Exploring Education and Childhood
Edited by Dominic Wyse, Rosemary Davis, Phil Jones and Sue Rogers

The tasks below have been designed for use alongside the relevant chapter in the book, to support teacher education and training.

1. **Childhoods and Contemporary Practices, Phil Jones**
   **Task:** Consider an interaction between yourself and a child or class, and use the matrix to (i) identify the ways different themes of the matrix are reflected in your example, (ii) think about the ways the themes interact and affect each other.

2. **The Child’s Voice, Rosemary Davis**
   **Task:** Discuss with your peers strategies that you could use to take account of children’s voice in your classroom.

3. **Children’s Thinking, Anne Robertson**
   **Task:** How do you think you could increase children’s experiences of using metacognitive strategies to advance their learning in your classroom? Make a plan of actions you could take to support children thinking about their thinking.

4. **Agency, Pedagogy and the Curriculum, Sue Rogers and Dominic Wyse**
   **Task:** Think about the pedagogy you will use to teach an area of the curriculum. Consider how this pedagogy could be either a) teacher directed or b) bringing the children’s needs and interests together with your teaching aims.

5. **High Stakes Assessment, Teachers and Children, Guy Roberts-Holmes**
   **Task:** Consider the possibilities and limitations of the future visions offered in the final section of the chapter.

6. **Technology and Education, Lynn Roberts**
   **Task:** ‘Meet your child’s new teacher: the ipad’
   Consider the following extract from a newspaper report:
   ‘More and more schools are replacing textbooks with technology. Teachers are regarded not as imparters of knowledge but “learning enablers”, there simply to guide pupils through educational apps … It’s a daunting prospect for parents, and we’re definitely seeing more mums and dads come into store to ask for advice on what to buy for their children to make sure they don’t get left behind,’ says Matt Leeser, head of buying for electricals and home technology at John Lewis. ‘Today’s children are digital natives [born in the internet age] who often know more about the latest tech and gadgets than their parents, so we believe it’s important that parents can keep up with them.’ Technology has taken over every aspect of
our lives, so our children have to learn how to master it, if they’re to be employable. Other countries have taken this message to heart. In South Korea, printed textbooks have gone the way of the dinosaurs. In Los Angeles, every schoolchild has been given an iPad. In Holland, 11 informally nicknamed ‘Steve Jobs’ schools, after the founder of Apple, are about to open. In these private institutions, founded by pollster Maurice de Hond, learning is done via iPads with no classrooms, form teachers, formal classes, lesson plans, timetables, parent–teacher meetings, break times, fixed school days or school holidays. Using educational apps, children will study each subject at a pace that suits them, with daily computer tests to assess their level. The theory is that no child will be bored because the class pace is too fast or too slow for them. (J. Llewellyn Smith, 2013. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/10230335/Meet-your-childs-new-teacher-the-iPad.html)

So are we on the verge of an educational utopia?

How are children and new technology seen within the extract?

How is learning seen within the extract? How are the roles of teacher and pupil featured in terms of change?

What are the ways in which children’s relationships with home and school feature in the extract?

What issues can you see here in relation to social exclusion?

The extract refers to large commercial organisations – what issues do you think this creates?

How are countries outside of the UK seen within the extract and how does it position UK children and their access and relationship to new technology in relation to those in other countries?

What parallels can you draw between the representation of iPads in the article and the principles behind Skinner’s intelligent teaching machines of the 1950s?

7. Expertise, Knowledge and Pedagogy, Tony Eaude

Task 1: Ask students, in small groups, to discuss:

a) a lesson plan and
b) a medium-term plan

and identify the following:

a) possible misunderstandings which a particular group of children may show
b) how the teacher might present the material in different ways to address these.

Task 2: Look at a five-minute video clip of a primary class teacher, preferably when the children are active and moving, rather than listening.

Watch and note the details of what she/he does in relation to:

a) use of voice and body language
b) interpreting cues
c) problem avoidance or resolution.

Every so often, pause the tape and discuss:

a) what has just happened?
b) what you would do next?
8. Language and Culture in Foreign Language Teaching, Paula Ambrossi

Task: Discuss what opportunities there might be for collaborative FL teaching during your school experience. Identify some challenges and ways to overcome them. Reflect on the foreign language delivery model being used in your school, and consider how effective it is.


Task: Think about one child in the classroom whose progress with learning or development you find it difficult to help. This does not have to be a child with a specific label. On one day, try and observe this child more closely (you can do this even if you are teaching the whole class). At the end of the day, make brief notes on what you observed and make a list of questions you have about them. Consider whether additional theoretical knowledge would help you answer your questions.

10. Embracing Diversity in the Classroom: A Cross-cultural Perspective, Lynn Ang and Rosie Flewitt

Task 1: Think about the diversity of the children in your setting. Consider how this influences and impacts on the way you plan and deliver the curriculum. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives introduced in this chapter about Bourdieu’s concepts of social and symbolic capital, how would you create spaces within the curriculum for the children to negotiate and exercise their autonomy, and build on their prior knowledge and experiences to contribute to the learning process? Produce a list of examples of how you would go about creating an empowering and inclusive environment that values children’s agency and symbolic capital. Discuss this with your peers or colleagues.

Task 2: This chapter contends that the expectations of a formal prescribed curriculum can sometimes pose challenges for practitioners when driven to meet certain educational targets or goals. This is incongruent with research evidence which shows that children’s learning takes place both formally and informally beyond the pre-set curriculum in the everyday contexts of the family, home and community as key sites of socialisation which inform their overall development. Reflecting on your own practice, consider some of the tensions or challenges that you face when supporting children’s learning within the expectations and confines of the curriculum in your setting. How do these challenges impact on your practice? How might you rethink or redesign your practice to support children’s learning beyond meeting these educational goals or targets? You may wish to approach some of your colleagues to find out the tensions and challenges they face. Have they experienced similar challenges and how do they address them? This will no doubt create the basis for an interesting and thought-provoking discussion.
11. Families, Society and School Choice, Georgina Merchant
   Task: Imagine a scenario where the government enacts a policy that withdraws parents’ rights to state preferences for schools, and requires them to send children to a government allocated place. Discuss the likely consequences.

12. Politics, Policy and Teacher Agency, Susan Taylor, Sue Bodman and Helen Morris
   Task: Think about what kind of teaching and learning approaches you have experienced. In what ways would they relate to the linear and conceptual models described in the chapter? What helped build your understanding of your future role as a teacher? What kinds of professional support and learning would help you to extend your confidence in becoming an autonomous decision-maker in your own classroom after your first year as a teacher? In what ways is your professional development as a teacher developing your ‘agency’?