

ECAD6007

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.

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## Introduction

Observations occur in a range of educational establishments and cover all ages and stages of learning (Min, 2006, p. 121; Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 308; Danish *et al.*, 2016, p. 6). These observations can occur for multiple reasons (Kumar, 2014, p. 173). Teachers may make observations of their students when carrying out a task to identify how it can be adapted for future use (Boon, 2016, p. 223), whilst researchers may be present in order to collect evidence that can be used as part of a wider research study (Min, 2006, p. 121).

Case studies, in particular critical incidents, can be beneficial for both teachers and their students as they allow for reflective practice to occur (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 129; Tripp, 2012, p. 24; Joshi, 2018, p. 82). Observed critical incidents can vary in their stature and impact; from simplistic, everyday moments to large-scale severe incidents (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 293; Tripp, 2012, p. 24). The recording and analysis of critical incidents in classrooms enables situations to be reflected on at a more convenient time (Tripp, 2012, p. 32). Possible preventative measures, solutions or areas for further enhancement can then be discussed as a result of the observed incident, resulting in them being introduced into the environment in the future (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 129; Tripp, 2012, p. 30; Joshi, 2018, p. 83).

This essay aims to identify and critique an observed critical incident that occurred in a primary education setting, with a focus on the next steps of learning for both students involved and the researcher.

## Observation

A primary school for children aged 3 to 11 was attended for this study. The catchment area for the school is a small suburb of a town, where majority of students come from homes where English is the first language (Estyn, 2015). The school budget provided per pupil is

slightly higher than the minimum school budget per pupil provided by the local authority, and a similar percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals as the Welsh national average of 22 per cent (Estyn, 2015).

The class observed for this study was a mixed ability Year 1 class of five to six-year olds, with approximately thirty students in the class. Students remained in this group throughout the observation and were split into smaller, mixed ability groups for activities and provisions throughout the day. Support was provided by a teacher and a teaching assistant. The classroom environment encouraged learning through language and maths displays, as well as various creative and technological engagement areas.

Further details about the school, class or participants involved in this study cannot be mentioned due to privacy and ethical guidelines produced by the British Education Research Association (2018).

It should be noted that the observation period took place during the COVID-19 outbreak. This may have had an impact on what was observed in the school, as well as the daily running of classes in the establishment.

### Methodology

Case study methodology was the most appropriate method to complete this study, due to it being a primary research method (Kumar, 2014, p. 173). This allows the researcher to see and interpret any potential incidents, ensuring that they understand the context and dynamics of a situation in relation to its surroundings (Kumar, 2014, p. 173, p. 289). This methodology also enables qualitative data to be collected, allowing descriptions of events or interactions to be noted in significant detail (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.290; Tripp, 2012, p. 25; Kumar, 2014, p. 175). A range of case study methods were considered when undertaking this

study, including action research, longitudinal study, and critical incidents (Tripp, 2012, p. 24; Joshi, 2018, p. 82).

Critical incidents were the most appropriate case study method for data collection in this study. This method has been developed, improved, and used over an extended time period (Tripp, 2012, p. 26). Any event that occurs in a classroom, regardless of its size or outcome, can be rendered a critical incident if later analysed and reflected on (Tripp, 2012, p. 24-25; Joshi, 2018, p. 84). High levels of detail are also beneficial when describing critical incidents (Tripp, 2012, p. 33). This allows the focus of the incident to be drawn to a small detail that can influence a situation and future thinking (Tripp, 2012, p. 33). Critical incident observation is also a recognised technique that is regularly used by teachers in classrooms to aid professional development (Tripp, 2012, p. 34; Joshi, 2018, p. 84).

Non-participant observation was also used as part of the critical incident technique. This was more appropriate than participant observation due to the researcher being able to spend additional time identifying potential incidents in the whole classroom, as opposed to focusing on a smaller group or activity (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.465; Kumar, 2014, p. 174; Joshi, 2018, p. 83). This also allowed for more attention to be given to any identified critical incidents, therefore obtaining greater amounts of detail and description to aid in further analysis and reflection (Tripp, 2012, p. 34; Kumar, 2014, p. 174).

Action research is a similar research approach to critical incidents (Tripp, 2012, p. 34). This method involves participant observation, as teachers implement techniques or strategies to improve a previously identified area (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 344).

Reflections are made on these changes, and feedback can be shared with other educators on how successful the change was in the testing environment (Cohen, Manion and Morrison,

2011, p. 344). This method was not used as a specific change was not being implemented in the class being observed.

Longitudinal studies occur over extended periods of time, with a focus on a specific individual or class group (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 196, p. 266). Due to the time period covered, large amounts of data can be generated from one longitudinal survey (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 266). This method was unsuitable for this study due to the substantial timescale that would be required for data collection.

### Critical incident and the four purposes

The critical incident focused on in this study involved two groups of students and a teaching assistant. The incident took place during an outdoor learning session. Children were tasked with making a Jurassic forest using items they were able to find. After a group check in session, the teaching assistant asked a group with a substantial number of items in their tray to comment on a group who had considerably less items. After discussing what was liked and required in the other groups' trays, both groups worked together to find more items that would fit the success criteria discussed before the start of the session.

Further detail about this critical incident can be found in "2. Critical incident identification record" in Appendix 1, whilst further details about the lesson can be found in "1. Observation/Field notes" in Appendix 2.

The four purposes were devised by Donaldson (2015, p. 29-30) after research was conducted on behalf of the Welsh government into the effectiveness of Curriculum for Wales 2008, and its subsequent assessments (Donaldson, 2015, p. 1).

The four proposed purposes are set to be the focus points of education reform in Curriculum for Wales 2022, providing a set of ideas that form the basis of the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015, p. 30). Each purpose aims to be developed through the introduction of six

Areas of Learning and Experience (termed: AoLE) that will be the same across all education levels (Donaldson, 2015, p. 38-39). Subjects that are currently taught in schools will be placed under a relevant AoLE (Donaldson, 2015, p. 38-39). As well as subject knowledge, students will be provided with opportunities to develop transferable skills, such as literacy and digital competency, through a range of cross curricular activities (Donaldson, 2015, p. 39-40).

To provide direction in each AoLE, five statements of learning were produced to guide educators in the production of curriculums (Donaldson, 2015, p. 95). Each statement is accompanied by a continuum of steps, increasing in skill, difficulty, and subject knowledge, which students should aim to achieve at different points throughout their time in education (Donaldson, 2015, p. 57). Providing the steps as a continuum enables learners to progress at their own pace and recognises that some learners may excel at greater rates than other learners at differing points (Donaldson, 2015, p. 54).

Of the four purposes put forward by Donaldson (2015), both “enterprising, creative contributors” (p. 29) and “ethical, informed citizens” (p. 30) best support the critical incident noted above. Observed interactions between individuals of a group, as well as with children that were part of other groups aligns with the ideas put forward in the first purpose mentioned (Donaldson, 2015, p. 29). This purpose was also supported through students providing task related feedback and knowledge to another group, which had the intention of supporting peers to progress further in their work.

The respectful nature in which students provided and utilised peer feedback aligns with the idea of creating “informed citizens” (Donaldson, 2015, p. 30). This was observed in the interactions that took place after feedback had been received, when one group assisted the other in finding items that were more appropriate for the task than the ones found previously.

## Literature review

### The use of peer assessment and feedback

Assessment for learning (termed AfL) is one of the pedagogical principles defined by Donaldson (2015, p. 64-70) that intends to benefit students using formative assessment methods (Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p.304; Wiliam, 2018, p. 2). Using AfL methods is a natural way of incorporating verbal or written feedback into activities or tasks, and can either be completed individually or in collaboration (Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 304; Donaldson, 2015, p. 76). The four elements of AfL were identified by Leahy *et al.* (2005, cited in Wiliam, 2018, p. 52), and include the use of questioning and success criteria, alongside peer and self-assessment. AfL techniques are used in a range of educational establishments with a variety of different age groups. Examples of these include college students studying English as a second language and students in primary or secondary education (Min, 2006, p. 121; Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 308; Boon, 2016, p. 212).

Using peer feedback can have positive or negative effects on a student, depending on how they interpret the information they receive (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996, cited in William, 2018, p. 131). Students who receive positive feedback may aim to push themselves further in their next task to gain greater understanding and experience, or may become complacent if they feel they have already achieved the task to a sufficient standard (Wiliam, 2018, p. 132).

Similar ideas may occur for children who receive negative feedback, either striving to complete the work to a better standard in the future, or rejecting the feedback and no longer engaging with the set task (Wiliam, 2018, p. 132). Any feedback that is received by a student needs to have reason and understanding behind, as this helps an individual to identify what needs to occur for them to progress (Donaldson, 2015, p.68).

A study by Boon (2016, p. 213) found that peer feedback was an ineffective attribute in the classroom, as students felt they did not gain much from the experience or understand its purpose. To increase the effectiveness of the task for students, training was provided on how feedback should be provided to peers, in the form of scaffolded questions relating to success criteria and model answers (Boon, 2016, p. 217). The use of training to improve what students obtain from peer assessment was also found to be beneficial by Min (2006, p. 129), as students understood the purpose of what they were identifying in the work of their peers. This enabled students to provide more concise, detailed feedback (Min, 2006, p. 127).

Being able to discuss any feedback that is obtained through peer assessment is also an important factor in ensuring that it is utilised by individuals (Boon, 2016, p. 219). This is beneficial to students as it enables them to check their own understanding of comments with the peer directly, providing opportunities to elaborate on any feedback given and point out specific instances in the work that it relates to in order to further the individuals understanding (Boon, 2016, p. 219). This enables clarity of feedback and ensures that learners do not internalise a wrong interpretation of the feedback, which may be detrimental to their learning of the topic, either at this point or in the future (William, 2018, p.136).

Peer feedback does have the potential to negatively affect a students' work (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996, cited by Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 304). This may be related to the accuracy of what the peer assessor has noted in their feedback, with their lack of understanding of a topic or purpose being an example that could ultimately be detrimental to an individual (Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 304).

Utilising peer feedback and learning through collaborative tasks can also be beneficial for students, as they are able to obtain higher levels of achievement (Min, 2006, p. 129; Donaldson, 2015, p. 70). For peer assessment to be successfully implemented, the student

acting as the assessor is required to have prior knowledge and understanding of the topic being used at the time (Donaldson, 2015, p. 80-81).

Having this knowledge in place is beneficial for both the student and their assessor regardless of their ability level (Wiliam, 2018, p. 158). In these situations, the assessor can explain what they know and understand to a peer, who can then gain additional knowledge or deepen their own understanding of the work (Donaldson, 2015, p. 80-81; Wiliam, 2018, p. 157-158). This also exemplifies the importance of students being able to discuss any feedback that they have obtained from their peers, as it can immediately rectify any negative perceptions that a student may have assumed (Wiliam, 2018, p. 157).

#### The use of a more knowledgeable other

The theory of a more knowledgeable other (termed MKO) supports the theory put forward by Vygotsky on social behaviourism (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Cicconi, 2013, p. 58; Abtahi, Graven and Lerman, 2017, p. 275; Eun, 2019, p. 18). Traditionally, adults are seen as MKOs (Cicconi, 2013, p. 57). More recently technology, inanimate objects or class peers have been acknowledged as MKOs, with the situation dictating who or what is seen as a MKO (Roth and Radford, 2010, p. 303; Cicconi, 2013, p. 57; Abtahi, Graven and Lerman, 2017, p. 275-276).

The use of a MKO can occur in a variety of different settings and situations. Some examples where an MKO would typically be seen in a classroom environment include collaborative or group work, peer assessments or direct teaching of the class from their teacher (Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 305; Topping, 1998, cited in van Gennip, Segers and Tillema, 2010, p. 304; Donaldson, 2015, p. 64).

The use of collaboration and peer feedback methods in classrooms also supports the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (termed ZPD), also put forward by Vygotsky (Shabani,

Khatib and Ebadi, 2010, p. 236; Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Danish *et al.*, 2016, p. 6). The ZPD is defined as any activity that requires an individual to receive additional help from a more experienced individual, as they would be unable to complete the activity if left unaided (Shabani, Khatib and Ebadi, 2010, p. 238; Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Eun, 2019, p. 20). Receiving help allows the individual to develop their skills and gain a greater understanding of the task being completed (Eun, 2019, p. 20, p. 23). The ZPD has also been observed as being an effective way of helping students to learn, particularly as it can benefit all learners in a class regardless of their ability (Wiliam, 2018, p. 158).

Collaboration also enables the use of a MKO, which benefits both parties. Students receiving help from a MKO would gain knowledge and understanding through interactions such as questioning, discussions or the use of physical items (Roth and Radford, 2010, p. 302; Abtahi, Graven and Lerman, 2017, p. 285; Boon, 2016, p. 219). The peer seen as the MKO would reinforce their own knowledge by consolidating what they know and explaining to their peer (Shabani, Khatib and Ebadi, 2010, p. 245; Eun, 2019, p. 20).

Peer feedback and assessment is similarly beneficial for both parties involved. To fully assess a piece of work, students need a good understanding of the purpose and methods used to provide feedback that is beneficial and enables improvements (Roth and Radford, 2010, p. 306; Donaldson, 2015, p. 81; Wiliam, 2018, p. 158). Students receiving feedback are also benefited by being encouraged to view their work in a different perspective, particularly if a critique is explained to them in a different way, or specific examples from their work are mentioned (Donaldson, 2015, p. 81; Boon, 2016, p. 219; Wiliam, 2018, p. 136).

Studies completed on the use of collaboration and peer feedback to enhance the learning of students in classrooms also support the idea of the ZPD. This is primarily due to findings that students may achieve greater success in tasks and learn more when they are able to obtain

knowledge from their peers as MKOs, as opposed to using adults or teachers (Min, 2006, p. 127; Boon, 2016, p. 223; Abtahi, Graven and Lerman, 2017, p. 285; Wiliam, 2018, p. 157).

In contrast, some studies have found that using student peers as MKOs may not be beneficial to the learning of other students. Gielen *et al.* (2010, p. 312) discusses that if students are able to justify why they have obtained a specific answer, then other students may take the comments on board and use the knowledge obtained, regardless of it is correct. Students may have obtained the inaccurate knowledge for a range of reasons, including mishearing the initial task or not fully understanding an earlier part of a topic that was crucial for the current understanding (Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 304).

van Gennip, Segers and Tillema (2010, p. 288) identified that trust between students also plays a role in how well a student can progress when using a peer as an MKO. This may be linked to the idea that students obtain and utilise greater amounts of feedback in environments and company that they feel familiar and safe in, regardless of how accurate they are (van Gennip, Segers and Tillema, 2010, p. 288; Donaldson, 2015, p. 68).

### Reflection and next steps

The critical incident focused on in this study involved the use of AfL methods on a group of children to check their understanding and help their peers improve on a task. The main AfL technique used was peer feedback between a group who were observed to have successfully fulfilled the task and another who appeared to need additional help, whilst success criteria were mentioned periodically throughout the task.

If the observed task were to be completed again, a recommendation would be to ensure that students were placed into groups with a range of abilities. Wiliam (2018, p. 158) mentions that children benefit greatly from peer tutoring, regardless of their ability. Placing children who require additional help in the same grouping as children who are classed as higher ability

would allow them to be brought on further during the task (Gielen *et al.*, 2010, p. 311).

Children would be able to partake in discussions about the task which would aid their understanding, as well as remove any misconceptions in a non-confrontational manner (Boon, 2016, p. 219).

A second recommendation for this task would be to utilise students when assessing completed work. During the observed lesson, peer assessment took place once, but was completed by the teacher numerous times. Encouraging peer feedback is greatly beneficial to children, particularly as they are more likely to enact on any mentioned comments (Wiliam, 2018, p. 157). Peer feedback also allows individuals to use different language to explain elements of the task to their peers, which can elicit different responses to the ones obtained from the teacher (Boon, 2016, p. 216; Wiliam, 2018, p. 157; Kluger and DeNisi, 1996, cited in Wiliam, 2018, p. 131; Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Eun, 2019, p. 20). This is also beneficial to the student acting as the MKO in the situation, who is also able to consolidate their own knowledge (Wiliam, 2018, p. 158).

Peer assessment is also beneficial to students as it allows them to further develop and enhance skills mentioned by Donaldson (2015, p. 29-31) in the four purposes. The specific skills developed during the observed critical incident include utilising teamwork and a range of roles through contribution and feedback, and making choices about the elements of work that should be critiqued when asked (Donaldson, 2015, p. 29-30).

Reflective practice is an important part of teaching professional practice (Colomer *et al.*, 2013, p. 364, p. 369). Its purpose is to develop professional practice further, which ultimately benefits students (Fullana *et al.*, 2014, p. 1008; Kolb, 1984, cited in Fullana *et al.*, 2014, p. 1009). Reflective practice also aims to structure the way that professional practice is viewed, by altering the points focused on at different times to ensure a situation is fully reviewed

(Fullana *et al.*, 2014, p. 1008; Lotter and Miller, 2017, p. 913). A range of different reflective practice models exist, including Kolb's experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2014, p. 92).

For effective learning to occur, a range of elements are considered when reviewing effective practice. These include any learnt theory, as well as events or experiences that have occurred first-hand (Colomer *et al.*, 2013, p. 365). Using a combination of both elements allows a personal conclusion to be drawn about the event and enables someone to identify how they would react in similar situations (Fullana *et al.*, 2014, p. 1010; Kolb, 2014, p. 91-92).

Based on the experiential learning theory put forward by Kolb (2014, p. 92), the observed critical incident would be the physical experience and the above recommendations would be the reflection of the physical experience. The literature review in this study would be classified as learning about the experience, whilst the following implications on personal and professional practice would be acting on the experience (Kolb, 2014, p. 92).

From what was observed during this study, I strongly feel that the use of AfL techniques, particularly peer feedback and assessment, are extremely beneficial to classrooms. Children were observed applying prior knowledge throughout the task and using this knowledge to critique and encourage their peers throughout the task.

I also feel that providing students with an opportunity to express how they felt about another's piece of work to be insightful. Their views were expressed in an environment they felt safe and secure in, whilst also being able to share their views in terminology that both parties were able to fully understand. As a result, students were able to clearly identify what others felt they needed to develop, which they were able to achieve because of the guidance received from peers.

I also found being able to view the techniques in person after reading literature about them in university beneficial. Being able to observe the techniques happening provided me with a

deeper understanding of why the techniques are used in classrooms successfully. As a result, I would like to further my knowledge on AfL techniques, so that I can implement them into my teaching practice effectively and know their specific purposes and intended benefits.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify a critical incident within a primary education setting. Discussions as a result focused on how this would inform future professional practice when combined with the reading of literature.

As a result of the observed critical incident further research was conducted into the use of assessment for learning techniques, specifically the use of peer feedback and assessment, within education establishments. Literature research was also conducted on the use of students as more knowledgeable others towards their peers.

Reviewing the literature found that both AfL techniques and the use of students as MKOs for their peers were beneficial towards their peers, regardless of the ability of the student (Wiliam, 2018, p. 158). Multiple reasons were suggested as to why both techniques were beneficial to students, including students being able to check their own knowledge against peers when providing comments and students feeling more comfortable obtaining feedback from a peer than a teacher (Boon, 2016, p. 218; van Gennip, Segers and Tillema, 2010, p. 288).

Of the five professional standards implemented by the Welsh Government (2019, p. 16), pedagogy and professional learning link best to what was observed in the current study.

Pedagogy is supported by the viewing of the critical incident *in situ*. Observed elements that support pedagogical development include the critical incident itself focusing on assessment techniques, the use of learning outside of a classroom environment and the task itself

supporting more than one aspect of the four purposes put forward by Donaldson (2015, p. 29-30) (Welsh Government, 2019, p. 22-29).

Professional learning is supported by literature and research to further develop thoughts and ideas that can be implemented during teaching. As opposed to relating to the observation of the critical incident itself, this is linked to research completed after the observed critical incident.

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## Appendix 1. Critical incident identification record.

### 1. CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

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| Details relevant to the research context.            | <p>29/09/20, 09:10</p> <p>Year 1 class</p> <p>Involved: 1 teacher, 1 teaching assistant, class of Year 1 pupils</p> <p>Children had been briefed on the activity for their first lesson, going outside for Forest School to collect natural objects that would be found in a Jurassic forest. The purpose of this was to be able to build their own Jurassic forest that could be a habitat for dinosaurs (the topic of the term). Success criteria, such as which plants and natural object would and would not be found in a Jurassic forest were discussed indoors before the critical incident.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| What happened?<br>Thoughts on pedagogy and practice? | <p>The teacher had just finished briefing the children on the success criteria required for the Jurassic forest that they would be starting to create in this lesson. The teacher asked the stand up from carpet. The children got up off the carpet and began talking loudly and excitedly whilst trying to find someone to partner up with so they could have a buddy to walk to Forest School with.</p> <p>Students then began lining up whilst talking loudly. The teacher stood up, put her hand in the air to mimic a stop sign and loudly sang “Stopiwch plis” to the children. The children stopped where they were, quietly turned to face the teacher and held their hands out in a stop sign. The teacher quietly counted the children and paired up any individuals who did not have a partner yet, before heading out to the Forest School with the children behind her, and the teaching assistant following on at the back of the line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The method of loudly singing the phrase “Stopiwch plis” along with the hand gesture was something that was recognised by the children as a way of getting them to stop what they were doing at the time and give their full attention to whoever the speaker was.</li><li>• The specific action and phrasing had been used before and may be seen as a method of classical conditioning (teacher uses phrase (stimulus); students stop and look; students get praised/get to move onto next part of the task for following instructions). Would like to look further into the differences in classical and operant conditioning in classroom settings.</li><li>• This method was an effective way of gaining the full attention of the students, all of whom were quiet after this signal had been used. Compared to other potential methods, how successful is this method in comparison?</li><li>• By gaining the full attention of the students, the teacher was able to explain the next steps for session, as well as brief individuals on safety aspects that would be different outside compared to inside.</li></ul> |

### 2. CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

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| <p>Details relevant to the research context.</p>             | <p>29/09/20, 09:40</p> <p>Year 1 class</p> <p>Involved: 1 teaching assistant, 2 groups of 5 pupils</p> <p>Children were engaged in an outdoor lesson in Forest School. Children were tasked with collecting natural items that may be found in a Jurassic forest, which would be a habitat for dinosaurs (topic of the term). This incident occurred after a pause in the session, where all groups came together to check that everyone was on task and understanding what they had to do, as well as for answering any questions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>What happened?<br/>Thoughts on pedagogy and practice?</p> | <p>The teaching assistant noticed during the pause break that one group had very few items that had been discussed as part of the success criteria for their forest in their tray, whilst another group had lots of items that had been discussed. Once the pause break had finished, the teaching assistant called both groups together, and them to place the trays they were using to collect items on the ground.</p> <p>Both groups were asked to comment on the other group's forest, including what things that had been collected they liked, what things did they need to collect more of, which items would not be appropriate for a Jurassic forest and where could they find items that they had yet to include.</p> <p>The group who had collected substantially more items then collaborated with the group who had very few, and proceeded to show them where in the Forest School that they had been able to obtain the items they had collected from.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching assistant encouraged the use of AfL techniques to aid in the development and understanding of a group of pupils who were perceived to need additional help with the task. Whilst the 4 types of AfL are needed for the strategy to be successful, is one method more effective than the others?</li> <li>• By asking both groups to provide feedback on the collected items of another group, the teaching assistant was able to check the understanding of the group with less items, to ensure that they fully understood the task at hand and why specific items were needed or not needed.</li> <li>• Pupils were able to integrate the success criteria discussed before the lesson into their feedback, further enhancing the elements that were required for the task.</li> <li>• Having the feedback come from pupils instead of an adult in the situation may have helped to aid the understanding of all individuals involved, particularly if it was explained in a different way to how the teacher was able to explain it earlier in the day. Is feedback that comes from peers more valuable to students than feedback from teachers? Links to Vygotsky's theory of the "More Knowledgeable Other".</li> </ul> |



### 3. CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

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| <p>Details relevant to the research context.</p>             | <p>29/09/20, 13:22</p> <p>Year 1 class<br/>Involved: 1 teacher, class of Year 1 pupils, 1 student - demonstrator</p> <p>The class were reinforcing what had been learnt the previous day during a maths session featuring Numicons to show number bonds. All pupils were sat together on the carpet, using a whiteboard to work through problems together. Different students were called out by the teacher to suggest numbers, pick numbers off the whiteboard, and say the sum in full. For this critical incident, a child was picked to come and pick the correct Numicon off the whiteboard, but was asked to do a slightly different task to the other children who had been called to the front to help.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>What happened?<br/>Thoughts on pedagogy and practice?</p> | <p>The individual chosen by the teacher appeared shy whilst walking to the whiteboard. The pupil was asked to pick a Numicon off the whiteboard that corresponded to the number a different student gave to be used in the sum that would be completed next. Once the pupil had picked the correct Numicon, the teacher asked the child to stay at the front of the class to help everyone count to make sure it was the correct number. This had previously been done with just the teacher sat next to the whiteboard, with the whole class counting the spaces on the Numicon together.</p> <p>The pupil was initially hesitant to count the spaces but was encouraged by the teacher. The pupil quietly counted the spaces on the Numicon, whilst the rest of the class joined in. The child had picked the correct Numicon and was praised by both the teacher and class. The child was smiling when they returned to their seat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher may have seen that the individual was less engaged in the task than other pupils in the room, so by asking them to participate using a slightly different method may have been enough to encourage them to fully engage with the current task again.</li> <li>• Constructivist theory of learning.</li> <li>• The teacher used AfL techniques of success criteria, questioning and feedback to help the individual whilst also benefiting the class at the same time. Are AfL techniques of feedback more effective when they are given to a whole class (either for collectively completing a task or as general feedback) or towards an individual student?</li> <li>• By revisiting an area of maths that had been looked at previously, the pupils were able to utilise their previous knowledge and build upon this, therefore enhancing the previous connections they had made and making it easier to recall the knowledge in this context and other in the future. How often does a student need to complete a specific lesson to understand it? Is there a specific timeframe before additional knowledge should be built onto the subject to ensure that the child has fully understood and integrated both the old and new works?</li> </ul> |



#### 4. CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

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| <p>Details relevant to the research context.</p>             | <p>29/09/20, 11:30</p> <p>Year 1 class<br/>Involved: 1 teacher, 1 group (approx. 15 pupils), 1 student (comment directed towards).</p> <p>Occurred during the Read, Write Inc. session. The incident involved one of the larger groups for this activity in the class and occurred just after the group had progressed to the carpet to start their session. The group could be described as the mid-group for this activity; they were not on the hardest or easiest phonics sounds in the class. For this critical incident, a child was not participating in a certain part of the Read task.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>What happened?<br/>Thoughts on pedagogy and practice?</p> | <p>The teacher used phonics cards with sounds on as part of the Read, Write Inc. programme. The teacher had pointed out the letters on the card and demonstrated the sound that needed to be made. The teacher then instructed the class to repeat the sound a few times, interjecting between each one to re-demonstrate the sound again. On the third try of the sound, the teacher made eye contact with a student in the front row, whilst making the sound again and encouraging the group the students to continue going. The student continued to not participate.</p> <p>At this point, the teacher made a comment in relation to the issue, asking the student “Would you like to do this at lunch time?”. The voice of the teacher had also changed from jovial and light-hearted to more serious and sterner. The student immediately looked down towards the floor after the comment, before joining in with the group reciting the phonics soon on the next turn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial thoughts were related to why the child was not participating with the group. Was the work too difficult for the child? Had the purpose of the activities not been explained to the individual? Had they always been part of the class, or had they moved from a different institution that did not do this programme of sessions?</li> <li>• Was passing a comment on the individual for not participating the best way of dealing with the situation? Would a few words of encouragement have helped the student instead of a potential punishment have been better, particularly if the student did not understand why they were benefiting from the task?</li> <li>• Further research could look towards how different interactions between a teacher and pupil can affect the relationship between the individuals, as well as how the potential relationship with that task or lesson is affected in the future. Research may also be used to discover whether better results are obtained in terms of pupils getting on with a task they are not engaged with through different kinds of interactions, such as positive encouragement and rewarding of behaviour or punishment and the revocation of privileges.</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 2. Observer/field notes.

### 1. OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

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| <b>Date and time, year group:</b><br>29/09/20, 9:00 – 10:00; Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Lesson details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lesson focus – habitats; topic of the term for the class - dinosaurs; fits into Science lesson</li><li>• AoLEs covered for lesson: Science and Technology; Expressive Arts</li><li>• Near start of the topic – had 1 outdoor session previously for a different aspect</li><li>• Indoors – for start/end of lesson. Discussed activity (creating a Jurassic forest), what would be required? (AfL), use of IT (pictures)</li><li>• Outdoors – discussion of rules in outdoor environments; collection of natural objects (leaves, twigs, stones)</li><li>• Whole class activity – split into smaller groups outside (by teacher)</li><li>• All abilities involved – not split by ability when in groups</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Classroom culture:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indoors: calm; children were engaged/interested; topic class appeared to share a natural curiosity for; encouraging</li><li>• Outdoors: inquisitive nature; excited; engaging in exploration; children encouraged to find things out for themselves/think of things in alternate ways; lots of open questions to gauge how children feel they are doing with task; children wanted to learn about the outdoors and different elements there; team ethos with the children</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aims/success criteria for lesson (AfL): stated to children before going outdoors, referred to throughout time outdoors, discussed when back inside. *referred to at the end of day (before home time)</li><li>• Indoors: use of pictures on whiteboard – show the plants children would be required to find; reference to previous story books; discussion with whole class about things that would be found outdoors that would not be in their forest (know what not to include)</li><li>• Outdoors: time to look around area in groups before collecting items; frequent pauses on task (every 5-10 minutes) to check in on group work; peer/teacher feedback during pauses about what needs to be included to improve work (AfL); dinosaurs (topic) – referenced when checking work; questions about what had been discussed indoors to further the point (AfL)</li></ul> |
| <b>Direction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relation back to previous work that had been done on the topic (terminology) (AfL)</li><li>• Lots of discussion through open questioning – allowed individuals to provide as much knowledge as they had/ask questions in return (AfL)</li><li>• Visual representation of the task before hand (pictures displayed inside) to compare work they were completing to – understand what elements were needed in higher quantities when pointed out by the teacher during pause moments (AfL)</li><li>• Opportunity to put what had been discussed inside into practice by collection of items</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

for the task outside

- Knew which elements needed to be found to make their work better, despite them not being available in high quantities in the environment (stones) – were able to think of ways as groups in order to overcome the lack of resource

**Access and challenge:**

- Group interactions – finding items in outdoor environment that had been previously discussed as part of success criteria
- Open and closed questioning throughout the task
- Success criteria – discussed both before and after task
- Difficulty in finding items (stones) – group work to think about where they could be; ideas about what could be used instead to look similar

**Assessment:**

- Lots of AfL techniques used – questioning (open and closed; throughout session); success criteria (referenced throughout); feedback (during pause breaks on what was good/needed improving); peer assessment between group work
- Questioning – what is this plant?; what does this represent?; what belongs here? (based off discussions occurring inside); took place at the end of the day (see what children had remembered)
- Prior knowledge – referring to previous lessons for terminology/providing explanations

**Specifics / Critical Incidents:**

- Importance of outdoor environments for teaching – able to see what children gained from outdoor experience
- How easily skills are transferable between lessons

## 2. OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

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| <p>Date and time, year group:</p> <p>29/09/20, 10:45-12:00; Year 1</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>Lesson details:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main task of lesson: Read, write inc. (structured programme); short activity (15-20 minutes)</li><li>• Split into ability groups – set by an initial test; one group worked with at a time; 2 teachers to work with all groups</li><li>• AoLE covered for main task: Language, Literacy and Communication</li><li>• Near start of the course – began beginning of September</li><li>• Continuous provisions for children not completing task</li><li>• Smaller tasks – help to reinforce AoLEs (Expressive Arts; Mathematics and Numeracy; Language, Literacy and Communication)</li><li>• Other tasks – children move freely between</li><li>• All indoor based activities</li></ul>                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Classroom culture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive, encouraging, creative</li><li>• Independent approach to learning – decided activity; got equipment; choose where to work</li><li>• Discussion and collaborative atmosphere in certain activity areas – Lego area</li><li>• Team atmosphere on tasks</li><li>• Engaged – easily move onto a new task when finished</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read, write inc. – cards to prompt individuals for spelling/sounds; books to read from to practice pronunciation; personal books to record progress; interaction with teacher (demonstrating sounds; reciting sounds back and forth)</li><li>• iPads – apps that demonstrate how to form letters; let children copy and attempt for themselves; can be used in daily tasks and other areas</li><li>• Writing area – practice handwriting of name on whiteboards; had pre-written names as templates of what they should look like; need for every day</li><li>• Spelling area – dinosaur themed (topic); aid in spelling simple words used everyday</li><li>• Maths table – using Numicon as an interactive tool to understand number bonds (addition to make 10)</li></ul> |
| <p><b>Direction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read, write inc. – set books that they have to read from; instant individual praise from teacher when they complete the phonic correctly (AfL); cards with pronunciations on, which are used in fun and engaging ways</li><li>• Writing task – words are already written; individuals can see what the end product is meant to look like</li><li>• iPads – app determines if letter/word looks right before moving onto the next one</li><li>• Art table – signs around the area (mixing colours; items that are this colour); aid in the creation of work of children</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |

- Displays around the room – alphabets in various places around the room with imagery; phonics displays around the room; displays on the formation of letters; displays on punctuation; topic related displays and roleplay areas to encourage what children had already learnt; displays of number bonds in different formats for maths (jigsaw pieces linking to make 10; ice cream and ice cream cones linking to make 10)

#### **Access and challenge:**

- Range of tasks provided - engage with during lesson
- Free choice – promotes independence; greater self-achievement by finishing task they chose to complete
- Writing area – can choose the word they complete; can progress on to words they perceive are harder as they go
- Range of practical and written tasks to build confidence in all areas
- Lots of opportunities for group work – most not in ability; expand understanding by helping other children to understand a task/discuss what they are creating

#### **Assessment:**

- Read, write inc. – recap over the previous phonic learnt (no demonstration for); able to progress onto harder sounds next day is completed successfully; instant feedback and praise from teacher (as an individual, not as a group)
- Writing table – use technology (take pictures); feedback later; self-assessment model (they decide when it has been done well before moving onto next task)
- iPads – instant feedback; can move onto next letter if it has been written correctly
- Maths – know they have created 10 when 2 pieces correctly fit together over the template piece provided; try different ways of creating 10; self-assessment

#### **Specifics / Critical Incidents:**

- Keeping individuals on task – whether by providing enough opportunities for engagement at a specific task or providing a variety of tasks that are challenging enough for individuals to want to pursue them; successfully encourage what you want individuals to revisit

### 3. OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

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| Date and time, year group:<br>29/09/20, 13:00 – 13:20; Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Lesson details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welsh drills – compulsory in school</li><li>• Structured session – repeat after teacher</li><li>• AoLE covered: Language, Literacy and Communication</li><li>• Completed as a start activity after lunch</li><li>• Involved whole class – no set abilities</li><li>• Indoor session</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Classroom culture:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Energetic and engaging</li><li>• Different format to other lessons</li><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Children had fun throughout – laughing; repeating in the same voices as the teacher</li><li>• Desire to continue with session once it had ended</li><li>• Expected – happens this time every day?</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help individuals understand/correctly pronounce common questions/answers in Welsh</li><li>• Teacher – set list of phrases to communicate to students</li><li>• Completed in drill formation – teacher, student, teacher, student</li><li>• Brief explanation – why it was being done</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Direction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English translation after saying the Welsh phrase the first time – explain what it meant</li><li>• Repetition of phrases – able to pronounce words correctly; greater repetition if words not pronounced correctly</li><li>• Actions/movements/variation in voice – to keep children engaged during repetitions</li><li>• Children have opportunity to questions – ask peers/teacher; provide answers as an individual</li><li>• Activity – completed on carpet; designated section of classroom – Welsh corner</li><li>• Displays on walls – phrases used in the session with imagery; changeable displays (date/weather); Welsh translation on different items around classroom</li><li>• Verbal praise after each repetition/question</li><li>• *Use elements of Welsh throughout the day – always exposed to it; “Stopiwch plis”/ “Amser tacluso”</li></ul> |
| <b>Access and challenge:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific actions to go with phrasing – aid remembering</li><li>• Variation in voice used by teacher – copied by students</li><li>• Display wall – has the same questions on; used as a prompt to answer questions; imagery to help remember</li><li>• Potential for individuals to incorporate other words they have previously learnt into</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

the session

- Opportunity for students to ask for help when translating at the end of session

**Assessment:**

- Immediate praise from teacher (AfL)
- Students become more confident/comfortable speaking/pronouncing Welsh with increased repetitions of phrases
- Able to apply the phrasing that had just been learnt to peers to ask questions/give answers as an individual and not as part of a group – peers may pick up on pronunciation (AfL)

**Specifics / Critical Incidents:**

- Repetitive nature of the activity – benchmark for expansion of terms/phrases as the individuals grow in proficiency and ability
- Keeping individuals engaged and understanding the importance of learning Welsh

#### 4. OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

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| Date and time, year group:<br>29/09/20, 14:30 – 15:00; Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Lesson details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outdoor session</li><li>• AoLEs used: Mathematics and Numeracy; Language, Literacy and Communication</li><li>• All class activity – individuals could work alone or in a small group</li><li>• No set ability</li><li>• End of day session – practice what had been learnt in the day (writing letters and numbers in chalks)</li><li>• Students completed tasks – able to have free play outdoors</li></ul>                                                            |
| <b>Classroom culture:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Energetic, active, and laid back</li><li>• Relaxed approach to learning</li><li>• Independent learning – reiterate what had been practiced during the day; go at own pace</li><li>• Encouraging</li><li>• Creative approach</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mention of the session purpose before going outside</li><li>• Mention of what students were able to do when finished with task</li><li>• Improve students' formation of numbers/</li><li>• Allowed students to feel comfortable with the task (could take as long as they needed on the task)</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Direction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre drawn numbers/letters on floor</li><li>• Examples of numbers in pre-painted playground games (hopscotch; number square)</li><li>• Previously completed both writing formations that day (various stations in class)</li><li>• Understood the purpose of task (name writing)</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Access and challenge:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose the location they completed the chalk task in</li><li>• Already visual examples in various locations around the playground</li><li>• Choose which chalks were used – personalised to them</li><li>• Repeat the task multiple times – by own choosing/being told to repeat the task; opportunity to keep improving until they felt it was right</li><li>• Were able to use chalks for fun after completing the task – something to aspire towards</li></ul> |
| <b>Assessment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using skills that had already been tested that day – built upon with this task</li><li>• AfL techniques involved – immediate feedback (teacher), self-assessment</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with other students for feedback and help</li></ul>                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Specifics / Critical Incidents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic tasks can be adapted – become more fun/challenging/engaging when completed in a different environment to one that is deemed traditional for that task</li></ul> |