

A critical evaluation and the identification of next teaching and learning steps focusing on a case study of an individual learner or a group of learners, based on an observed critical incident.

Introduction

This essay will focus on the case study of a critical incident within a classroom setting and identify what next steps should be undertaken through the use of pedagogical theory. During a full non-participant observation day at a secondary school, four critical incidents were observed. Only one will be discussed in detail in this essay. The intention will be to critically evaluate this event and identify the next teaching and learning steps that need to be undertaken after the occurrence of a critical incident. A critical incident is argued by Tripp (1993, p.8) as being 'an interpretation of the significance of an event'. Therefore, a critical incident can be a subtle everyday occurrence in a classroom which is then observed, identified and created through the lens of the observer. Through the first-hand observation of the incident, the notes transcribed, and the research undertaken following the observation day, a determination needs to be made of how this critical incident links to theory and the professional teaching standards. The Four Purposes of the curriculum, written by Donaldson and used as a starting aim for all schools by the Welsh government, will be focused on in this essay. As well as this, a determination needs to be made about how I may apply this observational experience to my own teaching practice by identifying what I would do to avoid or better this critical incident.

Observation

The observation that will be discussed in this essay took place in a Welsh medium secondary school in South Wales. The number of pupils at this school is around 1500, while the number

of pupils on Free School Meals is higher than the Welsh average (ESTYN, 2019). A majority of the pupils in this school come from the local area, which is predominantly Welsh speaking, as reflected in the percentage of fluent Welsh speakers at the school which currently sits at 47% (ESTYN, 2019). The observation followed a Welsh medium Year 8 class for an entire school day towards the end of the first month of the school year. The class was ranked as being of a middle ability within the year group, but they also had two pupils who were considered gifted and talented. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, only one class could be observed on the day as each year group formed a bubble which I became a part of. Breaking this bubble to observe another year group would mean cross-contaminating and potentially heightening the risk of infection. School had only begun three weeks prior to observation for the first time since March¹ with new rules in place. In order to abide by the observational ethical guidelines outlined by BERA, at no point in this essay will the name of the school or any of the participants be included in order to guarantee that their anonymity is protected, and all information gathered is kept confidential (2018, p.21).

Methodology

As previously discussed in the introduction, the purpose of this assignment is to observe a critical incident within the classroom, which in itself is a case study of an event. Therefore, the methodological approach best suited for this assignment is a case study as it provides information that cannot be collected from other methods. Cohen et al. (2011, p.289) argue that unlike other methods, a case study can show how theory works in a realistic situation

¹ Welsh schools did return for a three-week period between June and July, but this was a catch-up and preparation for September period rather than a full educational setting (Welsh Government, 2020b).

and highlights the various issues that may arise. Specifically, a case study can provide in-depth information, such as context, real life events and immediate consequences, on a situation that simply cannot be achieved using other methods (Cohen et al., 2011, p.289). In particular, a non-participant observation was used as it can 'catch human intentionality, agency and perceptions of causality and events more fully' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.66). What Cohen et al. mean here, is that observation itself can provide information and context in a specific way which is relevant to understanding the critical incident and how it came to be. Non-participant observation is better suited for such a task as it guarantees that the observer takes a passive role in the educational environment and does not affect the cause or the outcome of the incident. One of the disadvantages of using this method is that the participants may begin to act in a different way if they are aware of an observer, commonly known as the Hawthorne effect (Scott, 2014). In order to limit the impact of this, I sat at the back of the class in silence which helped as due to the COVID-19 restrictions, all tables must face the front and after a few minutes, the pupils forgot they were being observed.

Four Purposes

During my observation day in a secondary school, I followed a Year 8 Welsh medium, intermediate ability class for four sessions. Multiple critical incidents occurred during all four sessions, but only four critical incidents were noted. My observation day took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that schools had extra procedures in place to prevent the spread of the virus, including regular hand washing, wearing face masks, social distancing and no practical session. As a result of this, I had to sit two metres apart from the rest of the class while wearing a face mask. The teachers had to stand within their allocated area at the front of the class and only move around the room when necessary and wearing a face covering.

The main critical incident observed that I wish to discuss took place during the second session of the day, just before the lunch break. The lesson was Geography with the Year 8 class' Head of Year as the teacher which instantly changed the class' attitudes and behaviour. As soon as the class walked into the room, they quietened and became more organised by instantly sitting down, pulling out their pencil cases and handing out books. The critical incident took place at the beginning of the lesson during the starter session. The topic of the session was natural disasters and it was a continuation from a previous lesson on the same topic. The learning objectives were for the pupils to understand what natural disasters are, why they happen and where in the world they happen. The teacher asked the class to open their books to find their work from last lesson and use it as a guide to name examples of a natural disaster. The teacher used a hands up approach to get the pupils to give an example, he chose one pupil who answered with the example 'tsunami'. The answer was incorrect, but the teacher turned it into a learning moment for the entire class. The teacher replied to the answer by saying, 'Thank you for answering with that' and went on to explain that it is a common mistake made every year and it is incredibly important that it be addressed. The teacher asked the entire class why they thought a tsunami did not class as a natural disaster using previous knowledge and problem-solving skills. Multiple pupils attempted to answer but none were correct. This was when the teacher began to explain to the class why a tsunami is not classed as a natural disaster and again earnestly thanked the pupil for raising awareness to a common mistake and for helping the class to prevent making this mistake in the future.

This critical incident is an example of how to create an environment where all pupils are encouraged to answer questions and contribute, whether correctly or incorrectly. It helps to encourage contribution, pupil confidence and risk taking within the classroom. This example

of a critical incident can be applied to the Four Purposes of the Welsh curriculum, which are to create 'ambitious, capable learners', 'enterprising, creative contributors', 'ethical, informed citizens', and 'healthy, confident individuals' (Welsh Government, 2020a). Specifically, the positive outcomes of this critical incident can help to aid in the creation of three of these purposes. The environment in which the teacher has created in the classroom as a result of this critical incident can help to create ambition and capability within the learners by allowing pupils to explain their ideas without the fear of getting it wrong. It can also aid in creating enterprising and creative contributors as the environment can encourage pupils to 'take measured risks' with the answers that they provide in the classroom (Welsh Government, 2020a).

The main purposes that this critical incident can be applied to is the creation of healthy and confident individuals. The classroom environment created by the teacher during this critical incident can help in 'building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy' (Welsh Government, 2020a). The way in which the teacher responded to this pupil's incorrect answer was encouraging and inspiring to the pupil as it reinforced the idea that any answer is a good answer. Often an incorrect answer can knock the confidence and resilience of a pupil, however an appropriate and encouraging response can help build these values. Another aspect of this purpose that the critical incident achieves is to provide the pupil with the confidence needed in order to contribute and perform. The teacher created an environment in which pupils are unafraid of communicating their ideas and allows them to learn and appreciate the contributions of others. The way in which the teacher responded aided in creating another aspect of this purpose which was to 'form positive relationship based on trust and mutual respect' (Welsh Government, 2020a).

The respect shown towards the pupil and the appreciation for the pupil's contribution would help to build a beneficial relationship between not just the pupil and the teacher, but between the class as a whole. The incident provided an example for the class of how to approach the contributions of others and how to build a positive rapport with peers and people in authority.

Literature Review

While observing this critical incident, the theory of the Sixteen Habits of the Mind by Costa and Kallick (2008) was brought to mind. Costa and Kallick argue that the education system has placed too much emphasis on substantive assessment to judge pupils ability and as a result of this, pupils work to gain a positive view of their ability by the system (2008, p.7). In order for the pupils to seem as if they are of a natural high ability, they do not wish to be seen making an effort as 'to expend great effort with a task is taken as a sign of low ability' (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.7). Pupil effort should be encouraged and viewed positively, hence why there needs to be a change within the education system. Costa and Kallick argue in favour of the Sixteen Habits of Mind which proposes to approach pupil ability in a new way, this approach would encourage the critical incident to happen more often. The aim of this theory is to change the way in which pupils create knowledge, rather than the way they remember and regurgitate it (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.16). When this change is successful, the pupil will engage in the sixteen habits over time.

Of the sixteen habits included, four of which are significant in understanding why this critical incident was an excellent example of positive encouragement in the classroom. The first habit which is significant to the critical incident is persistence. Costa and Kallick (2008, p.18) argue that when a pupil does not know or understand a topic, they have a tendency to give up; this

is something that has derived from our human nature. Persistence is a value that needs to be developed through skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, in addition to patience within the classroom (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.18). During the critical incident, the teacher encouraged persistence within the pupils by providing the class with a chance to problem-solve and find an answer to the problem they faced. The teacher waited patiently while they persisted, but eventually stepped in to help when it was clear the pupils could not solve it. The second habit relevant here is 'listening with understanding and empathy' which consists of listening carefully to others, understanding the emotions and meanings within those words and appreciating them (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.20-21). Those who have not achieved this habit will show a lack of discipline through interruption, derision of others, disparagement of ideas and an inability to understand or accept the ideas presented to them (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.21). The pupils in the class did not show any of these attributes, they were understanding and respectful of the individual pupil's contribution.

The third of Costa and Kallick's habits which are of significance to the critical incident is 'responding with wonderment and awe' (2008, p.32). This habit centres around enjoyment; pupils must be able to find joy in their lessons and provide enough stimulus to challenge themselves and persist in their learning (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.32). This habit is incredibly important to encourage as Costa and Kallick argue that it allows pupils 'to feel compelled, enthusiastic, and passionate about learning, inquiring and mastering' (2008, p.33). This is about more than a pupil's natural interest in a subject; interest and wonder can be formed by a teacher using the correct methods. The slightest discouragement or negative experience in a lesson can cause disinterest, which is why the critical incident was important. The incident could have easily caused discouragement for the pupil, however the teacher created a

positive outcome and helped encourage the pupil to persist in their learning and contribution.

An interaction such as this can build confidence, inspiration and interest within the classroom environment which can either create or further wonderment within the pupils. The final habit of mind presented by Costa and Kallick is 'taking responsible risks', which is similar to one of Donaldson's purposes (2008, p.33). It is argued that there are two types of risk taking: venture risks are well thought out and considered before action is taken, whereas adventure risks tend to be spontaneous and the only consideration being the biggest risk (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.34). Taking a risk, provided that it is a rational one, within the classroom needs to be encouraged as it creates a positive mentality within the mind of the pupil and helps them to fight their fear of failure (Costa and Kallick, 2008, p.34). Again, positive reinforcement and encouragement from teachers will allow pupils to take these measured risks, which is something that will be beneficial to them throughout life.

The second theory which applies to the critical incident discussed in this essay is provided by Holt who argues that children no longer think properly in school because of the way that the system works (2009, p.xi). Holt argues that the way in which children are taught and tested leads to them feeling negatively about education and that they 'use their minds, not to learn, but to get out of doing the things we tell them to do' (2009, p.xii). Similar to Costa and Kallick, Holt believes that certain changes within the system can encourage pupils to gain more than just an education. Holt believes that schools can become a place where children can gain multiple lifelong values such as 'confidence, independence', as well as 'resilience, patience' and 'courage' (2009, p.vii). Children and young adults have a natural instinct to explore the world around them and they need to be encouraged to continue this exploration through learning (2009, p.304). One aspect of this exploration that Holt believes is important to

maintain is for the pupil to not 'shut himself off from the strange, confused, complicated world around him' (2009, p.304). Providing a response to a pupil's incorrect answer that is less than positive can have a detrimental effect on the pupil's motivation and wellbeing within school. There are different methods which can be used as a response, however negative comments and reactions will discourage the pupil and potentially shame them in front of their peers. This negative response will have a long-lasting effect on individuals, and they may begin to show disinterest in class, stop contributing and potentially begin to show behavioural issues.

Carol Dweck's theory of 'meaning systems' focuses on the way in which an individual's belief about themselves can impact the way in which they perceive the world and the outcome of their wellbeing (2015, p.xi). Dweck argues that sometimes we place too much emphasis on building the confidence of pupils, as it does not necessarily mean that confidence in the classroom will continue in other areas of life (2015, p.51). Dweck conducted in-depth research into this area and found that pupils who felt confident were more likely to take failure more personally and believe that their ability was lessened by it (2015, p.51). Essentially what Dweck initially argues is that building the confidence of a pupil in a classroom serves to worsen the blow when they face failure or difficulty. In relation to the critical incident, Dweck's theory would argue that the teacher was merely allowing the pupil to be incorrect in a confident way. Although it is always a positive to have confidence in your ability, what is necessary is the ability to face problems and situations without feeling helpless (Dweck, 2015, p.55). Helping pupils to understand failure, to accept it and work on it is a far more effective method in order to improve pupil performance and confidence in the face of obstacles (Dweck, 2015, p.57).

A supporter of Dweck's theory is Ames (1992, p.266), who believes that a pupil will become more motivated when feedback is centred on their efforts rather than their ability. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration that the ways in which teachers and peers respond to a pupil's efforts does have an incredibly important effect on children's views. Dweck argues that pupils have different attributes including 'being more natural risk takers' and being 'more cautious or easily frustrated', and the responses from their teachers and peers can affect them instantly (2015, p.107). Dweck's previous research found that certain praise can negatively impact a pupil's wellbeing as much as criticism, as 'praising children's traits or selves when they do well may tell them that their basic attributes can be readily judged by what they do' (2015, p.108). Essentially, it is incredibly difficult to find the right balance and find the correct thing to praise or criticise in order to provide helpful and positive feedback. The most effective form of criticism was the one which centred on the ways in which they could do something better, rather than bringing attention to what they did wrong (Dweck, 2015, p.111). In this sense, criticism is only effective when given in a positive sense as it does not negatively impact on the wellbeing, perception and confidence of a pupil. Regarding the critical incident, the response given by the teacher may not have necessarily boosted the confidence of the pupil, but it avoided doing the opposite. The feedback itself did not set the pupil back and make them feel negatively about their failure, instead it encouraged them to keep trying. According to the Welsh Government, the factors that have the largest effect on pupil's wellbeing are, 'having people to talk to', 'personal achievement', 'being praised' and 'generally feeling positive about themselves' (2010, p.8). Positive responses such as the one observed in the critical incident can contribute to pupils' positive feelings about themselves and gaining that personal achievement for contribution and effort.

Reflection / Evaluation and Next Steps

Although the hypothesis at the beginning of this essay was that the singular critical incident observed provided the pupil and the class as a whole with confidence, instead it allowed them to contribute and share without a fear of being judged or getting the answer wrong. This would have ongoing positive effects on these pupils throughout their school experience. The beginning of which could be seen almost immediately after the critical incident as not only the individual involved but the entire class began to make an effort to join in and have their say. The incident also encouraged them to take the measured risks supported by Donaldson in his Four Principles. Instead of negatively impacting the pupil's wellbeing by criticising a failure in front of their peers, the teacher approached the situation in a way which reinforced the idea that taking these risks and potentially failing is not a negative thing. As Dweck found in her research, the way in which a teacher responds to these instances can affect a pupil's decision to contribute and their initial reaction to failure (2015, p.107). Although the responses of teachers towards the mistakes and failures of pupils within the classroom is not alone in providing the opportunity for risk taking and contribution, it does have a significant impact. To show appreciation for pupil effort and turn what could have been a crucial moment in that pupil's perception of education into a positive learning experience for all within the classroom is an excellent step towards helping to create the 'healthy, confident individuals' that Donaldson hopes for (Welsh Government, 2020a).

It is important that feedback is provided in a way which furthers pupil knowledge and development in a way which does not breed complacency within the class. Teacher feedback must be able to help pupils to further develop their ideas, this approach could lose that purpose amongst the need to ensure pupil effort and wellbeing continues. Wiliam strongly

argues that feedback must always be given for the sole purpose of helping pupils to further their learning and improve their performance (2006, p.6). When feedback is provided in a way which emphasises to the pupil that they are incorrect and do not possess the ability to understand, it can lead to the pupil feeling 'de-motivated and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn' (Black and Wiliam, 1998, p.18). Teachers must ensure that the feedback and responses they provide motivate and inspire the pupil to continue to challenge themselves with their learning.

Looking back at the critical incident, the feedback provided addressed the mistake, corrected it and encouraged pupil motivation. This is a method that I wish to continue within the classroom. Taking into consideration the theories that have been looked into in detail, encouraging pupils to develop problem-solving skills, appreciating effort, encouraging risk taking and contribution, as well as providing critical and positive feedback can all be achieved within one fleeting encounter. Providing a supportive environment which focuses on pupil wellbeing and encouraging the development of the values discussed in this essay will be a priority for myself in the classroom. Finding a good balance between praising effort and providing critical feedback for the development of pupil learning is a problem that will arise, however developing the balance over time will be achievable. It is essential to create a good relationship with the pupils in your class, finding this balance and avoiding creating this detrimental effect on the pupil's learning will be a good way to achieve that. With regards to the professional learning standards set by the Welsh Government (2018, p.2) these goals would successfully reach the pedagogical and professional learning specification. In order to achieve an efficient pedagogy, a teacher must work to attain Donaldson's Four Purposes, pupil wellbeing and the furthering of pupil development (Welsh Government, 2018, p.2). For

professional learning, a teacher must ensure that pupils can persevere through challenges and not be discouraged from learning (Welsh Government, 2018, p.2). Both of these standards can be met by ensuring that responses and feedback are given appropriately in the way discussed above.

Conclusion

The critical incident observed and discussed in this essay has shown that it is essential to create a positive and healthy environment within schools where pupils feel safe to take risks and gain the most out of their school experience without fear of failure, judgement or embarrassment. Without this environment, fear of failure can fester and transform into something far more detrimental such as social anxiety. Schools in Wales are beginning to prioritise the mental wellbeing of their pupils and small steps such as the one seen during the critical incident can go a long way. The way in which teachers respond to pupil efforts and contributions, as well as their feedback, can significantly impact the wellbeing, motivation and the way in which pupils respond to education. The critical incident showed first-hand how one response from a teacher can change the atmosphere in a classroom and begin to build on the values that Donaldson's Four Purposes hope to create. Although it may seem simple to reach each of these targets in one step, the opposite could also be reached just as easily. As Chambers Schuldt argues, 'while teacher feedback has great potential for improving learning, the field has much to learn about how to capitalize on the power of feedback in the classroom' (2019, p.64-65). More research must be done, and a balance must then be struck between constructive feedback which does not centre on the pupil's ability in the classroom and ensuring that motivation is provided and encouraged. Once this balance has been met,

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pupils can feel encouraged, inspired, confident and able to continue furthering their knowledge in a stimulating way.

Appendices

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date and time, year group: 30/09/20 - 10:20 Second Lesson - Year 8
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). Food technology - lesson focusing on the production of wheat Indoors - pouring rain outside so pupils were agitated and damp Welsh medium intermediate group Large classroom of 25
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?) Pupils are far more interested in the fact that their clothes are wet than paying attention. Their interest peaked when the teacher said there was bread for them to taste. The class is very chatty. Those sitting in the first two rows seem to be listening and eager to learn, those in the back and far left of the classroom are not listening, they are chatting or doing Tik Tok dances instead.
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) No clear objectives or plan for the lesson outlined from the start. Teacher begins by using a PowerPoint to explain what wheat is, how it's produced and the different products that can be made from it. Then they tasted white and brown bread - no clear reason as to why. A YouTube video on the production of wheat was shown. A numeracy task was completed where they had to colour a map of the UK according to production wheat statistics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult for certain lessons to continue as normal, especially practical ones such as Food Tech so other methods are having to be used.
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?) There was food for pupils to taste and videos for them to watch in order to engage them in the lesson. There are posters on the wall relating to food safety, but no clear guidance on literacy, numeracy or digital competency. Nothing to help them develop understanding.
Access and challenge

(What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

No differing levels of challenge as everyone had the same work and same amount of time. There was no differentiation between pupils. The numeracy task was the same for everyone despite the class being in different sets for Maths. Some of the pupils had difficulty completing the numeracy work - perhaps in the panic zone (Vygotsky).

Assessment

(Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience?)

From what I could gather, they have been doing work on the different food groups. The teacher introduced the topic, spoke about wheat, got them to taste different breads, got them to watch a video about the production of wheat and then worked on a worksheet on the volume of wheat production in the UK.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching?)

When the bread was handed out, some of the pupils were confused as to what they were meant to do with it. Some began to nibble at the bread before one pupil said, 'maybe we're not supposed to eat it'. It was only after the bread had been handed out to every pupil that the teacher told them not to eat it yet. The bread was handed out in order for the pupils to understand and be able to taste the different products that wheat could make, and they had to think of which one they preferred. Had this been explained before the bread was handed out, there would have been no confusion. This incident made it clear how important it is to explain your lesson plan to the class, explain what they need to do and what is expected of them, how these activities are relevant before acting them out.

During the beginning of the pupil work on the worksheet, the teacher noticed one pupil turning around and speaking the pupils sitting in the row behind. The dialogue between them went like this:

T: Do you know what you're doing?

P: No, not really.

T: Why didn't you ask?

P: I was going to ask them (points to the pupils behind her)

T: No, you ask me because you're stopping them from working

Pupils are more likely to ask for help from their peers, if they cannot get a clear answer from them, then they ask the teacher. Why?

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context.	30/09/20 during the 10:20 session on a Wednesday morning. The class being observed were a Year 8 intermediate Welsh medium class. The people involved were a teacher and the classroom. They were a large class of about 25 pupils.
Date/time.	It was a Food Technology lesson. Practical cooking lesson are on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	The class were learning about the different food groups; however, no learning objectives were set out and there was no explanation of what the pupils were meant to do.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	As a result of COVID-19, practical lessons are on hold which has resulted in large chances to how lessons can be taught. During the Food Technology lesson on food groups, the teacher hands out pieces of white and brown bread for the pupils to taste. When the bread was handed out, some of the pupils were confused as to what they were meant to do with it. Some pupils began to nibble on the bread before one pupil said, 'maybe we're not supposed to eat it'. It was only after the bread had been handed out to every pupil that the teacher told them not to eat it yet. The bread was handed out in order for the pupils to understand and be able to taste the different products that could be made from wheat. The class had to consider which bread they preferred. The confusion resulted from a lack of explanation about what they were to learn and do during the lesson. This incident made it clear how important it is to explain to a class what they are to learn about and how. A clear explanation needs to be given at the beginning of the lesson about what pupils need to do during the lesson and how the activities are relevant before they are acted out. Donaldson's 12 pedagogical principles were brought to mind, mostly the use of resources in order to build on the knowledge and experiences they already have to initiate interest. This was a new section for the unit of work, they had done previous food groups, but this was the first lesson on wheat. They had not discussed what they had already learnt, nor what they knew about wheat already. Linking previous lessons together in an effective way could engage interest. The use of assessment for learning to accelerate progress could have been used here. There was no use of formative assessment methods during the lesson, which may have been useful to determine if the pupils understood what they were doing. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development - children seemed to be in the panic zone a lot of the time due to no learning objectives being set and no guidance or differentiation given. Bruner's Cognitive Development theory argues that in order to learn, we need guidance through scaffolding, questioning etc.

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OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date and time, year group: 30/09/20 - 11:20 Third Lesson - Year 8
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). Indoor Geography lesson focusing on Natural Disasters, building on work from previous lesson. Welsh medium intermediate class. Session before dinner.
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?) The teacher is also the class' Head of Year and he sets out the classroom rules. Instantly the class seem more organised and quiet. They all sit down and pull out pencil cases and start handing out books.
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) Learning objectives are clearly set out on the board. They are to understand what natural disasters are, why they happen and where they happen. They discuss what classes as a natural disaster, they have a class discussion about climate change and then the teacher hands out a map of the world for pupils to glue into their books. They have another discussion about wildfires and the recent news about wildfires spreading in the USA.
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?) The teacher instantly sets out what they are doing in the lesson (as well as LO's on the board) and recapping what they learned during the last lesson. The teacher begins by asking the pupils for examples of natural disasters using hands up. Pupils can look in their books for examples.
Access and challenge (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?) They do the class work together in small steps on the board, the activities are mostly class discussions, so it is tailored to all. The challenges are mostly centred on getting the pupils to think about their existing knowledge, expand and explain their ideas.
Assessment (Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience?) They are building on previous knowledge learned during their last lesson. Recapping on what they have learnt. Teacher uses hands up to question them on it.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

When asking for examples of natural disasters, a pupil puts their hand up and answers 'tsunami'. The teacher replies with 'thank you for answering with that' and begins to explain that a tsunami is not classed as a natural disaster because they are often caused by an earthquake. The teacher explains that it is a common mistake made every year and thanks the pupil again for raising awareness of it. The teacher turned an incorrect answer and a common mistake into a positive learning curve. It was encouraging to the pupil and the class that wrong answers are okay. The pupil has not been deterred by it and continues to answer throughout the class.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	30/09/20 during 11:20 session on a Wednesday morning. The class being observed were a Year 8 intermediate Welsh medium class. The people involved were the teacher and one pupil. They were a large class of about 25 pupils. It was a Geography lesson with the class' Head of Year.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	The lesson topic was natural disasters and was a continuation of a previous lesson on the same topic. In order to get the class to recap what they did in their previous lesson; the teacher asked the class to give him an example of a natural disaster using the information in their books to help them. One pupil raised his hand and answered 'tsunami'. The teacher thanked the pupil for providing that answer as it was a common mistake made every year which needed to be clarified. The teacher began to explain to the class that a tsunami is not a natural disaster and asked the class to figure out why. Nobody answered so he continued to explain that it is not classed as a natural disaster because it is caused by an earthquake. The teacher thanked the pupil again for raising awareness to a commonly made mistake. It was clear that because nobody could answer the teacher as to why it was not classed as a natural disaster, they would have also made the same mistake. The teacher provided a positive response to an incorrect answer which could have led to embarrassment and discouragement for the pupil. The response helps to create an environment where pupils are encouraged to contribute, take risks and pupils gain confidence. These are some of the things mentioned by Donaldson in his Four Principles. Good teaching and learning encouraged pupils to keep making an effort and not be afraid to speak. It is positive for pupil wellbeing and fits some of Costa and Kallick's 16 Habits of Mind.

	Dweck's theory on feedback and how it can be made effective, as well as the consequences of negative feedback on pupil ability. William's 5 strategies for formative assessment discusses the different positive and negative feedback that can be given throughout the lesson. Holt's theory that children learn differently because of the way their ability is judged and schools need to change the system to encourage positive values such as confidence and resilience.
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OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date and time, year group: 30/09/20 - 13:20 Fourth Lesson - Year 8
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). First language Welsh lesson immediately after dinner. Focus on how to identify and use adjectives and similes.
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?) The teacher started the lesson by reminding the class of the classroom rules and chastising them for their behaviour during the last lesson. The teacher also reminds them that many of the pupils have not completed their homework on Google Classroom. The class is quiet.
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) The teacher recaps what they learned during their previous lesson, they have been working on describing techniques and applying them to nature. When the teacher calls the register, the pupils respond with a sentence they wrote during the previous lesson. The teacher provides a clear outline of what they will be learning during the session and in which order they will do it in.
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?) There are multiple posters and boards on the walls with examples of descriptive techniques and vocabulary to help them. The teacher states what she expects of the class during the lesson. There is a clear step by step approach on the whiteboard - introduction to the topic, recap of previous lesson, then describe and explain similes. The class have to think of an adjective, then find one in the text provided to them. Each pupil has to think of an adjective or simile before they are allowed to leave the class.
Access and challenge (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?) The class are helping each other by working in pairs or as a group. When reading the text aloud to their partner or group, they are encouraged to highlight words that they do not understand. The teacher gives them permission to use their phones to research what these words mean (they cannot use dictionaries in the class because of COVID-19 restrictions).
Assessment

(Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience)?

They are recapping previous work on adjectives and developing their knowledge. They are moving onto the next step of identifying more complex adjectives and being introduced to similes. The teacher uses a lot of effective questioning and chooses random pupils to answer throughout the lesson.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

The teacher asks the class for definitions and examples of an adjective, but if they feel more confident then they can use a simile. The teacher randomly chooses pupils in the class and points to them to answer. Each pupil that is chosen is given ten seconds to think of an answer. One pupil struggled to come up with an answer, after 10 seconds the teacher asks them if they want to phone a friend. The pupil looks relieved and says yes. The pupil then gets to choose another person to provide an answer for them.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	30/09/20 during the 13:10 session on a Wednesday afternoon. The class being observed were a Year 8 intermediate Welsh medium class. The people involved were a teacher and the classroom. They were a large class of about 25 pupils. It was a Welsh lesson straight after dinner time. It's raining outside which leads the pupils to become hyper.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	During a lesson on adjectives and similes, the teacher asks the class to provide a definition of an adjective and then examples that they have made up. The teacher's approach is to randomly choose pupils to answer and point at them. For each question asked, the pupil gets ten seconds to think of an answer. When the teacher asks one pupil, they take longer than ten seconds and it becomes clear that they cannot provide an answer. The teacher asks the pupil if they want to 'phone a friend'. The pupil agrees and looks relieved. The teacher asks the class to raise their hand if they think they can help the pupil, the pupil then chooses someone to provide an answer. This incident uses 'Thinking Time' in an effective way and provides an alternative method for when it fails - Robert Coe. The teacher also uses questioning to check that the class have understood the topic. The teacher uses open questions to provide an example. Doug Lemov's work discusses how to use effective questioning within the classroom. Dylan William's 5 strategies of formative assessment and the advantages of using cold calling.

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date and time, year group: 30/09/20 - 14:10 last lesson - Intermediate Year 8 Maths set
Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information). Last lesson of the day which is only 50 minutes due to COVID-19 rules to stagger end times to avoid crowds. Focus of the lesson is angles. This class is different to the others as the year have been split into ability sets so there are different pupils in the classroom. This is an intermediate ability set.
Classroom culture (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?) Pupils seem to be ready for the day to end as multiple pupils have vocalised. They still possess a positive attitude and appear ready to learn. There is a starter exercise on the board to get them to settle and ready to learn. They sit down and begin figuring out the sum on the board while they chat. Teacher begins by giving positive feedback to the class about the standard of their homework.
Objectives (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?) The teacher clearly sets out the work they will be doing. Begins by asking the class what they already know about angles. The lesson objectives are clearly set, they are to understand the different angles, to be able to identify and draw them.
Direction (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?) There are multiple display boards and posters around the classroom which cover different topics, including angles. There are also standards of work for pupils to see. The starter session on algebra is used to warm them up before the session starts. The teacher uses pupil voice to choose the type of angle and its size. The teacher asks the pupils for answers using the hands up method, as well as cold calling.
Access and challenge (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?) The teacher clearly explains what pupils need to do before asking them to do it. Throughout the lesson, the angles being used are getting bigger and more difficult to challenge the class. Most of the angles are drawn on the board with the help of the pupils in order for them to understand the step by step process of drawing an angle.
Assessment (Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience?)

The teacher questions the class about what they have already learned about angles in previous lessons. The teacher asks pupils questions and asks for answers throughout the lesson. During the final five minutes of the lesson, the class play a game which the pupils seem to do often and enjoy. During this game, the teacher will pit two pupils against each other and ask a question about what they have learnt, the pupil who answers correctly the quickest continues on against a new challenger.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

The use of pupil voice by the teacher throughout the lesson. When showing the class how to draw angles on the board, they ask random pupils to provide an angle type and size of their choosing for the class to draw.

The teacher asks pupils to mark their own work as a form of self-assessment, as peer-assessment and teacher marking is currently unavailable due to COVID-19 rules. When marking their own work, the teacher asks them to use a green pen. One pupil gets flustered as they look in their bag and they tell the teacher that they do not have a green pen. The teacher replies saying that it is fine, they can use a pencil instead.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	30/09/20 during the final session of the day at 14:10. This final session is only 50 minutes long, rather than an hour, to allow the pupils to leave school at staggered times to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The people involved were the teacher and a pupil. The class being observed is slightly smaller at around 22 with different pupils. It is an intermediate ability Welsh medium Maths set.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, peer-assessment and teacher marking is on hold to limit the spread of the virus. The method used instead is self-assessment. The teacher asks the class to pull out their green pens for marking as the colour is easily distinguished from their work. One of the pupils appears flustered as they rummage around in their bag trying to find a green pen. The pupil puts their hand up to tell the teacher that they do not have one and apologise. The teacher tells the pupil that it is fine, and they can simply use a pencil instead. The lack of problem-solving skills with regards to simply issues within the classroom differs to pupils problem-solving skills regarding work. This pupil could easily work out an algebra sum and identify/draw angles but could not solve the issue of what to use instead of a green pen. Development of independence within education: Donaldson's 12 Pedagogical Principles - pupils need to take responsibility for what and how they learn, encourage pupils to problem solve.

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	Donaldson's Four Purposes - healthy and confident individuals need to become independent and figure things out on their own. McCain's book called Teaching for Tomorrow includes a chapter called Fostering Independent Thinking which discusses how to get pupils to think and problem-solve on their own.
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