

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

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this essay, as alluded in the title, is a discussion, analysis and critical reflection upon a critical incident, referring to the concept introduced by Tripp [18].

Tripp identifies critical incidents in a vague manner, this is precisely because it is solely in the eye of the beholder what necessarily makes an incident 'critical'. Many trivial things occur in a day-to-day environment that one can reflect upon critically, but often do not constitute a 'critical' incident, I will give an example. You are teaching the class, the class begins as your pupils slowly draft in through the door, a pupil trips, perhaps being absent minded, and breaks his fifth digit on his hand, meanwhile this is an incident, there is nothing to be gained from critically reflecting upon such. One might however argue that the consequent events, such as how the teacher reacts I.E does the teacher recognise his broken finger and promptly

sends him to the nurse or does the teacher ignore his complaints and carry on? Such an incident might be considered critical, as the well-being of the pupils is more than simply their education.

In summary a critical incident is something in which we can reflect upon, critically analyse and use to improve our practice. This will improve the outcome of the pupils but also a way in which to modify our behaviour so that we can continually improve our craft and just as importantly, educate other teachers so that the collective profession improves.

2 The Role of Critical Reflection

Critical reflection have been defined in multiple ways, but there are general overlapping ideas about what it means in more concrete practice: Critical reflection is the process by which adults identify the assumptions governing their actions, locate historical and cultural origins of the assumptions, and develop alternative ways of acting [6]. There is ways in which this could improve the current educational model, and help teachers to grow as practitioners. Some of these ways include reflection based actions, journaling and dialogue between different practitioners in the field of teaching. The process of critical reflection essentially can help to capture the underlying assumptions we have governing our actions, by locating our social, political, cultural and historical assumptions, question the meaning of these assumptions and develop ways of acting which enables practitioners to achieve more effective ways of teaching. This can help to guide new understanding in the field of teaching and help to develop new ways of engaging with students by being able to consider also their perspectives as well as the practitioners and making conscious decisions in the complex environment that guides our actions.

Critical reflection can be used as a strategy to deal with different incidents during teaching to ensure one's ability to grow as a teacher and not to stay stagnant after one becomes used to the routine. This is important to ensure that the profession grows in practice through experience, it is mentioned in Tripp's book "Critical Incidents in Teaching" [18], how teacher has various critical incidents that go unnoticed because they've become so routine. Teacher should question and challenge their own assumptions and beliefs, we often hold beliefs that have become part of what Tripp refers to as 'professional habitus' (Tripp 1993, p. 19), referring to the set of norms one internalizes through their career, as we grow part of an institution, it should be important to ensure that during the professional development of teacher's career also ensure personal growth as a person. Reflective journaling can help teacher to reflect on the events that happened during the day, this is a process of recording events that occur during the day and analyzing them to cultivate and have something to help with reflective thinking.

To cultivate a culture which encourages practitioners to develop a good understanding of pedagogy and the skill to select the most appropriate pedagogical approach, there needs to be active participation in the process of teaching. This means we can't default back to our routine way of doing things, but must actively be part of the process of teaching by being able to observe and analyze the situations and understand our positions in the institution. To be able to understand our underlying assumptions about ways in which we for example require students to do things like finishing a task, is important due to the way in which this allows us to reflect and learn from our own and their behavior. As listed in the Curriculum for Wales 2022, "be supported by effective pedagogy", I think it's important to note that there should

be a dialogue between the theory and practice to guide the practice of teaching in pedagogical terms. This means reflective self-dialogue and conversations with other practitioners should be an important part of this process to grow as learners and as teachers, because there are highly significant implications to the wider community of teachers and students. When we analyze what actions may have given rise to a certain outcomes we're able to reflect on our actions clearer and develop our own 'epistemology of reflective practice' [15].

The practice of critical reflection should encourage teacher to examine their personal biases and take in account how the students tend to learn as well to ensure an environment where appropriate progression for all learners is accounted for in continuum of learning (as listed in new curriculum), and to support balanced and broad education. Critical reflection can help to foster environment where teacher is able to understand their own actions and students actions better through observing, recording and analyzing what goes on in the classroom. This can also have benefit for understanding their own teaching style and grow as a teacher. It is an ongoing process that requires the teacher to be actively involved in the process. To be realistic in practice of teaching and how much critical reflection can possibly help in achieve some of the goals listed in the new curriculum for wales like setting up 'ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives', has to account that the more people are involved, the more complex this task is likely to be [10].

3 Observation

The observation occurred in a mixed Gender English-medium comprehensive school based in Cardiff, just under 9% [8] are eligible for free school meals, which is considerably lower than the national average of 17%, Nearly all pupils have English as their first language. Around 18% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Just under 16% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is below the national average. Just over 5% of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is higher than the national average. There is an additional teaching facility for pupils with autism at the school. Problematic child with suspected ALN/ADHD, he was interrupting constantly from the start of class and being non-conducive to learning for the whole class, once his behavior was recognised to be problematic, the teacher implemented a specific 3 mark system, allowing him to address the teacher/class only 3 times, he regularly interrupted regardless however the teacher was able to quiet him without being admonishing or showing any contempt, there was clearly an implicit agreement on the education of this pupil. Once his interruptions got too frequent, he was asked would he like to go stand outside, which he complied with. He rejoined of his own accord a few minutes later and continued the same behavior, the teacher asked would he like to go outside again and he complied, once he returned, his behavior was still disruptive but markedly less so.

4 Critical incident linked to Donaldson's Four Purposes

Critical incidents are created or produced by the way we look at a situation, they're value judgements [18]. We could start dissecting this incident where problematic child with ALN/ADHD starts interrupting from the start of the class by first asking certain questions about this incident in the tune of: Why did he start interrupting in the class? This is where it

could be valuable to be able to assess where is this behaviour coming from and being able to examine his behavior in an accurate manner. It can be helpful to ask the student, this way we are able to confront the asymmetrical nature of power distribution and move towards more equal grounding where it can be encouraging for the student to express their views, which might contain essential information for understanding their behavior. This could have been especially helpful where the behavior still keeps on going regardless of stepping outside and complying otherwise but still leading up to the same incident. Being able to reflect-in-action can be very valuable whether its in the classroom, home or working in hospital as this can let us cue in on some valuable insight we might have otherwise been missing.

Classroom is a complex environment and to be able to handle such environment demands a lot from a teacher. This is because more than often there is situations in which teacher can face multitude of conflicting demands that require immediate attention, in this sense these routines that professional teachers develop during their career are necessary part of their tool set. However, we also wanna foster careful consideration and ability to analyze the situations in which we end up in, not only to be able to grow as practitioners but to also enhance the possible quality of teaching and to be able to be aware of the everyday routines we do not usually ask ourselves about. This could be regarded as part of the aim towards ambitious and capable learners in the of new curriculum for Wales, it is not only in the interest of the learners but also in the interest of the teachers as this can have very valuable effects in the form of providing further understanding and direction in the career of teaching. Critical incidents in this sense, can be a helpful tool for expanding the tool set for a teacher, and to enable learning environment where there's an emphasis on understanding and ambitious learning.

While these examinations might not seem all that relevant on the surface, they can guide valuable action and enable more ambitious and capable learning environment for through deeper understanding of the students and the environment in which we navigate in as teachers. There is obvious practicality in this matter, in that our actions can be guided by these incidents in companion with critical reflection to avoid situations where possible miscommunications could occur and to help students also find a voice to express their views. To be able to address problematic behavior in intelligent ways and be able to overcome our underlying assumptions, these assumptions often govern our behavior, so working through our thought process and the incidents is going to help us develop taken for granted incidents and become more aware of the assumptions from our contexts.

5 Literature Review

Critical incidents, as noted by David Tripp – are value judgements about the way in which we analyze the situation [18](p.8). He suggests that by focusing their attentions on such incidents in a structured and analytical way, teachers can develop their own grounded theory, theorising about aspects of their practice rather than trying to apply academic theory to their experience. Critical incidents technique is itself an open-ended term as first described scientifically by Flanagan in 1954 as a tool for formulating the critical requirements of an activity [9]. In the paper "Teachers' lives, critical incidents, and professional practice", David Tripp talks about there being a methodological problem with what he calls the "voice of the the paper" that is usually adopted in academic papers, he notes how difficult it is to find an academic journal that will publish his paper, so presumably he is talking about the publishing

process, although he does not further articulate on what he means by the "voice" [19]. The paper itself is concerned the process of what could be understood as journaling in education, calling for further inclusion of teachers into educational research and what I would effectively view as autoethnography although not in the paper articulated as such and has some minute differences.

Tripp's Critical Incident approach used to gain awareness of certain aspects of practice by reflecting on them and in turn attempting to become more aware of the nature of their professional values and possible problematic dispositions about our own demands and practices. Tripp contrasts his own approach to what he calls "holistic approach" and "holistic biography", listing that "holistic biography" is not means of eliciting new aspects of the practice, and does not account for the specifics of a teacher's practice [19]. Tripp contrasts this to his approach which is to explained in terms of aspects of and critical incidents in a teacher's personal history, "biography for developing practice, not for biography for knowing history." and whilst Tripp does seem to acknowledge the fact that memory can be faulty, he rather explicitly suggests that the existence of written record is a guard against misrepresentation. This is however rather questionable as it places heavy reliance on one's own personal memory of the events as the main data source. In the process of writing down one's own memories, there has to be inclusive focus on the self as such, as it is introspective practice as also recognized by Tripp himself [19] (Tripp 1994, page 72), one has to walk rather careful lines between narrating memories of the events and the interpretation of those memories. It is also of note that what Tripp seems to be more focused on in this paper [19] is retrospective reflection of events, as he cites reflecting on his paper for a decade as an example, however often times the most difficult part of teaching is exactly what Schön would call 'reflect-in-action', reflecting on your actions as you're doing them [15].

As the practice of teaching faces a diverse range of complex issues to deal with in practice, it is important that there is grounding for the teaching professionals to deal with these issues that they might face in their work. This study in particular raises concerns about teacher's ethical knowledge and the ethical dilemmas grown out of critical incidents and the emerged responses that these incidents elicit. In a study done on a 50 different secondary and high schools that interviewed teachers on difficult ethical situations they've encountered using grounded theory as methodology, it was found out that most frequent ethical dilemmas were those involving tension between caring climate and formal climate [16]. All of the incidents in study represent possible critical incidents. The study calls for more ethical education for teachers to develop moral language with an explicit moral base to be more apt at facing moral dilemmas. In this we're working with the assumption that moral education produces effective outcomes in dealing with moral dilemmas, this not being completely unfair assumption as there is research suggesting that for example college students that are involved in community service work along with discussions of relevant moral issues, increased moral reasoning in college students [2] as measured by Defining Issues Test. Similar findings has also been found by adults who are involved in extracurricular community activities [12] were able to display higher levels of moral reasoning in comparison to those who were not as measured by DIT2 (Defining Issue Test Revised) from surveying over 396 undergraduate accounting students).

Teaching itself is itself a moral activity, as for one, teacher defines the "moral and the social quality of conduct" [1]. In light of these issues, a programmes for developing the moral language with an explicit base reasonable suggestion, as teacher do have to be involved in moral dilemmas in their work [16]. The second most happened incident from the study of 50 different secondary and high schools had to do with distributive justice versus school standards, this having to do with what teacher considers fair allocations of desirable outcome

for the student(s). In the described critical incident, student ends up not having to have a chance to go abroad due to coming from a poorer background, the school put pressure to exclude the student because of this, and teacher followed this but ends up regretting and seeing it as an unjust outcome that conflicts with his own values. It should also be noted that poverty plays a role in this critical incident, similar findings have been noted [5] where teachers find themselves in ethical dilemmas, due to the poverty of the student.

These incidents are particularly good at presenting the moral complexity teachers may have to deal with in their work and if one ought to be concerned about the practice of teaching, then raising the issues in the daily practice of teaching should be a primary concern. For a teacher dealing with classroom of students, the kind of material they're taught as teachers by the teacher educators should be of practical concern, if one ought to be concerned with applied practice of teaching. In "Has Reflective Practice Done More Harm than Good in Teacher Education" T. Russell [14] highlights some of the aforementioned issues, especially in relation to how complex actual teaching can be in practice. Article goes onto talk about several studies in relation to reflection and reflective practice as it pertains to teaching, applying also his own experience of the field and focuses specifically in the use of "reflection" as a term and how it might have negative impact on the teacher educators. In the section "Reframing while Teaching and Learning to Teach: The Potential of Listening in Moments of Uncertainty and Surprise" Russell goes onto highlight that *"There is little or no connection between university-based classes and school-based practicum experiences in pre-service teacher education."* and teaching how to learn from experience requires explicit modeling by teacher educators. In the last chapter, he goes on to point out that teacher educators are generally lacking in explanation and modeling of what is actually meant by reflection and reflective practice and how there is a general failure to link reflection clearly and directly to professional experience, often having teacher candidates ended up in a muddled and negative view of what is actually meant by reflection.

In an earlier chapter, "Reframing while Teaching and Learning to Teach: The Potential of Listening in Moments of Uncertainty and Surprise", he does go to point out that "critical" has also been added as part of the vocabulary commonly found in studies and books. He questions particularly the use of this word in relation to how much it is adding anything. This use of critical reflection seems to have come from the additive use of critical theory [4], where critical theory is supposed to act as part of the reflection, guiding evermore expansive view of reflection to include sociopolitical and ideological context with it and presumably seeking a further role as emancipatory practice [11]. Indeed frustrations about understanding and conflation of reflection and critical reflection has been expressed also by Brookfield who notes *"I contend that reflection is not, by definition, critical. It is quite possible to practise reflectively while focusing solely on the nuts and bolts of process and leaving unquestioned the criteria, power dynamics and wider structures that frame a field of practice."*, also noting how from the perspective of critical theory, it is supposed to focus on uncovering power dynamics and detecting the creation and maintenance of hegemony [3].

The question of how much is it possible to be gained from adding lens of critical theory to the mix and is it a serious concern in practical terms as reflection as its described by Schön is already complicated to merge into practice should be a serious consideration one wants to these instructions to be clear enough for teachers to use in practice [14]. The emancipatory role of critical theory in particular has been demonstrated to be difficult to integrate into actual practice: In the study [13], it was found that students had *"utilitarian"* ideas about critical reflection in transforming themselves towards competence in *"anticipated professional procedures"* and in one cluster of assignments, students critical reflection was revealed as *"as*

a process that highlights transformation towards demonstrating professional competence.” and “When potential tensions emerged between personal and professional practice knowledge and skills, students described how they would seek out and adhered to policies and procedures. They silenced and/or censored personal experience and views”, which goes against the rather emancipatory goal of critical reflection in so much as one is asked to realize the social, cultural and political context of which they navigate in.

This question becomes more pervasive as if one aims for clarity and ease of integrating the theory into practice, these matters become important. I’ve also found rather confused use of ‘critical reflection’ that further seems to demonstrate that it is being conflated with ‘reflection’ from Dewey and as extended by Schön, as an example the study [17] mentions that in the section ‘Purposes of critical reflection’ that “In relation to thinking, Dewey [7] describes critical reflection as problem solving or investigation brought about by a moment of doubt.”, however Dewey does not talk about ‘critical reflection’, but just ‘reflection’ which is mentioned in his work “How We Think (1933)” in total of 60 times, not one of which uses the term ‘critical reflection’.

If mental health is to be valued, it should also be noted how muddled all of these considerations about reflection and critical reflection can become in a practice, as this does not only concern the mental health of the students but also the teachers. As noted by Schön in his book reflective practitioner [15] (Schön 1983, p. 42): “The swampy lowlands, where situations are confusing messes incapable of technical solution and usually involve problems of greatest human concern”, under inappropriate conditions, which could be construed as defined by [20] (Yip 2006, p. 783), oppressive social environment, demanding working environment, social workers’ poor physical and mental health. Which can lead to the social workers being abused, exploited and recall personal traumatic experiences which can not be solved by such acts of reflection. Under the wrong conditions the self-reflection may become more of an additional burden than help. As self-reflection is part of reflective-practice, demanding also mental energy from the practitioner, a social worker experiencing poor physical and mental health would not be in an optimal position to undergo such reflective practice. Social workers may overindulge in analysis and evaluation that might be highly destructive to their mental health due to heavy workloads and inappropriate work environment to perform such reflection [20].

In trying to conceive more effective ways of learning, one should realize the opportunity cost that necessarily comes with education, that not being just the tuition fees one might have to face depending on their country but also the time cost they sink in. This should speak to the importance of proper conceptualization and grounding of concepts, since these matters can negatively impact the field.

6 Reflection, Evaluation & Next Steps

Focus of the critical incident is concentrated upon the why did the interruptions start and how can we assess the situation in a way that allows to perceive the important aspects of the events and reflect upon the heart of the issue. Through this narrative inquiry we’re trying to be more aware of the context-specific assumptions and working on being aware of one’s own professional motivations and habitus by steering the focus by examining the not only reflecting upon what the student is doing but how the teacher reacted and what prompted this event from the pupil. From this we try to seek possible alternative forms of actions and evaluate our own actions as well as pupils, focusing also on recognizing the assumptions that

under grid our actions. Possible alternatives such as asking the pupil about their feelings and also being aware of other pupils that might be influencing the event, next steps could be to try to involving the pupil in the class by demanding focus by for example asking a direct question about the subject matter, also focusing on the student and having eye-contact and seeing if the pupil keeps disrupting. If pupil keeps disrupting then asking the pupil to leave the class, you can also try speaking with less volume to make it obvious that pupil is disruptive, this relies however on peer pressure of the other pupils.

Critical reflection can act as a tool to help teachers in this context to help improve upon their practices and also grow more aware of their own values, beliefs and practices. In teaching context this could include reflecting upon the pupils and how you're perceived as a teacher and are you coming clearly across as a teacher. This is also where journaling entries can be employed to see patterns and practices that have become part of the routine and are much more difficult to identify. There has to be a balance between being able to be active in the classroom as a presence but also being able attend to a pupil and be able to emphasize, encouraging the pupil to elaborate if there is something of value to be said. We also want to focus on providing good teaching for those that want it, enhancing the quality of teaching and systematically evaluating your own teaching methods. There is importance to be placed upon being able to understand and properly reflect on the students and not acting hastily as there can easily be misunderstandings in such an environment where you're constantly having to act on your feet, this is where being perceptive comes in handy as classroom can be chaotic environment. We want to work on contextualizing our practices and understanding them in the wider context of the institution we participate in linking theory and practice.

When we use critical reflection as a tool we can also experience better understanding of ourselves better by having an active dialogue with our own practices, values and beliefs and contextualizing our self within the classroom. There is a way in which we can't separate ourselves from the context which we live in, and in this way there also has to be personal development in tandem with the professional development helping us to also improve our abilities to reflect-in and -on-action, in this way reflecting critically can help us refine our approaches in teaching. We can devise action plans or teaching strategies and evaluating effective actions which means we have to pay attention to our procedures and measure the outcomes of those procedures. This way we can build upon experience by reflecting upon different procedures and methods one might try, as there is no hard set limit to the set of strategies one might try to employ in a real setting, as long as it is applicable and effective. Teaching in this way, is a constant journey to improvement.

Journaling can be of significant help in this and feedback from other teachers can also be helpful in some contexts. When dealing with pupils with ADHD, critical reflection can be of particular use if it helps the teacher to be more emphatic as pupils with ADHD seem to respond better to calmness than confrontation. These situations can be very difficult to deal within bigger classrooms where there are lot of noise and pupils to attend to and keeping general order in the class. In this way reaching for substantial professional development and growing into the practice of teaching.

7 Conclusion

In this essay I have gone over critical reflection, critical incidents and reflection as a general tool in education also in attempt to evaluate some of the moral and practical usefulness of the

concept of reflection. There needs to be supportive emphasis for the teachers if reflection as reflection itself can be damaging for individuals lacking proper supportive grounding, difficulties in personal life and/or having traumatic experiences [20]. There should also be emphasis on employing quantitative methods in tandem with qualitative methods, as methodologies such as autoethnography by themselves can lack in some other aspects (isolated reliance on the narrator) whilst also providing useful insights into the field. Employing effective pedagogy in the classroom to enable professional growth and being able to bring clarity and progress to support the education at Wales. The emphasis upon having a climate of mutual support becomes also important when considering the complex environments that teachers navigate in and the health of not just the pupils but also the teachers. Engaging with the pupils on the same ground and having awareness to be emphatic and employ critical reflection to help prioritize learners rights and needs as a forefront and also guarantee a coherent and developing education culture in Wales. Here I have employed strategies of reflection and critical incident looking back at what happened in the classroom and contextualizing the event and considering alternatives and systematically evaluating the processes that happened through different procedures whilst also considering different strategies to employ in the teaching process.

8 Appendices

8.1 Observations

8.1.1 Record 1

Date and time, year group: 22/09/21, 9:50, year 7.

Where and When: Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context; Year 7 mixed ability German, class was quite peaceful, teacher was going over German adjectives.

What happened: Problematic child with suspected ALN/ADHD, he was interrupting constantly and being non-conducive to learning for the whole class, once his behaviour was recognised to be problematic, the teacher implemented a specific 3 mark system, allowing him to address the teacher/class only 3 times, he regularly interrupted regardless however the teacher was able to quiet him without being admonishing or showing any contempt, once his interruptions got too frequent, he was asked would he like to go stand outside, which he complied with. He rejoined of his own accord a few minutes later and continued the same behaviour, the teacher asked would he like to go outside again and he complied.

Areas of possible exploration: Teacher knew of pupils difficulties and tried to work with him rather than simply being admonishing, the teacher and pupil obviously had some tacit understanding, probably from his experience with the SEN/ALN team, he was given a small boundary but occasionally allowed to break such, once the breaks got too frequent, he understood his behaviour was non-conducive and hence the teacher wisely offered him the option to go outside rather than forcing him, giving him a choice in matter's empowered the pupil without giving him free reign. I have considered research regarding dealing with ALN/troublesome pupils and the best way to conduct such.

Notes: The class room was near max capacity, it was during 2nd period, prior to break, agitation/boredom might be a factor but considerably less so than 4th period.

8.1.2 Record 2

Date and time, year group: 22/03/21,11:50, year 9

Where and When: Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context: Topic at hand was feasibility vs futility arguments pertaining to gastric band therapy, mixed ability class.

What happened: The teacher asked a question to a pupil, the pupil began to answer but didn't fully understand, the teacher gently nudged and gave ample time, without pressuring him, asking rhetorical questions and pushing him a bit until the pupil gave a fully descriptive answer, the pupil seemed pleased with himself.

Areas of possible exploration: I think researching further on pupil engagement, via differentiation and progression in learning, will lead to more satisfactory learning and more satisfied pupils.

Notes: It was the period before lunch time I believe, the pupils were a bit off topic and there were 3 pupils in the class who had particular deficits, as specified by the teacher to me afterwards, he used the attainment of the other pupils to help bring up the more troubled ones.

8.1.3 Record 3

Date and time, year group: 22/03/21,11:50, year 9

Where and When: Topic at hand was feasibility vs futility arguments pertaining to gastric band therapy, mixed ability class.

What happened: Teacher noticed a pupil was off task, this particularly pupil as I learned later was one who was 'struggling', he gently nudged the pupil and enquired if he was engaging in the topic, the pupil had two minor questions which, the teacher accordingly rectified in a very calm and friendly manner, he maintained a very 'friendly' composition during this and it was almost like a parent giving a slight nudge to a child.

Areas of possible exploration: What you think could be "under the hood" in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider? The teacher knew this particular pupil was struggling a bit, he successfully managed the learning environment to bring the pupil up to speed, I believe that being able to spot and cater to individual's specific needs is a key area I need to research. I believe also that the study of behaviour management is essential to an 'ideal' lesson.

Notes: The class was specifically meant to be a debate type environment, as it was for vs against, the pupils were actively encouraged to discuss relevant matters, this is a somewhat difficult approach to manage, as it is very prone to some pupils using the time to go off topic, being able to manage the room is key to the success of all the learners. The teacher utilised

technology and implored them to use their phones due to the display projector malfunctioning, the pupils seemingly mostly followed this instruction and were mostly on topic, the ability to deal with obstacles like this via quick thinking and former experience is key to a smooth, coherent lesson.

8.2 A Synopsis of some critical incidents observed by last year's cohort

Here are some examples of incidents from a 3-19 range, made critical by some students and the areas of further study this led them towards in their assignments.

1 The researcher observed an adult speaking firmly to a child at a table set out for an individual task. 'You're not listening, you need to listen, you need to learn to listen,' said the adult. The child sat in 'quiet tears.' Later the researcher asked the child why they were there. 'I got it wrong' was the reply. Analysis of this incident led to further study of how the use of AfL might serve to understand and avoid similar incidents in personal practice. The researcher also studied how approaches to Health and Well-being might usefully relate to the issues raised by the incident.

2 The researcher observed a pupil initially disengaged, playing with a pencil case and swinging on the back legs of the chair. When the pupil saw the teacher start a practical activity involving individual whiteboards, the behaviour ceased and the pupil became highly engaged. The researcher observed this enjoyment of practical engagement at several different times throughout the day. This led to deeper study of behaviour management and the theoretical underpinnings of scaffolding as a pedagogic technique.

3 A child diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was observed with a 1:1 support TA trying to engage him apart from the other learners in the class. As the child was not engaging at this time, it raised questions in the researcher's mind as to the purpose of the pupil being in the mainstream setting. This led to further study of what learning theories might tell us about developing confidence and socialisation skills in ASD pupils and a deeper analysis of the usefulness of scaffolding as a pedagogic technique.

4 A pupil was observed arriving late and joining a group involved in a shape cutting task. On arrival the pupil cut paper randomly and when asked offered some help before again becoming distracted back into random cutting. An adult arrived and engaged the pupil gently in discussion. Soon the pupil rejoined the others and completed the learning task. Later the researcher asked why the pupil was late and was informed that he was returning from a support session with the Emotional Learning Support Assistant (ELSA). This led to further study on emotional well-being and relevance of learning theories (with an emphasis on holistic theory) to future personal practice.

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