

## OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

### Record 1

Date and time, year group:

**Nursery AM**

**26.09.22**

**09.00-11.30**

**Where and When:** Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context

I was placed in the Nursery class at School 'x' for observation. The critical incident took place at around 09:20 after the register, morning routines and daily check-in had taken place. The teacher had finished introducing the morning's lesson to the children so they were aware of what activities they were about to do, where they needed to be in the classroom, and which teacher/LSA they would be working with. There were three activities and a 'Baseline' assessment taking place throughout the course of the morning, which would work in a rotation to ensure that by the end of the week, each group will have completed all of the activities.

**What happened:** a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work)

At around 09:20, child 'A', arrived late at the Nursery, who is usually always on time to school. Upon arrival, child 'A' took off their bag and coat and was called immediately to start a cutting activity along with the rest of the group. The child was disengaged and wasn't given the time to process what he needed to do due to missing the lesson introduction and explanation from the teacher of the different activities taking place throughout the session. This caused the child to get upset and refuse to participate in the cutting activity. The teacher noticed this was out of character for the child and approached the child to see what had happened. It became clear that the child was tired, had not eaten breakfast, and was rushed to school due to running late. As a result of this, routines both at home and in school were disrupted, causing the child feelings of uncertainty and unsettlement. Such feelings were the factors contributing to the child's challenging and negative behaviour.

The teacher made the decision to give the child time to settle into the class before returning to the cutting activity to do their work. The child went to play for around five-ten minutes and then was called to return to the activity. The child had a complete change in behaviour and attitude as a result of the time the teacher provided for the child to settle into the class. The child returned to the activity with a positive, enthusiastic attitude and approach, leading to achieving the learning objectives/outcomes.

**Areas of possible exploration:** what you think could be” under the hood” in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider?

An area of exploration for this incident would be posing questions as to why this situation might have occurred and how the class teacher and support staff could alter the way they dealt with the situation in a more positive way. For example, taking a more holistic view of the child and considering how the experiences that morning will have made them feel. For example, still doing a morning check-in, going through the timetable and activities for the day ahead, and allowing the child time to settle in before expecting them to undertake any tasks. The teacher could also alter their pedagogical approach to meet the pupils’ specific needs to support emotional development and positive relationships.

#### Urie Bronfenbrenner – Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory

I am aware that Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory explains the different levels of external or environmental influence on a child’s development. This incident links directly to this theory and specifically the ‘microsystem’ of it, where the child’s parents/caregivers, immediate family, and school are considered. When the child wakes up at the beginning of the day, the people they see or the environment around them will have an immediate influence on them from there on. Bronfenbrenner says that when there is a situation impacting any factor within the Ecological system, the impact will ripple through the rest of the system. For example, when the child’s day began at home, negatively affecting the ‘microsystem’ around them, the effect rippled through the rest of the system and caused a disruption to their learning at school and resulted in challenging and negative behaviour.

#### The Four Purposes

During the critical incident, the teacher supported and emphasised one of the four purposes, to be healthy, confident, individuals by putting the child’s specific and individual needs first in a difficult situation and encouraging them to overcome their

#### Donaldson – Donaldson’s 12 Pedagogical Principles

What is it? A further area for exploration would be Donaldson’s 12 Pedagogical Principles and what you should do with them to implement and support effective teaching practice. The critical incident and the way in which the teacher dealt with it supported Donaldson’s principle to ‘support social and emotional development & positive relationships. The teacher encouraged the child to talk about and regulate their emotions to gain insight and understanding as to why the child felt that way and to resolve the situation, ensuring it wouldn’t negatively impact the rest of the day. Ensuring the child is able to regulate their emotions, it allows them to make good choices and decisions that benefit their learning. This is not only effective teaching but it also emphasises one of the four purposes, to create

healthy, confident individuals. The teacher provided the child with the opportunity to discuss how they were feeling, why they were feeling that way, and what they could do together to move forward and alter the child's attitudes and behaviour. This links to the incident as the teacher used their experience and approach to identify the child's needs, meet the need with the appropriate pedagogical approach, and then finally, assess the approach through the pupil's progress.

#### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

**Notes:** any details you can note (is it a busy environment, is it after lunch, are there lots of distractions, are directions made explicit - the more you can refer to the better here)

The incident took place around thirty minutes into the school day, after the Nursery's morning routines had taken place.' Child 'A' who arrived late, entered a busy environment as the rest of the children were transitioning from the carpet to their group activities. The child was already unsettled prior to entering the classroom, therefore the busy environment made this situation worse for the child.

## **Record 2**

Date and time, year group:

**Nursery AM**

**27.09.22**

**09.00-11.30**

**Where and When:** Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context

I was placed in the Nursery for observation. The critical incident took at 08.50, as the AM class was entering school for the morning session. Myself, the class teacher and an LSA were at the gate, greeting the children enthusiastically as they were walking up to their class. The parents/caregivers must leave their child at the gate, and the children then walk a short distance independently to the classroom. The rest of the LSA's wait in the classroom to welcome them and assist in taking their coats and bags off. The LSA's in the class were guiding the children to sit on the carpet until all of the class pupils have arrived and the class teacher has returned from the Nursery gate to the classroom.

**What happened:** a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work)

The teacher, an LSA, and I were greeting the children at the gate. Many were walking up to the class excitedly and with a positive attitude. However, child 'X' was at the gate, crying and clinging to their parents, refusing to leave them and becoming distressed. The class teacher approached the child and started to work with the parents to encourage the child to school. Due to the child's upset and negative behaviour, the parents were becoming anxious and agitated. To prevent the child's behaviour from negatively impacting the other students entering the class, and to avoid any further upset and anxiety for child 'X', the teacher guided the parents and child 'X' to a less-crowded area just away from the school gates to provide a calming and less overwhelming environment.

The teacher comforted the parent and their child and reassured them that despite the difficulty to get child 'X' into school, the child always settles in fine, and is always happy, engaged and involved. The teacher spoke to the child empathetically and with a neutral tone. The child eventually started to calm down, therefore the teacher explained calmly and clearly, the fun activities they had planned for the day ahead. The teacher also made a point of praising the other children who were modelling good behaviour by walking into the class with self-control, confidence and a positive attitude. When the child was calm and communicating effectively, the teacher asked the child if they were ready to walk into school with the rest of their class, to which child 'X' responded 'yes'. Child 'X' then walked alongside another pupil into the classroom with no distractions or negative behaviour.

**Areas of possible exploration:** what you think could be” under the hood” in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider?

The teacher had previous experience with this incident occurring. In order to prepare for this situation in the future or avoid it from happening, the teacher could begin with a meeting with the parents and child ‘X’ to gain an understanding as to why the child sometimes gets upset coming into school. The teacher and parents could then discuss and implement effective strategies that could help child ‘X’ transition during the morning. Starting school for the Nursery children is also a huge milestone and will be the first time some children are leaving their parents/primary caregivers.

There are several areas of research to explore in relation to this incident which focuses on attachment in early childhood and how to support child development throughout the different stages of their life. This research will aid an understanding of why a child reacts in a certain way and the most effective teaching approach and strategies that can meet the child’s specific needs in similar situations.

#### Bowlby’s Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1969) believed that attachment behaviours (such as proximity seeking) are instinctive and will be activated by any conditions that seem to threaten the achievement of proximity, such as separation, insecurity, and fear. When a child has to separate from their parent/primary caregiver to attend school, a child will show distress and may seek comfort until their parent/caregiver returns to pick them up.

#### Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs is a further area of research that comprises a five-tier model of human needs. The needs lower down the hierarchy pyramid must be satisfied before the individual can attend to the needs higher up. From the bottom of the hierarchy, the needs are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualisation. People can fluctuate between the tiers of the model and progress and development can be disrupted by the failure to meet the needs lower down the hierarchy.

#### Erikson’s Psychosocial Developmental Theory

Erikson believed that an individual’s personality develops in a predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. During each stage of psychosocial development, two conflicting ideas are presented that must be resolved in order for an individual to become a confident, contributing member of society. However, failure of resolution can lead to feelings of inadequacy and being unable to contribute confidently to society.

**Notes:** any details you can note (is it a busy environment, is it after lunch, are there lots of distractions, are directions made explicit - the more you can refer to the better here)

The environment in which the situation occurred was extremely busy as it was during the drop-off time for the Nursery morning session. The class teacher, an LSA, and I were greeting the children enthusiastically at the gate and many children were leaving their parents/caregivers and walking up to their class positively and confidently. However, this is a situation that some pupils may react differently to. Due to the busy environment, a child could find it very overwhelming, resulting in unsettlement and a change in behaviour.

### **Record 3**

Date and time, year group:

**Nursery PM**

**27.09.22**

**12.50-15.20**

**Where and When:** Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context

The critical incident occurred during the afternoon of observation in the PM Nursery class, at around 12.50 just after the children had left their parents/caregivers at the gate and were entering the classroom independently.

**What happened:** a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work)

The pupils were entering the class after leaving their parents at the Nursery gate. Upon arrival in the class, most children were taking their bags and coats off independently and hanging them on the correct peg with a picture of the child's face on. The LSA's were there to support anyone who had difficulty in doing it themselves but still encouraged the children to have a go independently. The immediate transition from the door where the children took their coats off, to the carpet was smooth and calm as the teacher had already put nursery rhymes on the interactive whiteboard and there were orange lines on the carpet at the front of the class, so the children knew where to sit. This was extremely interesting to see, as the children did not follow any temptation to play in the classroom areas and tough spots as they knew that they must follow routine and rules to sit on the carpet until the class teacher or LSA returns from greeting children at the gate and comes in to start registration.

The children were given the independence to sit on the carpet whilst the LSA's were at the door greeting the other children arriving. This worked very well as the children were aware of their routines and what was expected of them. Each child sat smartly on the carpet with no disruptions or misbehaviour. The LSA's were also praising the children for their good listening, smart sitting and patience whilst waiting for the class teacher to arrive. This reinforced the good behaviour and motivated the children to continue sitting smartly. When the class teacher arrived back in class after greeting the children at the Nursery gate, the class were calm and ready to start their day. It was clear to see that the routine had a positive impact on the children as some were excited and energetic entering the class but seemed to regulate themselves through the teacher's aid of calm nursery rhymes and the orange lines on the carpet for smart sitting. It also proved beneficial to the children entering the class who were slightly unsettled, as they had time to settle in before starting the school day.

A strategy which seemed to work particularly well for was the orange lines on the carpet. For the children who were able to sit smartly, the lines were a guide for where they should be sitting for most effective looking and listening whilst the teacher is at the front of the class. It also supported the children who had difficulty doing so, as it provided them with something to focus on when sitting on the carpet. The children who would usually fidget on the carpet or move around had the visual aid of the orange lines to concentrate on. It also implemented an element of fun as the children seemed to admire the orange lines, therefore were eager to sit on them smartly and be praised for doing so.

This strategy demonstrated the teacher's effective practice as they had considered each of the children's needs and found something that would suit them all. The teacher considered a strategy that would benefit the already well-behaved children and those who required more structure and routine for good behaviour patterns. The strategy in place also

promotes independence, contributing to health, and confident individuals, one of the Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.

**Areas of possible exploration:** what you think could be” under the hood” in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider?

### Pavlov’s Classical Conditioning

Discovered by Ivan Pavlov, classical conditioning is a form of unconscious or automatic learning. This learning process stimulates a conditioned response through associations between an unconditioned stimulus to a neutral stimulus. Classical conditioning involves a neutral stimulus, an unconditioned stimulus, and an unconditioned response than a conditioned stimulus and conditioned response. Classical conditioning involves learning by pairing a naturally occurring stimulus with a previously neutral stimulus. It would be interesting to see how the teacher introduced the stimulus and rewarded the good behaviour for the children’s conditioned response.

### B.F Skinner – Operant Conditioning

Operant conditioning is a method of learning that rewards and punishes behaviour. Through operant conditioning, an association is made between a behaviour and a consequence (whether it be negative or positive) for that behaviour. This form of conditioning utilises reinforcement and punishment to modify behaviours. The key concepts of operant conditioning:

- Positive reinforcers – positive outcomes presented after the behaviour. Positive reinforcement is behaviour that is strengthened by reward or appraisal.
- Negative reinforcers – negative reinforcement grows stronger when something is immediately removed as a consequence of behaviour.

Punishment is when you remove or apply a stimulus to decrease behaviour.

- Positive punishment is adding a stimulus to decrease behaviour.
- Negative punishment is removing the stimulus to decrease behaviour.

**Notes:** any details you can note (is it a busy environment, is it after lunch, are there lots of distractions, are directions made explicit - the more you can refer to the better here)

The environment in the classroom was calm and controlled. The teacher had put a strategy in place to reinforce the class routine and to ensure the children would behave in response to the stimuli. For example, hearing the nursery rhymes on the interactive whiteboard and seeing the orange lines on the floor. There were distractions around the class including the learning areas and tough spots, however, the children did not pay attention to these, and instead went straight to sit on the orange lines, on the carpet. The strategy in place was effective as it promoted a calm and settled environment so that the class was ready to start their day.