

University of Wales Trinity St David

ECAD6007: Core Studies 1 - The Learner: who am I teaching?

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

Word Count: 4,387.

Introduction

This critical evaluation will focus on the case study of an individual learner, based on an observed critical incident that occurred within a classroom. It aims to identify appropriate next teaching and learning steps, informed by an in-depth analysis of the observed critical incident that draws on relevant empirical and theoretical literature. In doing so, it attempts to produce a “live picture” of how the researcher’s understanding of this incident has developed, moving beyond a descriptive account to a more thorough analysis that critically interrogates the meaning of these events. While there is no single definition of a critical incident in the context of education (Joshi, 2018), the following has been adopted for the purpose of this investigation. Richards and Farrell (2010: 13) define a critical incident as “an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during a lesson and that serves to trigger insights about some aspect of teaching and learning.” In this way, the classification of a critical incident is based on the significance attributed to these events by the teacher (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011; Tripp, 2012). Crucially, subjecting critical incidents to review and analysis offers a valuable tool for the development of reflective practice in teaching (Bruster and Peterson, 2013; Joshi, 2018). Griffin’s (2003) research highlights how the capacity to think reflectively about critical incidents can increase orientation towards growth and inquiry. This is a significant outcome of engaging in reflective practice as it prompts practitioners to examine established routines and procedures and identify the underlying assumptions governing their practice (Bruster and Peterson, 2013; Griffin, 2003). Reviewing critical incidents through the lens of empirical and theoretical literature facilitates a deeper understanding of these events, which can inform next teaching and learning steps (Joshi, 2018; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). This suggests that the evaluation of critical incidents is essential to the development of pedagogical practice, benefitting teaching and learning experiences (Richards and Farrell, 2010; Tripp, 2012).

School and class context

The observations conducted for this investigation were undertaken in a large, 11-18 comprehensive school in South Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2020a). For the purpose of this investigation, the school will be referred to as “School X” in line with

the tenets of ethical research practice identified by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018). School X has an extensive catchment area that encompasses a wide range of socio-economic groups (Welsh Assembly Government, 2020a). Approximately 38% of its pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales, with 24% of its pupils entitled to free school meals (ibid). This is significantly higher than the Welsh national average at 16% (The Children's Society, 2018). School X has a relatively high attendance percentage at 93.6% and high performance outcomes (Welsh Assembly Government, 2020a). Observations were undertaken in Year 8 classes. On entry to Year 7, pupils are placed in mixed ability classes. However, School X uses a "set system" for English and Mathematics, whereby pupils are grouped based on their individual ability and relative academic performance (see Appendices 1 - 4 for contextual information related to the observed critical incidents).

Methodology

This investigation focuses on the in-depth analysis of a critical incident which occurred during one of four non-participant classroom observations. Non-participant observation denotes instances where the researcher does not involve themselves in the activities of a group (Kumar, 2014). In doing so, the researcher remains a passive observer, recording activities as they unfold (ibid). Non-participant classroom observations were undertaken as interactions between the researcher and pupils may influence pupil behaviour, producing a classroom environment that is not representative of day-to-day teaching and learning experiences (Estyn, 2014; Palaiologou et al., 2016). However, it is important to recognise that the researcher's presence will inevitably be noticed by the individuals being observed (Kumar, 2014). This awareness may influence the behaviour of the group; a phenomenon described as the "Hawthorne effect" (Cohen et al., 2011; Kumar, 2014). To mitigate the influence of the researcher's presence on pupil behaviour, observations were undertaken at the back of the classroom out of pupils' visual field.

Procedurally, observations were recorded using structured observation schedules adapted from Fletcher-Wood's (2016) question framework (see Appendices 1 - 4). Crucially, this approach facilitated the collection of information in a

selective, systematic way (Frankel and Hobart, 2004). However, as Kumar (2014) notes, this qualitative approach to observation recording has both advantages and disadvantages. This method was advantageous, as it allowed the researcher to produce a detailed written record of the contexts shaping the observed teaching and learning experiences (Arthur, 2012). Conversely, quantitative approaches to observation recording (such as snapshots, or time and event sampling) can provide a quick, objective overview of classroom dynamics (Cohen et al., 2011). However, such approaches fail to capture significant details and, in doing so, limit opportunities to “flesh out” written comments for later analysis (Hartas, 2010; Palaologou et al., 2016). Disadvantages of qualitative approaches to observation recording include the difficulties that may arise in recording information if situations are unfolding rapidly in the dynamic classroom setting (Arthur, 2012). Moreover, the process of note-taking means that the researcher’s attention is diverted; therefore, they may fail to notice certain interactions and developments (Hartas, 2010; Kumar, 2014). However, the opposite problem may occur when the researcher watches attentively at the expense of detailed recording (ibid). Recognising the contingencies of observation recording, one way to have avoided this would have been to take audio-visual recordings of the lessons, which could be viewed and revisited multiple times to overcome the partialness of the researcher’s view (Cohen et al., 2011). However, the use of audio-visual recordings was deemed inappropriate due to time constraints, which did not allow for consent to be sought by School X, individual pupils and their guardians (BERA, 2018). Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2011) suggest that qualitative approaches to observation recording are inevitably subjective and prone to bias. Consequently the accounts that emerge risk being partial and selective, reflecting the researcher’s perspective and, in doing so, influence the conclusions drawn (Arthur, 2012). While this is considered a problematic aspect of qualitative approaches to data collection, Frankel and Hobart (2004) observe that research demands a level of reflexivity; by acknowledging and making explicit their position, the researcher can limit the influence of bias (Cohen et al., 2011; Palaologou et al., 2016). Overall, the value of the comprehensive and detailed information offered by this qualitative approach meant that it was considered preferable to quantitative approaches in this investigation.

An observed critical incident (see Appendix 5) has been selected for analysis. Critical incidents constitute a form of case study methodology (Yin, 2009). Creswell (2013) states that case study research denotes approaches whereby the researcher explores a single event (the critical incident) within a bounded system (the lesson within which it took place). Case studies offer important insights into specific instances, providing a “snap-shot” that might typify features of learning and teaching experiences in particular contexts (Yin, 2009). However, this means it is often inappropriate to generalise the results from case studies (Cohen et al., 2011). Nevertheless, case studies might assist with the interpretation and understanding of similar situations (Richards and Farrell, 2010).

Critical incident linked to Donaldson’s Four Purposes

The selected critical incident occurred during a mixed-ability, Year 7 Geography lesson (see Appendix 5 for specific contextual information). A routine has been established where pupils engage in a starter activity to ensure a focused and productive start to the lesson. Teacher A asked pupils to spend the first ten minutes of the lesson revising for a “low-stakes” quiz; these are a regular feature of everyday classroom practice. They are intended to give pupils opportunities to regularly practice retrieving knowledge and identify any potential learning gaps. Approximately two minutes into this revision period, Pupil X raised their hand. School X’s main Covid mitigation strategy has divided the school into six “learning zones” which are occupied by single year groups. This means that teaching staff must travel to different classrooms, while pupils are based in one classroom for the duration of the school day. Consequently, Teacher A was at the front of the classroom setting up the computer and projector for the lesson and failed to notice Pupil X had their hand up until the beginning of the “low-stakes” quiz approximately eight minutes later. During this period, Pupil X opened their exercise book but did not read through their notes. Teacher A informed the class that discussion was allowed. While most pupils seemed to be making progress with the task, Pupil X did not engage with their peers or ask them for support.

This feature of the critical incident can be linked to one of the Donaldson Review's Four Purposes of the curriculum - that each child and young person in Wales will become "enterprising, creative contributors" (Donaldson, 2015: 29). The Review suggests that the curriculum should help pupils "lead and play different roles in teams effectively and responsibly [and] give off their energy and skills so that other people will benefit" (ibid). In this example, if Pupil X's peers had noticed that they could have provided assistance, it is possible that Pupil X may not have spent this period making no progress with the task. However, had Pupil X recognised that their peers might have been able to answer the question, it is likely it would have been answered more quickly.

Teacher A provided an overview of the work pupils were expected to complete at the beginning of the lesson. This included writing the topics that would be assessed, the types of questions that could be asked and the success criteria for the attainment of a good mark on the board. Pupil X did not appear to refer to this guidance. Instead of raising their hand and waiting for the teacher to notice, had Pupil X considered how they could have used the available information to address their query, they may not have spent this period making no progress with the task. This feature of the critical incident is also linked to the aforementioned purpose of the curriculum, which suggests that each children and young person in Wales should "think creatively to reframe and solve problems [and] identify and grasp opportunities" (Donaldson, 2015: 29). Indeed, Pupil X only began revising for their "low-stakes" quiz once Teacher A realised they had their hand raised and provided assistance.

Literature review

Drawing on work from educational and psychological theory, this literature review adopts an interdisciplinary approach. It will outline existing empirical and theoretical literature, contextualising the identified critical incident in wider academic thought to reflect upon its significance. The first area identified for potential research is "Assessment for Learning" (AfL). AfL involves using a range of strategies in everyday classroom practice to identify what stage pupils are at with their learning, in order to gauge whether teaching activities need to be modified to advance pupils' learning

(Bowen and Ellis, 2009; Klenowski, 2009). This relates to the selected critical incident as Pupil X was unable to recognise how to continue with their work until Teacher A intervened. The second area identified relates to a key concept of social constructivist educational theory: the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The work of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky has been instrumental in developing this concept (Aubrey and Riley, 2018). Vygotsky became interested in how children could find solutions to problems beyond their understanding if they were provided with “light assistance” (Powell and Cody, 2009). He described the gap between what an individual can do without any help and what they can do with support from a “more knowledgeable other” (MKO) as the ZPD (Aubrey and Riley 2018; Roberts, 2013). For Vygotsky, if learners are given tasks beyond their level of competence but are able to secure the support of others (an adult, or a more competent peer), it is likely that they will manage the task more effectively (Bigge and Shermis, 2004). This also relates to the selected critical incident, as Pupil X appeared unable to work independently and required assistance from a MKO (in this case, the teacher). In this way, the concept of the ZPD is an important aspect of AfL strategies which highlight the significance of social interactions for learning (Bowen and Ellis, 2009). This approach represents a contrast to established principles of constructivist educational theory, as proposed by Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget (Powell and Cody, 2009). For Piaget, individuals cannot be supplied with information which they instantly comprehend; instead, they actively construct knowledge by making meaning of their experiences with the environment (Wallace, 2009). As Powell and Cody (2009) note, the significance of a social, interactive environment for learning is currently embedded in contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.

Peer assessment is one example of an AfL strategy that draws on social interactions to help pupils move through the ZPD (Brown, 2019; Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). It means involving pupils in the assessment process, as they review the work of their peers and make judgements about whether they have met a set of success criteria (Bowen and Ellis, 2009; Topping, 2009). While fellow pupils may not be considered a MKO, by providing feedback they can support their peers (Flórez and Sammons, 2013). Indeed, assessing the work of others has benefits for both the pupil receiving

and giving the feedback, forcing individuals to engage with success criteria in the context of someone else's work (Black et al., 2007; Wiliam, 2011). This provides opportunities for pupils to identify what constitutes "good work" and why, developing pupils' understanding of the standards required for the completion of a task and, in doing so, increases their ability to achieve (Topping, 2017; Wiliam, 2014). Topping (2009) notes that the most significant quality of peer assessment is that feedback can be supplied more quickly than by the teacher. This means that the teacher can observe and reflect on pupil misunderstandings, allowing them to plan interventions in future lessons that link teaching more effectively to learning (Black et al., 2007; Wiliam, 2016). Crucially, peer comments will naturally be phrased in language pupils would ordinarily use; therefore, this feedback may be more accessible and understandable (Tillema et al., 2011). Furthermore, if pupils do not understand an explanation, they are more likely to question feedback from their peers than a teacher (Topping, 2009). Peer assessment invariably requires explanation and justification, facilitating discussion and the exchange of ideas which actively engages pupils in their own learning (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010; Wiliam, 2014).

Conversely, some researchers have highlighted the limitations of peer assessment (DeLuca et al., 2012; Flórez and Sammons, 2013). While peer assessment aims to provide pupils with formative feedback to help them identify their current position and how to improve, this is a difficult task (Black et al., 2007; Topping, 2009). Crucially, pupils need to be familiar with and understand both the subject content and success criteria if they are to assess accurately, effectively, and helpfully (Flórez and Sammons, 2013). Tillema et al. (2011) argue that limited pupil understanding of these aspects renders peer assessment, and ultimately using a peer as a MKO, unsuitable with potentially damaging consequences for learning. However, as Brown (2019) observes, this problem can be alleviated if teachers provide pupils with a clear list of success criteria they can check their peers work against. Without these criteria, pupils will have no basis to support their judgements about their peers work or their own (Topping, 2009). Studies suggest that a useful starting point is for teachers to model the process of peer assessment and feedback (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). By showing pupils a range of concrete examples of work i.e. two examples - one of which would

be of higher quality than the other, pupils are supplied with a frame of reference (Flórez and Sammons, 2013). This could include examples of pupils' work or the same piece of work from a previous cohort (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). In this way, pupils may gradually come to internalise and develop a shared understanding of what is required to meet the success criteria (Aubrey and Riley, 2018; Wiliam, 2016). However, this practice may have detrimental impacts. For example, pupils may feel uncomfortable if their work is publicly critiqued; this may strain relationships between learners and reduce pupil motivation and engagement (Black et al., 2007; Topping, 2009). While examples could be anonymised by the teacher, this may be inadequate as pupils could still recognise their peers work (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010). One way to avoid this would be for the teacher to create their own examples of work (ibid). However, this strategy is problematic as it can produce examples which may not mirror the misconceptions held by the class, limiting its utility (Black et al., 2007; Roberts, 2013). Crucially, these issues can be alleviated by creating a supportive classroom environment in which pupils are aware of the value of errors, which can be shared in order to advance learning (Black et al., 2007; Brown, 2019).

While the strengths and limitations of peer assessment have been explored, it is vital to examine the research evidence that discusses the relative merit of this AfL strategy in promoting student learning (DeLuca et al., 2012; Wiliam et al., 2004). For example, in one of the most extensive investigations into AfL strategies, Black et al. (2007) reviewed a range of published research from 1988 - 1997, including over 160 research journals and books (yielding 681 articles and chapters). While it is difficult to directly measure the impact of AfL strategies on achievement, the authors describe how one study examined the learning outcomes from the use of peer assessment. White and Frederiksen's (1998) study involved twelve middle-school classes of thirty students; each class studied the same science curriculum. Half of the classes were used as a control group, in which classroom time was spent discussing the module in general terms, while the other half discussed the peer assessment process. All students took the same test at the outset of the module, which showed little difference in scores. However, there was a clear difference after the completion of the module, with students who had focused on the use of peer assessment performing significantly better

than their counterparts in the control group. White and Frederiksen's (1998) findings indicate that peer assessment had a significant impact on student learning. Some caution does need to be exercised in relation to the weight of this evidence. For instance, it is important to recognise that improved test scores may not reflect higher levels of understanding of the module content, but improved insights into how to perform well in the test (Black et al., 2007).

Despite the growing scholarship on AfL, limited research has examined pupils' perspectives of the value of the AfL strategies used within their learning (Klenowski, 2009). In one of the most rigorous studies exploring this, DeLuca et al. (2018) asked 1079 pupils to complete a questionnaire in which they had to rank the utility of various AfL strategies. The authors describe how pupils ranked teacher feedback and success criteria as the most valued approach, while peer feedback was considered least effective in supporting their learning (DeLuca et al., 2018). These findings draw attention to how many pupils consider the teacher a more valuable MKO than their peers. However, a closer examination of the language used to describe the AfL strategies in the questionnaire reveals that peer assessment is referred to as "giving feedback to other students" (DeLuca et al., 2018: 86). Notably, this does not capture peer assessment in its entirety (as it involves both giving and receiving feedback); therefore, it is conceivable that pupils might have altered the ranking of these strategies if it had been phrased differently.

It is apparent that a range of studies point to the potential of peer assessment to contribute to the scaffolding and progress of student learning (Bennett, 2011). However, peer assessment is a flexible practice with considerable variety in its activities and modes of delivery (Black et al., 2007; Wiliam, 2011). Given these complexities, it is unsurprising that researchers note that the effectiveness of peer assessment is dependent upon multiple interrelated factors, such as the nature of individual learners and the school context in which it operates (Bennett, 2011). It is essential that teachers are aware of this before integrating peer assessment into their teaching practice in order to help pupils move through the ZPD (Wiliam, 2011).

Reflection, Evaluation and Identification of Next Steps

Critical reflection is an important activity that encourages practitioners to review specific events in their professional practice (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011). By subjecting critical incidents to analysis and evaluation, practitioners can consider these events more deeply (Griffin, 2003; Tripp, 2012). As Bruster and Peterson (2013) note, unreflective practitioners are limited in their capacity to make change. Indeed, the ability to reflect on significant events is considered a crucial aspect of professional development in teaching, as it promotes improvements in professional judgement (Bolton, 2010; Joshi, 2018). In doing so, it can aid understanding of how to adapt to, or resolve similar events in future practice (Tripp, 2012). Reflection models can assist with structuring the critical reflection process, offering a methodical approach that helps parcel out significant aspects of identified critical incidents (Bruster and Peterson, 2013). In this investigation, Brookfield's (1998) four lenses were used as a framework to structure the researcher's reflections on the observed critical incidents (see Appendices 5 - 8).

The selected critical incident revealed that Pupil X felt unable to undertake the task and were uncertain about how to make progress. As noted in the critical incident identification record (see Appendix 5), I was frustrated by the incident. I could not understand why Pupil X was so reluctant to ask their peers for support, which meant that they failed to make any progress at the beginning of the lesson. It left me feeling uncomfortable, but why did it have such an effect? As I considered the situation more deeply, I realised that I was concerned that a similar event might occur in my own classroom. I now notice that these thoughts reflected my anxieties about having limited experience and a huge amount to learn about pupils' learning and development. I started to think of it as a "dose of reality" and a sign that I needed to develop my professional knowledge. I read a range of educational and psychological literature to improve my understanding of the concepts and theories I would need to draw on to inform my personal practice. I was struck by the literature related to the selected critical incident and grew interested in how this research could offer practical suggestions for how to support learners and in turn, how these might work in practice.

Brookfield's (1998) four lenses encourage the researcher to reflect upon the aspects of the incident through colleagues experiences. In this example, Teacher A did offer a clear explanation of the task, which allowed Pupil X to progress with their learning. As Joshi (2018) observes, it is beneficial to note the encouraging aspects of any critical incident, as they may include general principles that could be used by practitioners again. However, it is integral that practitioners reflect on the aspects that they might wish to change in their future practice when identifying possible solutions (Tripp, 2012). In this example, the time Pupil X spent making no progress with their work might be considered an area for improvement. The review of literature related to the selected critical incident suggests that to establish a learner's current position and help them move through the ZPD, social interactions with a MKO (a teacher, or a more competent peer) are integral. In this example, Teacher A adopted this role and offered the required support to Pupil X. However, if one of Pupil X's peers who understood the task had supported them, it is likely that Pupil X would have made progress and advanced their learning more quickly. As aforementioned, AfL strategies such as peer assessment offers a potential next teaching and learning step to avoid scenarios in which pupils need to wait for teacher feedback to make progress (Wiliam, 2014). Pupil X's decision not to ask their peers for support indicates that they may have felt self-conscious about sharing their concerns or wanted to avoid disturbing them (Black et al., 2007). However, it is also feasible that Pupil X considered Teacher A's feedback more valuable (DeLuca et al., 2018). This highlights another possible next teaching and learning step - the development of a supportive classroom environment in which errors are recognised as valuable learning opportunities. Indeed, if teachers ask pupils to assess their peers work at various points throughout a lesson, it is conceivable that any feelings of embarrassment surrounding asking peers for support will be minimised. Furthermore, if success criteria are not only displayed but explained to pupils, the feedback provided will inevitably be more valuable and help pupils improve their learning (Tilemma et al., 2011).

This approach to critical reflection, using an observed critical incident as a tool for the development of reflective practice, has inevitably informed my personal and professional development. Indeed, this process has demonstrated that by making

thoughts about an event explicit, structured reflection can guide an examination of existing literature. This can improve practitioners' understanding of the theories underpinning their personal practice, which provides a basis for re-evaluation and the identification of possible solutions to inform future planning (Bolton, 2010).

Conclusion

The approach adopted in this investigation - observation, identification of critical incidents and reflection provided a useful framework for further research. An examination of the wider empirical and theoretical pedagogical literature highlighted both the significance of social interactions to help pupils move through the ZPD and strategies that could be applied in the classroom environment. Crucially, unpacking the pedagogical literature surrounding the selected critical incident provided valuable insights into the intricacies of this event and possible next teaching and learning steps. It is vital that teaching practice is informed by wider pedagogical debates, as being a reflective practitioner is integral to the professional development of educators in Wales (Education Workforce Council, 2020). The centrality of reflection for professional learning is emphasised in the 'Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership' paper with regard to refining pedagogy and innovation (Welsh Assembly Government, 2020b). In the absence of critical reflection, incidents considered commonplace in the classroom environment would be allowed to continue. Therefore, reflection and a subsequent improved understanding of pedagogy facilitates opportunities for professional development and the refinement of personal practice.

Appendices

Appendix 1

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES	
(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))	
Date and time, year group:	28.09.20 8:40am - 9:40am Yr 8 Geography.
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).	
Autumn Half Term - Rivers - Processes of Erosion	
Area of Learning and Experience: Humanities.	
Start of the unit. 25 students. Mixed-ability.	
Classroom culture	
(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)	
Classroom chat was allowed amongst pupils who appeared focused and making good progress with the task outlined by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson.	
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?)	
The 'low stakes' quiz topics and success criteria were written on the board by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson. These were briefly outlined by the teacher, and referred to throughout the lesson.	
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?)	
Most students appeared to make consistent progress with their revision for the low-stakes quiz - looking their peers on potential topics and providing each other with feedback. Teacher led explanations are provided throughout the lesson.	
Access and challenge	
(What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)	
Most students appear to be fully occupied with the lesson.	

the task set. Some students are challenging their peers to provide more detailed answers, pointing to the success criteria on the board for guidance.

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)?

The teacher asks the class at the start of the lesson to complete a low stakes quiz to revisit content covered in the previous lesson.

At the end of the lesson, students must produce their own diagram and annotations describing

Specifics / Critical Incidents the formation of a waterfall.
(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

Approximately two minutes into the allocated revision period for the low stakes quiz, one pupil (who had opened their exercise book) raised their hand to gain the teacher's attention. The teacher failed to notice the

pupil as they were setting up the computer and projector for the lesson. The pupil had their hand raised until the beginning of the quiz when the teacher noticed them.

Appendix 2

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES	
(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))	
Date and time, year group:	28.09.20 13:50pm - 14:50pm Yr8 Maths
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).	
Autumn Half Term - Using the column method for multiplication. Lower-ability	
Area of Learning and Experience:	Beginning of the unit 18 students
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)	
Pupils had already entered the classroom and were enthusiastic about the lesson - the teacher had excellent rapport with the students (clear evidence that positive relationships had been forged).	
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?)	
Lesson objectives were clearly explained visually (on a PowerPoint presentation) and orally by the teacher - 'to be able to multiply whole numbers'. The objectives were directly linked to the activities set i.e. using multiplication tables to multiply double digits by single digits.	
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?)	
All students appeared to understand what they were doing - a Power Point of instructions for each task was available for students to refer to during the lesson.	
Access and challenge (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)	
Extension tasks were given to pupils who had	

completed the work throughout the lesson (i.e. additional questions). Answers were then discussed 1-1 with the teacher who walked around the classroom.

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)?

During the lesson, a low-stakes quiz was used at the beginning of the lesson - students attempted questions individually and then went through the answers as a class and noted corrections in their book. The teacher used cold-calling in the lesson questioning students. Another quiz was used at the end of the lesson to re-cap.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

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

One pupil completed the multiplication questions faster than their peers. The teacher noticed they were not doing anything and gave the pupil another set of questions.

Appendix 3

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES	
(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))	
Date and time, year group:	28.09.20 9:40am-10:40am English Yr 8 Geography
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).	
Autumn Half Term - Describing the annex - Anne Frank	
Area of Learning and Experience:	Lower-ability
Mid-way through the unit. 16 students	
Classroom culture	
(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)	
Pupils were allowed to talk among themselves when working on the sequence of activities supplied by the teacher. However, lots of pupils appeared distracted from their work.	
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?)	
The lesson objectives were shared visually and orally at the beginning of the lesson - each of the activities were linked to one of the lesson objectives (this was highlighted on each slide of the PowerPoint Presentation)	
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?)	
The teacher would briefly explain each activity before giving pupils strict time limits in which to complete the tasks (e.g. 10 minutes). While some pupils listened to these explanations, few undertook the tasks independently.	
Access and challenge	
(What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)	
Most students appeared confused by the tasks	

the work and consequently failed to complete some of the activities set. This meant that most of the teacher's time and attention was focused on this group. This left other students who had completed the work with nothing to do for some sketches of the lesson.

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?)

The teacher used a low-stakes quiz at the beginning of the lesson, allowing students to retrieve knowledge developed over the previous lessons. Students used a 'RAG' rating system at the end of the lesson to reflect on their progress.

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

* One pupil repeatedly raised their hand throughout the lesson saying 'miss, I don't get it'. The teacher responded by saying 'we need to make sure we're listening don't we'. The pupil said 'well miss you didn't answer my question'. The teacher responded by saying 'I think we need to listen better throughout the lesson, don't you?' After this, the pupil became increasingly chatty and failed to complete any of the other activities.

Appendix 4

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES	
(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))	
Date and time, year group:	28.09.20 11:10 am - 12:10 pm Yr 8 Welsh
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).	
Autumn Half Term - Describing the countries	
Area of Learning and Experience	
End of the unit	23 students Mixed-ability
Classroom culture	
(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)	
Class appeared unsettled at the start. Classroom chat was allowed amongst pupils - relatively high noise levels - however, pupils appeared focused on the sequence of tasks outlined at the start of the lesson. Success criteria were projected on the board.	
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?)	
> The tasks the teacher expected pupils to complete were projected on the whiteboard - success criteria for how to construct an effective sentence were included.	
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?)	
Most students appeared clear - i.e. the sequence of tasks outlined by the teacher. Exemplar sentences (weak - good) were projected on the board by the teacher.	
Access and challenge	
(What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)	
A small group of students appeared confused by	

set by the teacher and as a result did not complete the activities or required the constant attention and support of the teacher.

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)?

The teacher used a range of closed-open questions throughout the lesson to gauge student understanding. Questions often began with a narrow focus, however the teacher did pose more questions encouraging students to develop and elaborate on their answers.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

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

* One student sought constant reassurance from the teacher, repeatedly raising their hand to question the teacher and read out examples of their own work to reaffirm they were 'on the right lines'.

* One student had been very disruptive throughout the lesson, affecting the progress made by their peers. The teacher said that she would keep the class in for every minute of the lesson she had to reprimand him. The pupil shouted 'just keep me in, not the rest. I don't care, I don't want to go out to lunch anyway'.

Appendix 5

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD	
Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	28.09.20 8:40-9:40 am Yr 8 Geography (mixed-ability) Pupil X and Teacher A.
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.	Approximately two minutes into the allocated revision period for the low-stakes quiz, one pupil sat with their exercise book of notes in front of them and their hand raised. The teacher did not notice that pupil X was not making any progress with the task until the beginning of the quiz. During this period, pupil X did not engage with their peers or ask for their guidance. This critical incident could lead to further studies of AfL strategies, such as peer assessment and the use of scaffolding as a pedagogic device.

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Appendix 6

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD	
Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	28.09.20 13:50-14:50. Yr 8 Maths (lower-ability). Pupil X and Teacher A.
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.	Pupil X completed a set of multiplication questions provided by Teacher A. However, pupil X completed the questions much faster than their peers. Pupil X then sat not doing any work and did not ask Teacher A for additional work. Teacher A noticed this and gave Pupil X more questions to complete. Pupil X replied 'but that's not fair, why do I have to do more than everyone else?' Teacher A explained that in maths it is important to apply understanding to other questions to practice and improve. Areas for further study: differentiation.

Appendix 7

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD	
Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	28.09.20 9:40 am - 10:40 am Yr 8 English (lower-ability). Pupil Y and Teacher B.
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.	Pupil Y had been consistently disruptive throughout the lesson, laughing and joking with their peers and interrupting the teacher. Mid-way through the lesson, Teacher B said she would keep the class in for an extra minute each time she reprimanded him. Pupil Y had previously shouted at Teacher B, saying 'I just don't get it, you're giving me loads of fancy language'. After hearing that his class mates would be kept in, he shouted 'just keep me in, not the rest. I don't care, I don't want to go out to lunch any way'. This could lead to further study of the utility of scaffolding as a pedagogic practice, behaviour management and deeper analysis of well-being.

Appendix 8

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	28.09.20 11:10am-12:10pm. Yr 8 Welsh (mixed-ability). Pupil Z and Teacher C.
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.	Pupil Z repeatedly raised their hand throughout the sequence of activities in the lesson stating that they 'didn't get' the activity. The teacher suggested that this issue could be rectified if pupil Z ensured they were listening - however, they did not provide any further explanation. This happened throughout the lesson. Approximately 20 minutes before the end of the lesson, pupil Z became distracted, chatting with their peers and failed to complete any of the other activities set by the teacher. This could lead to further research on the utility of scaffolding as a pedagogic technique and AfL strategies.

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