

A critical evaluation and the identification of the next teaching and learning steps focusing on a case study of an individual or a group of learners, based on an observed critical incident.

Introduction

A Critical Incident in an unplanned event which takes place within the class. The incident only becomes critical when the event is analysed. This idea can be seen through theorist, Tripp and his model on how to successfully find and analyse a critical incident. Within his model, Tripp (1993) says that the, 'Critical Incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event.' A critical incident can be positive or negative and tends to be part of a normal routine, which is why the evaluation and analysis is so important.

Within this essay, I will be exploring the idea of a critical incident and how one can be observed in a case study of an individual or group of learners in a classroom. I will be taking an incident from my own case study which I collected through a structured observation within a school and critically analysing the incident using relevant theory and studies. The main idea that I will be focusing on is the idea that a child's knowledge and development is shaped by who and what surrounds them within their environment.

Observation

On first arrival at the school, I was taken back at its large size. However, despite its intimidating size, the school seemed to be an inviting place. My thought was further confirmed when entering the building, I was made to feel very comfortable which was aided by staff I spoke to and the schools welcoming atmosphere. The School is a relatively new build, around five years old. It has a large intake of learners, around 600 children are enrolled at the school, creating several classes within a year group. The school also has three Special Teaching Facility (STF) classes, Year one and two, year three and four, and year five and six. Other than the Special Teaching Facility classes, the classes have between twenty-five and thirty students.

According to the schools most recent Estyn report, '28% of children enrolled at the school have an Additional Learning Need (ALN)', (Estyn, 2017). The school is in a slightly deprived area, as again, referring back to the most recent Estyn report, '30% of pupils have free school meals... above the Welsh average, which is 19%' (Estyn, 2017).

However, despite these numbers, the staff and learner relationship were not affected, and the children seemed to be happy and comfortable in the company of their teachers (Estyn, 2017). I found that statement to be true, as I observed this in the class that I was placed in for the day and when walking through the corridors seeing teacher and learner interactions.

At the moment the school is running slightly differently due to Covid-19 restrictions, this means that school days are shorter due to staggered drop off and pick up times, lunch is eaten in classrooms apart from reception as the school saw it important for the younger students to still be learning table manners and the classrooms are set up differently as group table are no longer allowed. However, I found that even though there are restrictions in place, this did not cause to much disruption and the days still run smoothy.

Methodology

At the start of my preparation for my school observation, the first thing I did was research into what observation style would be appropriate for a school situation. Whether structured or unstructured and qualitative or quantitative. I wanted to find which type of research would benefit my work best. I found that 'In structured observation, data collection is conducted using specific variables and according to a pre-defined schedule. Unstructured observation, on the other hand, is conducted in an open and free manner in a sense that there would be no pre-determined variables or objectives...'. (Business Research Methodology, n.d.). From that finding I was able to know that my observation was to be structured as I was to complete a task sheet, a STEER document, in order to get the necessary details for my critical incident. As I was observing a class to find the incident this means that my observation would be non-participate. I also found that, 'qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). This means that, as I was observing a class in their own classroom environment, my research would consist of qualitative data.

There are several advantages to non-participate observations. For example, they allow the researcher to create their own opinions as they have a first-hand account of the situation, so can make judgements based on reactions and behaviour. Another advantage is that the researcher is a privileged observer meaning they can form opinions on what they see rather than using previous knowledge, so are less likely to be biased. Finally, the observer will have little to no contact with who is being observed so they cannot have any influence on the participants, further ensuring that the observation is unbiased. However, there are definitely disadvantages with non-participant observation. For example, if children are being observed they may act differently to how they normally would whether it be positively or negatively. Another disadvantage would be, children like to chat and talk to new people, so in a classroom environment the children may become distracted.

When I conducted my observation, I did have several issues with the non-participant aspect. Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, the class is separated differently, meaning there is less carpet time and work is done in smaller groups. As well as this the teacher informed me there were two Teaching Assistants off meaning that the class were further behind on their baseline assessments as there was less staff to conduct them. This also meant that with me being an extra pair of hands for that day, they wanted me to get stuck in with the children and help out with the lessons. For me personally, I highly enjoyed my day and loved getting stuck in, but from a non-participant observational view, I did struggle. With the current pandemic situation, things like this cannot be helped and as a teacher, thinking on the spot and quickly dealing with situations that are out of your control is it part of the job.

Finally, prior to my observation I read up on the BERA Ethical guidelines, I thought this best when observing children. Within the guidelines it says that 'researchers have a responsibility to think through their duty of care in order to recognise potential risks, and to prepare for and be in a position to minimise and manage any distress or discomfort that may arise. (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2018, Point 34). I feel this point is quite important when observing children. As a student teacher, I am learning to cope with situations that may arise in a class so, being aware of these guidelines, and knowing that when observing a class a child may become distressed or a situation may arise that was not expected, is something important to consider.

Four Purposes

Currently, Wales is undergoing a change to their curriculum such that by 2022 there will be an entirely new curriculum in place. This new Curriculum for Wales has the '12 pedagogical values' as its baseline and is designed to 'help each school develop its own curriculum, enabling their learners to develop towards the four purposes of the curriculum' (Gov.Wales, 2020). The four purposes referred to in the curriculum are: 'Ambitious, capable learners. Enterprising, creative contributors. Ethical, informed citizens. Healthy, confident individuals.' (Gov.Wales, 2015). Along with the Four Purposes, Professor Graham Donaldson, creator of the New Curriculum, stated that the new curriculum is to include, 'six 'Areas of Learning and Experience': Expressive arts; Health and well-being; Humanities; Languages, literacy and communication; Mathematics and numeracy; and Science and technology.' (Successful Future, p.39, 2015). The purpose of the six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE) is to create cross curriculum learning focusing on three main topics: Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Competency.

The critical incident I observed involved the interaction between a child and the teacher. The Child said to the Teacher "I need a wee wee". The Teacher responds with the correct way for the Child to ask to go to the toilet. When the Child passes a Teaching Assistant on the way to the toilet, the Teaching Assistant asks where they are going. The Child replies by saying "I'm going to the toilet", which is how the Teacher told the Child to speak when needing the toilet. In relation to the four purposes, I found that this event is linked within two of the four purposes; Ambitious, capable learners and Healthy, confident individual. Each of these purposes has traits within them which I found this child to fall into. For example, 'Building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts.' And 'have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can' (Successful future, p.29, 2015). I feel these are relevant points in relation to my critical incident because the Child quickly learnt what was acceptable to say when needing the toilet from the Teacher only telling them once. Then, the Child used the correct language when speaking to the Teaching Assistant. The Child showed signs of managing everyday life independently and applying their knowledge just from that one small moment with the Teacher. This to me is what makes a critical incident and how it relates to Donaldson's New Curriculum.

Literature Review

When analysing my critical incident, I found that it can be linked to various pedagogical theories, which are important and form the basis when it comes to teaching. The main theories that I have linked my incident to are cognitive development, learning in behaviourism and Social Learning Theory. I will be looking at how a child's behaviour can affect their development whether it be physical, social or emotional development. This will be the main link to Social Learning Theory and its effects.

Cognitive development is the development of the behaviour, memorisation, and decision-making processes within a child. This development is affected by the child's home and school environments. The most influential cognitive theorist is Swiss born psychologist, Jean Piaget. Piaget believed that a child's development and intelligence is not fixed, it is ever changing and influenced by the child's environment. He conducted an observational study of the cognitive development of children, this is known as Piaget's four stages of Cognitive Development. The

idea behind this four-stage theory is that children attain knowledge in different stages of their life. The four stages are: Sensorimotor - Birth to age 18-24 months; Preoperational - Toddlerhood through to early childhood age 7; Concrete operational - Ages 7 to 11; and Formal operational - Adolescence to adulthood (Simply psychology, McLeod, 2018). When I conducted my critical incident, according to Piaget, the children I observed would be at the preoperational stage of their development. This would mean that, a child's language development is not fully established yet, and they are still building up their understanding of conversations. I feel this relates to my critical incident as the Child did not have the correct knowledge about how to ask to go to the toilet, but with instructions from the Teacher, they learnt the correct way and applied the knowledge when the Teaching Assistant asked where they were going. The Child developed their knowledge through the help of someone within their environment which is what Piaget predicts will happen within the preoperational stage.

The behaviourist idea is that a child learns their behaviour through their environments and the interactions that take place within the environment whether it be at home, school or anywhere else that has an impact on them (Simply Psychology, 2020). This means that, because children are so impressionable and learn through mimicking, the behaviour of those who are around children will have a big influence. Their behaviour is important as this will affect the children's development. For example, if a child is around a person who swears a lot, the chances are the child will pick up the bad language as they will not see anything wrong with using this language, creating a bad behaviour.

Theorists such as Ivan Pavlov and B.F Skinner both looked at behaviour through the observation of animals. They found that behaviour is learnt through rewards, stimuli, punishment, and reinforcement. (Very well minded, 2020). For his research, Pavlov used a dog in order to find out whether a stimulus has an effect on behaviour, thus pioneering Classical conditioning (Strickland. B, p 129, 2001). Whereas Skinner created the 'Skinner' Box. This was designed so that the animal, which had been conditioned, would have to perform an action to get a reward of food. In many cases, children do learn through positive reinforcement and rewards in both home and school. For example, at home a parent or caregiver may say to a child, that if they eat one more bite of vegetables, they can have dessert. Or in school, children often are rewarded with stickers, house points or being class helper for the day for their good behaviour. In some cases, it does work as the children learn that if they want something such as the dessert or the house point, they have to work hard to earn it. This idea of conditioning follows a person all the way through their life but in different situations. As an adult if someone wants a promotion or a pay rise, for example, they have to work hard, put in the hours and be committed to the job to get what they want. I feel this idea of behaviour and conditioning does in some way relate to my critical incident. The Child was shown the correct way to behave before being allowed to go to the toilet, therefore the Child has learnt to ask to go to the toilet correctly before being able to go. The Child then remembered the correct way to behave when asking to go to the toilet when another adult asked them about it.

There are many ways in which the behaviourist theory links to the idea of cognitive learning theory and how it has an effect on a child's development. John Watson and again B.F. Skinner, together created the idea of Learning theory and together they argue that 'Children are completely malleable' (Strickland, B. p 129, 2001). This meaning that children are easily influenced and shaped, which is why their surrounding environments and influencers are so important in the development of their behaviours, intelligence and personality. Theorist, Albert

Bandura believes that again children learn through observation and imitation, which he referred to as 'modelling or imitation' (Gale Encyclopaedia, p,384, 2001.). In day to day life children have many influences around them for example; parents, family, schools, friends and teachers, plus, in an ever-growing technological world, there is now added influences such as social media, television shows, movies and so on. These all will have influences on a child's development and behaviour. Bandura conducted an experiment called the 'Bobo doll' Experiment to look at the behaviour of children and whether their behaviour was influenced by an adult (Everywhere Psychology, 2012). Bandura took thirty-six boys and thirty-six girls aged three to six and showed twenty-four of them a video of a woman aggressively hitting a doll with a hammer, as well as kicking, punching and throwing it. Twenty-four of them a video of a lady playing with the doll nicely and twenty-four of them were just allowed to play with the doll. The aim of the experiment was to see if the impressionable children copied the behaviour of the lady resulting in the development of their behaviour and understanding (Simply Psychology, 2014). Bandura's results found that children are impressionable, and that they do learn through mimicking and observing how others behave. These findings link together the previously discussed behaviourist approach and the cognitive approach.

I found that this idea of Bandura's links directly to my critical incident. The Child displays behaviour which they have learned at home, in their natural environment by saying ' I need a wee wee', the Teacher then explains the correct way to say they need to toilet, this is similar to the Lady in the video showing the aggressive or nice behaviour. The Child then repeats the correct way to say they need the toilet when the Teaching Assistant asks where they are going. This shows that the Child has learnt the correct behaviour by imitating and mimicking what the Teacher told them. My observation of the critical incident supports Bandura's experiment and findings that children are very impressionable, and that they are influenced by their environment and the people within them.

After looking at these theories, I think that they are all very similar in their main idea. The idea being that children develop and learn through their environment, and who surrounds them. Children learn through observing and imitation, which is why their environment and who surrounds them is so important. Bandura's experiment with the Bobo doll clearly shows this as the children he observed just copied that they saw the lady in the video doing. Pavlov and Skinner both looked at the idea of conditioning and positive reinforcement and how children are malleable and can be shaped by positive reinforcement. However, if the environment is negative, the positive reinforcement will not work as the child does not want to learn due to their negative surroundings. Finally, Piaget again believes that a child's development can be shaped by their environment and that they learn through the imitation of others. All of these theories directly link to my critical incident as, the Child clearly showed their language development which was due to the Teacher giving the correct way to speak about the toilet and then the Child applied this in the conversation with the Teaching Assistant.

Reflection

When reflecting back on my critical incident I decided to use Gibbs' reflection model. This model has six stages of reflection: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan (Gibbs, 1988). This reflection plan is useful when looking at critical incidents as it offers a good framework for analysing experiences.

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As previously discussed, my critical incident was a conversation between a child and the Teacher, where the Teacher tells the correct way to ask to go to the toilet. The Child then applies the knowledge they have just learnt from the Teacher when a Teaching Assistant asks where they are going. When I observed this incident, I was impressed with how quickly the Child had taken on board the correct way of asking to go to the toilet and then used that knowledge again without having to be told twice. However, now I can understand that this is because of how a child develops their knowledge through imitation and their environment. As teachers we have such important roles in a child's development as sometimes it may be the case that school and the teachers within are the only positive environment that a child may be around, so they need to be able to have a strong positive impact on a child to help their development. As Skinner and Watson state, children are very malleable and impressionable so as teachers we need to create a positive learning environment.

I found my critical incident to be very positive as there was a good teacher pupil relationship which was demonstrated by the Teacher when they did not get angry at the Child for not speaking correctly, they just informed them of the correct way in a caring and helpful manner. Encounters like these do help build up a good rapport between the teacher and pupil creating the positive atmosphere and environment where a child is more likely to want to be and want to learn as they feel safe and comfortable.

When reflecting back on my observation, there are one or two things I would change, for example, I would have liked it to have been less hands on and more non-participatory. However, situations sometimes occur which is out of the control of the observer and this observation was one of them. As the Coronavirus pandemic is still having an effect in schools, teachers and teaching assistants are off due to various Covid related issues so, with the class at the time being short staff, an extra pair of hands was very useful to the teacher. It may not have been too useful for my observation, however it did give me a good experience of being hands on in a classroom which I take as a positive and I did thoroughly enjoy my day. I would have also possibly liked to have changed classes because, as I was in a reception class, it was difficult to observe lessons. This was due to the fact that a lot of the day is taken up with the children playing and then short fifteen-minute lessons. However, even though I was in a reception class, there was plenty of opportunities to observe critical incidents and I feel this benefited me.

In the future, if I was to observe again, I would handle the situation differently. I would make sure my observation was more non-participatory, as I do feel this has had a slight effect on my findings. However, I do feel that in this situation, it has not made too much of a difference. I do feel that non-participant observations may be very difficult in general as, depending on who or what is being observed, the participant may act differently. But the current situation also needs to be taken into account, as if Covid-19 was not happening I may have had a different observational experience. Though, as teachers we need to be ready for any situation that is thrown at us, so it should be taken as a positive rather than negative.

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Conclusion

To conclude, at times I found the observation difficult for the critical incident. There were times the observation was not non-participatory, which I feel can be a general disadvantage of this type of observation, especially when observing children. However, by it being participatory I managed to get involved with the children and witness more incidents than first expected.

My incident fits in nicely with all the theories I have explored within this essay. I have found that children are easily influenced and that their environments and relationships are highly important for them to have a positive development and gather all the necessary knowledge to become well educated, knowledgeable and well-rounded people. The theorists I have studied, all have very similar ideas on the development of a child which only backs up my observation further. Through their studies, experiments, and observations I have understood the importance of how a child's environment can affect their development, knowledge and behaviour. If a child is around negativity or bad influences, they will likely adopt the same attributes, as children learn through mimicking, this is seen in Bandura's experiment of the Bobo Doll. Whereas, if a child is around positive and good influences, they will mimic that behaviour instead, which is seen in my critical incident. The other way in which children will learn to act and behave a certain way is through positive reinforcement which was demonstrated by Pavlov and Skinner.

The use of critical incidents can be very beneficial as the incidents can be used to improve a child's development and behaviour, and I have found this through my own incident and then when looking at the theory behind it.

Appendices

Observation sheet 1

Date and time, year group: • 30/09/20 • 9.30am • Reception Class
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). • General knowledge/ literacy • Morning routine of talking about the day of the week, the weather, the month etc • On going topic • If the weather is nice the children can go outside and see what the weather is like • Low ability range so that everyone can understand and learn the days, months and weather properly • Activity done in English and Welsh
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviors towards learning seem like at this point in time?) • Children excited to do this in the morning • Helper of the day gets to change the day and weather chart • Everyone getting involved by answering questions about what day it is or what they think the weather is like • Children seem disappointed when they do not get picked to answer a question. This shows they are excited to learn.
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) • A dedicated board with the weather and days on and which the children get to change each day after a brief discussion. • By doing this activity every day the children are becoming healthy well rounded individuals with good knowledge of the world they live in. • The activity is done in English and Welsh which develops the childrens language.
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well)? • Children behave as they want to be the helper of the day and to change the board around • If the weather is good then the children again behave as they want to go outside • Having both the English and Welsh helps the children understand the two languages and develop that knowledge.

Access and challenge

(What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

- Colourful boards and displays of the days of the week, months, and weather in both English and Welsh are around the carpet area so the children can see them at all times
- More complex sentences can be formed depending on the child and how confident they are at the days of the week and weather etc.

Assessment

(Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience?)

- Teacher asked the children if they knew the English day of the week and then asked if anyone knew it in Welsh. If they did not know the teacher then told them
- The teacher asked the children to look outside and describe the weather and how it made them feel. These words then went up on the board.
- Depending on the level of the child, the teacher would prompt them to make their sentence more complex. For example they might have said 'it is raining outside' where as another child may say 'it is raining very heavily outside'.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)

- Children wanting to be the helper of the day so change their behaviour so that the teacher may consider them for this role.
- Children who were not picked then misbehaved
- Teacher explained that because they were misbehaving they would not get picked another day
- Children then sat nicely and listened as they wanted to be the helper another day.

Observation Sheet 2

Date and time, year group:

- 30/09/20
- 10.30am
- Reception Class

Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information).

- Area of study is literacy
- Class are near the beginning of the topic as only a few letters have been learnt.
- Indoor study as it was a very wet day. This topic can be learnt outdoors by writing the letters in sand, collecting sticks, leaves etc to create the letter shapes.
- Ability ranges from very young 4 year olds to more advanced 5 year olds.
- Some children further ahead than others and more confident with the letters

Classroom culture

(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviors towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

- Children seem keen to learn and listen to the teacher
- Still quite young so their full attention is not there
- Teacher seemed to keep most of them engaged
- A lot of children would rather play than do the lesson
- Classroom vibe is very positive. It is an inviting place that would make you want to learn

Objectives

(What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?)

- Displays and posters all around the room that are relevant to that age groups learning. For example, the English and Welsh alphabet posters
- Photos of the children all around displaying previous activities and lessons reminding them of the work they have done and the previous enjoyable lessons.
- Activity tables set up which are relevant to what they are learning. For example, name writing tables.

Direction

(What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?)

- Relevant activities around the classroom
- Dojo point system always up on the board which encourages the children to behave well, sit nicely and so on, to earn points
- Helper of the day. Only can get this job for behaving nicely whilst the register is being taken this encourages the children to behave and sit quietly whilst the teacher takes the register.

Access and challenge

(What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

- Teacher relating the topic to things that the children know about in their lives. For example when learning the letter 'C' the teacher would say "c c c Caterpillar, c c c Cow, c c c Cat". By doing this the teacher is relating the letter C to things that the children would know so they can begin to place the letter into words.
- Dojo point system engages the learners as they want to do well in the lessons and participate in order to earn points.

Assessment

(Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience?)

- Existing knowledge of things beginning with the letter demonstrated first to show the children that they already knew the letter before introducing new words.
- Asking the children to have a go at saying a letter beginning with a C
- Teacher asked them to have a go at writing the letter in the air to see if they knew what it looked like
- Teacher also asked them to have a go at saying the letter before telling them what the letter was.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching?)

- Children are sat on the carpet for the lesson
- Lesson starts. Some children sitting nicely others misbehaving
- Teacher tells the misbehaving children to copy Child A who is sat nicely and practicing the letter C in the air. Child A received a dojo point.
- Misbehaving children copy the well behaved Child A as they want to receive dojo points
- Children do not misbehave again

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Observation sheet 3

Date and time, year group: • 30/09/20 • 12.45pm • Reception Class
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). • Class learning numbers. The number 7 was that day's focus • Near the start of the topic • Mixed ability range. Some children already able to count to 10 but not all children • Indoor topic
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?) • Children seem in good moods • A tad restless as it is the first activity after lunch • They are sitting nicely on the carpet waiting for the teacher
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) • Number charts are around the class room • Various displays and posters are around to help the children with their numbers and counting • Activities around the class round to help with that lesson. For example, maths puzzles, jigsaws, number matches etc • Lesson just focuses on one number rather than confusing them with more
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?) • Children watch a counting video which engages them and helps them count. The teacher stops the video and encourages them to count outloud. For example, the teacher stopped the video when 7 birds flew out of a tree and the class had to count. • Teacher also sang a rhyme whilst the children drew the number in the air
Access and challenge (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?) • Some child the teacher did not need to help, they knew it was the number 7 straight away and were able to draw it in the air without help

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- Some children needed the extra boost of confidence

Assessment

(Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience)?

- Teacher was asking the children if any of them were born on the 7th or if anyone had a sibling who was 7.
- The teacher was getting the children to count on their fingers to 7
- This was showing that some children already knew of the number 7 and are seeing in used in their own lives.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

- The children loved the number 7 video. They enjoyed counting the birds seeing what would happen next.
- It was a very engaging activity for the children

Observation sheet 4

Date and time, year group: • 30/09/20 • 1.30pm • Reception Class
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). • Start of the topics • Indoor play as the day was very wet. Otherwise there would be outdoor activities as well. • Mixed ability range. Activities for everyone
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?) • After the two more formal lessons, the children just want to play and release some energy • Children all very excited and happy • Mostly good behaviour. The odd small argument between who can use what activity • Children seemed to want to do the activities that related to their lessons
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) • Activity tables are set up around the classroom to enable the children to play but for it to be educational at the same time. For example, a name writing table, number jigsaws, block counting and so on. • The children think that they are playing, but they are actually learning through play. • The name writing table and the maths jigsaws were the most popular tables. • This shows the abilities within the class as the more able learners wanted to be on the tables where they could be praised for writing their name or completing the jigsaw where as the less able learners just wanted to play.
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?) • On the name writing table, the children had to go and find their own name and use that to write their name (all children have a name label on the door which they can remove). • This helps the learner identify letters and they need to be able to find their own name and then write it themselves.
Access and challenge (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

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- Some children just wanted to play with their friends and not take part in the educational activities.
- The more able learners wanted to take part in the activities and would often go up to a teaching assistant to check that they had done their name right or to ask for help.

Assessment

(Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience)?

- Some children already knew how to recognise their own name and a few even knew how to write it.
- A few children could also count up to 10 already.
- Prior knowledge was also shown in the non academic activities, such as the play house/kitchen. The children knew that the dolls needed to be looked after, fed and changed which I observed a few of them doing.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

- The writing activity was a good activity as lots of children of all abilities wanted to get involved in this and have a go whether it be independently or with the help of a teaching assistant.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD 1

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	• 30/09/20 • Approximately 9am • Reception class. Children age 4 and 5 • Interaction between Learner and a Teaching Assistant Incident took place when the Learners were arriving into school for that day and waiting for the day to start properly.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	• Once the children arrive they sit on the carpet nicely waiting for the teacher. • One particular child was jumping and messing about, instead of sat waiting. • A teaching assistant says to the child, “do you want to sit on my special spot?” this referring to a time out mat away from the main carpet. • The child replies ‘no’ and sits and behaves for five minutes. • After five minutes or so the child gets up and starts jumping about again. • The Teaching assistant notices and says “I’ve given you 2 chances now, this is the last chance or you will sit on my special spot” • The child looks alarmed and says sorry. • They behave properly this time and does not have to be told again. • This then lead to other children starting to behave and not mess about as they do not want to go and sit on the special spot. This incident clearly shows the influence that children have on their peers. It also shows that the teaching assistant gave the child enough warnings about their behaviour for that child to fix what they were doing and if not, their actions would cause consequences. But the child understands and listens to what they are being told and in the end, they do listen and behave. This shows that children are conditioned to fear a punishment no matter what it is.

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CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD 2

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	• 30/09/20 • Approximately 9am • Reception class ages 4 and 5 Incident took place between a child and a Teaching Assistant
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<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	• The child is very upset from leaving their parents for the day • Child is crying and trying to run back to parents • Teaching assistant takes their hand and guides them to take their coat off and hang their bag up • Child then runs back to the door and starts kicking it trying to get back out • Teaching assistant does not shout, they calmly ask the child to stop doing that • Teaching assistant asks if the child wants to come for a chat for five minutes whilst they calm down and let the other children into the class • Child goes with the teaching assistant and does eventually calm down. When speaking to the teacher and teaching assistant at the end of the day, that incident that took place in the morning was actually much better than previous days and that the child is getting more comfortable and used to coming to school. The teacher tells me that the child is being assessed for any additional learning needs as they think the behaviour is not typical behaviour. Throughout the day the child seemed very quiet and was often on their own. The teachers leave the child to do their own thing as the child does not always cooperate so when they are happy, they leave them to do their own thing. This incident is related to additional learning needs as well as behaviour management. The teaching assistant could have shouted at the child for kicking the door and not interacting with the group when it came to lessons, but instead they took the child for a chat and listened to what the problem was to see if they could help. By doing this it creates positive relationships where the child feels more comfortable and happier.
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CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD 3

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group.	• 30/09/20 • Approximately 1.30pm • Reception Class ages 4 and 5
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People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	Interaction took place between a child, teacher, and teaching assistant.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	• The children are all sat on the carpet listening to the teacher. • A child stands up and says to the teacher, "I need a wee wee" • The teacher stops what they are doing and replied, "okay. But say, Please may I go to the toilet." • The child asks again in the right way and the teacher lets them go. • On the child's way to the toilet, a teaching assistant, who has not heard the previous conversations asks the child where they are going. • The child replied by saying "I'm going to the toilet" politely and in the correct way. This incident is linked with idea that children learn through imitation. A child's environment is so important for their development as if a child is in a negative environment the child will learn those bad habits and develop a negative behaviour whereas if a child is around a positive, good and happy environment the child is more likely to imitate that behaviour instead.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD 4

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual	• 30/09/20 • Approximately 2.30pm • Reception Class ages 4 and 5 Incident took place between a child and the teacher.
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information from field notes.	
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	• Children are all sat on the carpet with their bags and coats on waiting for their parents to pick them up • The teacher is reading a story to keep the children entertained • One child is lying on the floor kicking the bookcase with all the books in • The teacher asks the child to stop kicking and to sit nicely • The child asks why they should stop kicking the bookcase • The teacher replies by saying, "That is where we keep all our books and we do not want them damaged." • The child replies by saying, "Okay, I like books" and they stop kicking and sit nicely As soon as the child realised that what they were doing was going to affect something that they liked, they stopped doing it immediately. This shows that the child realised what they were doing was wrong. Even though they had to be told, they themselves could see how it would affect the books and case, so they stopped. This shows that this incident can be linked to the idea that children are ambitious, capable learners. They questioned the teacher which some may see as being rude but others may see it as the child furthering their knowledge, as some children would just take the comment and stop kicking but this child questioned why and learnt that their action would have a consequence on the book case and something that they enjoy may end up being ruined

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