

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

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

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Introduction

The focus of this assignment is to study an observed critical incident in the context of reflective learning. In order to do so an analysis of the incident from numerous different areas is required. It is also important to understand the context behind the situation. This includes a background to the school in question and what was occurring in the classroom at the time of the incident.

Explanation will also be given into how the observation took place and what methods were used. It is also important to remain critical when discussing the methods used and to understand that there are positives and negatives to every potential solution.

This assignment will also look at Professor Donaldson's four purposes and attempt to link the purposes to the critical incident. This is also useful as a reflective practice by asking the question, "could the incident be used in a positive manner to help the children?"

Literature will be reviewed to help improve knowledge of the topic in question. Different types of sources will be used from different authors and crucially, all this information will be reviewed critically to remain as neutral as possible. This will allow me to identify potential solutions to the incident.

This will in turn allow for clear next steps to be formed which should include different manners of thinking about and dealing with critical incidents of this nature in the future. This assignment will be deemed a success if my ability in teaching can be improved with the information gained.

Observation

The School where the incident occurred has 417 pupils on enrolled, according to senior management. To give some context to the area; the percentage of pupils receiving free School meals in the area is 20.4%. The School in question has 24.5% of its pupils receiving free School meals (Mylocalschool.gov.wales, 2019). This, while not conclusive, displays the idea that the surrounding area is possibly in a slightly below average income bracket.

The incident occurred in a reception / year one joint class containing 26 pupils. The class in question had a teacher and teaching assistant present at the time of the incident. Also, of significance to the incident is the time that it took place, which was after lunch, at around 2:45 pm. The School day ends at 3:20 pm.

While there is the potential to investigate more than one incident around what occurred the primary incident will be that the children were grouped together on the carpet, with each learner's positioning being marked out by round, coloured carpet strips, with a circumference of approximately 20cm. Colours were linked to the class groups that the learners belonged to. The incident in question is recorded on observation sheet 2 (Pg. 16) in the appendix.

During the reading it appeared that the small spacing between learners was causing a learner, Child X, some discomfort. This culminated with Child X kicking the child in front of them and the teacher having to react by moving Child X's carpet tile away from the group. The teaching assistant remained near to child x for the rest of the session.

Methodology

There are multiple different observation models that could be used during classroom observation. Methods can vary from relatively straightforward note taking to more complex methods such as questionnaires that require a lot of forethought.

Questionnaires allow for relatively uncomplicated data gathering in a format of your choice. The benefits however must be balanced against negatives such as the amount of time taken to create the questionnaire and the potential limited scope and flexibility of this method (*Cohen et al, 2011. Pg377*). Therefore, while this method is beneficial in situations in which the observer wants the learners' opinion of the class, it will alter the natural classroom environment.

Another potential method of data collection in an observation is with interviews. This is a widely used method with strong applications and can be completed with both learners and teaching staff in both formal and informal settings. A benefit of this method is that it is more personal than other forms with cues both verbal and non-verbal to a person's opinion on a topic or situation. This has the potential to open avenues of thought into various topics. This method of observation does however have negative possibilities. They have the potential to take a lot of time and remove the subject from the environment they were in. The observer is now, in most scenarios, participating in what they were previously observing.

Participant observers are actively involved within the classroom. This includes talking to the learners about the lesson or incident in question. Both prior methods listed are participant observation. While this form of observation has the potential to give more information the presence of the observer alters the classroom environment.

The observation method selected was the recording of notes while remaining a nonparticipant observer. This method was beneficial for several reasons, the primary of which was reducing the potential for the Hawthorne effect within the classroom, allowing a more natural look into how the class usually operates. Another benefit is that there is only a minor delay between, in this scenario, the observation of the critical incident and the recording of it. The potential negatives include the chance of missing information due to the quality of the note taking or even missing sections of the class. This is due to the idea that note taking has the potential to take as long as the observer spends in actual observation (*Cohen et al, 2011. Pg300*).

The Hawthorne Effect has been observed as far back as 1927, when the original study occurred. The base of the effect is that human beings are constantly aware of their surrounding environment. The theory is that those who know that they are under observation subconsciously alter their behaviour to suit the new environment (Frank Merrett, 2006). This means that the impact of an observer within the classroom is very difficult to judge, even if they are attempting to be unobtrusive.

During the incident in question I was a nonparticipant observer. This had the potential to have both beneficial and detrimental effects to the incident that was witnessed. The most significant positive is that, even with the Hawthorne Effect, my presence within the classroom should not have had a major impact on the incident that occurred. The negative is the inability to confirm if Child X would have reacted in the same manner with another adult participating.

Four Purposes

The critical incident, which can be found in observation sheet 2 in the appendices. With the class pupils from reception and year 1 the age range is around 5 to 7 years old. Child x was in Year 1 meaning the learner in question is 6 or 7. The age of the learner is important regarding this incident as it touches upon social skills that need to be developed in the form of personal space.

This idea links closely to one of Professor Graham Donaldson's four purposes, which is the idea that schools and the new curriculum should help learners become "ethical informed citizens" (Prof. Graham Donaldson CB 2015, pg30). When the children were given set locations on the carpet with their coloured carpet tiles, they were given a set amount of space each, which was approximately the same for all of them.

Child X was struggling to focus on the teacher reading the story. There are several key areas that I believe created this. The first is the time of day, after lunch with around half an hour left in the school day. This would potentially be detrimental to a learner's focus as they have been active earlier and are also near the end of their day.

Another possible reason could be due to the environment. What the children are comfortable with was changed while they went to lunch. While most learners appeared to appreciate and be comfortable with the new seating, it is possible that child x did not like being 'locked' into one location. Even Child X's positioning, being in the row that was most clearly visible to the teacher may have had a reaction.

When Child X kicked out at the child in front and was moved to their isolated location, the child did not show many visible signs of sadness. The primary emotion shown was confusion. This potentially shows a lack of understanding in their actions, or the impact that their actions would have. This is something Professor Donaldson believes is important for an ethical informed citizen.

Upon moving to the new position, Child X remained quiet during the rest of the story, however the teaching assistant was seated nearby. There was still a lot of fidgeting in place and eventually the child began moving their carpet tile until it was almost under one of the desks, potentially removing them from the view of most of the learners, if that was their goal.

Once the story was finished it did not appear that child x attempted to or was told to apologise to their fellow classmate. In Professor Donaldson's purposes it is also stated that the development of empathy is an important feature in the creation of healthy, confident individuals. This appears to be a good situation to begin laying the seeds for such empathy to grow, even through a simple apology. Child x was told that positive behaviour for the rest of the day would result in having their carpet space moved back to its original position.

Literature Review

This review will focus on three areas of study that impact the critical incident. This will include an understanding of said area, potential issues that could arise due to said topic in a classroom and a direct study of how the chosen area of research affected the critical incident. The areas that are studied in this review are the classroom environment, emotional development and behaviour.

The classroom environment is important to support children's learning and is an area that primary teachers need to pay attention to. This environment also has the tasks of meeting both children's needs and the demands of the Welsh curriculum.

As the environment primarily affects the children who use it, asking the children their views on the classroom seems not only appropriate but required. This idea is shown with Kershner, Ruth and Pointon, Pam (2000, Pg64). The article in question was formed around a project which took place over three schools with children in those schools receiving individual interviews. It quickly becomes clear through the article that alteration of displays in a classroom are noticed by children and even if they enjoy the new display, it doesn't mean they enjoy the change in the environment. It is expressed that such displays are beneficial for learning, self-esteem and motivation of the learners.

Numerous other forms of data gathering were used in the project as well, such as peer interviews, questionnaires and the creation of a photobook. The photobook was comprised of photos taken and captioned by the children connected to parts of the school environment. All this data was eventually correlated into a rating scale. A notable floor in the process is the presence of several independent variables, which may decrease the validity of the results

For example, the learners were asked if they were comfortable with sitting on the carpet. Gender appeared to alter the results with more girls not enjoying sitting on the carpet than boys. The boys in this classroom, by a smaller majority, did not enjoy sitting on the carpet. However, in a different classroom results were completely different, with the children largely positive about the idea of carpet time.

It is therefore very difficult to draw clear conclusions as the quantity of data is so vast that finding patterns in all of it is difficult. A benefit of this is that a process of this nature gets the children involved. The children started to speak with the selected teacher more openly about changes,

alterations or potential issues in the classroom environment. This includes even the youngest of children, only four or five years old.

Regarding the critical incident this article was highly beneficial as it displays clearly that children are extremely aware of their classroom environment and alterations to it. The children in the reception / year 1 class in question are young but still have opinions over changes to the classroom, small or large. The children may struggle to clearly express their feelings and emotions over said change.

Feelings and emotions are difficult to understand for an adult, meaning children have a much more difficult task. All children also develop this skill at vastly different stages, with reception / year 1 children potentially having a very basic knowledge of the topic. Therefore, development of these skills is crucial at an early stage. One method of this is for 'social and emotional learning', as stated from an article by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2019). The article explains that the goal of such learning is focused towards helping learners manage their emotions and their interactions with others.

The article is a rundown on this method and remains largely factual in its delivery: which is beneficial when it discusses the effectiveness. This makes the article more reliable. How such a program is implemented, and the commitment of the teachers can have a dramatic impact on the learners.

In 'Mind over matter' created by the National Assembly for Wales (April 2018), it is stated that emotional and mental health education has been fairly limited in Wales. The clear goal stated is to help children to become 'emotionally resilient'. Author Lyne Neagle AM, chair of the Young People and Education Committee, makes the goal of emotional resistance very clear. She stated that changing the system step by step is not enough. It is heavily encouraged that numerous areas need to change. This includes the training teachers are given and the time they can dedicate to this area of wellbeing. Even the culture behind emotions, feelings and mental health needs to change, according to the document. At a basic level this means discussion of the topic should be more common. Regarding the classroom, learners should be given more opportunities to describe what they are feeling. For example, in the class where the incident occurred the learners entered the classroom after lunch and had to use the interactive board to move their name on a table of feelings. This immediately allowed the teacher and assistant to see if there were any potential issues that needed to be examined before moving on with the lesson.

Another area of importance in the study of emotions at a young age and in relation to the critical incident is empathy. In the Cambridge Journal of Education, an article by Sue Waite and Sarah Rees discusses one of the ways learners practice empathy, using creative play. It was also stated that such play could “foster long-term benefits for ethical and fulfilling lives” (Sue Waite and Sarah Rees, 2013). This shares close links with Professor Donaldson’s four purposes in creating “healthy, confident individuals”.

In the Article, there is reference to Sarah Dunn’s article on social interaction (1993, pg391) which investigates and supports the ‘Vygotskian’ ideas that social interaction is significant for developmental advancement. Another theory concerning emotions is Daniel Goleman’s work, “Emotional Intelligence”. It is a field of continued study and debate, with the original theory from 1995. A look at “Book reviews: Social sciences” (1995, Pg194) is largely positive and claims the Goleman’s work is based on reliable empirical data. Some of his most recent work on emotional intelligence (2009, pgs. 277 – 279) further emphasises the idea that making emotions and social skills taught topics may at first glance seem uneventful, however, the text suggest that like raising a child at home, small but significant lessons regularly repeated is how to engrain emotional learning.

When viewing the critical incident, it appears that the idea of empathy is of considerable importance to the situation. When Child X kicked the learner in front, response and facial expressions displayed a potential lack of understanding in empathy. Or more concisely, the idea of how your actions impact those around you. This in a classroom environment also links very closely to the idea of behaviour.

Behaviour is viewed as one of the most important factors to running a good classroom. There are times when teachers must deal with ‘disruptive students in the classroom’ (Jerry Olsen & Paul Cooper, 2001). In the preface it is suggested that no singular book, article or otherwise could potentially cover the range of situations that could occur in the classrooms but suggests the benefits of using some well-established behaviourist approaches. A positive for the book is that the authors are open in the idea that the approaches suggested worked with certain pupils at different times and therefore may not have the same affect in similar situations.

Chapter 1 involves ‘Dealing with change effectively’ (Jerry Olsen & Paul Cooper, 2001, pg1). This can be summarised by the idea that change can alter not only how the children act but also their reactions to being told to do something. For example, prior to the move to the individual carpet space, Child X was still sitting in the same location, however there was a different reaction.

Page 4 of the chapter also states that in a school context it can potentially be difficult to distinguish between “emotional and behavioural difficulties and routine indiscipline.” This shows the potential difficulties in the classroom, the teacher must view and deal with the situation in a short period of time while trying to gauge the reasoning behind what the child did.

It appears that Jerry Olsen & Paul Cooper nearly twenty years ago recognised that support, positive relationships, whether that be with the teacher or classmates and a focus on emotional development is necessary to examine when dealing with behaviour in classrooms. This can be recognised in the twelve Pedagogical Principles of Professor Donaldson from 2018 which has a similar view on the matter.

On page 84 of ‘Dealing with Disruptive Students in the Classroom’, there is a list of teacher responsibilities. While only recommendations, the links to more modern ideas are clear to see. For example, the first responsibility listed is the idea of creating a positive environment for learning. This environment should be cooperative and respectful of the individual.

Throughout this review of literature on the topics of the classroom environment, emotions and behaviour it has been made clear that there are strong links between these three areas. A new environment will bring with it a range of feelings and emotions, particularly for younger children. How those emotions are dealt with can, in turn, lead to behavioural issues. From reviewing the evidence, it appears that all three of the areas influenced the critical incident. It must be noted that other factors could have also participated in creating the incident that occurred, such as, the time of day or further information on Child X that is unknown to me.

Reflection / Evaluation and Next Steps

There are numerous methods that can be used to reflect and evaluate a situation or, in this case, incident. Some methods, while appearing basic in nature, can have strong affects. For example, discussion of the incident with another teacher or teaching assistant at a later stage can be beneficial. It also helps if the person you are in discussion with has knowledge of the child in question, in case there are any details you are unaware of.

When reflecting on the critical incident and information gathered during reviewing literature, it seems plausible that the change in classroom environment did influence child x. The children in the class did not receive an opportunity to discuss the new setup. While many children may enjoy having their own set space, some children may have felt trapped. There has been research into the idea of space and of methods to teach a child about personal space. From the website 'Understood' several potential strategies for explaining personal space are listed, such as having the children stand a set distance away from each other. Ask if the children are comfortable, if they say "yes" have them close the distance until they describe it as uncomfortable. This gives children an idea of their and other peoples 'personal bubbles' (Kate Kelly, 2013). This is potentially why there was an aggressive response from Child X.

There is also importance in viewing how Child X processed the situation. They were potentially uncomfortable but did not understand why. This in turn lead to the aggressive behaviour.

The teacher gave a firm command which ensured nothing else occurred, such as retaliation from the aggrieved pupil. This response was successful as the class was immediately calmed and child x moved to their new position with no complaint. The intervention was also successful regarding the rest of the lesson as all other children were focused on the story.

Another form of reflection, which was used in this incident is the Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model. This involves filling in a sheet after the fact, which asks thought provoking questions, such as what your feelings were at the time. You would also evaluate and analyse the situation before giving your conclusions and suggesting further actions (see ARC Form 2).

From all the information gathered the incident, while handled effectively, had the potential to be prevented. Child X had been told off at an earlier stage of the day for a lack of focus. One method of fixing this was to include Child X in the telling of the story, with the teacher to focus them. Including Child X would be a positive way of preventing the situation.

In evaluating the actual use of the carpet tiles, there has not enough time to determine whether they will provide a benefit to the classroom environment or not. However, in the short amount of time that they were introduced, there were potential beneficial and detrimental effects already visible. A benefit was the enjoyment that was shown by the children. It was clear that many of them liked to have a set area. It also appeared to help the reception children feel more comfortable in the classroom as they could see clearly where to go. A potential drawback is the loss of choice for the learners, which has the potential to feel uncomfortable, especially when they have had the choice earlier in the day. Introduction of such a change could potentially work better at the beginning of a new day or week, with time taken for the teacher to explain why the change occurred.

With the critical incident itself, a recommendation after it had occurred would have been to have a discussion with Child X. The primary focus of the discussion would not be to reprimand but to investigate the cause of their reaction. Once that information is known the situation can hopefully be avoided in the future. Time should be taken to help child x understand their emotions and that of the person they effected and, depending on the pupil's response, effort made to get them to apologise for their actions. Following these steps could potentially turn the critical incident into a positive learning situation, especially with its connections to Professor Donaldson's four purposes.

Conclusion

To conclude, I personally believe that this assignment has allowed a greater view into the complexities of what, at first glance, seems to be a small and quickly resolved incident.

My approach in this assignment was to attempt to remain neutral in my thoughts on both how the incident was handled and the child in question. This allowed the 'why' of the situation to be more important than the 'what' which occurred.

The use of ARC sheets appears to have been extremely beneficial in helping to improve my skills in reflective practice. Having time to properly review an incident after the dust has settled has several clear benefits. Firstly, studying why your pupil acted in a certain manner may allow the identification of a pattern or an unknown issue. It also allows the teacher to see if there were any ways in which to prevent the incident from occurring in the first place; as prevention prior is superior in most scenarios to dealing with after.

Reflection also allows the teacher to view any potential learning experiences from the incident. Maybe in this scenario a lesson on personal space or other people's feelings could be covered. These are areas that I strongly believe link into Professor Donaldson's four purposes and are a large focus for any reception / year 1 class.

In the new professional standards for teaching and leadership (Education Wales, 2018) the importance of teacher improvement is clear. This makes reflection a crucial part of a teacher's job, as you cannot improve if you are unsure what worked or did not.

Overall this assignment has proven how important it is to view all aspects of learning; with the environment, emotions of the learners and behaviour being very significant to the classroom.

Finally, the necessity of reflective practice and the benefits that this can bring to both teacher and pupil is clear to see and a practice I intend to follow to the best of my ability.

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Yr Athrofa
Addysg a'r Dyniaethau
Education and Humanities

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Observation 1

Date: 26/09/19

Lesson details: The lesson was for the learners to develop their literacy skills, primarily reading and writing. The introduction had the learners grouped on the carpet facing the board. The learners had to list animals that could attend a prop giraffes party. For each answer the prop would be inflated a bit more. Teacher selected who to answer. The learners would then sound out the first letter of the animal phonetically. The final step was for the learner to trace the selected letter on the board. This process lasted for around ten minutes. The learners were then split into groups. The main task had learners work alongside a staff member to sound and trace out their chosen animals.

Classroom culture Reception - Year 1

(Are the students focused on learning?)

The learners kept concentration well. As this was a reception, year 1 split class as well as early in the School year, it was apparent that some pupils especially reception could not have focused much longer. Those pupils did appear to be picking up behavioral understanding from the year 1's. The teacher was very effective in using positive praise to those that were behaving well instead of reprimanding those who were not.

Objectives

(Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?)

W.A.L.T, 'to write a list of animals' was clearly defined on the board. W.I.L.F was also used, 'sound out the words.' The goal was clear and the structure of the group activity and the main task of the sheet were clearly aimed towards promoting the lesson. Encouraging the learners to use phonetics was also clearly important both when trying to say the word in question and write it.

Direction

(Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?)

There was very clear direction from both teacher and teaching assistant throughout the task. Especially during the sheet work as that was effectively one to one between teaching staff and a learner. With the young age range of the class, 3-5 it had to be clear in structure and purpose.

Access and challenge

(Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?)

All learners appeared to be engaged at the basic level, giving animal suggestions and tracing out the starting letter. When one to one a level of challenge was added. If a learner was having a measure of ease in tracing out the letters of the animal, they would instead be asked to copy some of the letters instead.

Assessment

How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching?

During the group stage questioning both open and closed in nature was used. Learners were also brought up to sound out the opening letter of their chosen animal phonetically then trace said letter. When finished the sheets the children were to colour in a face which was either happy, neutral or sad. (traffic light system)

Specifics / Critical Incidents

(Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?)

The teacher calmed the learners at one point during the group stage by praising several learners who were sitting peacefully instead of focusing on the ones being disruptive. This worked to great effect and all learners focused quickly.

At one stage a count to five was used to focus a learner. Said pupil focused by two and was praised for their actions of acting before the time was reached.



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Education and Humanities

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

Observation 2

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 26/09/19
Lesson details: The lesson was for the learners to develop their Welsh and literacy skills. Primarily reading and writing. When in groups some of the learners will also use their numeracy skills in the form of a tally chart. Learners grouped at the beginning with a quick song in Welsh. The learners then watched the teacher draw fruit on the interactive board that they had to guess what the drawing was. Then as a group they would learn and repeat the name of the fruit in Welsh. This section of the lesson lasted around fifteen minutes before the learners went off in groups. The main task was a sheet where the learners would write 'ga i 'fruit'' and then use real fruit that was sliced and painted to imprint on the sheet.
Classroom culture Year 1 (Are the students focused on learning?) The learners used the interactive boards as they arrived back from lunch to move their names into pre-set boxes describing how they feel. Any who were feeling bad could then go to a staff member to talk about any issues they had. This really appeared to calm the class. Light music was also playing in the background which appeared to quickly calm and focus the learners to the front.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) The W.A.L.T, while not written on the board was clear. Learn the names of fruit in Welsh. The learners also were to use phonetics to sound out the words. They were split into groups of around four to work on the sheet with the teaching staff.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) There was very clear direction from both teacher and teaching assistant throughout the task. Especially during the sheet work as that was effectively one to one between teaching staff and a learner. With the young age range of the class, 3-5 it had to be clear in structure and purpose.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) All learners appeared to be engaged during the group activity. When in groups level of challenge was added. If a learner was having a measure of ease in tracing out the letters of the fruit, they would instead be asked to copy some of the letters instead. Some learners were also writing out the word just from hearing the phonetics.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? During the group stage questioning both open and closed in nature was used. Learners were also asked to repeat the Welsh names five times in a row. Asked children while in the group stages to name fruit pointed at and all children asked could respond both in English and Welsh.
Specifics / Critical Incidents (Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?) A learner during the group stage kicked the one in front of them while sitting on the carpet. Teacher made this learner sit on their own still in view of the group. The learner was told why they were moved, however child still looked relatively unsure as to why he was isolated. The rest of the class did however have a noticeable improvement in behaviour. The class helpers were used during the lesson by saying the start of the Welsh sentence 'ga i' then one of the other learners would respond.



OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

Observation 3

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 02/10/19
Lesson details: Literacy, specifically the skills to write a letter. Show what makes a letter. For introduction children were grouped on the carpet. Use of interactive board to show a letter from Goldilocks to the three bears. White board also used for difficult spellings. Children use class story 'Abrazaebra' to write an apology letter to one of the characters.
Classroom culture Year 2 (Are the students focused on learning?) Different techniques used during the group stage. Children asked open ended questions. At the start children asked to talk to a partner on how to write a letter. The use of a well-known fairy tale story also ensured the learners continued focus. Several different language techniques that were in the letter were also explained with the children providing answers by use of hands.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) Primary objective was for the children to write a letter. Which was clearly defined by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson. Learners also had to focus on feelings. What were the characters feeling? How would they feel in the same situation? Another objective was for the learners to use punctuation and grammar skills in their letter. Full stops, commas, exclamation marks and question marks. The learners were also encouraged to try to spell out difficult words phonetically even though spelling was not a primary concern at this stage in the term.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) The discussion and introduction were very clear, and the learners all had a comprehensive understanding of what was expected in the letter. The example the teacher had worked through on the board was left up during the activity. Actions were used to help the children remember punctuation, such as lightly punching forward to remind them of a full stop.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) The children were asked open ended questions during the introduction and importantly given plenty of time to think and respond. Learners were encouraged while working with teaching staff to attempt more challenging words phonetically. This allowed the more confident learners to push a little further.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? Questioning both open and closed was used throughout both the introduction and working on the letter. AFL in constant use throughout the activity with the learners receiving constant feedback as they are writing it. Once finished the teacher would read through the letter with the child.
Specifics / Critical Incidents Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss? Two boys were not allowed to sit together for previous poor behaviour. Went and apologised to the teaching assistant to get a chance to sit together again after lunch and were given it. Girl during the group stage forgot her answer and wasn't pressured into giving one. One learner during the group stage was attempting to answer the majority of the questions. Teacher responded by giving her a reward and allowing her to rest from answering appeared to work however pupil appeared to understand what was going on in the background. Child did not attempt any cool challenge last week so wasn't allowed to do the activity he had spent the most time doing last week.



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Education and Humanities

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

Observation 4

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 25/09/19
Lesson details: C.O.O.L challenges explained and encouraged to push the idea of working independently. Introduction brief involving parts of the body in welsh taught through a version of Simon says. Main activity from Abracazebra (classes story) Goal was for learners to look at the characters and respond to the statement 'I see, I think, I wonder'. The learners then had to write a few lines describing the character in their books with a picture above for them to study.
Classroom culture Year 2 (Are the students focused on learning?) Issue occurred during lunch; teacher solved the issue as a class discussion were the children were able to ask questions. Being heard appeared to calm the children down. The children were given the choice to work in different areas around the topic, keeping them learning rather than playing. Also noticed that children were gently pushed to work out questions that they asked of the teaching staff.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) To learn parts of the body in welsh and be able to vocalise the words. Children to be able to describe the characters from their story. The rest are to work on their cool challenges.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) The discussion after lunch and the Simon says game helped to focus the children and calm them down for the final lesson of day. The learners were led to their aim using questioning. Still guided through task due to the class still being in the first term. They were also encouraged to use phonetics when attempting to spell challenging words.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) All were focused during the introduction and joined in with the game. When the groups were in play the children working on the character description sheet were provided direct support by both teacher and teaching assistant. Children expected to attempt more challenging questions if they felt comfortable with the work.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? Pupils had to tick off their name from a sheet once they had completed the work set. The teacher was also using AFL techniques within the group they were working with. This allowed the learners immediate feedback and the chance to correct. Questioning with enough time to answer was also used.
Specifics / Critical Incidents Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss? Rude words were used at lunch, teacher responded not through anger but being sad over the situation which appeared to greatly affect the ones involved. Children led class role call after lunch with the children answering in welsh. Use of class pride, treating the learners as a cohesive unit that should support each other. Use of objects in the environment to help the teacher explain the aim of the lesson. Really good manners between learners and towards the teaching staff.



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Reflection 1

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfrio (BWA) Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model

Dyddiad/Date: 26/09/19

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/Critical incident (focus): Praise to stop negative behaviour

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad? "What are your feelings regarding the experience?"	It was an impressive technique that was used on several occasions the primary critical incident did make me think that the primary child involved should have been spoken to at some stage. I also was slightly worried that having other children tidy away what 'child x' was playing with could have led to further behavioral issues.
Cofio a Deall/ Remember and Understand Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a aeth yn dda? "Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?" Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgu oedd yn siomedig? "What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"	The primary incident occurred during extra activities not with the primary objective. However, during the carpet section / introduction several learners were fidgeting while sitting there. The teacher praised several of the learners who were sitting neatly. The WALT for the lesson was also on the board and clearly explained by the teacher to the learners. The use of a prop Giraffe was also very effective in keeping the learner's attention as it gave them a physical goal in inflating the giraffe. The group also helped each other to write the first letter of the selected animals onto the interactive board. This also included the use of phonetics. The only potential disappointment was that due to timing only several pupils got the chance to go up to the board.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ Evaluate and analyse Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol? "What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?" Beth oedd achas yr elfen siomedig bwyscaf? "What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"	It was clear that with year 2 it is beneficial to have a physical/visible goal connected to the learning objective. The whole class was focused on the task and could see that they were succeeding in the task at hand. As with the critical incident positive reinforcement really aided the learning. The cause of the most important disappointing element was the timing of the lesson. Even with how efficient the introduction was, there just was not enough time to completely involve all the learners in the activities. Another slight concern is that while handing out positive praise to the class focused them the poor behavior is just being paused learners need to now why what they are doing is a positive.
Casgliadau a chymau gweithredu/ Conclusions and actions Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiau siomedig a nodwyd? "What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?" Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf? "What will you do next?"	A potential solution is to continue giving positive praise to learners that counteract negative behavior. At the same time, I do believe that the situation should be explained to the child that wasn't following instruction. Explain that you want to reward and praise them for doing the right thing. Also ensure to praise the learner when you see them adapt to the correct behavior and explain to them why it is.
Y profiad newydd / Transformed experience	



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Reflection 2

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfrio (BWA) Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model

Dyddiad/Date: 26/09/19

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/Critical incident (focus): Child excluded from group due to behavior.

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad? "What are your feelings regarding the experience?"	My initial feelings regarding the critical incident was that the child who didn't behave had already been warned. For convenience the child shall be child X. Due to child X making physical contact with the child in front action had to be taken. From watching child X when they were moved. Personally, I was not convinced that they understood why they had to be moved as they appeared to be confused rather than upset. Upon reflection the situation had the potential to be avoided, however it was handled effectively as child X's movement settled the rest of the class.
Cofio a Deall/ Remember and Understand Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a aeth yn dda? "Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?" Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgu oedd yn siomedig? "What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"	The children took to their new seating for the story well. They appeared to enjoy having their own marked space on the floor to sit. The breathing exercise after lunch was very effective in calming most of the children. Child engagement and focus was relatively high, especially during the shared story reading. The reading was around ten minutes. Which allowed both reception and year 1 learners to maintain focus for the most part. The incident with child X did have an effect of the overall level of focus, however the child's new position was not in the line of site of most learners.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ Evaluate and analyse Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol? "What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?" Beth oedd achas yr elfen siomedig bwysig? "What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"	The learners during the lesson after lunch developed their literacy, reading, orally and several began to work on their writing. Several AFL strategies were used during the lesson. Some of which was in a group while others took place as one to one questioning of the subject matter. The level of work appeared appropriate to the class with effective challenges for those learners that completed the original work efficiently. One potential issue is in relation to timing, unable to get through many learners with the primary activity. Will be revisited the following week.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ Conclusions and actions Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiau siomedig a nodwyd? "What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?" Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf? "What will you do next?"	A potential solution would be to slightly increase the group size working on the main activity and ensure the learners understand that good efficient work allows them more time with other activities in the classroom. This is something that will naturally improve over the year as reception particularly get more comfortable in their environment. Regarding the critical incident, recommendation would be to have a quiet word with child X to ensure they understand why action had to be taken. Also ensure to praise Child X when they are following instruction.
Y profiad newydd / Transformed experience	



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Reflection 3

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfyrio (BWA) Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model

Dyddiad/Date: 02/10/19

Digwyddiad critigol /Critical incident: Learners using other teaching staff to avoid consequences.

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad? "What are your feelings regarding the experience?"	My feelings concerning the incident are of concern especially if going to another staff member was a deliberate maneuver. Teacher must communicate extremely effectively with each other to understand how they want a situation handled. The teacher appeared not to want to go against what the teaching assistant did, and I would assume didn't want to appear to weaken the teaching assistants' position in the class.
Cofio a Deall/ Remember and Understand Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a oeth yn dda? "Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?" Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgu oedd yn siomedig? "What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"	This literacy task had several different parts that worked well and kept most of the classes focus. The use of such a famous story worked well in drawing the children into the activity as it was something they could recognize and see the new skill they were going to learn applied to it. The use of actions applied to different kinds of punctuation also worked exceptionally well in keeping all children on task even the two from the incident who were sitting together on the carpet. It also helped that the teaching assistant remained near the two children in question. Questioning went well during the introduction and AFL strategies such as think, pair share got the learners involved.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ Evaluate and analyse Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol? "What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?" Beth oedd achas yr elfen siomedig bwysig? "What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"	The learners in the groups were effectively able to structure a letter with only a few requiring minor assistances. Punctuation also went well with children attempting to use and feeling confident enough to ask for assistance if unsure. Having the learners connect actions to punctuation also worked well which also shows a form of pedagogy. Timing would probably be the most disappointing element. The introduction went well at around ten minutes. It was the group section were more time spent would have been beneficial.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ Conclusions and actions Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiau siomedig a nodwyd? "What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?" Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf? "What will you do next?"	Overall, I believe this was a very effective lesson. The learners show clear evidence of achieving the aim of the lesson. This was clearly shown through questioning and WAGOLL that the teacher displayed to the class. The level of work appeared appropriate with the learners selecting challenging words and using punctuation to structure the letter. The behavior of the class was of a high standard with the majority focusing well on either their C.O.O.L challenges or righting the letter.
Y profiad newydd / Transformed experience	



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Reflection 4

Model Beirniad Wedi Adfyfrio (BWA) *Assisted Reflective Conclusions (ARC) Model*

Dyddiad/Date: 25/09/19

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/Critical incident (focus): Teacher responds to issue at lunch with acting sad rather than anger.

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings <i>Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?</i> <i>"What are your feelings regarding the experience?"</i>	The issue from lunch was dealt with very effectively which while slightly delaying the start of the lesson. Appeared to have a greater impact on the two children involved in the situation. The class settled and focused relatively well after this. The explanation of the aims was a little vague and I was left unsure as to how many really understand the task at hand.
Cofio a Deall/ Remember and Understand <i>Allwch chi restru'r agweddau ar y profiad dysgu a oeth yn dda?</i> <i>"Can you list the aspects of the learning experience that went well?"</i> <i>Pa elfennau o'r profiad dysgu oedd yn siomedig?</i> <i>"What were the elements of the learning experience that were disappointing?"</i>	The use of a story the children were clearly familiar with was clearly beneficial as when the teacher asked questions how they thought the characters would feel they were able to give a response if not very detailed. The images of the characters also aided in their attempts to describe their appearance and personality. A plenary showing the children positive examples of the work could have helped improve the understanding of the task given. This in my opinion could have countered the classes lack of understanding from the task and helped to focus. Especially after the incident from lunch, it was important to keep them focused on the task at hand.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ Evaluate and analyse <i>Beth fyddwch chi'n cadw'r un fath i sicrhau dysgu ac addysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?</i> <i>"What will you keep the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?"</i> <i>Beth oedd achas yr elfen siomedig bwysigaf?</i> <i>"What was the cause of the most important disappointing element?"</i>	While I believe the learners did well in discussing how the characters would feel I feel like the aim of describing the characters was not quite achieved. Success criteria was completion of the sheet which several learners accomplished and, in my opinion, if there was time most of the class would have been able to do so. The sheet in question was clear to understand and the images provided more than enough information for the learners to write about.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ Conclusions and actions <i>Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r materiau siomedig a nodwyd?</i> <i>"What are your possible solutions to the disappointing issues identified?"</i> <i>Beth ydych yn mynd i'w wneud nesaf?</i> <i>"What will you do next?"</i>	In Conclusion I believe the aim can be improved by further discussion with the class. A plenary during the activity showing a good example of the work could have also solved this issue. I would try to make it clearer what time the learners must complete the task in an attempt to help them focus.
Y profiad newydd / Transformed experience	