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.

Introduction

It has been theorised by Tripp (2012) that the use of critical incidents in the learning of teaching and the science of pedagogy is invaluable. By looking at the definition of a critical incident described in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) we can see that what is termed a "critical incident" is very subjective and personal to the observer. However, when a critical incident is observed, dissected and evaluated, the knowledge gleaned can inform decisions made in the classroom, not only about how the students are reacting to teachers, but how teachers themselves are reacting to students. The observational methodology is able to examine the minutia of the unconscious bias, underlying issues and personal wellbeing that may be missed with other more traditional teaching evaluative methods.

First it would be prudent to explore the background of the school in question in which one such critical incident was observed, and further it can be discussed how this incident relates to the four purposes as set out by Professor Donaldson (2015) as well as ideas relating to Assessment for Learning techniques being used in the Foundation Phase. Finally, reflection and next steps will be posed in order to see how this critical incident can inform teaching practice going forward.

Observation:
School and Class Context

For this research, the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) has been adhered to. This states that the researchers "should recognise the entitlement of both institution and individual participants rights to privacy" (BERA, 2018). Therefore, the information given regarding the school context below has been anonymised, and the links redacted to protect confidentiality.

Working ethically is vitally important to ensure the protection of the participants but also to build a relationship of trust between participant and researcher.

The school observed for the purposes of this paper was an English medium, mixed gendered, primary school (covering nursery, infants and juniors). In 2018, the school had 484 pupils, with 18.1% entitled to Free School Meals, this is just above the national average for Wales in 2018 which was 17.4%, increasing to 18.3% in January 2019 (information accessed from the Welsh Government My Local School website, 16 October 2019).

The class observed was a Year 2 class with pupils aged from six to seven years old, of mixed genders. The class had twenty three pupils on register, with two absent on the day of observation. While no pupill in the class had a formal additional learning needs (ALN) statement, four children were in touch with outside agencies for monitoring, as well as a further four pupils being monitored internally for difficulties such as specific learning difficulties (SpLD). The classroom itself was spacious, with a large carpet area, two large tables, a reading and quiet corner, as well as access to additional areas just outside the classroom door such as “tough spot”, a role play area and an outside space.

Methodology

Teachers have traditionally been exposed to a number of methodologies and assessments used to evaluate how appropriate and effective their own methods of teaching are. Cohen et al (2011) states that critical research is imperative to the science of teaching, needing to understand situations or phenomenon that occur, but also implementing changes, may these be curriculum or policy-based changes.

The method implemented in this instance is the observational method. As explained in Palaiologou (2008) observations are a “structured way of studying children”, and they should be conducted for a purpose, such as tracking progress, and informing the structure of curriculum and pedagogy. There are two main methods of observation as outlined by Palaiologou (2008), these are participant observation, where the observer has an active role in the observation and is allowed to focus on whatever draws their attention, and non-participant observation, which is more systematic in nature and uses a number of techniques such as sociograms and histograms. Cohen at al (2011) builds on these ideas further and proposes there are three main types of observation – structured, semi-structured and unstructured. With structured observations, the observer is aware of what they are

looking for in advance and may have set criteria for this, semi-structured may have an idea or “agenda” but is less systematic in its approach, and unstructured observation will again allow the observer free will to observe what they wish before determining the significance of the phenomena observed. In this instance, a semi-structured observation approach was adopted as a record sheet was used. This recording sheet was adapted from questions posed in Fletcher-Wood (2016) which gave the observer some direction in what they could observe but also gave a lot of independence to the observer to focus on specific areas of interest to themselves.

Cohen et al (2011) outlines “critical incidents” as a specific type of observation (or sometimes considered a case study) of one particular class, pupil or teacher, where consistency is not needed as a person may have only “demonstrated a particular behaviour once” (Cohen et al, 2011 pg 464). In addition, Tripp (2012) explained that critical incidents can in themselves be of the observers creating, and that a “typical” occurrence can with academic exploration become “critical”, but this in no way makes it less valid in its methodology. It can however be subject to observer bias, as the observer has their own set of judgements and prejudices which can predispose them to looking at specific situations. The Hawthorne Effect (Mayo, 1933) may also give a negative implication to observational studies such as critical incidents as being the subject of “special attention” causes those being observed to act differently to the way they may usually. This causes conflict in studies using observational techniques as to whether the behaviour being observed is natural and organic (Stagner, 1982).

It is important to bear in mind the ethical implications of observations and critical incidents, especially in a foundation phase setting (Palaiologou, 2008). As these observations are reporting data and being used for assessment in some cases, Palaiologou states that careful consideration should be given to child voice in order to protect the rights of the child (UN, 1989). In this case, consent was obtained through school policies and procedures in order to protect the child, and the observation is only being used to inform future practice and learn from current practice, not to be related to a specific child’s assessment and development.

Critical incidents with link to the Four Purposes

Using the method of observation, one such critical incident as outlined above was recorded. A full observation report (developed from questions adapted from Fletcher-Wood, 2016) and observational reflections developed using the Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) model can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 retrospectively. (A further three observation forms and three ARC reflections can be observed in Appendices three to eight however these will not be referred to for the basis of this report).

The critical incident in question was observed in School X on 26th September 2019. The class observed was a Year 2 class, however for the particular incident discussed, it is important to note that for a portion of the morning session, usual classes are disbanded and a number of pupils moved classrooms and teachers for a Read, Write, Inc session, which the whole school is currently participating in. Further background knowledge disclosed by the class teacher is that Read Write Inc is a new venture in School X and has only been implemented since the beginning of September 2019. Teachers are still receiving training on the delivery of Read Write Inc, such as during the inset day that is happening in October 2019. This is pertinent to the critical incident as the teacher's methods come under evaluation, as remembering he and the school are new to the system may go a little way to explaining why the critical incident occurred.

During the Read Write Inc session, there were 13 pupils in the classroom. In the first instance the class sat on the carpet and learnt a new phonic "oy", they practiced this with a number of "real" words such as "boy", "toy" and "enjoy" and some "alien" words such as "loy". All of the pupils were engaged in the session, however it was observed that the closer the pupils were to the teacher, the more engaged they were. It was noted that the pupil discussed in this observation, Pupil A was sat towards the back of the carpet. After the carpet session was complete, the class then moved to a desk-based task. The pupils were required to show the teacher the number of phonics in a specific word using their fingers. They were then required to attempt to write the word in their books before the teacher wrote the correct spelling of the word on a small white board close to one of the tables. Following the word being written correctly on the board, the pupils were required to self assess their work with a purple pen, putting ticks for phonics in a word that they correctly recorded and dots for phonics that they had not spelled correctly. Pupil A seemed as though he could correctly show the number of phonics in each word and confidently wrote down the words which contained the new phonic "oy", however after a few of these words were completed,

the teacher moved on to phonics that had been covered previously. At this point, Pupil A still seemed comfortable with the task of showing the number of phonics using number of fingers, however when he had to write down the word he became increasingly anxious and displayed behaviours such as looking around the room trying to see other pupils answers, chewing his fingernails and asking the teacher for assistance with spelling the words he was struggling with. The teacher responded to the request for help by explaining he would be putting the correct spelling on the board in a second once everyone had had a go at writing down the word. As the teacher walked away the pupil still looked increasingly anxious and carried on biting his fingernails. When the teacher wrote the correct version of the spelling on the board, Pupil A proceeded to copy the correct spelling into his book and self assessed the copied down word as correct across all of the phonics in the word.

From this observation, links can be drawn with two of Donaldson's (2015) Four Purposes. Firstly, "our children and young people will be ambitious, capable learners", clearly from the above case study, Pupil A has the potential to be a capable learner as he has mastered the new phonic which was undertaken in the session, and it can be argued that he too was ambitious as he was unwilling to put an incorrect spelling into his workbook. Secondly, the purpose of the curriculum to produce "healthy, confident individuals" is in question here, as from the observation it can be seen that this child is clearly not confident in his own ability and seems fearful of making a mistake.

Literature review

As described above, the critical incident in question brings into light some important further points for consideration. As the child was "self-assessing" his work, it can first be assumed that the school and the teacher in question were employing some Assessment for Learning techniques, however they were proving unsuccessful in this case. The first discussion will centre around this as the appropriateness of Assessment for Learning. A further point for discussion, leading on from the appropriateness of Assessment for Learning, is centred around the idea of whether the child was "cheating" or learning. This discussion will draw upon ideas related to childhood wellbeing, honesty as well as whether the child was simply learning through Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development. These issues can also be related back to Donaldson (2015) and a discussion on whether the school in question is creating "Ambitious, Capable Learners" or "Healthy Confident Individuals" or whether the techniques being employed are not making it possible for all learners in the classroom to achieve these ideals.

The first interesting point centres around the use of Assessment for Learning Techniques. Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques are predominantly techniques which involve formative assessment which allows the learner to see how they are doing during a task, as opposed to a summative assessment (sometimes referred to as Assessment of Learning) which would show the learner how they did the end of the task, not allowing them to utilise this knowledge and build upon it. Summative assessment has been historically a more traditional way of assessing learning and has been described in Fautley and Savage (2008) as "the end of unit test model". The benefits of AfL has widely been discussed (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Royce Sadler, 1989; Marshall, 2002) and can be observed in Black and Wiliam's review conducted by in 1998 into over twenty research papers that used formative assessment procedures, the discussion yielded results of up to an effect size 0.7, which they describe as the equivalent of raising a national score from the middle of the rankings to one of the top five rankings (Beaton et al, 1996, as cited in Black and Wiliam, 1998). As a result of these impressive statistics AfL techniques have widely been implemented into schools.

In the critical incident described, it is apparent that the AfL technique being employed in the Read, Write, Inc session is self assessment. A full description of this technique has been published by the Welsh Government (2010) as well as guidance on how this technique should be carried out. As described, the pupils were self marking their spelling attempts before the teacher displayed the correct spelling on a white board. This class of children was a Year 2 class which means they are around ages six to seven. The guidance mentioned states that: *"Self-assessment will only happen if teachers help learners, particularly the low attainers, to develop the skill." (Welsh Government, 2010, p.27).*

In this particular case, it was noted on Appendix 1 that Pupil A was a lower attainment student, who after a discussion with the relevant teacher, it was disclosed that this child had missed some school recently due to personal reasons. Therefore, while noted theorists such as Black and Wiliam have declared the overwhelming positives that AfL can and does produce, the important caveat from the Welsh Government (2010) paper is that if learners have not had the time to learn how to self assess, it does not have the benefits that can be observed in previous studies of this nature. In addition, a mitigating factor regarding the effectiveness of AfL in this particular case is that the pupils had only been conducting Read, Write, Inc sessions from September of this year, meaning not only had this pupil missed some of the sessions themselves, they may have missed some of the critical time on learning how to self assess. It would therefore be very prudent not to assume a one size fits all when it comes to AfL techniques in the Foundation Phase. This has been noted by

Marshall and Drummond (2006) where lessons which incorporate the “spirit” of AfL instead of rigidly standing by the techniques to the “letter” preserved pupil autonomy, and teachers attitudes towards AfL themselves can affect how well AfL is integrated into the classroom – this could even be having an effect on the case study as, as already mentioned, this technique was not only new to the pupils but the staff members also. In conclusion to this section, from the critical incident observed, positives can be drawn in parallel to the literature on the use of AfL, but it is important to remember the caveats such as time is needed for learning and embedding AfL techniques for pupil and teachers alike.

Alternatively, a second school of thought regarding the critical incident above could be in relation to Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD has been defined as:

> *"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 86).*

In simpler language, the ZPD is the area of growth in knowledge a child can achieve through the appropriate level of assistance, by that from peers or adults. Therefore, by looking at Appendix 1 it can be determined that most of the students would be defined as being in the ZPD because they were not finding the task easy but could complete the task with some “scaffolding” (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) in the form of the phonic counting and “special friends” discussion being held by the teacher before they came to spell the words.

However, it is known from Appendix 1 that Pupil A became increasingly distressed from the experience of not knowing how to spell certain words, and asked for assistance on how to spell the word on two separate occasions.

If the incident is looked at objectively, it is observed that the pupil is clearly in between the two zones – the zone of information that is not yet known, and the “struggle zone”. As Lynch (2019) stated “struggle and progress go hand in hand”, so by allowing the pupil to have a go at the words, the teacher would have thought that he was currently in the struggle zone.

It is at this point that two different arguments for the theory of ZPD arise – was the fact that the pupil copied the correct answer off the board allowing him to remain in the ZPD? Or is the pupil not learning anything new and remains in the zone of knowledge not yet known? A possible solution to these questions could be that the teacher writing the correct spelling of

the word on the board for the pupils to use to self assess could in itself be scaffolding, and removing the idea of the AfL self assessment, the pupil uses the correct spelling to “broach the gap” in his knowledge , he has not “cheated” in copying down the word and marking it correctly, he has merely used the whiteboard answers of a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO; Vygotsky, 1978) as “scaffolding” which is a technique recommended by the Welsh Government (2010) in the guidance for developing thinking strategies in the classroom.

The last point linking to the Welsh Government guidance and other related points above are the aims new Curriculum for Wales 2022 (Welsh Government, 2019), as developed by Donaldson’s (2015) ‘Successful Futures’ report. The new curriculum draws great links with pupil wellbeing and success for the future. In the critical incident observed, at first glance a person may think it apparent that the teacher is not having a high regard for wellbeing of Pupil A as he seems to become increasingly distressed. However, through discussion with the teacher after the session, as mentioned Pupil A had missed some school. The fact that the teacher did not answer the request for the correct spelling meant that Pupil A was not singled out, but also the fact that the teacher did not chastise the pupil for copying the correct spelling into the book meant that his self confidence was not knocked. As Pupil A continues in school more regularly, the hope here is that he will adjust to the AfL techniques, continue to make use of scaffolding and ZPD assistance and grow further into an ”Ambitious, Capable Learner” and “Healthy Confident Individual”, as although these techniques can be unpicked, they have sound roots in research for making a difference in the classroom to children of lower attainment levels.

Reflection/evaluation and next steps

In order to effectively reflect on the critical incident that was observed, directly after the observation, the observation record sheet derived from questions posed by Fletcher-Wood (2016) and also an Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model sheet, an example of which can be seen in Appendix 2. The ARC itself aimed to focus reflections around four main themes – the observer’s feelings towards the critical incident, what the observer was able to remember and understand about the critical incident, what the observer could evaluate and analyse from the critical incident, and conclusions and actions which could be drawn from the critical incident. This model is also transferrable from looking reflectively at critical incidents and also reflecting on whole lessons when undertaking professional teaching practice. There are also other beneficial models into reflection, such as Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988) which centres on similar themes of description, feelings and

evaluations of the incident. Eby (2000) also puts forward a model of reflective practice which explains that to undertake reflective practice you must have a combination of self-awareness, reflection and critical thinking, which the ARC model incorporates successfully.

From looking at Appendix 2, I can see that while I was comfortable in the classroom observation, I became worried about Pupil A who was seemingly anxious. I also had an automatic response to assume he was “cheating” when he was copying down the words from the board. From looking back on this with a more open, and self-aware, eye, I think that the word “cheating” is much too harsh a term in this situation and that the child was simply learning through modelling the correct spelling from the board. After researching Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD and scaffolding techniques (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) as mentioned in the literature review, I have evaluated my own thinking process and agree with the teacher’s protocol. Whereas in the session I was concerned there was undue stress caused, the scaffolding allowed Pupil A to have the correct answer in his book and learn from this experience, without embarrassment or damage to his confidence. As long as the teacher has a watchful eye over this situation and is using their additional AfL techniques as an objective view of pupil attainment, this technique shows merit.

Suggestions for improvement in this case would be centred around the use of AfL techniques in the classroom. As I have mentioned, as long as further techniques are being employed so that the teacher is aware of the correct attainment level of the pupil, the fact that the critical incident of copying off the board occurred, can be mitigated by an overall knowledge of attainment, rather than taking an attainment level from one such spelling task. Further AfL techniques could have been employed by the teacher here also to ease the child’s obvious signs of anxiety. As I have already alluded to, the Welsh Government (2010) published guidance on a wide range of techniques which could have helped. For example, if the pupil had the ability to “Think, Pair, Share” with a partner before writing the answer in his book, he may have had more confidence in his own ability. Also, the technique of “Mini Whiteboards” mentioned in the guidance could assist this pupil as there is not the “permanency” of writing a wrong word down into the exercise book and having to self assess and mark it incorrect. I think, on reflection, as this was a Read, Write, Inc session that had not been designed by this particular teacher, the teacher was instructed to complete the session prescriptively. As this teacher knows some of the children in the class very well, these techniques may have been changed if he felt as though he had free choice over the session. AfL techniques used here have not been embedded as fully as they would like, and I wonder whether they are the most appropriate for the age group as they are Foundation Phase. Perhaps a suggestion for improvement really is to fully embed peer assessment,

which I did not see an example of, before asking the pupils to assess their own work, as this is arguably harder. One last suggestion here would be for teachers not to employ an AfL strategy just for the sake of it. As discussed in the literature review, AfL works best when its "spirit" is incorporated, where for this session, the children were not really using the AfL technique to inform another part of learning. As I have discussed, other methods may have been more beneficial to not only Pupil A, but for all of the children in the Read, Write, Inc session. These are important observations which I intend to use to inform my practice when employing AfL strategies, and if I encounter children whose confidence is lacking, in order to create a safe and encouraging place for them to learn.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ethical observation and the study of critical incidents are methodological techniques of great value when using these to inform teacher's reflective practice. In order to support Tripp's (2012) notion that any critical incident can start of as "typical", the methodology implemented here allowed for a broad observation, but the observational tools used (adapted from Fletcher-Wood, 2016) allowed for a semi-structured approach to dissect the most straightforward of situation into a critical incident as defined by Tripp. This allowed for reflection on the critical incident objectively and with a view to improve professional practice.

The ability to work reflectively has become increasingly, vitally important for teachers. This has been explicitly included in the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership published by the Welsh Government (2019). These new and updated standards encompass five professional standards – Pedagogy, Collaboration, Leadership, Innovation and Professional Learning. The need for the teacher to be a "professional learner" states that the individual can "show how reflection and openness to challenge and support informs professional learning to progressively develop pedagogy" (Welsh Government, 2019). By developing the ability to work professionally and reflectively, new teachers will be able to critically evaluate their own practices, be that in specific areas such as AfL as discussed here, or in a wider context of ensuring that the teaching profession is always researching and always developing the best pedagogical principles possible to ensure every child has the best possible education that a teacher themselves can provide.

Current word count: 4336

Appendices

Appendix 1

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016)

Date: 26/09/2019
Lesson details: A “read, write, inc” session with 13 children present from a number of year groups and classes
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?) The children were focused on learning, after going through some phonics on the carpet, they moved to desk work where the teacher would ask them to show with their fingers the number of sounds in a word, then they would write this in their books and self-assess in purple pen.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) The lesson followed a structure of previous “read, write, inc” sessions, this enabled the children to know what they were doing and when to do it. There was a clear purpose to the session – that the children learned the phonic “oy” and put it into practice in a number of words – boy, toy and enjoy for example. They then practiced other sounds that they had learnt previously such as “ir”.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) The children were clear about what to do as the session followed a structure they were familiar with, the teacher fully explained what was happening at each point in the session.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) The children were quiet and very focussed during the spelling part of the session, they concentrated well and were engaged with some more challenging words to spell.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? The session introduced the phonic to the pupils and was embedded with a teacher led spoken repetition exercise. Then, whilst undertaking the written part of the task, the correct answers were discussed and written on a small whiteboard for the pupils to see. The students then marked their own work so that they could get instant feedback on how they were performing.

Specifics / Critical Incidents
Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?

One incident of note occurred while the pupils were undertaking the spelling part of the session. A pupil of lower attainment in the group asked for how to spell a word as he did not know. The teacher encouraged him to have a go as they were about to go through the answer and he was reassured that it did not matter if he made a mistake. The pupil was visibly worried and chewing his fingernails. He did not make an attempt at spelling the word “bird” and instead waited for the teacher to put the answer on the whiteboard. He then copied from the whiteboard the answer and proceeded to mark the answer correct using the purple pen, this happened again when a few words later, he had managed “third” correctly after “bird” but was unable to correctly write the word “twirl”.

Appendix 2

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfyrio (BWA)
Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model

Dyddiad/*Date*: 26/09/2019
Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/*Critical incident (focus):* A child is copying from the board but when peer assessing the work, he has been marking it as correct

Profiad/ *Experience*	
Teimladau/ *Feelings* *Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?* *"What are your feelings regarding the experience?"*	I was very comfortable in the session until I became aware of the issue with a pupil. He looked like he was getting distressed and was biting his fingernails which made me concerned for him, I could see he was struggling with spelling a few of the words which the teacher was requesting.
Cofio a Deall/ *Remember and Understand* *Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a aeth yn dda?* *"Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?"* *Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgi oedd yn siomedig?* *"What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"*	The session on the whole went very well, all children seemed to be engaged and challenged throughout with the introduction of a new phonic, and the spellings were of an appropriate level as the children were answering them mostly correct but not finding them too easy. The resources used were generic but aimed at the correct level for the students. One learner encountered difficulty and asked for help on spelling a word – bird. The teacher replied to give it a go as they would be going over the answer in a few minutes. Instead of making an attempt at the word, the pupil waited until the word was written correctly on the board. The pupils then used the self-assessment assessment for learning technique and checked their own word using purple pens, dots and ticks. The child who had copied off the board marked his work as correct and moved onto the next question. The teacher did not notice this was the case and if anyone were to look at the child's book, they would not know that they had struggled at all.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ *Evaluate and analyse* *Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?* *"What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?"* *Beth oedd achos yr elfen siomedig bwysicaf?* *"What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"*	The session itself was very good and not much would need to be changed to ensure the most effective teaching and learning environment. The children were engaged and on task for the whole of the read, write, inc session and it seemed like on the whole, most children were understanding the links between words based on their vowel sound. The only disappointment was that the pupil had felt the need to copy on a very simple classroom task – when discussing this with the classroom teacher after the session he explained that the child had had some recent personal issues, and these could be affecting his mood as well as his schoolwork.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ *Conclusions and actions* *Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiaon siomedig a nodwyd?* *"What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?"* *Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf?* *"What will you do next?"*	There are a few possible solutions that could be of use: • An additional AfL strategy could be employed to eliminate the child just copying the answer from the board – this could be using think, pair, share to discuss with a partner to reduce the fear of getting it wrong • A discussion with the parents or guardians to see if there is a root cause of the anxiety of getting a word wrong. Home-school links could then aim to reduce any anxiety the child is feeling (after talking to the class teacher it was ascertained that the child had missed some school due to personal reasons)
Y profiad newydd / *Transformed experience*	

Appendix 3

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016)

Date: 26/09/2019
Lesson details: Mathematics lesson where one group at a time were conducting a focus task with the teacher
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?) The children are focused on different tasks and learning in different ways – a group of children are doing a formal task, another doing an enhanced provision task, and the remainder learning through play
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) The main lesson objective is to complete a work sheet on adding 1, subtracting 1, adding 10 and subtracting 10. The enhanced provision promotes understanding of these concepts with a snakes and ladders game, while the remainder of the class learn through play with construction and other objects around the class.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) The students who are conducting the focus tasks are clear on what the need to do as the teacher is sitting with a small group of 4 or 5, enabling them to get feedback throughout the session. The rest of the class have independence to choose tasks which interest them.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) The students who were conducting the focus task were challenged and engage. The other groups were engaged by activities of their choosing.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? The teacher assessed understanding at the beginning of the session with a quick whole class discussion asking questions about +1, +2, -1, -2, +10, -10, as well as the class already being sorted into attainment level groups from the previous term so that the teacher can gauge his interaction level with the children.

Specifics / Critical Incidents
Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?

At one point during the session I became aware of a child playing with the tools that the teacher had used earlier in the day in a previous session for going over some mathematical concepts. A meter ruler had been used to illustrate visually going forward and backwards in the 2 and 5 times tables. The child appeared to be playing teacher but in the process was reiterating the times tables more confidently than she had done previously in the day. She went on to recite songs in Welsh which had been sung earlier, as well as mimicking writing on the board.

Appendix 4

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfyrio (BWA)
Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model

Dyddiad/*Date*: 26.09.2019
Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/*Critical incident (focus):* A child mimicking the teacher and effectively reciting the times tables and songs from earlier in the day

Profiad/ *Experience*	
Teimladau/ *Feelings* *Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?* *"What are your feelings regarding the experience?"*	During the session the atmosphere was fun and positive, all the children seemed to be enjoying the tasks that they were undertaking and I enjoyed the lesson overall.
Cofio a Deall/ *Remember and Understand* *Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a aeth yn dda?* *"Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?"* *Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgi oedd yn siomedig?* *"What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"*	The session went really well – it was good to see that the children were naturally gravitating to the educational activities as well as the more traditional play activities. I think it was good that the classroom had stimulating displays where the children could draw off previous knowledge, as well as the props which the teacher had already used being available. I think this contributed to the fact that the children recited all of the earlier times tables and songs correctly. AfL techniques were also employed with the teacher checking those children who were undertaking the focus tasks as they went along in order to give specific and relevant, immediate feedback.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ *Evaluate and analyse* *Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?* *"What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?"* *Beth oedd achos yr elfen siomedig bwysicaf?* *"What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"*	Positives • Designated zones for different play activities • A range of equipment to activate prior knowledge • AfL – immedicate feedback Negatives • Discipline was needed – appropriateness of the behavioural strategy used discussed in appendix 3? • Not enough teacher attention for the other groups?
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ *Conclusions and actions* *Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiaon siomedig a nodwyd?* *"What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?"* *Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf?* *"What will you do next?"*	• It may have been beneficial to rotate the focus group more than once so that more children got attention • Attention towards the other groups could have picked up on the good word being done by other pupils for example the pupil who was using the tools appropriately to recite the times tables alone • Evaluate the appropriateness of the discipline used at times
Y profiad newydd / *Transformed experience*	

Appendix 5

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016)

Date: 26.09.2019
Lesson details: First session of the day, register being taken and Welsh recap undertaken
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?) The students mostly focussed on learning. As the children are on the carpet there are a few distractions such as children moving around the carpet to sit by friends.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) There is a clear lesson objective – daily recap of Welsh terms such as colours, days of the week and months of the year
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) The students are clear on what they should be doing as the teacher demonstrates all hand movements and sings along to all the songs so as to guide the children
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) Students are engaged with the session as the songs are sung enthusiastically by all children.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? As this is a daily recap, the teacher reminds the children of their successes on the previous day and asks the children to do it as well as they did the day before as they had been correct for the first time yesterday.
Specifics / Critical Incidents Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss? • Two of the children sat with their fingers on their lips for nearly the entire session until the singing began, despite a lot of children not adopting this pose and the teacher not acknowledging them for doing this. • The teacher used whispering back at the children as a way to stop them talking while the register was being taken

Appendix 6

Dyddiad/*Date*: 26.09.2019
Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/*Critical incident (focus):* children sitting with fingers on lips when not required to do so

Profiad/ *Experience*	
Teimladau/ *Feelings* *Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?* *"What are your feelings regarding the experience?"*	• The session on the whole was a very positive experience • It was unclear as to why two of the children chose to sit with their fingers on their lips as it did not seem to be a requirement for the session
Cofio a Deall/ *Remember and Understand* *Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a aeth yn dda?* *"Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?"* *Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgi oedd yn siomedig?* *"What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"*	• Session was engaging for the children as they were very interactive with the teacher • One element that was disappointing was that the children did not get told to relax and have fun, they were sitting very rigidly – it is possible they were sitting like this to gain more attention from the teacher and this was not achieved
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ *Evaluate and analyse* *Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?* *"What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?"* *Beth oedd achos yr elfen siomedig bwysicaf?* *"What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"*	• I would keep the "fun" engaging part of the lesson in future as this seemed to draw all the children in and all children participated in the singing • I also liked the whispering to get children's attention as it stopped them talking easily and in a friendly manner
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ *Conclusions and actions* *Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiaon siomedig a nodwyd?* *"What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?"* *Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf?* *"What will you do next?"*	• A change I would make to the lesson would be to encourage those children with their fingers on lips to relax and have fun with the songs to ensure they were fully engaged and focused on learning the songs not looking for attention
Y profiad newydd / *Transformed experience*	

Appendix 7

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016)

Date: 02/10/19
Lesson details: Read, Write, Inc session where assessment has been taking place for a number of days – this is the last session where this is taking place
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?) While one student at a time undertakes an assessment, the other pupils are learning through colouring, word searches and reading independently.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) The main purpose from the teachers point of view was to complete standard assessment. The children were instructed to complete silent work to facilitate this purpose.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) Children are clear that they should be completing the worksheets in silence, there is a some talking and the teacher reiterates a number of times that the children are to work in silence.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) There were indicators that some children were not being stretched as some were asking what they could do next and could they play. They did seem engaged in the worksheets while they were completing these.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? Formal assessment undertaken by the teacher, this was going to be used to inform which Read, Write, Inc groups the students would be in after half term.
Specifics / Critical Incidents Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss? The children did not seem to be used to working in silence, this does not follow the structure of previous lessons observed. Also, child asked if they could go and play as they would have when finished work in other lessons observed.

Appendix 8

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfyrio (BWA)
Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model

Dyddiad/*Date*: 02.10.2019
Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/*Critical incident (focus):* child wanting to play instead of work

Profiad/ *Experience*	
Teimladau/ *Feelings* *Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?* *"What are your feelings regarding the experience?"*	I found the lesson very different to other sessions I had observed. I understood why silence was necessary but I observed that the children did not seem entirely used to it
Cofio a Deall/ *Remember and Understand* *Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a aeth yn dda?* *"Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?"* *Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgi oedd yn siomedig?* *"What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"*	While one student at a time undertakes an assessment, the other pupils are learning through colouring, word searches and reading independently. This went well in that the children who were undertaking the assessment could concentrate on what they were reading. However the rest of the class did not seem used to the silence or the fact they were unable to play when they had completed their tasks, as they have been allowed to in other sessions I have observed. I did not observe the teacher explaining the purpose of the tasks or the silence in this lesson, however as this was a continuation of a previous lesson this could have been explained on an earlier day.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ *Evaluate and analyse* *Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?* *"What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?"* *Beth oedd achos yr elfen siomedig bwysicaf?* *"What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"*	The assessment itself seemed beneficial to the pupil as they are going to be evaluated and moved to the most appropriate group based on the results of the assessment. None of the children seemed fearful of the assessment which I think is very beneficial and something I would keep the same myself. It was disappointing to see some of the children not feeling stretched by the activities and wanting further tasks or to go and play.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ *Conclusions and actions* *Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiaon siomedig a nodwyd?* *"What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?"* *Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf?* *"What will you do next?"*	Possible solutions could be (if staffing allows) on teacher or teaching assistant to take the children outside the classroom to complete the assessment in a quiet area. Additionally, perhaps children could play in the outside spaces/corridor spaces once they had completed the tasks in order to minimize noise and distraction in the classroom.
Y profiad newydd / *Transformed experience*	

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