

**Research- 'How can we promote engagement through specific auditory behaviour strategies in a KS2 classroom?'**

**Aim focus, purpose and context of the research project**

This research assignment focuses on 'How can we promote engagement through specific auditory behaviour strategies in a Key Stage 2 classroom?'. My group has chosen this topic as we were currently undertaking our trainee experience; each member of the group has struggled with classroom behaviour strategies which is why we decided to focus our research in this area. My specific class have a great attitude to learning, however they tend to get very loud and noisy as a group when discussing their work with their learning partner. This is something the current class teacher and I have discussed since starting my placement with this group. Consequently, looking at strategies which could enable their behaviour to be modified would be of long-term benefit for myself, the class teacher and the class themselves.

The research project took place in three Primary schools; one in Cardiff, one in Porthcawl and the final one in Bridgend. The Cardiff school is an urban based school with 523 pupils of mixed ethnic background on roll. The catchment area for the school is largely prosperous but has an element of social deprivation. The schools latest Estyn inspection took place in November 2018- the school was graded as a 'good' school. Currently, 9.1% of pupils at the school are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 19%. The research project will take place in a Year 4 classroom which has 30 pupils. Throughout this assignment the Cardiff school will be referred to as School 1.

The Porthcawl school comes under the local authority of Bridgend County Borough Council and has approximately 470 pupils on roll, with 10.3% receiving free school meals, this is below the national average of 19%. The Schools latest Estyn report which was undertaken in 2017 graded the school as 'adequate'. The school is mostly made up of a white British

ethnicity with English as their first language. The research will take place in a Year 4 classroom which has 30 pupils. Throughout this assignment the Porthcawl school will be referred to as School 2.

Finally, the Bridgend school which is also in the local authority of Bridgend County Council is the smallest of the three school; it has approximately 299 pupils on roll with 28.2% eligible for free school meals, this is above the national average of 19%. The Schools latest Estyn report which was undertaken in 2018 graded the school as 'good'. The school is mostly made up of white British ethnicity with only a few pupils coming from an ethnic minority background. The research will take place in a Year 3 classroom which has 30 pupils. Throughout this assignment the Bridgend school will be referred to as School 3.

### **Short overview of relevant literature**

Managing pupil's behaviour is often one of the biggest challenges that a teacher can face. Understanding how children can be engaged in their lessons, so that learning can take place within a classroom setting, must be a priority. In order to become a successful classroom practitioner, I need to firstly understand why children misbehave and if there is anything that I can do to prevent such misbehaviour happening in my classroom, to determine whether any strategies introduced in the research have been effective.

Within the last decade, poor behaviour in schools has been a headline. A YouGov poll (Evans, 2014), commissioned by the Teacher Support Network reported that poor student behaviour was having a negative effect on teaching standards. "57% of teachers in Wales had reported worsening behaviour which was above the UK average of 49%," they emphasised the need for school staff to be supported in order to deal with pupil's increasingly challenging behaviour.

In England the government commissioned an independent review of behaviour in schools- Creating a Culture which was undertaken by Tom Bennett (2017), this report collected evidence from a variety of sources which seemed to show that behaviour in our classrooms

is getting worse. Consequently, the importance of managing children's behaviour in the classroom is becoming a more prominent feature, both in terms of public and parental perception of a school but also in pupil's outcomes. One of the Government's response by Greening (2017) was to have better training for staff on behavioural strategies, which is why I believe looking at how I can manage behaviour more effectively in my classroom is important to my own well-being but also to the progress of the young people in my class.

Rubie-Davies (2007) found a connection between teacher's expectation and pupil's attainment. Whilst behaviour management is only one aspect of teacher's pedagogy, those teachers who provide a positive behaviour approach to discipline saw greater pupil progress. From research, Hattie (2008), agreed and saw a link between student attainment, engagement in a lesson with effective classroom management on the part of the teacher.

In 2012 the Welsh Assembly Government published an information document called Practical approaches to behaviour management in the classroom- a handbook for primary teachers; which was issued to all primary school in Wales. This document together with other readings helped me to clarify why a child can act inappropriately in a classroom; it may be that they are bored, or they may be finding the work too difficult. Consequently, to deflect their inability to complete the work they misbehave as they don't wish to appear stupid in front of their peers. Another reason that a child may misbehave is that they have an Educational Need which has not been catered for, meaning that they cannot access the work provided. The first two I believe can be dealt with through planning, ensuring the work is both interesting and accessible with just enough challenge, as Vygotsky (1981) called it 'The Zone of Proximal Development'. Whereas those with additional needs both educationally and emotionally need further support. Therefore, it is important to understand why some children just want to be noticed. We know that negative attention can in some instances be easier to achieve than positive attention, as the child has control, they can become the class clown as they want to be liked by their peers- thus, they go out of their way to entertain their classmates. If this is the case, it is important to try and understand

how we can change this negative behaviour. Bandura and Walters (1977) believed that we learn from our observations of others and adapt our behaviour accordingly. I believe this is where we create a 'norm' culture in the classroom, one where children are aware of the expectations that everyone is expected to adhere to.

"Students need to see others behaving well in order to emulate them. This is consistent with the view that social norms are powerful inhibitors and catalysts of behaviour" (Bennett 2016, p.51). When researching behaviour, I found that there are several models and theories that focus on how behaviour can influence learners. The first model is Cognitive where our thinking influences our behaviour, where the learner is an active participant in the teaching and learning process, as Dewey (1933) said "learning to think".

Cognitivists believe that behaviour can be influenced in a good or bad way by the child's perception of their surroundings and the experiences they have had, for example, if a child has a home environment where they are continually being emotionally abused then it may mean that in school their reaction can be disproportionate to that issue and this can create a flight or fight reaction which can be difficult for a teacher to deal with in the classroom. The aim is then to help the child control their own behaviour by using their 'inner speech' for them to modify and change their behaviour by helping them to develop self-control. This can be achieved through role play, discussing how we could and should react in a variety of scenarios so that these positive behaviours can be rehearsed. This is an effective tool for a child as they will be able to use this technique in all aspects of their life not only in the classroom. Piaget and Cook (1952) believed that teachers would also need to be aware that a child's ability to learn is dependent on their developmental stage. Consequently, when dealing with behaviour the teacher needs to understand where that child is developmentally in order to help the child modify their behaviour and develop self-control; as the child learns to understand the world around them, knowing what is and is not acceptable.

Biological models believe an individual's nature is determined not only by their genetic make-up but also by the environment in which they are brought up in. This is the classic the

nature vs nurture argument. Subsequently, a teacher creating a classroom environment where a child can thrive is crucial to child's development and their ability to learn.

Finally, the behaviour theorists who feel that a child's behaviour can be modified through 'conditioning', this is where an event is followed by an action. There are two types of 'conditioning', the first being Classical Conditioning where there is an association between the stimulus and the behaviour/response eg a child could associate a piece of music with an activity. Pavlov's experiment *cited in Bichler et al 2013* showed that a neutral stimulus of a bell resulted in dogs salivating as they associated the bell with food, whilst Thorndike (1911) *Cited in Nevin (1999)* advocated the law of effect, linking stimuli and response which he felt were strengthened by the frequency of occurrence. The second, Operant Conditioning, B F Skinner (1938) believed that positive behaviour can be strengthened when the behaviour is reinforced also known as Positive Reinforcement. His theory advocated that a person's behaviour could be 'shaped', when the behaviour wanted was reinforced every time it was seen. After all we learn at a young age from our parents and guardians which behaviours receive positive and negative comments and the consequent feelings we had from gaining those responses. Operant Conditioning theorists believe that teachers in the classroom can reinforce the behaviours they want from the children in their classroom setting for learning to take place. This can be through praise, approval and encouragement though it should be varied in order to maintain the required behaviours. Skinner (1938) believed that Negative Reinforcement could also have the required effect though he was clear that this should not be confused with punishment as this can lead to more negative behaviours. What is important is Continuous Reinforcement. Bandura and Walters (1977) Social Learning Theory whilst agreeing with the behaviourists felt that the environment we are in and the people around us have a part to play in our behavioural responses.

Ginnot (1971), a teacher and psychologist emphasised the power teachers can have on a child's life for better or worse and how it was important that teachers recognise this fact and understood how their actions can influence a child's behaviour. Which is why it is important

that a teacher aims to create a positive learning environment in the classroom setting, building a positive relationship with the child based on mutual trust and respect. An important point as many researchers have shown that a teacher with high expectations can make a difference on a child's academic progress. This is reaffirmed by both Rubie-Davies (2007) and Hattie (2008) who believed that teacher's actions can make a real difference in a child's outcomes. Rogers (2015) agrees that the dynamics between a teacher, child and the classroom expectations early in their relationship can make a difference to that child's learning experience in school. Canter (2010) also agreed with this, he believed teachers need to be effective classroom managers to develop a classroom discipline plan, for example the rules and routines that children need in order to function effectively and thus thrive. Consistency is the key!

I believe this behaviourist approach is something which needs greater research and something we decided as a group to implement during our lesson study project. We were looking to establish new routines with our children and condition a response to stimuli, to see how effective the response was as we endeavoured to maintain a positive learning environment where every child made progress. We all felt that the schools had already created a positive ethos where learning was valued, and many routines were already established. We endeavoured to bring a totally different stimulus to each establishment to determine if any were effective in gaining a positive behavioural response from the children involved.

### **EXPLANATION OF LESSON STUDY DESIGN**

The aim of the project was to use the lesson study process to undertake a critically reflective approach to our teaching "As reflective practice is a deliberate process of thinking that seeks to address practical problems." Grigg and Lewis (2017).

We aimed to look at one aspect of our own practise and determine as Grigg and Lewis (2017) comment how best we could improve the teaching and learning within our classrooms

as our own self-awareness develops. We agreed that we would each act as a 'critical friend' to the each other. Our aim was for each of us to be involved in planning a collaborative lesson and to deliver that same lesson to three different classes in our own individual schools. We would then determine which strategies introduced appeared to work and which didn't and why through observation. This peer review would be undertaken in a sensitive manner where the observers were looking at the responses the children gave to the stimuli rather than the performance of the actual trainee teacher. These observations were then discussed and shared with the group, Miller (2010) believes that peer reflection gives us a way of looking for alternative ways which we may not have thought about prior to the lesson. Lesson study originated in Japan, it was designed as a professional development tool where participants could benefit from a collaborative approach, therefore it needs to be completed in a culture of trust and support, sharing best practice and strategies. Ensuring that a quality lesson is delivered where the focus of the study is robust as is the refining of interventions and adaptations introduced. We aimed to use the learning study cycle 'learning from our teaching' (Stepanek et al 2006) *see appendix fig 1.*

We determined that interviewing the children involved, at the end of the lesson would also give us further relevant information as to the children's perceptions of 'how well the lesson had gone', what had changed and why did they think it had and how they think the lesson could have been improved. Brookfield (1998) commented that using our 'Learners Eyes' is an excellent tool for us to have a greater insight into how these children experience their learning within the classroom context.

As a group of three we decided that our research question would be on 'How we can promote engagement through specific auditory behaviour strategies in a KS2 classroom?'. This was looking at conditioning techniques as Pavlov, Thorndike and Skinner had used in the past. We planned to utilise three auditory techniques or stimuli in the lesson we planned to teach and monitor the groups response.

A mathematic lesson 'mastering our times tables' was designed collaboratively between all three trainees, however adaptations were made to the lesson due to each school's requirements. School 1 has a target from Estyn to involve ICT more in lessons so consequently there was an ICT component in the lesson, which meant that this was part of a carousel activity in this lesson. Whilst the other two schools had issues with room size and the number of iPads or laptops available to the class so were unable to incorporate this element in their lesson. Schools 1 and 2 were working with children from Year 4 whereas school 3 was a Year 3 class, therefore the trainee teacher had to adapt the questions used during the lesson to ensure they were relevant to the children's mathematical knowledge ensuring they were challenged yet comfortable with the activity i.e. the activity was in the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1981). Year 3 must learn the 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 times tables whilst Year 4 have to know their 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10 times tables.

The three stimuli used were;

- a) Hocus Pocus, the trainee teacher would shout out this comment and the pupil's in the class would stop what they were doing and respond by calling back 'everyone focus' and then look to their teacher for the next instruction.
- b) The second stimuli was to play the Mission Impossible theme tune and this again would gain a response. In school 1 the class was split into five groups, two ICT groups and three working on worksheets the children had to complete the ICT activity plus a minimum of two worksheets. There was also an extension activity for those who had completed everything. The children chose which worksheets they wanted to complete either 'dial a phone' or one of the 4 Venn diagram sheets offered. This was to create a busy 'hustle and bustle' environment within the classroom to determine if our auditory behaviour strategies worked. The Mission Impossible theme tune was played when the teacher wanted to create movement between the groups i.e. the carousel from completing the worksheet to ICT and vice versa. The ITT behaviour review (2016) cited in Bennett's (2017) review on behaviour felt that all trainee

teachers and teachers needed to know what classroom processes could be automated, taught and practised automatically, i.e. when children should be conditioned to respond in a positive way which would minimise any disruption to learning taking place in the classroom. This was especially pertinent when looking at activities which had a lot of movement associated with them e.g. carousel activities. Once all the groups had completed their ICT activity then the theme tune was played to indicate that the class should pack up quietly and move to sit on the carpet. This is where the theme tune was used in schools 2 and 3.

- c) The third was to use an auditory monitor system on the whiteboard where the software would indicate both visually and auditory to the class the noise level in the room, the expectation was for the class to use, as Cognitivists would advocate, self-control and monitor their own behaviour and turn their volume down.

Unfortunately, on the morning of the first lesson the software was not working in school 1, so this technique was abandoned. It was agreed by all trainees that this technique would not be used. We decided that our third stimulus would be one each class was already familiar with and we would look to compare the results of this technique with the two new stimuli introduced.

For school 1 I was going to use the paper noise indicator attached to a wall in the classroom which indicates the level of talk the class should be using. Starting at zero for 'no talking' to a level 5 which indicates 'loud outside voice', for this lesson the indicator was placed on level 1 which was 'spy talk', talking to your learning partner only. However, school 2 decided to also adapt the lesson and use a bell as a stimulus, something the children were used to, their expected response was to clap twice which meant that they had to stop and listen for further instruction from the trainee teacher. Similarly, school 3 used a technique they were used to, a clapping technique as a stimulus and the children would respond to that stimulus by repeating the clapping sequence back to the trainee teacher. "At all times, the teacher's routines should aim towards supporting the aims and outcomes of the school routines, which

in turn demands that these are robust, clear and aimed at a defined and public good” (Bennett 2016).

The lesson was designed to last one hour, where the two observers collated their observations on the ‘Leuven Scale for Involvement’ (Bertram 2002) observation sheet. This allowed us to mark each child against a numerical scale from 1-5 and use the criteria to write up their level of involvement in the lesson. We were then able to compare the results across the three establishments.

Following the lesson, a semi-structured interview took place with 3 identified children from each school, 10% of each class; parental consent was gained to ensure these children could take part in the task. In school 1 those chosen were high ability students as they were articulate and would be able to discuss their views openly with unfamiliar people. Whereas in schools 2 and 3 the children chosen were mixed ability. In all three schools the three children were interviewed by the trainee teacher and an observer, whilst the second observer wrote up the notes. I believe that this process could have been improved on with a proper random selection taking from those children who had brought back their permission slips for each class.

### **Ethical considerations**

There are ethical considerations when conducting research in a classroom which are emotional distress, physical harm, transfer of personal data and sensitive organisational information. Prior to starting our research project an ethics form had to be submitted and approved by the University ethics committee before any research could be undertaken.

Throughout our research the three schools shall not be identified therefore they will be referred to as school 1, 2 or 3 (as mentioned earlier). Each child involved within the research will be identified as Child A, B or C no details of the child will be given within the research for safeguarding reasons. Each class from all three schools have been sent a letter asking for permission from the parents/ guardians allowing their child to take part in the research, if a

permission slip is not brought back in then their child will not be involved within our research. Throughout our time in school if any safeguarding issues arise, we will follow the schools and UWTSD safeguarding policies. To reduce risk and for practicality reasons all research will be conducting during school hours of 9am – 3:30pm. The semi-structured interviews will take place within school with a door being left open to allow members of staff to freely look in the room. All participants have the right to withdraw from our research at any time. Any research completed will follow the guidelines of BERA (2018), UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice (2017) and EWC Ethical Practice Guidelines.

### **Lesson study School 1 results and analysis**

The research was conducted in a Year 4 classroom with a total number of 30 pupils made up of a mixture of boys and girls, the children selected for the research were 3 higher ability students. This was the first lesson in which the research was conducted. The lesson itself worked well with all children being fully engaged in the tasks set, the level of task was appropriate for the class and was differentiated to allow all pupils to access the work.

As mentioned earlier following the technical difficulties the third stimulus to be used was the one the class were very familiar with i.e. the paper noise level indicator which the class were familiar with which was set to level 1 i.e. 'spy talk', talking to your learning partner only.

From the observations stimuli 1 and 2 i.e. using the 'hocus pocus' catchphrase and the 'mission impossible' music scored the highest overall scores on the Leuven scale, there were times when the 'hocus pocus' technique did score a 3 with the mission impossible technique maintaining 4 and 5s throughout the lesson. When interviewed, Child A and C were asked which technique they felt supported their learning, both children chose the catchphrase 'hocus pocus' this was also verified during the observations. Child A only scored one 3 as they continued to focus on their task, the rest of the lesson they scored 4s and 5s when 'hocus pocus' was used. Child C scored 4s and 5s throughout the lesson when 'hocus pocus' was used. Child B scored the lowest on the Leuven scale scoring three 3s

when 'hocus pocus' was used which makes sense as to why they preferred the 'mission impossible' technique where they scored 4s and 5s throughout the lesson. However, both Child A and C scored the same with this technique. Yet when interviewed about their thoughts on the 'mission impossible' technique Child B stated the song needed to be "more calming" as it was too hectic. Interestingly, Child C agreed and mentioned that it too felt the music was too chaotic and felt it encouraged children in the class to act silly. Child B later went onto say (even though it's the technique they said best supports their learning) that they didn't like the 'mission impossible' technique and found it annoying, though as mentioned earlier this was the one, they scored highly on during the observation.

Remarkably, two pupils agreed they did not like the third technique the noise indicator which they were most familiar with. They stated they wouldn't always look at it as they would not always be facing the wall where the indicator was, instead, they would just copy the behaviour of others and their level of chat. Child C spoke about how they were familiar with the technique so they would look at the board and remind the table they were working on that it was 'spy talk'. Surprisingly, this is what we thought all three pupils would have said, we anticipated that the familiar technique would have shown the highest score, but our observations showed the opposite. It scored 3s and 4s across all three children.

When asked how the lesson could have been improved, Child B mentioned the use of 'Helpwr Heddiw' to be in control of the music/catchphrase etc. and Child C believed that to encourage the children to be quieter they would utilise table monitors to keep the noise level low and ensure the children were on task. Both pupils would put the responsibility of the behaviour management and noise level in the hands of the class allowing pupils to take responsibility for each other's learning.

### **Lesson study School 2 results and analysis**

The research was conducted in a Year 4 classroom with a total number of 30 pupils made up of a mixture of boys and girls; a very similar set up to school 1 which meant that the lesson did not need to be adapted. The only difference was that the third stimulus used for school 2 was one the class were already familiar with- the trainee teacher would press a bell and the class would respond by clapping to the bell. The children selected from this class were mixed ability. The lesson worked well with all the pupils engaged in the planned activities.

From the observations the 'hocus pocus' technique scored the highest overall on the Leuven scale beating the bell and clapping technique which the class regularly used. The 'hocus pocus' technique scored 4s and 5s throughout the lesson whilst the bell scored 3s, 4s and 5s. During the interview all three children commented on how they liked the use of the catchphrase, they mentioned that they felt it was fun, something new, never heard it before, they had to remain alert and be ready to respond quickly to the catchphrase. They believed that this technique was the one best suited to support their learning; this validates our observations.

The mission impossible music also scored slightly better than the bell and clapping technique gaining 5s and 3s. During the interview session, Child B and C commented that they had found the music stimulus very boring, what was interesting was that this corresponded with the observations as Child B only scored a 3, whilst they did tidy up they were distracted and chatting to others; Child C also gained a level 3 as they didn't stop what they were doing they continued the task.

Surprisingly, the technique that was regularly used within the class, the bell and the clapping, received negative comments during the interview process. The children were quick to say how irritating they found the stimulus, it didn't encourage them to stop what they were

during which meant that they were not ready to receive instructions from the teacher. In fact, Child A commented that it reminded them of someone ordering food.

When asked how they would improve the lesson, if they were the teacher Child A responded, "I would use raffle tickets as a reward for those children who listened, so that they could potentially win a prize." Child B also wanted prizes in the form of "Dojos" to be awarded to anyone who behaved well in class. Whilst Child C believed that they would use the technique of counting, un, dau, tri.

### **Lesson study School 3 results and analysis**

The research was conducted in a Year 3 classroom with a total number of 30 pupils made up of a mixture of boys and girls. The lesson plan had to be adapted because this was a Year 3 class and the other two classes were Year 4, therefore the levels of knowledge and understanding were different. The core lesson objective stayed the same however the tasks were differentiated to suit the learning needs of Year 3. The children selected from this class were three levels of ability- Higher, middle and lower ability to allow us a range of data in which we could compare. The lesson worked well and received excellent feedback in the group interviews. From the observations of the 3 targeted children the clapping technique worked the best which is part of the class' daily routine, from the observations all 3 children scored a 5 on the Leuven scale which is the highest score possible which demonstrates intense and greatest involvement. Interestingly, during the interviews Child A stated she did not like the clapping technique as it hurt her hands clapping along all the time; this was surprising as during observation she scored a 5 for her level of involvement and was one of the first to respond straight away to the clapping throughout the lesson. Child B and Child C both stated they enjoyed the technique, and this is what we expected as their observation notes showed that both were graded a level 5 for their level of engagement throughout the lesson.

Regarding the catchphrase 'hocus pocus' during the observations they responded well gaining a 5, 4 or a level 3 however during the interview when questioned all three children didn't like the stimulus, felt it was weird, children weren't saying it properly or were even not responding at all.

When the children were asked which technique supported their learning best, we found that Child C voted for the clapping technique; whilst children A & B both stated that the 'mission impossible' music was their favourite. During the observations Child A scored 5 on the Leuven scale, with Child B scoring 4 and Child C scoring 3; all three children when asked about 'mission impossible' during interview stated they liked it as it was fun! Child C who scored the lowest when observed, with this technique, explained they enjoyed the technique because it was good fun and they could dance to it, therefore using this technique may not be what it was intended to be used for. Interestingly, when asked if they were the teacher how could they improve the lesson it was only Child A who related what they said to the techniques that we had used. Child A mentioned how they too would use music, like we did, but would have a song with words that the class could sing to as that would grab their attention straight away and they would immediately sing along.

All three researches were very surprised with Child B who said that they would just stand there until the class started to listen. Child B said that they would wait for the class to show their attention and the longer it took then the more time they would add onto break or lunchtime. This was so surprising, because from all the answers given to the other techniques, they had indicated that they had liked them all. This response by Child B to improve behaviour in the class was something completely different and we believe would encourage taking responsibility away from the learners.

### **Discussion of research findings in relation to related literature and research**

Throughout the whole process it was evident that the three schools encouraged a warm climate based on mutual respect and trust; children were encouraged to give their viewpoint

and took an active role in their learning. The planned lesson worked well because it was sufficiently challenging, yet it allowed them to access the work with support. What was interesting from the comments from school 1 was their ability to recognise that they self-regulate their behaviour by conforming to the norm. Therefore if the teacher lowers the noise level scale to a 1 on the noise scale i.e. 'spy talk' then they responded to this by following others in the class even if they haven't seen the indicator themselves, which seems to validate what Bandura and Walters (1977) and Bennet (2017) have said about the power of creating a climate of conforming to the norm, Rogers (2015) also believed that behaviour can be affected by the group dynamics.

During this lesson study we utilised a behaviourist approach. School 2 recognised the benefits of Operant Conditioning in line with Skinner (1938) as they felt their behaviour would be improved through the process of positive reinforcement, for example receiving a raffle ticket or a Dojo as a reward in recognition of their good behaviour- they believe this would encourage further positive behaviour. This was followed by a negative reinforcement approach from Child B in school 3 which was also advocated by Skinner (1938) as an effective method of behaviour to ensure a child realised that actions have consequences, though as Rogers (2015) advocated if this method was employed as a strategy, it then requires the teacher to rebuild the relationship between themselves and the teacher. Whilst the stimulus- response technique of getting children to respond to a neutral stimulus was evident throughout the project in all the interventions used.

What is evident from the pupil interviews is the usefulness of the Learners Lens (Brookfield 1998). The feedback given by the pupils has given me 'food for thought' for the future; giving me a real insight into how I can improve my lessons for the future and how I can organise my future classroom. Certainly, the catchphrase stimulus came out as a positive effect and one which the children liked. The pupils also believed that the music stimulus could be helpful within the classroom to help with classroom organisation. However, it is important to remember that the choice of music needs to be carefully considered. One of the most useful

insights was the use of monitors, for example Helpwr Heddiw, which utilises other children to monitor the classroom rules and expectations.

From the research carried out we found out that the semi-structured interviews were good, however, following their response we wanted to introduce other question for the children to answer. After interviewing the first group of children we discussed changing the interview process, but we knew that if we changed the questions then it wouldn't have been a fair analysis.

What was interesting from the research undertaken was that both Year 4 classes did not believe that the stimulus of lively music, 'mission impossible', was beneficial in encouraging improved behaviour from children in the classroom. They found the music irritating and believed it could encourage more chat or off task behaviour. Whereas, the Year 3 children enjoyed the music, though there was some concern from us as trainee teachers that the intended outcome may not have been what we had wanted i.e. dancing! The reverse was true of the catchphrase 'hocus pocus', both Year 4 classes found it fun enjoying the interaction whereas the Year 3 class really didn't like this.

Whilst our planned third technique wasn't used it gave use the opportunity to analyse how effective their familiar stimulus was in comparison to those introduced techniques.

Surprisingly, in two out of the three schools the familiar stimulus was the one which was least favoured by the children. It would be interesting to find out why, was it that familiarity leads to it having less impact? It was the younger children who liked their stimulus best.

### **Conclusion**

I don't believe that the findings of this lesson study can be generalised. On reflection there are too many limitations and weaknesses in the process:

- a) The timing of the project at the end of the teaching experience meant that the process was rushed as the observations had to take place during our last week of practise over a two day period which meant that there was not enough time to reflect

and make enough interventions to the process before the lesson was delivered again.

- b) The classes used were different age groups i.e. two Year 4's and one Year 3 class.

Does that mean the findings were reliable? There seems to be a discrepancy between the two age ranges and a synergy with the results of the two Year 4 classes. Does this relate to Piaget's thoughts that children can only learn when they are at the right developmental age? This also meant that the lesson had to be adapted for the age range to access the material. Similarly, one school demanding that ICT be incorporated in the lesson due to Estyn recommendations and the other schools not being able to do this due to their lack of equipment.

- c) The selection of children to be interviewed, (always dependent on parental/guardian permission), school 1 chose three higher ability whilst the other two classes used mixed ability children. This was not systematic or objective.

- d) There should have been the ability to extend/adapted the interview questions i.e. ask supplementary questions should the opportunity arise after school 1, as the children may have highlighted or added something of interest.

- e) Break down in technology i.e. the inability for us to use the auditory noise monitor in the classroom.

Whilst it did not appear to be a weakness, having new adults observing in the lesson could affect how the way children behave and answer questions in an interview session, as they could be influenced by the interview situation.

What can be said about the whole experience was the positive engagement from all three classes, the classroom climate experienced was one built on trust, support and respect. The fact that all three trainees had piloted the new stimuli that were going to be introduced, this I believe helped the lesson flow as the children were not concerned by these techniques.

The project highlighted:

- a) The importance of researching the literature, understanding how a lesson study should be undertaken i.e. the cyclical approach and to look at educational research already undertaken on the focus of the project.
- b) The importance of pupil voice and how this can be used to change future practise.
- c) The quality of the planned lesson, as one school used the opportunity to formally observe their trainee delivering the lesson by the class teacher, who graded the lesson as excellent.
- d) The collegiate support given by the trainee to each other.

The importance of pupil voice cannot I feel be over emphasised I believe this was the key learning point for me from this study; children's responses could be very insightful and surprising, I believe that I will try to incorporate that far more in my next practise.

The idea that the mission impossible theme tune was too distracting or irritating for the Year 4 children has led me to question what type of music I would incorporate as a technique to gain their attention in the future. Similarly, whilst Year 3 liked the music they also wanted to dance, this was not the intended response we had wanted. The fact that the Year 4's advocated using a 'classroom monitor' to support the teacher in gaining control of the class was really interesting. The idea that they wanted to take responsibility for their own behaviour within the classroom and saw how important good classroom behaviour was to their own learning was a key finding. I was impressed that they understood how children respond to the norms of the classroom environment i.e. they follow the behaviours of others in the class, peer pressure.

I believe that in my next school experience I will look at ways of encouraging positive behaviour through high expectations and making those expectations explicit in all interactions between myself and the children, having a consistent approach to encourage the children to adhere to those classroom norms. I will also look to identify individual children who can act as a monitor to support those norms and encourage positive behaviour and focus by those children in their group. The children would be encouraged to take

responsibility for their own learning and consequently responsibility for their own self- control regarding their behaviour. Whilst I appreciate a consistent approach is important for any classroom teacher and using a familiar stimulus is important; I do feel there should be a range of stimuli used so they do not become complacent and begin to ignore it but respond immediately.

### **Recommendations**

This project has shown me the important role that the child can play in their own learning, their voice if listened to can influence how the teacher plans and adapts the learning experience for that child. The positive interaction between teacher and child is fundamental to a child's well-being and their attainment.

If I were to undertake this lesson study again, I believe that it should ideally be undertaken in the same school, so that the children involved would be familiar with the adults who come into the classroom to observe the lesson. The class observed should not only be the same Key Stage but ideally the same year group to limit variability. The children chosen for interview should be a mixed ability group, selected on certain criteria i.e. their previous levels of attainment. The process should take place over a longer period which would allow the observers to reflect and adapt the lesson. I would also introduce the idea of a questionnaire to get the viewpoint of other children within the group.

This would allow the findings to be collected and shared across the school and become the focus of good professional development as the collegiate approach to the study would permeate through the school encouraging the sharing of good practise across the establishment. Teachers discussing pedagogy and adapting their practise considering action research is so important.

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