

Evaluation of teaching and learning

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate what sort of teaching and learning can occur from a reflective incident, witnessed during the time spent at the partner school.

A reflective case study is regarded as an important method in research, and case study research has been employed in many fields of education, branded as one of the main approaches to improving the 'verification and accumulation of education knowledge' (Phothongsunan, 2011).

Case study research through the means of identifying 'critical incidence' can be used to improve education by identifying positive and negatives that occur and develop teaching through, the means of building open evidence that has already been discovered as well as bringing light new occurring evidence. Case studies capture a range of perspectives, as opposed to the single view or opinion. For example, to see if a method of practice is working within the education field or if change is needed, through observations and feedback given by pupils and peers.

The idea of this evaluation is to observe a key incident that holds the potential to open deeper understanding of the teaching environment whilst showing an understanding of how this incident relates to learning in the classroom, 'through applied skills witnessed in a real-world situation'.

The reflective incident explored in this assignment is built around the effects of behaviour when using a reward system. The teacher shared the names of pupils who had displayed good behaviours in the lesson. Watching the teacher conduct a lesson and how the pupils in the lesson responded to the teacher. I identified, how the teachers practice affected the students behaviour. I reflected on this practice and researched relevant supporting theories from this type of teaching method

The role of critical reflection

'Critical reflection in teaching practice involves describing and questioning taken for granted feelings and actions' (Walkington, 2001).

Critical reflection acts as the main means of developing a teaching philosophy and strategy. It involves teachers learning through others by the means of research, for example visiting a school to witness how teaching is put into practice by other teachers. The aim of critical reflection is to witness the method conducted by others to see as a means of gaining new insight into 'how to teach' through the means of picking up skills and methods from a classroom environment, rather than by studying a method academically.

Becoming critically reflective does not happen automatically in teaching. It requires a conscious awareness of understanding a thinking process and utilising it within practice. Time and volume play a key role in critical reflection (Crowe, 2011). Time will provide a greater possibility of witnessing an effect of a learning method over a period. Whereas, volume will allow for the bested method to be used through the means of trial and error, I have built on this theory during my reflection.

Having pupils' feedback can enhance the teacher's ability to conduct a lesson, through the means of responding to pupils' feedback and adapting the lesson to better suit the learning of the pupils at any moment during the lesson.

To be successful in critical reflection, teachers need to use curricula projects such as planning resources, reflective journaling, and growth portfolio (Shandomo, 2010).

- Planning resources – making structured pathways of lessons that pupils can follow on and in turn can be assessed on how well those pupils are conducting on those pathways ‘goal setting’.
- Reflective journaling – making notes on how lesson/teaching method are having affected on pupils after each lesson, as a means of evidence ‘that can be looked back upon’ to assess learning
- Growth portfolio – identifying what went well and the reasoning behind why it went well, ‘why are goals being made’ so evidence can be recorded on how goals can be achieved.

It’s important to related critical reflection to professional development of teachers ‘how well teachers are doing’ and the success of their teaching methods. Valenčič Zuljan defines the professional development of teachers as ‘the process of being meaningful and lifelong to learning, in which teachers develop their conceptions and change their teaching practice. It’s a process that involves the teacher’s personal, professional and social dimension and represents the teacher’s progress towards critical independent, responsible decision-making and behaviour’ (Zuljan, 1999). This evidence solidifies the point that to be a successful in the teaching field, time and critical reflection on teaching methods is needed.

OBSERVATION School & Class context

The observations of class context for this assignment took place in a school situated in the west part of Wales. 39% of households in this community area are classed as ‘living in poverty’ according to Carmarthenshire Community Area Well-being Profiles (CCA, 2021). Data shows that the majority of student attending the school fall into this category.

The school was created as part of the Authority's School Modernisation Programme. The school provide the Town with a new secondary school fit for the 21st Century, running year groups from year 7 all the way up to year 13 ‘A level’. The school is well informed with today’s times offering support to those with disabilities such as sight and hearing, the school also has its own special needs department.

Figure 1:- data to show number of pupils (Dafydd, 2022)

	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

The data from the table above shows the amount of female and male students in each year group according to the schools data base ‘sims’. The data indicates the school is majority male (50.34%) with female population only being a fractionally smaller (49.66%). Each year group having a small percentage difference between the genders.

Figure 2: - data to show Key Pastoral Factors of students (Dafydd, 2022)

	Year 7		Year 8		Year 9		Year 10		Year 11		Year 12		Year 13		All Years
Current Pupils															
Free School Meals	25.35%	54	19.05%	40	26.36%	58	28.70%	66	21.89%	44	15.07%	22	9.91%	11	22.16% 295
English as Additional Language	10.33%	22	13.81%	29	7.73%	17	9.57%	22	8.46%	17	6.16%	9	12.61%	14	9.77% 130
Medical Condition	19.25%	41	20.95%	44	24.09%	53	18.70%	43	25.87%	52	22.60%	33	21.62%	24	21.79% 290
In Care	1.88%	4	1.43%	3	2.27%	5	0.87%	2	1.99%	4			3.60%	4	1.65% 22
More Able			10.00%	21	8.18%	18	9.57%	22	6.97%	14	0.68%	1	16.22%	18	7.06% 94
SEN Needs	30.05%	64	28.10%	59	31.82%	70	31.74%	73	41.79%	84	24.66%	36	32.43%	36	31.71% 422
SEN Status	29.58%	63	14.29%	30	30.91%	68	31.30%	72	13.43%	27	24.66%	36	32.43%	36	24.94% 332

Data observed from the above table shows all the key factors of students attending the school, for example 22.16% of all students attending the school receive free school meal. This evidence suggests the school is set in a low income area. The data also shows the amount of needs and care that is being given through indicating the percentages of 'More Able', 'SEN Needs' and 'SEN Status'. The needs data suggests the school has a special needs adaptive learning program set in place.

Class context

I observed a Year 7 class, aged between 11 and 12 years old, the task was to observe two days of teaching around the school with this class and make notes on all critical instances witnessed during the lessons. Over 10 lessons were witnesses over the two-day period each lesson running for around one hour. The class being observed was a mixed ability class that show positive behaviour through the two-day period. Lesson ranged from academic learning lessons such as Welsh, Maths and Humanities. To more physical 'hands on' learning observed in lessons such as PE, Drama and Design technology. In each lesson observed different types of teaching methods could be seen as a strategy to encourage the pupils to learn and complete work.

I saw how these different methods worked for some but not all students, I observed that in some lessons pupils did better and enjoyed more than others and vice versa. An example that was seen in the physical activity lessons, male students seemed to enjoy and perform slightly better compared to female students that performed better and enjoyed the academic 'thinking' lessons.

Apart from this evidence there was no real diversity to the year 7 class that was observed for the two days. All pupils showed full attendance and nether complained about a specific lesson or particular teacher.

Critical incident linked to Donaldson's Four Purposes

Professor Graham Donaldson is the founder of the 'Four Purposes' that are used in curriculum purposes for Wales (Donaldson, 2015). In his report the four Purposes are flowing 'The four purposes are that all children and young people will be Ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives. Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work. Ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world. Healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society. The Donaldson Review recommends four purposes to the Curriculum for Wales and says that, if generally supported, they should 'guide all future decisions about national and local educational priorities and underpin all teaching and learning in Wales'. The curriculum guides all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, it aims to give every student access to rigorous academic

experiences. The structure, organization, and considerations in a curriculum are created in order to enhance student learning and facilitate instruction.

There were many Critical incident observed during the two-day period at the school. The chosen example that follows the parts of the four purposes, specifically to enable each child or young person to be a successful learner and a confident individual. I observed during the Welsh lesson a structured system in the classroom to promoted positive contribution and behaviour through the means of positive reinforcement. The positive reinforcement was displayed as a 'wall of fame' where if students performed exceptionally well and contributed to the lessons they would be awarded. This method of rewarding 'giving an opportunity to win a prize' had a positive effect on the class and promoted confident learners. Students were focused on answering questions, they were keener on demonstrating good behaviour and finally contribution in class was far greater. This critical incident demonstrates parts of the four principles. The teaching method, positive reinforcement promotes learners to be (Ambitious) and ready to learn, through the means of participation 'wanting to answer question'. The Method also promotes (Enterprising) by having the pupils 'come up with new ideas' thinking of how to answer possible questions.

This method of teaching can be simplified down to Skinner's theory of operant conditioning as to relating to the positive reinforcement of behaviour. The part of the theory that relates is as follows 'behaviour that is followed by pleasant consequences is likely to be repeated, and behaviour followed by unpleasant consequences is less likely to be repeated' (Skinner, 1988). This evidence proves by offering an award pupil are more likely give their best and engage with the task in hand.

Results taken from a study to show motivation of students using positive Reinforcement, positive reinforcement in the classroom showed to significantly improve students' age-appropriate behaviours and social skills. The results also showed the effects were sustainable, lasting even after the reward system was removed or discontinued (Diedrich, 2022).

Positive reinforcement is an evidence-based teaching method that is simple, yet powerful enough that it can be implemented across all classrooms environments if done correctly. Reinforcement occurs immediately following a behaviour that increases the likelihood that the person will perform the behaviour again. In conjunction with this method of teaching would work better with the younger years 'year 7' as they are more like to participate with the method. Although this method is better suited for the early years ,it can be implemented correctly and at the right time it can in turn be sustainable, improving learners contribution throughout their academic life 'as stated in the evidence earlier'.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Operant conditioning, also known as instrumental conditioning, is a method of learning normally attributed to research conducted by B.F. Skinner. In Skinners finding, the consequences of a response determine the probability of it being repeated. The operant conditioning behaviour which was observed was reinforced through means of rewarding students on the wall chart. This theory shows that good behaviour will likely be repeated, and behaviour which is punished will occur less frequently. Skinner believed that the best way to understand behaviour is to look at the causes of an action and its consequences. He called this approach operant conditioning, in which he looked at Positive and negative stimulus 'adding' and 'removal' as a method of enforcing and punishing behaviour. This method was used to increased wanted behaviour and to decrease less preferable behaviour (Skinner, 1988). This evidence shows that to successfully get the best response from a student, 'positive reinforcement' as through rewarding good performance will in turn boost the amount of good performance from occurring in a class environment.

However, the negative side of this method found comparing ages. Biglan, found that mobilising positive reinforcement to reduce youth negative behaviour' show that the older the participants become the less likely the method would have an effect on them, therefore not reducing negative behaviour in comparison to younger participants (A. Biglan, 1995). The method was less effective with older age groups, meaning that the best use of the method is in the early stages of learning such as seen in the critical incident/ observation, 'years 7 and 8'. This method of operant conditioning through positive reinforcement boosting positive behaviour in the class as a whole.

One of the key features for learning is memory. Learning is the acquisition of skill or knowledge, and memory is the expression of what you've acquired, for a student to show what they have learnt memory skills are needed to produce learning. Jean Piaget shows children's cognitive development in four stages, each of the stages represent a new way of thinking and understanding of the world (Piaget, 1976). Each stage is correlated with an age period of childhood for example: -

- Sensorimotor intelligence (2 years)
- Preoperational thinking (2 to 7 years)
- Concrete operational thinking (7 to 11 years)
- Formal operational thinking (ages 12 and up)

This evidence shows that to produce the best possible learning from pupils' teachers need to adapt to the correlated age of their pupils. In this case teachers need to think of way to introduce 'formal operational thinking' into lessons. "pupils who can reason the answer in their heads are using formal operational thinking" and they can apply learning in different context (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). The best way to introduce this method of leaning would be through 'self-assessment' having the pupils give reasoning to the work / self-marking work and understanding where they have gone wrong. As a result of operational thinking many pupils will be able to think in an abstract way and hypothetically, exhibit many new ways of reflecting on information (Dolgin, 2011).

The negative side to Piaget's theory of learning is that the theory overestimates the ability of adolescence and doesn't consider students with disabilities. Students with learning difficulties may have a learning stage which is different to peers in the class. An example of a disability like dyslexia should be considered by Piaget's theory. In early childhood, the child may not be obviously affected by dyslexia, and therefore, the problem may not be detected. In middle childhood, when the child starts to become aware of the significance of things and develop feelings of responsibility, a pupil with dyslexia may not value/achieve scholastic achievements, and therefore may dislike school and learning. Early detection is very important for early intervention and management of dyslexia, especially before reaching the later childhood stage when socialisation is important and schoolwork demands are greater (Al-Shidhani, 2012).

Students at this Formal operational thinking stage 'ages 12 up' may need extra support to aid in their work and development, even starting back a stage with the student and developing them up to be capable learners around their fellow peers, this would also support Donaldson four purposes.

Another theory that has important implications for education in schools is John Bowlby's attachment theory. The theory emphasises the importance of children making secure attachments with their care giver, this being the teacher in the case of education. 'Attachment theory is concerned with the role of the primary carer in providing a child with a sense of safety, a secure base from which to thrive and flourish' (Bowlby, 1979). The theory in relation to education states the importance of teachers making the right sort of connection with students as means of seeing them develop e.g. produce good work and contribute to lessons. Children need to feel safe and secure in order to make

the most of the learning opportunities available. Evidence from a research paper 'Attachment in the Classroom' by Dr Christi Bergin, shows that students with greater positive relationships with teachers contributed more academically in class (Bergin, 2009). The data showed that when student responded to 'Liking' a teacher, the higher the academic results would be in those classes that the teacher was teaching. Alternatively, application of attachment theory in the school setting allows for assessing a child's disruptive behaviour, for example wilfully troublesome/disruptive behaviour may be seen as result of current fears and anxieties that have a history in biography and developmental context. In order to address this, it's important to increased staff awareness of such problems, together with the acquisition of associated relational skills. This may lead to enhanced teaching and an increase in learning ability. In consequence, a relationship-based approach to teaching and the organisation of school life in general, has the potential to enhance educational performance overall.

Limitation of attachment theory is its failure to recognize the profound influences of social class, gender, ethnicity, and culture on personality development. Pupils may not be able to make a link with the teacher or in some cases misinterpret their teacher authority, this in turn can influence the pupil's behaviour and overall, the pupils learning. The evidence shows that, it is important that the correct specific attachment is made for students so they can create an educational bond with the teacher to further their academic progressing in class.

Adverse childhood experiences also known as 'ACEs' play a key role in the education field. Movements toward trauma informed approaches in education settings represent a critical example of how research on adverse childhood experiences 'ACEs' have been translated into policy and practice in school around the country (Chafouleas, 2021). It is believed that children who experience adverse childhood experiences 'ACEs' not only are more likely to exhibit negative behaviours at school but are more likely to develop risky behaviours. As a method of combating this schools have introduced trauma informed approached to aid education. According to an Estyn report by Delyth Gray 'Schools should first ensure that they place a strong focus on building and maintaining trusting, positive and open relationships with families. Finally, schools should provide calm, nurturing and supportive spaces for children and young people to relax and feel safe when they feel stressed, worried, or sad' (Gray, 2020). By supporting children with ACEs, can boost their academic performance and their 'so what' attitudes to school life. Evidence shows that pupils with ACEs under achieve in school compared to others, for example those with ACEs are more than double the risk of having no educational qualifications when leaving school and at much greater risk of unemployment (K.Hardcastle, 2018). Evidence from Public Heath Wales shows two of the five adults with ≥ 4 ACEs and were unemployed and went on to claim from the Employee Benefits Scheme in Wales. ACEs influence school and society, evidence has shown that if the correct support networks are implemented into earlier life stages, for example during school life. 'ACEs do not limit further attainment once initial educational hurdles are overcome' (K.Hardcastle, 2018) this evidence reports that when ACEs are properly tackled the effects can be eliminated allowing for pupils with these ACEs to effectively succeed in school life 'eliminating bad behaviour and promoting contribution in the class environment'.

REFLECTION / EVALUATION & NEXT STEPS

The reflective model chosen as a way to evaluate the observation is the 'Borton model of reflection' (Borton, 1970). This method entails a three-step process, which requires the write up of Experience (what) Reflection (so what) Learning (now what). This model suggests that reflection leads to further learning through the means of questioning. Bortons simple three step model is capable of facilitating profound insights into the critical incident as it's straightforward and easy to implement reflective

framework. It allows for an incident into why the incident occurred how it occurred and what can be done to improve the incident (Nicol, 2016).

The critical incident observed was focused on combating behaviour through the means of rewarding good/positive behaviour. The theories focused in this assignment discuss why children may behave the way they do toward their teacher and the effects on their learning. The methodology behind the critical incident focuses on positive reinforcement ' . Writing down on the board children that are producing good work and are contributing to the lesson well - in turn showing good behaviour.

Although this method see is shown to work and produce results with children responding positively in class. However, it is not as simple as 'good behaviour produces good work'. An example of this would be disabilities and ACEs, as spoken previously there is more understanding required from the teacher for good behaviour, for example if children are not given the correct support needed, they are more likely to struggle and not produce same positive behaviour/work. In turn pupils with disabilities and those suffering from the effects of ACEs, are less likely to have the opportunity of reward 'having their name written on the board'. This in turn would add to the pupils' poor behaviour and work ethic as they see themselves as underachieving, although they might be producing excellent work for the individual level they are at.

The learning from the critical incident has shown for all pupils to produce the best possible learning outcome. The teacher will need to find way of using positive reinforcement that is adaptive for all levels. Pupils will need individual assessments to properly identify whether they may be at a disadvantage because of possible disabilities or even ACEs and the teacher should be aware. By understanding individual disadvantages and finding the correct level in which the pupils can thrive, only then can we implement positive reinforcement such as rewarding students.

To critically evaluate what can be changed, students need to be assessed by their individual work and not just in a class group. There is a need for personal/individual positive reinforcement from the teacher. Teachers need to know which students are disadvantaged and reward them on their own individual successes. To implemented this, the teacher from the critical incident could learn if the disadvantage students never achieve the wall of merit. They should understand what sort of level the student is performing at, rather than compare them to the class. Giving personal feedback through the means of positive reinforcement as way to boost good behaviour and good contribution for all students.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the evidence shows that behaviour can affected the academic performance of students. Positive reinforcement can work as means of producing positive behaviour in class and in turn boost academic success of pupils. Although there are some exceptions that need to be considered for example ACEs and students with learning difficulties. Evidence shows that these can be the reason why some students present negative behaviour in class compared to other students with the same teacher. To address this, teachers need to know the students who may have disadvantages and should aim to give them their own personal positive reinforcement and be inclusive.

Furthermore, time to form the student teacher relationship is important to the success of education. Unfortunately, the case study allowed for two days of observations. In order to get insight of behaviour from the wall of merit and to see if the same children remained in the top 10 place, there needs to be more time. This would allow for more observations to be taken for example whether the behaviour changes depending on the time of day or day of the week and whether behaviour changes during other classes because of the teacher style. Teachers need to spend time with students to see

what individual learning methods suit them, whilst trying a variety of methods to also find the best method that suits the whole class. Encouraging students/pupils to also be critically reflective enhances the progression of a teacher 's teaching abilities (Cohen, 2000).

The experience gave a personal insight into teaching and allowed for many observations to take place, which in turn will assist me in choosing the best methods of practice to be adapted and adopted into personal practice. 'Adopting the teaching method of positive reinforcement in class but adapting it to work better by considering individuals and suit my own teaching style'.

Word count - 4050

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OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

Record 1

Date and time, year group: Monday the 26th of October, 9:10 – 10:00 years 7 lesson 1
Where and When: Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context The lesson being conducted was Welsh, during lesson one. The classroom was a mixed ability
What happened: a detailed description of the critical incident(the more detail the better to refer to in your later work) The teacher had designed a method of rewarding the children for good behavior through the means of 'the wall of fam'. Students would have their name written on the board for good behavior / contributing well to the lesson. At the end of the lesson all the names on the board were given an opportunity to win a prize.
Areas of possible exploration: what do you think could be" under the hood" in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider? There is a need to analyse behaviour to understand the benefits of this method 'rewarding for good behaviour'. 'Positive reinforcement through the means of operant conditioning' reading up on B.F. Skinner is needed to analyse the method.
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) Students all responded positively. All students were answering and contributing as a means of getting on the 'wall of fame'.

Record 2

Date and time, year group: Monday the 26th of October, 2:25 – 3:25 years 7 lesson 5
Where and When: Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context Humanities lesson Same class with a mix of abilities Students all the same age
What happened: a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work) Teachers were seen giving positive reinforcement by complementing and appraising the children of doing good work. The teacher also took the time to give individual feedback on some of the students' work
Areas of possible exploration: what do you think could be "under the hood" in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider? Looking at the benefits of individual feedback compared to peer assessing or even whole class feedback. (Learning ladder) making the pupils visualise where their learning is taking them and how they can 'improve'. (Target setting) reaching personal and class targets
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) Students were seen as a bit tired as it was last lesson before 'end of school'.

Record 3

Date and time, year group: Tuesday the 27th of October, 12:25 – 1:15 years 7 lesson 4
Where and When: Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context Design and technology Same class as the previous lessons, Mixed ability class All behaving the same (listening to teacher)
What happened: a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work) Teacher had method that pupils could use to critically evaluate their work (www) what went well (EBI) even better if

(NOW) what are they going to do after feedback

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

Exploring the benefits of critically assessing work

Find data on how critically assessing works

Find other critically assessing methods

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)

N/A