

Appendix 1

Record 1

Date and time, year group:

26.9.22

9:30am

Year 7

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

This observation took place during a Welsh lesson. It was the first lesson of the school day on a Monday morning. The class was rather loud and chatty. The pupils were completing self assessments after getting back results from a test they had done in the previous lesson. They were also looking through their books and preparing them for an ESTYN inspection.

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

Mid way through the lesson I observed one child pulling a fizzy drink from his bag and showing it to his friend who was sat opposite him. When the teacher walked near him, he quickly put it back in his bag. However, a little while later I saw a different child go into his bag and pull out a bottle of Fanta. He then began to drink it. The teacher saw and didn't ask him to put it away and allowed him to continue to drink the fizzy drink.

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

The things I could explore here are how fizzy drinks effect children's attention, listening and overall mood throughout the day. As I will be following the same class throughout the day I could observe how the two children behave and interact through the duration of the school day. It would be interesting to see how other teachers react to the drinking of sugary drinks in their lessons, and if it is something that is allowed across the school or whether some teachers allow it and others do not.

I could look at studies relating to children drinking fizzy drinks in comparison to those who drink water. I could also explore the aspects of 'sugar rush' and 'crashing' after the sugary drinks have suppressed their energy. Does this effect their overall learning?

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 class was rather busy as they were preparing their books for an ESTYN inspection. Whether this was a one off occasion is unknown but it will be interesting to explore these avenues. The thing that surprised me the most was that it was first lesson on a Monday morning, and children were drinking sugary drinks so early in the morning.

Record 2

Date and time, year group:

26/9/22

10:40am

Year 10

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

This observation took place during a Year 10 RE GCSE lesson. It was a small class who were really engaged with the lesson. There was a lot of participation from the students, and they seemed to have a really positive relationship with the teacher. This lesson was a compulsory RE short course lesson, so the pupils present hadn't opted to take RE as a full GCSE.

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

The children were sat in a seating plan, which I found interesting as they were a Year 10 class. I asked the teacher if she puts all her classes into seating plans, to which she replied 'yes'. I asked her the reason for doing this and she said that it heightens pupil engagement as it suppresses distractions, if they were sat with their friends they may chat more and not focus on their work and learning. She also said that it made it easier for her to remember pupils' names as she taught a number of classes, and it was only 3 weeks into the new school year. Even though they were sat in seating plans, there was still a lot of discussion within the class which showed to me that they were comfortable talking to those they were sat with. I walked around to listen to some conversations amongst pupils and they were all to do with the work they had been set by the teacher.

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

The possible areas of exploration here could be 'how effective are seating plans?' and whether they provide a positive impact on children's learning. It would be

interesting to look at whether they have the same impact on the younger children in the school, for example year 7, in comparison to the senior pupils within the school.

Do children work better with their friends? As they could feel more comfortable talking about work within friendship groups to avoid feeling embarrassed if they get an answer wrong, or is it better for children to work with people they are less familiar with?

Is it more beneficial for the teacher or the students?

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 lesson took place just before morning break. It was a rather quiet class, all pupils seemed engaged and ready to learn. The class number was relatively small and intimate, meaning the class teacher was able to give a lot of her attention to anyone who needed it. The directions given by the teacher were clear and concise, every pupil knew what they were supposed to be doing. There was a lot of collaborative work within this lesson, for example, they were highlighting key parts of the booklet as a class, also, they watched a video clip and had to fill in the relevant information within the booklet provided. The teacher continuously paused the video and clarified what it was they needed to write down. Did the seating plan play a part in the limited distractions?

Record 3

Date and time, year group:

27.09.22

14:55pm

Year 7

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

This observation occurred during a Year 7 French lesson. It was the last lesson of the school day on a Tuesday. A lot of the class were tired and ready to go home, but some were still engaged and ready to learn. There was a lot of structure to this classroom, they were sat in seating plans and children knew exactly what they had to do when they entered the room.

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

The teacher of this classroom took a no hands up approach and used cold calling

instead. They were set a task where they had to look up French words, they hadn't learnt yet, in a dictionary and translate them in their books. Some children worked quicker than others and understood the task in hand whereas some children struggled to use the dictionary to find what they were looking for. Once the time limit was up, the teacher cold called individuals in the class to share what they had found. My question here was whether cold calling was the most effective approach within this classroom setting. A lot of the children hadn't used a dictionary before, and therefore when it came to them being picked to answer, they didn't have an answer to give.

I asked the teacher at the end of the lesson why she used the approach of cold calling rather than hands up. She said that all children will then work and stay on task as there is always the possibility that they will be asked for the answer.

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

The avenues I could explore here are whether cold calling is always the most effective approach to asking children questions. Are there any other approaches that could work better? Should we allow children to put their hands up to answer questions to avoid others feeling embarrassed or forced? Does cold calling apply too much pressure on to pupils, or does it encourage independence and concentration to find out the answers?

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)

This lesson took place just after lunch time and it was also the last lesson of the day. I could see that some of the children were tired and ready to go home. However, despite this, the teacher managed to keep the children engaged. She had a loud, clear voice and started them off with a task straight away. They had a recap session about what they had previously learnt last lesson to ensure understanding, meaning that she could move on to the next task. The teacher had control over the class, when the children began to chat and get loud, the teacher counted down from 3 and she had instant silence and attention.

Appendix 2

The SIMS School Report

School Details

Head Teacher		Governance	Community	School Years	Year 7 to Year 13
School Phase	Secondary	Local Authority	Carmarthenshire	Pupils of this school	1331

Pupil Numbers

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	All Years
Pupils of this school	213	210	220	230	201	146	111	1331
Male	53.52% 114	44.29% 93	51.82% 114	53.91% 124	46.77% 94	51.37% 75	50.45% 56	50.34% 670
Female	46.48% 99	55.71% 117	48.18% 106	46.09% 106	53.23% 107	48.63% 71	49.55% 55	49.66% 661
Single Reg	213	210	220	230	201	146	111	1331
Male	114	93	114	124	94	75	56	670
Female	99	117	106	106	107	71	55	661
Dual Subsid					4			4
Male					3			3
Female					1			1
Total Pupil Numbers (Current)	213	210	220	230	205	146	111	1335
Male	114	93	114	124	97	75	56	673
Female	99	117	106	106	108	71	55	662