

Mirela Hayles – 2011395

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

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Introduction

The need for talent and competence is now so high that schools must serve as talent incubators, if not talent factories (Wiliam, n.d.). It is no longer sufficient to discover talent in our classrooms; teachers need to create it (Wiliam, n.d.). Fletcher-Wood (2018) cited Dylan Wiliam that responsive teaching is the key to understanding how children learn and develop holistically, thus educators need regularly reflect on their work in this manner. Hence, in order to reflect on their work, teachers apply a pedagogical theory developed by Tripp (1993) called "critical incident analysis" (Tipp,2012). Tipp (2012) emphasized that critical incident analysis is reflection of the teachers' practice that leads to excellent teacher professional development. On the one hand, Mohammed (2018) noted that critical occurrences not only helped teachers' professional practises develop, however they also allowed to improve and progress. On the other hand, Raj Joshi (2018) added that it indicates that educators learn about responsive teaching strategies that can be applied or strategies that are ineffective. Therefore, Dewey (1933) stated that developing reflective habits is one of education's key goals, enabling teachers to engage in thoughtful activity. Therefore, the current critical incident is an example of reflection of the responsive teaching that is a path to improving teaching practise.

Description of the critical incident

To begin, critical incident analysis attempts to explain the nature of the incident: There were around 22 students, on 5 tables. The classroom was a three-sided square shape. The teacher was performing board work and speaking activities. All students could see the teacher and each other. The children were around in Year3/ 4 and working on progression step 2.

The current critical incidence occurred on a child A who was sitting with other 4 children. Child A's table was near the entryway. Child A's participation in the first session was quite limited. There was a picture on the board, and the teacher began asking questions

concerning previous experience. The child couldn't stop yawning and twirling its hair during the first session. However, once the teacher presented a bag containing several types of shoes, child A became enthusiastic, immediately began working on the task, and followed the instructions given by the teacher.

The critical incident is about a child A who was given a shoe to explore, and the child became more engaged and interested.

Therefore, this assignment analyses a critical evaluation and the identification of the next teaching and learning steps focused on the critical incident where the teacher's approach to learning increased the child's engagement level.

Literature REVIEW

The observed critical incident brought attention to several crucial aspects that can be linked and explored in the context of a literature review. The following review will concentrate on views about how to engage children to learn, what motivates and engages children to learn, and the role of schools to encourage this.

The Welsh Government is the first country in the world to have legislated play – based curriculum as well as creating authentic context as part of the learning process (Welsh Gov, 2019; Welsh Gov, 2014). What is more, Article 31 of the UNRCR (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) explicitly recognizes the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, and participation in cultural and artistic activities (Unicef, n.d.). This means that children have a fundamental right to play and engage in activities that contribute to their well-being and holistic development (Unicef, n.d; Macblain, 2014; Welsh Gov, 2019).

As result of Wales' ongoing curriculum reform, schools now have the opportunity to drastically modify teaching practises (Chapman 2020; Brock, 2015). There are a few educational government documents that are based on play-based and experiential learning curricula, where children's motivation and curiosity are the main driving forces: Successful Future, the Foundation Phase in Wales, an Independent Stocktake of the Foundation Phase

in Wales, and the Evaluating the Foundation Phase Final Report (Kingston and Siraj, 2017; Waters, 2016; Donaldson, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015). The first serious discussions and analyses of these documents were to emphasise the importance of having teachers who have had adequate training, are well-educated, highly motivated, and fully comprehend how creating authentic contexts for learning encourages learners (Kingston and Siraj, 2017; Waters, 2016; Donaldson, 2015; Taylor et al., 2015). However, there is a lot of evidence in favour of play-based learning, although not so much in favour of play-based teaching (Welsh Gov, 2014). Despite the fact that children's needs and interests were recognised, activities were designed to link play to specific learning goals, phases, or developmental processes (Anning, Cullen, and Fler, 2008).

In considering that the new Welsh curriculum (2022) fosters teachers to have more autonomy and chances to develop pedagogical techniques and strategies to drive children to learn, as well as to recognise and address the needs of children. For example, the multiple intelligences (MI) idea, created by researcher Howard Gardner, focused on how to adapt the curriculum to each child's individual interests. According to this theory, children learn best through certain approaches: for instance, if children find arithmetic or history difficult, the teacher may might encourage them to study such subjects through the arts, theatre, or music (Waller, Whitmarsh, and Clarke, 2011; Welsh Gov. 2020). Similarly, Montessori, Vygotsky, Bruner, Dewey, and others were among those proposed the idea of children having preferred learning approaches, their work placed a major emphasis on the personal and emotional development, as well as the growth of future learners (Aubrey and Riley, 2018; Sternberg and Swerling, 1996; Joyce, Calhoun, Hopkins, 1997; Gray, 2015). Thus, hands on learning are the motivation that is crucial for encouraging learning, enjoyment, perseverance, and performance, according to Eberie (2014, cited in Waters-Davies, 2022). It also includes a variety of elements such as surprise, pleasure, independence, and inner desire (McLeod, 2018; Stixtrud and Johnson, 2018; Bransford, 2004; Smidt, 2010).

On the other hand, Dewey (1933) pointed out that every action the teacher does, prompts the children to react in some way, and each response tends to shape the learner's mindset in certain way. Aubrey and Riley (2019) and Gray (2015) pointed out Vygotsky's theory where the adult interactions were a core factor in cognitive development of the children. Similarly, Grehan (2012) did research that gives evidence about the various educational systems employed in countries such as Finland, Canada, Singapore, Japan, and Finland. These countries are very different in terms of size, culture, diversity, and history; however, they all share one fundamental educational philosophy: teachers inspire children by making learning relevant to children's lives so that they understand the value of the material they are teaching. Therefore, teachers must also acknowledge that each child with whom they contact is a unique individual (Waters, 2016; Donaldson, 2015; Taylor et al. 2015).

Nevertheless, according to Brock (2021), excellent teaching, active parental participation, and children's efforts can all have a big impact on a child's life by motivating them to work hard at anything which will help to further their education. On the one hand, Maslow (2013, quoted in Grimmer, 2021) contends that the ability to love and be loved is a fundamental need that must be satisfied and that having healthy connections and feeling loved are essential components in children's motivation to learn. Holt (2017) provides an example of a well-known rat experiment that demonstrated how rodents' behaviour improved noticeably when they had a wonderful relationship with their handlers.

On the other hand, a number of research findings suggest that when children experience an authentic activity themselves, they are more motivated to learn (Howard and McInnes, 2012). Stixrud and Johnson (2018) agree that children who engage in hands on activities are more likely to learn because they put a lot of effort into activities that they find both engaging and difficult, they enter a state of flow when they are totally involved with the present moment, and time passes fast. In contrast, if we apply Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to the Foundation Phase implementation in Wales, we can see that a child's development and learning are influenced by everything in their surroundings, including their

network interactions and that every contact matters (Waller, Whitmarsh, and Clarke, 2011; Cray, 2015; Welsh Government 2019; Hayes, O'Toole, and Halpenny, 2022). As a result, it seems that the involvement of the children's teachers had a significant impact on their level of learning (Moore, 2012; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). This could be related to children looking up to role models, knowing that what they are doing is meaningful and brings joy to the people in their lives, and having someone to share their joy with (Moore, 2012; Welsh, Gov, 2014; Gray, 2015). This would also be consistent with the views of Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner that children develop through social interaction (Hayes, O'Toole, and Halpenny, 2022; Newman and Latifi, 2021). Aubrey and Riley (2019) and Gray (2015) indicated the Vygotsky's zone of proximal development concept that in order to motivate children to learn, first children must engage with others, as children might be inspired by other children or adults.

Skinner, on the other hand, stated that courses should be designed to show pupils what they don't know and how they cannot accomplish it, rather than to expand on what they already know and enable them to learn more (Gray, 2015; Aubrey and Riley, 2019). Furthermore, according to Skinner's theory, rewarding children enhances their motivation (Aubrey and Riley, 2019). In contrast, Brock (2021) and Moore (2012) support and advocate for behaviours motivated by intrinsic motivations. The motivation comes from within, not from a desire for a reward or a certain outcome. As a result, intrinsic motivation boosts children's love for learning and their self-esteem since children who are drawn to things that they find interesting and enjoyable are less likely to be afraid to make mistakes (Griffith and Burns, 2015; Griffith and Burns, 2012; Bennerr and Dunne, 1992).

To summarise, the new curriculum requires teachers to improve their quality of teaching by putting theory into practise and participating in reflective and responsive teaching (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012; Donaldson, 2015; Fletcher-Wood et al. 2020). As wonder is a natural process in children (having a boot on the table), children need to be raised in circumstances that

value and appeal to their innate curiosity and passion for knowledge (Holt, 2011; Graham, 2019; Peer and Reid, 2021).

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching and learning methods are actions that put theory into practice and make teaching alive as it is taken into account both the potential and the prior knowledge and skills of learners (UNESCO, 2014; Wiliam et al., 2007). Teaching and learning methods include more actions than chalk and talk activities since teachers need to tackle all aspects of child development (UNESCO, 2014; Gray, 2015). In comparison teaching and learning methods in primary schools are often aligned with various education theories that quite educators in understanding how children learn and how best to facilitate their learning experiences (Tina, 2015; Peer and Reid, 2021; Pritchard, 2009; Pond, 2006; Bransford, 2004). Therefore, in the new curriculum (Welsh Gov, 2019) four purposes encourage practitioners to look the uniqueness of the child, the child as a whole – body, soul and mind.

As an alternative, teaching and learning strategies support the application of theories, such as: Froebel and Montessori believed that children learn through play, Stainer through imitation (Macblain, 2014), Lucke believed that children can be encouraged to learn using their perceptions, Rousseau believed that children learn through the teacher's encouragement. Nevertheless, Kolb believed that children learn best when they are encouraged to participate in authentic, hands-on experiences (Kolb, 2005; Kolb, 2015). Experiential learning places a strong emphasis on hands-on, direct interaction with materials or objects in order to obtain knowledge and skills (Kolb, 2015). Furthermore, these experiences and interactions using theories as methods of teaching and learning that build a brain architecture, allowing children to make and strengthen connection between what they know what they experience within the world around them (Gray, 2015; Waters-Davices, 2022). Therefore, a variety of teaching strategies exist to assist learners in realising their full

potential, however only responsive teaching actually puts these concepts into practise (Fletcher-Wood et al., 2020; Moor, 2010; Sternberg and Swerling, 1996).

As indicated with the literature above, the approach to teaching and learning used in the current critical incident in the classroom was based on the idea that children learn best through experience and that experiential learning is a powerful and effective teaching and learning strategy (Kolb, 2015). Macblain (2014) pointed out this method encourages students to actively engage in the learning process, reflecting on their experiences. Link to the critical incident is that once the children received the shoe as a real-world application the child became more engaged and motivated to learn. To build on learners' prior knowledge and cognitive growth, Donaldson (2015) and Paterson (2018) emphasize that creating authentic contexts for learning is a key component of teaching. According to Waters-Davies (2022) play and movement in the classroom are also part of learning thought experience.

However, much like any technique of teaching or learning, hands-on learning includes limitations. A few of these limitations are as follows: space and resource limitations materials, tools, and space are frequently needed for hands-on activities (Pond, 2006; Pritchard, 2009; Macblain, 2014). For example, assessing learning outcomes from hands-on activities can be complex. Traditional assessments like tests and quizzes may not accurately capture the depth of understanding gained through exploration and discovery (Wiliam, 2007; Wiliam and Black, 1998; Griffith and Burns, 2012).

Despite these limitations, hands-on learning is still a highly effective method of learning that can greatly improve the understanding of learners, engagement, and knowledge acquisition (Holt, 2011; Aubrey and Riley, 2019; Grimmer, 2019). Teachers frequently combine hands-on learning with other teaching strategies to get around some of these limitations, giving their pupils a well-rounded and successful educational experience (Moore, 2012, Fletcher-Wood et al., 2020).

Though, Dowling (2013) pointed out that for learning to occur in the classroom, children must actively engage in exploration using all of their senses – touching and smelling. As stated by Locke, who was referenced by Macblain (2014) and Cousins and Cunnah (2018) agree with Dowling that people learn about the world and how it works through sensory experience. However, Leach (2003) and Smith (2017) believe that children require more than just sensory motivation; they also require pedagogical strategies that employ many methods of teaching that have been developed to assist learners in any field area or subject. As a result, Mutpnyi (2016) found that various sensory activities, such as touching and smelling, can be used as a hand-on learning in order to encourage and motivate children in the learning process.

However, none of these cognitive theories according to Fletcher-Wood et al. (2020) provide teachers with information regarding various teaching strategies or instructional techniques; rather, they are essentially a collection of limitations that teachers should be aware of with regard to how children's brains process and how children can progress. Additionally, teacher needs to expose children to different types of experiences, for example teacher can not teach children to speak but if the child is exposed to language children learn to speak (Kolb, 2015; Dewey, 1938). Therefore, teachers need to immerse children in a rich environment in order to learn. For example, interactions with the environment and/or others facilitate what is known as a serve and return interactions (Waters-Davies, 2022; L'Ecuyer, 2019). In accordance with Draper (2018), the concept of "serve and return" refers to responsive teaching in which the teacher engaged children in hands-on learning in order to realise the child's full potential.

Explanation of the case study

This case study aims to investigate the effects of introducing real-life objects into the classroom on the engagement and learning experience of Child A, a primary school student. It seeks to understand how hands-on materials can enhance the student's educational experience and promote active engagement.

Background: There were two adults in the classroom, a teacher and a teaching assistant, and the students were aged 7 and 8. The child was placed on the table next to the door.

Incident: The teacher made the decision to include a real-life attempt in the lesson plan during the critical incident. The teacher provided a bag filled with various types of boots and shoes.

The teacher placed a different kind of shoe on each table and briefly gave the directions to the students. The teacher went around to each table and explained the work. Some of the children were interested by the shoe, particularly child A, who became quite involved and motivated.

However, what truly engaged the child A and the entire class was when the teacher brought in an actual shoe.

The child A's engagement: As an observer I noticed that the child eyes lit up when the child saw the shoe, the real-life objective sparked the child's curiosity.

The real-world object impacted the classroom by providing a physical link between the classroom lessons and the real life. As an observer I noticed that the enthusiasm of the children was evident. Children began asking a lot of questions and talking about the potential task.

The incident not only made the lesson special, but it also fostered in the children a sense of wonder and interest about the task. Consequently, including real-life objects and hands-on experience into classes could dramatically improve learners' engagement and understanding (Kolab, 2015, Galindo, n.d).

This critical incident highlights the importance of experiential learning and the impact that real-world objects may have on engaging students and bringing abstract concepts to life (L'Ecuyer, 2019). It also emphasizes the need of cultivating curiosity and inquiry in the

classroom, which can lead to a more in-depth comprehension of the subject matter (L'Ecuyer, 2019; Kolb, 2015; Nuthall, 2007, Greham, 2016).

All philosophers, whether constructivists, behaviourists, or humanists, argue over their educational theories how children learn and develop (Broke, 2021). However, they all have one goal in mind: to discover in theory how children learn and think in order to their theories to be underpinned in educational practises (Aubrey and Riley, 2019; Gray, 105; Brock, 2021). The critical incident was evidence that the children learn differently, and child A's degree of learning engagement rose because the child entered a state of flow as viewing a shoe that is a part of daily life (Griffith and Burns, 2012; Stixrud and Johnson, 2018). Grehan (2016) and Hayde (n.d) support that learning happens when there is a tool, an occasion, or a circumstance that makes it relevant to children's lives. As therefore, all thinkers like Froebel, Montessori, Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner and Piaget undoubtedly agreed that interaction with the environment and participation in practical activities promote learning (Aubrey and Riley, 2019; Broke, 2021; Gray, 2015; Hayes, O'Toole, and Halpenny, 2022; Newman and Latifi, 2021).

What is more a different study cited by Howard and McInnes (2012), children interpret an activity including a stimulation, such as the boot that occurs in the critical incident, as an act of play. Holt (2017) asserts that play is one of the most crucial ways to encourage children to learn and grow. However, on one hand L'Ecuyer (2019) argues that learners should be free to explore their own interests and that education ought to be personalised to meet children's own requirements. Nutshall (2007) agreed with L'Ecuyer that learning shouldn't be viewed as a specific objective but rather as a process that helps each learner reach their full potential. Although on the other hand, according to Kolb (2015) bringing shoes into the classroom is implementing the experiential learning that combines practical engagement, reflection, concept development, and application. This approach can make the learning process more engaging and effective.

Discussion

It is crucial that the following sections follow BERA Guidelines in regard to how to treat the participants who have been watched as they play the role of the observer, or "researcher" in this context. In order to maintain the standard of educational research, the following parts will make sure that the data obtained is kept private and anonymous (BERA, 2018).

The process of critical reflection has highlighted the significance of analysing that allows teachers to learn more about how they teach suggested by Joshi (2018). It also encourages them to question their own teaching practises, allowing them to grow professionally (Brock, 2021).

However, I feel that my primary goal of analysing a critical incident is to learn about good teaching methods that a teacher is implementing in order to improve my practice (Tripp, 2012; Fletcher-Wood et al., 202). According to Stixrud and Johnson (2018), to motivate, to encourage children to learn is a powerful thing.

As shown in previous sections, Kolb's (McLeod, 2023; Kolb, 1981; Kolb, 1984) teaching strategy is similar to the Chinese three-point teaching system (Yang and Ricks, 2013) (key point – the hook, experimental point – main activity and reflecting point) in that all of these methods use practical and authentic teaching methods that increase a child's intrinsic motivation to learn.

Several studies investigated that the theories support the idea that learning through experience benefits children and learners in general because it fosters active participation, critical thinking, problem-solving, and a deeper comprehension of subjects (William and Black, 1998; Pritchard, 2009; Yeomans and Arnold, 2006; Overall, 2007; Gray, 2015). As an observer in the critical incident, I made a reflection that using experiential learning (Dewey, 1933; Kolb, 1981; Kolb, 2015) connects theoretical information with real-world applications, making learning more relevant and effective for children.

However, Tomas and Lewis (2016) embraced the theory of independent experience, in which children discover their own results, over the Vygotsky theory (Yeomans and Arnold, 2006;

Pound, 2006; Aubrey and Riley, 2019), in which children require more knowledgeable adults. As I observe in the critical incident I support the child-led approach which is for example the Dewey's theory that children learn by doing, and they require the support of adults (Dewey, 1922, Aubrey and Riley, 2019). Bruner agrees with Dewey that children require people to assist them in learning (Aubrey and Riley, 2019; Waller, Whitmarsh, and Clarke, 2011). Furthermore, Howard and McInnes (2012) reaffirmed their study's findings that children learn best when learning is combined with adult-led or child-led activities. Therefore, each of these strategies enables the practitioner to develop an action plan in every situation in order to identify the uniqueness of the children and to differentiate the child's need, whether the child needs adult assistance or to work more autonomously (Brock, 2021; Holt, 2011).

Furthermore, during the critical incident, the teacher supported the pedagogical principle in practice by enhancing the degree of engagement for learning in the classroom. According to Donaldson (2015), four educational objectives can be achieved only when schools focus on the holistic development of the child. Sam (2018) agrees with Donaldson that hands-on learning promotes children's overall development by connecting mind, body, and spirit, resulting in an academic child who is also a healthy, ethical, and creative child.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, critical incidents in primary education provide teachers with valuable opportunities to reflect, learn, and grow as educators (Nuthall, 2007, Broke, 2012;). Critical incidents help teachers become more responsive to children's needs and children's progression (William, 2016). The critical incidents refine teachers to change their strategies and create a more effective and engaging learning environment. However, children will not learn according to Greham (2016) unless the teachers make the learning meaningful to children's life. Therefore, Kolb's theory of experiential learning is based on constructivist theory, which states that actively engaging with problems and materials is the most effective approach to learn (Kolb, 2005; Kolb, 2015; Mayo, 2010; William, 2016, Fletcher-Wood et. al.,

2020). As John Dewey noted, "Education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process" (Dewey, as cited in Mayo, 2010, p. 36).

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APPENDIX A

Date and time, year group: Tuesday 17th of October in Reception at 1.20pm

Where and When: P.E.. Practise getting dressed / undressed; Listening, following the instructions: Bean game, traffic light, Donkey tails, Simon Says, Hokey Cokey.

What happened?

The children had just gotten back from the singing assembly. In preparation for physical education, children were told to sit on the carpet. The teacher gave the children the following instructions, telling them they had to go by themselves to get their PE equipment out of their backpacks and returned to the carpet to get dressed. Children all confidently carried out the directions after carefully listening and clearly remembering the procedure from the prior week. The teacher and TA waited patiently for each child to finish getting dressed, thus getting ready took some time. Even though some of the children were having difficulties, they persisted in making a lot of effort.

As an observer and new for the school I was really impressed how children got ready for the PE session.

When we all went to the hall for PE, the teacher had already prepared the songs and the equipment. The movement's space sparked the children's enthusiasm. The teacher explained patiently that everyone needed to pay close attention if the children wanted to have a fun and safe session. The teacher utilised a gentle voice and management behaviour strategies.

The children started playing different games such as Bean game, traffic light, Donkey tails, Simon Says, Hokey Cokey. However, when the teacher decided to use extra resources for some of the games, the hall became chaos. For example, the children had to put a small fabric square to act as a tail. Each child tucked a 'tail' into the back of their shorts. The children run around the play space trying to capture the tails of the other players whilst also keeping their own tail safe.

Child B and Child C lost control of their emotions and screamed and acted wildly while the game was being played. As an observer, I could tell that the teacher had to change up the activity and think about what happened in the hallway.

Ares of possible exploration:

- ✓ Even while there may not be particular studies looking into how young children behave when bringing extra equipment to physical education classes, the research in the previously mentioned fields can offer helpful insights into the dynamics at work.
- ✓ To ensure that children have safe and beneficial learning experiences during physical education classes, it is crucial for educators and carers to strike a balance between letting children explore and offering structure and direction.

Notes:

Children under the age of five are especially susceptible to being overstimulated or distracted by extra objects or stimuli introduced during a physical education (PE) lesson. This is due to the fact that their attention spans are shorter and that if there are too many distractions present, they may find it difficult to concentrate on an organised activity.