

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 (250 words)

When first considering how to tackle this assignment there was a realisation to understand the meaning of 'critical incident' in educational terms. Referring to Tripp it's quoted "incidents tend to be typical rather than critical at 1st sight, but are rendered critical through analysis." (Tripp, 2012)

With further reading a critical incident in teaching is at first an everyday or typical incident that is then made critical through evaluation. On consideration, a primary source of evidence would come from the family children, who, in true sibling loyalty, would at times return home from school, faces gleaming, to report brother / sister had been told off by the teacher! When questioned, the excuse was they had become bored, disinterested, the teacher had not asked them a question in the discussion group, the work was too easy, too hard, did not understand the task, teacher had not read out their work but had read out that of their best friend. Always a reason, always an excuse! Being conscious of this and possibly on the lookout for any similar situation a primary school in Cardiff was the placement to observe classes one, three, four and enjoying lessons on stages of life, forest school and coordinates but it was in the first lesson in the morning with a year six mixed ability class that there was a critical incident and with the words of Donaldson (2015) "children arrive with different aspirations, interests and experiences and so will approach learning in their own particular way" further investigation was needed.

Observation (250 words)

Tuesday morning September 29th 2020 was initiation day into the classroom; a year six mixed ability group, first lesson in the day on literacy, not knowing what to expect. The initial observation was the 'buzz' in the room, an atmosphere of exuberance, joy, laughter, friendship. The pupils were so happy to be there and it was wonderful to witness. On further reflection the realisation that the children had experienced five months of 'lockdown' when there had been no school due to the 'coronavirus

pandemic' sweeping the country. Never was anything so convincing as to how school life, friends, social contact, play is so important and vital to a child's development. The next observation was the large collage of 'The Titanic' on the wall, so appropriate to transport the children to a world of travel, travel that had eluded them during the summer months. From the collage, this was the literacy topic to be examined.

The lesson began with a group discussion, the teacher having gained control with a simple non-verbal command of raising an arm. The pupils sat at their desks in their groups, the teacher at the front. On a question / answer basis what had been learned before was recapitulated and when a child shouted out an answer instead of raising a hand it was interesting to notice the teacher calmly ignored it. The lesson contained many facets of literacy; there was recall, discussion, a short video and a set task of writing a diary entry to describe, in the first person, the initial reaction of how they felt on first seeing the ship. This objective was clearly written on the whiteboard. The observation lesson had taught me that pupils seem to be happy and productive when busy and interested.

Methodology (500 words)

Observation was conducted as a 'complete observer' but further reading and understanding of the other three practices, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant proved extremely helpful when considering the classroom environment. Following Tripp's (2012) advice to "observe commonplace events in the classroom" was guidance to consider the techniques the teacher was using and the impact they had on teaching and learning. The first lesson of the day with a lively year 6 class enabled the monitoring of the communication and movement in the room. The topic was an ongoing one and the initial discussion as a 'recap' was productive: the teacher remained at the front of the class giving an overall picture of being in control. Interested in the verbal communication between teacher and learners and realising that what was being said was enhanced or reduced by the volume, pitch, speed and tone of voice. Non – verbal communication was an additional tool for effective rapport and gestures, postures , facial expressions and mannerisms all helped to promote the teaching and the learning.

The sociometry in the room was eager, pupils wanting and needing to communicate with each other, keen to listen but also to perform. They seemed to be evolving into ambitious capable learners who “are building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts.” (Donaldson, 2015). The use of visual aids was appealing. The pupils must have enjoyed creating the colourful Titanic collage displayed on the wall. The video was also enjoyed and helped them to visualise the ship. This stimulated their creative writing and their senses of sight and sound when asked to compose a diary entry on first entering the ship. To explain the “ideas and concepts they are learning about” (Donaldson, 2015), some of their work was read out aloud, a technique maybe to help stimulate ideas with less imaginative pupils. With this task there was more movement: the teacher moving around the room, checking each child had understood the tasks, instructing when the concept of writing in the first person had not been realised, persuading more information when work seemed a little sparse, encouraging all pupils to read and check their work and transmitting any help and praise when necessary. Throughout the task the pupils were encouraged to “set themselves high standards and seek and enjoy challenges.” (Donaldson, 2015)

Having observed and learned from this lesson it was inspirational to consider this topic and the methods tried to “set tasks and select resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest.” (Donaldson, 2015) A ‘brain – storming’ session encouraging each child to give a one word reaction on seeing the ship for the first time may have been useful, each word written on the board for the pupils to record in their books and consequently, in their written task. The scope for this topic could move into a mini project, into the realms of social history with dress and diet, science with bridges, railways, transport, maths with size, depth, distance, maritime themed poems, stories for language development, problem solving with what happened and why and discussions and debates on how the accident may have been avoided. A learning environment to “practice and promote a common understanding that all children and young people can learn and benefit from working together” is one that “ensures that all pupils participate as fully as possible in class activities.” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2016)

Critical Incident linked to Donaldson’s Four Purposes (500 words)

Picture the scene in a year six classroom, first lesson on a sunny tuesday morning: it is alive with excited pupils, happy to be there, happy to be back with their friends, happy to have a structure to their day again, happy they are no longer in lockdown! The first lesson is a literacy one; it is a lesson on the 'Titanic', a topic they have been covering for some time, the topic is well received, full of drama and adventure and the pupils are receptive to it. Seated in groups at their desks, the teacher at the front of the room, instructions are given for a question / answer forum, answers only from pupils with raised hands. Interaction is lively, pupils clamouring to be the 'chosen one' but, in the midst of this, a pupil lays his head on the desk. A momentary action and the child responds positively at the call of his name. The lesson continues calmly and positively.

Such a simple action was interesting to observe. Why did the child behave in such a manner? Did he not "understand and consider the impact of the action when making a choice and acting" (Donaldson, 2015). Initially, it appeared to be poor behaviour but on further consideration, was he trying to communicate something? Convinced of having found the 'critical incident' there was a want and a need to investigate further. Did the child consider the impact he was making? Did he realise he was making a different choice to the other children? Was it a deliberate act of defiance? Had he lost the "confidence to participate in performing" (Donaldson, 2015)

Trying to be an impartial observer and objective thinker is difficult when, initially, the act appears to be one of negativity and defiance. The counter argument could consider that the child was poorly, bored, the work too hard, too easy, he was too small to be seen seated behind a taller pupil, he was tired, hungry, was there discord in the home? It could be considered that it was learned behaviour that was not challenged, that there were no set standards in place for responding and questioning techniques, that there was a lack of specific rules for the activity but the learning objectives were clearly written on the board and the teacher had determined the rules prior to the activity. The child was not conforming to the class rules. The incident in itself was not alarming and the pupil did not repeat it once challenged. There are many theories to this behaviour and, though negative behaviour demands the most attention, this could be positive behaviour in so much as the pupil wanted to be more involved, he wanted to be the one to answer the question, to receive the

appropriate accolade, he could have been unsure of his response, hesitated and missed his chance. This critical incident is thought provoking; it opens up 'Pandora's box' to find and evaluate the real reason, but, on reflection, it is wise to consider that not all critical incidents have to be negative.

Literature Review (1,500 words)

The task of education is two fold: it should enable children to grow up to be good members of society and learn how best they can serve their community. At the same time they need to develop their own sense of independence in thought and action to give them a power to make choices and judgements of their own. The purpose of education is to nurture, in each child, an all round development to help form their spiritual, emotional, moral, physical and intellectual well – being. This purpose can be more easily achieved with a pupil who is totally attentive, interested and motivated. Sadly, not all are and many can under – achieve if not guided and taught appropriately. There are many thoughts and theories why a child under achieves and educators must look to themselves as well as to their pupils to analyse and question how they can better serve. The teacher has to establish an active sense of standards.

Teachers have many roles to play: they owe it to themselves to have gained as good an education as possible, an education in which they have confidence in learning theories and styles. One such theory is the Goleman Behaviourism Learning Theory (Goleman, 1995) in which positive reinforcement is key to learning. Pavlov experimented with dog behaviour and found that behaviour in animals can be motivated by reward. The same can apply to children. To succeed is paramount and with success comes its own reward; self satisfaction, pride, and a desire for further knowledge. It is vital that children find the work sufficiently interesting and worthwhile to encourage their best effort. No child can thrive or progress if bewildered or disheartened. Children need to enjoy success and in order to experience that success, they need to receive positive reinforcement to retain information and move forward, a direct result of the behaviourism theory. In layman's terms, ' the six R's' are a tool for sound life-long learning; recapitulation, repetition, revision, reinforcement, recording and rewarding. With these in mind the teacher provides

opportunities for responsibility, choice and decision as are within the child's learning ability.

Goleman (1995) is an advocate of the behavioural learning theory and focuses on self awareness to recognise how our own emotional state can affect the behaviour and attitude of those around us. As educators the demeanour we bring into the classroom can reflect and affect the demeanour of those we teach. Teachers need the skill of self regulation to think before they act, to take stock of the responsible role they are in and to respond positively and appropriately to pupils behaviour, moods, emotions, ability, background and race. Teachers should be motivated in self improvement as well as improving the education and well being of those they teach. Goleman (1995) cites 'internal motivation driven goals' are those that self improve, in contrast to 'exterior motivation driven goals' which tend to enhance self status and kudos, traits not necessarily beneficial in promoting the learning development of pupils. Children need to enjoy success but to experience the triumph of that success they must be encouraged to enjoy and assimilate their learning. Given a sense of progress and purpose, pupils will be happy in their learning and possibly be happy in their behaviour too. It is important that teachers have sound social skills, skills with people in all walks of life. To be able to laugh at oneself, to make and keep friendships and relationships, to be able to communicate appropriately at the appropriate time and place is a vital skill for the practitioner in front of a class of developing youngsters, youngsters who need to be moulded into responsible, hard working, sociable adults, adults to enhance and promote a healthy society.

Lev Vygotsky was an advocate of the 'zone of proximal development ZPD' which he describes as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). What is understood by that is the distance between what a child learns on his own and what they can learn from a teacher is measurable, When a child is 'on task', guidance from a teacher if needed, can be invaluable to boost the understanding and completion of that task. With success of that task comes some degree of independence and competence. Goleman (1995) declared "teachers can focus on different learning styles to reach different pupils,

creating teaching that focuses on pupils' needs". According to the English dictionary to teach is to 'tell or show someone how to do something, to give instructions, to cause to learn or understand' and a teacher is 'a person whose job is to teach others (John Simpson; Edmund Weiner, 2020). These definitions fit in most appropriately with Vygotsky's 'scaffolding' method of teaching'. Scaffolding is the stages of help, encouragement, information a teacher gives a pupil who is in the process of learning and needs graded, appropriate help to encourage further interest and to achieve success. Scaffolding is a temporary framework used to support during construction: when used in the classroom it is used to help build the stages of educational construction in any child that needs it. With more understanding the scaffolding can be gradually withdrawn, leaving the pupil with a feeling of achievement, self satisfaction and a better understanding of the task in hand. Scaffolding is a tool that can be instructional, a guidance, an encouragement used when needed to assist understanding of the task and to enable the pupil to have the joy of having 'done it themselves'. Praise is key to scaffolding; praise to help solve the problem, praise to cajole the pupil into believing in themselves and solving the difficulty they were unsure of.

On occasions every teacher is faced with underachieving, disruptive, poorly motivated pupils and they must be dealt with fairly without damaging the pupil / teacher relationship. There are many reasons why a child becomes disengaged: it could be a low innate ability, where the work is too hard and interest is lost. It could be an event, a crisis, a poor home background, birth or death and these, in turn could cause long periods of absence which would cause this under achievement. Some pupils could be 'moderately disengaged' and though enjoying some aspects of school life their work ethos and interest in education is limited. With those pupils who suffer severe disengagement school life and education are of no interest to them and usually have multifaceted factors contributing to their disengagement. These pupils may be labelled 'special educational needs' and all would need specialist teaching to help them to learn, understand, cope and succeed. The curriculum would need modifying to equip them with the life and social skills needed to become "ethical, informed citizens who are ready to become citizens of Wales and the world." (Donaldson, 2015) The Welsh Assembly Government (2010) has undertaken a qualitative research study to explore young peoples' disengagement from learning

and recommend more flexible strategies to enable young people to make a new start at each stage of their education. The theories and styles already discussed in this assignment could be useful tools for all pupils but much would depend on the teacher, the teaching, the environment, the interest, the success. The capabilities of each child must be exercised to the full and to achieve this end the programme of learning must be made interesting and appropriate.

Reflection / Evaluation & Next Steps (700 words)

Critical reflection in education is a new concept to me; my experience of reflection comes from tangible results in the world of business and commerce. I am used to hard facts, profit and loss and the results. My research and extended reading has given me an insight into the advantages and disadvantages of critical reflection in education. The advantages include; offering a real starting place when you may be unsure as to where to begin, a structure to follow, the ability to assess all levels of a situation and a clear end to the process of evaluation. The disadvantages are equally clear; steps need to be followed in a defined way, in the real world or the world of business you may not always start at the beginning. Reflective practice models may not apply to every situation and reflective practice needs to be continuous. The reflective model I have tried to deploy in this assignment is that of Gibbs (1998) which builds on other models such as the ERA Cycle (Jasper, 2013) and Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle. (Kolb, 1984)

When first instructed to find a critical incident in my day's placement in a local primary school, it felt I was being 'thrown in at the deep end.' I wondered if I could identify a 'needle in a haystack!' I set about reading as much as possible beforehand to try and equip me with the skill to identify this elusive concept. In the classroom with all its experiences and activities, I was fearful these critical incidents would pass me by through a lack of actual experience. Realising I needed some tangible examples of critical incidents, a wake-up call came when I remembered my son returning home from school having been reprimanded for shouting out an answer, not raising his hand to be asked. My response was that he had displayed poor behaviour and should have listened more intently to instructions. He argued that no instructions had been given; since working at and compiling this assessment, I wonder if there had been a set standard in place for responding to questioning

techniques. Maybe his accusation of displaying poor behaviour had had some unfairness about it. I have learned from my research and reading that critical incidents are far more complex than just misdemeanours and must be treated with sound judgement, objectivity and unbiased evaluation.

On reflection of my placement, I can now identify quite a few critical incidents. In the forest school, with a year four class, a pupil was overzealous with the hammer and the situation had to be diffused. Was the child showing off? Was he seeking revenge for any poor treatment he may have experienced? Had he been shown how to handle the tool correctly? Was he just a naughty boy and had to be reprimanded? In a maths lesson with a year three class a few children were shouting out answers to a question. It is worth considering whether these actions were critical incidents or incidents where the required standards had not been put in place. A child was messing around with a glue stick instead of being 'on task.' Was the child bored, was the task not understood, was it attention seeking or was it just poor behaviour? There is so much to analyse in a critical incident and sometimes it is very difficult to identify an initial situation.

First lesson in the afternoon and a year one class are discussing stages of life. After discussion some practical activities were offered and the children were encouraged to experience them all. One child refused to move despite insistence and guidance by the teacher. Was this a critical incident? Was it unsociable behaviour? Why was the child reluctant to move? Was he unsure of the next task? Was he comfortable with other children? Was he used to having his own way? Whatever the reason may have been it was attention seeking and quite often it is difficult to figure out why. To try to understand critical incidents the teacher has to be well prepared in the tasks to be undertaken, well versed in appropriate classroom practice, has guidance for standards and the needs of the pupil and the class as a whole to be considered. My short experience in the classroom has given me an insight into facilitating learning and, by compiling this assessment I have started to learn a lot more about good classroom practice.

In conclusion I wonder if critical incidents in my grandfather's day would have been handled with the cane, in my father's day with a ruler rapped across the knuckles and in my day it was lines, detention and the withdrawal of privileges. It is comforting

to know that, in today's world, critical incidents are considered with more compassion.

Conclusion (300 words)

In the researching and compiling of this assessment, I have tried to learn and digest the new professional standards for teaching and learning. Coming from the 'world of work' into the 'world of education' has been a challenging transition but I do feel there is a correlation between them. Teachers follow the objectives of the 'Four Purposes' (Donaldson, 2015) to "nurture capable learners, creative contributors, informed citizens and confident individuals" and the 'world of work' does similarly by providing training, lectures, practical tasks and mentors. Pupils who receive a sound education invariably make sound employees. The 'Four Purposes' (Donaldson, 2015) in education are prescriptive aims that all educators, trainers, tutors can aspire to. With each step of development comes knowledge, maturity, readiness to learn and to play a full part in life and work, and who become ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society. The first steps of the scaffold are placed in a child's early years; it is the role of the teacher to identify and develop those steps by using all the knowledge they have acquired, training they have achieved and skills they have learned. They need to know how best to use them to "practice and promote a common understanding that all children and young children can learn and benefit from." (Welsh Assembly Government, 2016)

This assessment has taught me invaluable lessons about education; how children work, how they develop, how extra help is required at times, but most importantly it has taught me that, though in a class group situation, each child is an individual with varying needs and temperaments. It is imperative to try and make each child an unique person.

References

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Appendices (1,000 words)

Appendix 1: Observation Sheet 1, Year 6

Date and time, year group: 29th September 2020. Year 6, first lesson in the morning.

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).

Lesson on literacy, the class had been learning about The Titanic and in this lesson they were asked to write a diary entry describing how they felt as they first saw and entered the ship. The lesson is held in the classroom. The lesson begins with a short discussion on what they have done so far followed by a short video of the ship. This is followed by a group discussion about tickets prices, different classes and areas on the ship. Following the discussion the children are asked to write their diary entry. The class is mixed ability.

Classroom culture

(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The Teacher is front of class during the discussion then consistently moves around the classroom when the children are working. The Teacher is in control of the classroom environment, I have listed a couple of examples of this in the Critical Incidents section. The classroom atmosphere is lively but well controlled and the Teacher uses repetition to check that the class knows what they are doing.

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 Learning Objective is clearly written on the whiteboard at the front of the classroom. The Teacher is also clear of the lesson objective orally. The first part of the lesson is conducted in a group environment with children being asked questions and to remember information learnt at previous lessons.. The second part of the lesson is a written task.

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 lesson begins with some questions on what they have learnt so far and a short video. The Learning Objective is clearly displayed as is the written task. During the written task the Teacher makes a point of reading out a number of diary entries that she says she is really pleased with giving the children a quality benchmark.

Access and challenge

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

There is a fantastic picture of the Titanic on the wall which has been made by the children. The Teacher answered all of the children's question before the written task commenced

The Teacher reading out work she is happy with.

It is clear that the group is mixed ability as the Teacher and TA's are moving around the room dealing with a myriad of issues.

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 question session at the start of the lesson gave the children the chance to recap what they had previously learnt.

The Teacher is clear on the success criteria for the task; written in the 1st person, using paragraphs and to include information about the ship.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

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

One slightly disruptive child shouted out an answer, the Teacher calmly ignored him and just carried on.

A child was caught messing around with his water bottle for the second time, the Teacher immediately asked him to move it to the window sill out of the way.

The Teacher had something to say but it was quite noisy in the classroom. In silence the Teacher raised her arm, very quickly the children started doing the same and stopped talking.

A child had his head on the desk, the Teacher just called out his name and immediately he sat upright.

The Teacher asked a question, a number of children shouted out the answer. The Teacher immediately said; 'hands up, let's do that again' and picked someone with their hand up.

Appendix 2: Observation Sheet 2, Year 4

Date and time, year group: 29th September 2020. Year 3, second lesson in the morning.

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).

Lesson on numeracy, learning how to read coordinates on a map. The lesson is held in the classroom. The class is mixed ability as illustrated by the task in the second half of the lesson. The first part of the lesson was conducted as a group discussion / question and answer session on the carpet. The teachers had drawn a really big pirate map on the carpet and had placed various pirate related objects on the map.

Classroom culture

(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The classroom atmosphere is lively, jovial but ready to listen and learn. Children are keen to get involved. The Teacher is in control of the class, the lesson does get boisterous at times but the Teacher uses a number of tactics to remain in control whilst not impacting on the fun element of learning.

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 is clear of the lesson objective, to help the children learn how to read coordinates on a map. The first section of the lesson is conducted in a group environment with children being asked to give the coordinates of a number of the objects on the map. The second part of the lesson is a written task in the books and the Teacher has written three sets of questions; Gold, Silver and Bronze. The children are told to start with the Bronze questions and work as far as they can.

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 large map on the carpet, along with the Teachers excellent explanation and instruction clearly helps the children grasp the concept of coordinates in a group environment. They are given the opportunity to answer the Teachers questions collectively and each answer, whether right or wrong is discussed and explained. The children then move on to their individual tasks, the Teacher and TA's are available to help and are constantly moving around the classroom. The lesson ends with a short period of peer marking.

Access and challenge

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

The large map on the carpet and the opportunity to discuss collectively at first
The questions in their workbook.
Peer marking. This was the first time the children had done coordinates and at first it was clearly quite challenging. The large visual map, group discussion and question and answer session gave the children the skills to tackle the individual task

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 has created the three different levels of questions; Gold, Silver and Bronze. This gives the Teacher the opportunity to reflect on how well each child has understood the subject.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

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

Children were encouraged to walk up to the Teacher / TA's to show their work but were not allowed to move around the classroom randomly.

When there was too much chatting / noise in the group environment the Teacher would immediately say out loud; un, dau, tri, edrych a fi.

A few children started shouting out an answer to a question. The Teacher immediately said; 'I'm going to pick somebody who has put their hand up to answer.'

A child did something incorrectly (wrote the number 3 the wrong way around). The Teacher very calmly responded; 'that's ok because you knew it was wrong.'

A child was messing around with a glue stick. The Teacher immediately told him the cost of a glue stick and asked him to work out the cost to equip each child in the class with a glue stick.

A child was asked the coordinates of an object on the carpet map, she couldn't answer as she didn't have her glasses on. The Teacher very calmly asked her to go to her Locker to get them.

A child passed wind out loud during the group session on the carpet. The Teacher very naturally just said 'excuse you' and carried on as normal.

Two children picked up items from the map on the carpet (a hook and a sword) and started play fighting. They were told to stop doing it. When it happened for the second time they were clearly told that they were not allowed to use the map again that day.

Appendix 3: Observation Sheet 3, Year 1

Date and time, year group: 29th September 2020. Year 1, first lesson in the afternoon.

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).

The lesson is indoors and begins with a group discussion with the children on the carpet and the Teacher out front using the whiteboard. The class is discussing different stages of life from baby to being elderly. The second part of the lesson involves different activities at different tables; drawing, making body parts using different coloured paper and basic art and craft.

Classroom culture

(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The Teacher gave an individual greeting to every child. The Teacher asks for 'hands up' when answering questions in the group discussion environment. The children are well controlled but are also having fun as a result of the way the Teacher is conducting the lesson and the tone she is using.

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 uses images of people at different stages of their life and in the group discussion the children have to put them in the correct sequence.

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 uses pictures of people at different stages of their life. The aim of the first part of the lesson is to discuss these different stages and ultimately get them in the right order. Following that achievement can be measured by completing a number of tasks; a drawing or sticking the pictures in the correct sequence.

Access and challenge

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

Asking the children to think about what they had previously learnt.
The use of visual aides followed by practical activities. It was a lively environment and noise was sometimes an issue.

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 started the lesson by asking the children to try and think about what they had learned the previous day, lots of questions and lots of participation. Following the discussion the children are then given the opportunity to show what they have learnt via the practical tasks.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

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

A child was offered the chance to answer a question in the group discussion, he didn't answer. The Teacher offered him the chance to 'phone a friend.'

A TA had to physically eject a child from the group environment as he was extremely disruptive.

A child wouldn't change activities and join the Teacher at a new table. The Teacher gave him a number of opportunities to move across but the child did not respond. The Teacher displayed a lot of patience and empathy and in the end

turned the chair to face the child and said; 'I'm going to leave this chair open for you, I hope you will make the right choice' and then went back to concentrate on the other children at the table.

Appendix 4: Observation Sheet 4, Year 4

Date and time, year group: 29th September 2020. Year 4, second lesson in the afternoon.

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).

This was a Forest School lesson conducted outside. The area of learning was Science as they were doing an activity with a leaf.

Classroom culture

(What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The environment was fun but very well controlled. The children all sat in a group and listened and watched what they had to do. Then they went off in pairs to perform the task of banging a leaf so it left a print on a white tissue. the second part of the lesson was a mixture of free play and a game of 'hide and seek.'

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?)

Through a group discussion the group learned about the physical makeup of the leaf, were shown how to perform the task then were given the opportunity to try for themselves. It was a very visual task

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 discussion at the beginning of the lesson followed by the practical demonstration. It is then very clear by what is left on their paper if they have completed the task successfully.

Access and challenge

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

The group discussion followed by the practical demonstration. The children were using hammers and stones so it was of paramount importance that safety was stressed and monitored.

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 group were asked a number of questions at the beginning of the discussion to reaffirm knowledge. Being able to understand instruction and complete the task successfully.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

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

One of the children could not climb a tree until the Teacher encouraged his peers to assist him.

One of the children was getting a little overzealous with the hammer and playing to the crowd. The Teacher diffused the situation by asking him to think of what could go wrong if he didn't calm down.

Appendix 5: Critical Incident Identification Record 1, Year 6

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	Tuesday 29th September 2020. Year 6 class, it is the first lesson in the morning. It is a Literacy lesson, the class have been learning about the Titanic and in this lesson they are asked to write a diary entry describing how they felt when they first saw and boarded the ship. Prior to doing this the children have a group discussion reaffirming knowledge already learnt and then watch a short video. The Teacher is front of class during the discussion then moves around the classroom during the written task.
<i>What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to</i>	During the class discussion a child had his head on his desk. The Teacher spotted this and very calmly called out his name. The Child immediately responded and sat upright. The discussion continued and nothing more was said. The child did not put his head on the desk again. The child had clearly lost engagement during the group discussion and it immediately got me thinking 'why' and what could the Teacher do to keep all of the children interested and

<i>you as a result, looking towards your research.</i>	engaged. Could they have extended the discussion and the children's vocabulary by asking all of the children to think of one word to describe how they might have felt or one word to describe what they might have seen as they approached the ship. Each child gives a word and the Teacher writes them all on the board, repetition is not allowed. The children could be asked to include their word in their diary entry and in addition record all of the words in their workbooks and practice using them as homework.
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Appendix 6: Critical Incident Identification Record 2, Year 3

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	Tuesday 29th September 2020. Year 3 class, it is the second lesson in the morning. The lesson is on numeracy, learning how to read coordinates on a map. The lesson is held in the classroom. The class is mixed ability as illustrated by the task in the second half of the lesson. The classroom atmosphere is lively, jovial but ready to listen and learn. Children are keen to get involved, the Teacher is in control of the class. The first part of the lesson was conducted as a group discussion / question and answer session on the carpet. The teachers had drawn a really big pirate map on the carpet and had placed various pirate related objects on the map. The second part of the lesson was a written task in their books and the Teacher had written three sets of questions; Gold, Silver and Bronze. The children are told to start with the Bronze questions and work as far as they can in the allotted time
<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 the group discussion / question and answer session a child was asked the coordinates of an object on the carpet map, she couldn't answer as she didn't have her glasses on. The Teacher very calmly asked her to go to her Locker to get them. Has this happened before? Has the pupil been missing out on learning as a result? What could be done to prevent this happening in the future.

Appendix 7: Critical Incident Identification Record 3, Year 1

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group. People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	Tuesday 29th September 2020. Year 1 class, it is the first lesson in the afternoon. The first part of the lesson focuses on people at different stages of their lives and the Teacher works on sequencing with the children, this is done by way of a group discussion with the Teacher front of class working on the whiteboard. The classroom environment is lively but well controlled however there is one child who is consistently misbehaving and disturbing the other children. Following the group discussion and sequencing activity the class was split into smaller groups and moved around the classroom working on different activities including arts, play and craft
<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 the group discussion one child was consistently misbehaving and disrupting the lesson. The Teaching Assistant tried, on numerous occasions, to placate the child but his disruptive behaviour continued. After approximately ten minutes the Teaching Assistant physically removed the child from the classroom. Does the child have an ALN or was he just disengaged?

Appendix 8: Critical Incident Identification Record 4, Year 4

Details relevant to the research context. Date/time. Age/Stage of group.	Tuesday 29th September 2020. Year 4 class, it is the last lesson of the day. It is a Forest School lesson, the lesson began with a Group discussion on the biology of a leaf. The class were then put into pairs and asked to perform a practical task each with a leaf. Using a hammer they were trying to get the sap out of the leaf onto a white paper towel so it left an outline of the leaf.
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People involved. Contextual information from field notes.	Following the practical task the children were given approximately twenty minutes free time to play, climb and explore. The environment was fun but very well controlled. All of the children were given the opportunity to perform the task and were well supported if they were having any problems.
<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 the practical task a child started getting a little overzealous with the hammer. The Teacher spotted this and very calmly asked him to stop and consider what could go wrong if he didn't calm down with the hammer in his hand. The Child immediately responded and continued with the task in a controlled manner. It was clear from the response of the pupil that there was a positive Teacher / pupil relationship. The child was made aware that his behaviour was not acceptable but was treated calmly and with respect.