

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 observed critical incident.

Introduction

The focus of this work is to identify a critical incident from the observation days at a school in relation to Tripp's pedagogical theory, which concentrates primarily on reflections that teachers enable, allowing themselves to develop their professional practice through contemplation and change (Tripp, 2012, p. 8). In order to do this, educators must look back on a critical incident and acknowledge the significance of the event and the value that these judgements make. The critical incident in question can appear typical rather than serious but becomes critical through analysis. During the two observation days in school, detailed notes on teaching and learning were made. These were then reviewed so that a critical incident could be selected.

In order to understand the role of critical reflection, there needs to be knowledge of the developing role of the teaching profession, and the importance of contextual information for the incident. Throughout this piece the incident will be linked to one or more of Donaldson's Four Purposes, before moving onto a literature review – identifying potential research and key points in relation to the chosen incident and an evaluation. The appendices include other information from the observation for reference and to indicating how the selection process was made. The critical incident involves a young boy within a Physical Education session seemingly to be struggling to find his place within the classroom and perhaps an 'under the hood' issue of gender identity.

Critical Reflection

Teachers must examine their practice through critical reflection, in order to "confirm, modify or challenge" (Tripp, 2012, p.39) their existing beliefs, and through consistently checking conclusions and re-analysing data realise that it is important to improve (Tripp, 2012, p.39). Tripp suggests that the development of professional judgement through analysis and reflection of critical incidents will lead to "diagnostic teaching" (Tripp, 2012, page 8). The importance of progress through the means of

enabling teachers to be aware of their professional values, contemplation and associated problems is demonstrated by Tripp (2012) and expresses the importance of teachers questioning their own practice through reflection (Tripp, 2012, p. 17-18).

In relation to reflective practice, Donaldson was asked to conduct a review in March 2014 on the Curriculum for Wales, from Foundation Phase up to Key Stage Four, (Donaldson, 2015, p. 1). Donaldson explains that “the absence of a clear and common understanding of an acceptable curriculum was seen as having led to unacceptable inconsistency” (Donaldson, 2015, p. 8) within the old curriculum. The New Curriculum influences the critical incident through providing children with the opportunity to freely explore their identities and can be connected to one of the Four Purposes: Ethically informed citizens.

The aim of the New Curriculum is to “establish common educational aims across Wales” (Donaldson, 2015, p. 8). Based on Donaldson’s review, the Four Purposes of the curriculum are key characteristics that demonstrate what should be developed through the curriculum (Donaldson, 2015, p. 29). Donaldson expresses that the themes for the new curriculum should include promoting high aspirations, the need for children to be rooted in their own cultures and have a strong sense of identity as citizens of Wales (Donaldson, 2015, p. 28). Upon leaving school, pupils should all have a broad spectrum of education that gives them enough knowledge to thrive in an ever-growing world (Donaldson, 2015, p. 28). This can be linked to the critical incident which focusses on the way in which gender is understood by the children and the staff and the ways in which every child develops as an individual.

The new curriculum will also include the importance of the Five Professional Standards which need to be met by all teachers in order to achieve effective teaching practice, these five standards are (Welsh Gov., 2018, p. 16):

- ❖ **Pedagogy** – effective teaching and learning in which a teacher constantly secures the best results through progressive refining, influencing, and advanced learning.
- ❖ **Leadership** – through all aspects of professional practice to support schools and pupils.
- ❖ **Professional Learning** – constantly expanding knowledge, skills and understanding of reflection and open-mindedness.

- ❖ **Innovation** – the utilisation of an innovative attitude which is demonstrated through control and measurable development of practices and approaches.
- ❖ **Collaboration** – work productively with peers, learners, and others in order to achieve professional success.

The observations from which the critical incident was drawn took place in a 'Rights Respecting' Primary School. The school will be referred to as School X in order to maintain anonymity and to adhere to BERA standards of ethical research practice. According to the 2014 Estyn report on School X, the school's performance and prospects for improvement were noted as "adequate" (Estyn, 2014, p. 2). They were given this status as pupils were making good progress in many areas of learning however, the performance within mathematics seemed to have declined, punctuation within writing is not present and "more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could" (Estyn, 2014, p. 2). School X was given six recommendations including, among others, raising the standards of numeracy and improving the quality of self-evaluation and pupils' attendance (Estyn, 2014, p. 3). School X is a 'rights respecting' school, encouraging individual growth, which is interesting in the context of the critical incident as it considers how the children relate to each other and express their preferences.

Observation

Due to the importance of privacy of the school, classes, teachers, and pupils observed, the school will be referred to as 'School X' and any teachers and pupils will be labelled alphabetically. The school's vision statement is to 'Dream, Believe, Achieve and Be the Best That You Can Be' which they consider summarises the ethos and culture of the community in the school. The school has a core value which is concentrated on each month, with the aim of developing the children's empathy, self-belief, enjoyment, hopes and aspirations, social skills, and life skills.

For example, when observing School X, all classes were focusing on the value of Friendship. School X also prides themselves on being a Rights Respecting School (UNICEF, 2022), promoting the view that children have a right to an opinion and are considered in high regard by employees and teachers. This impacts the critical incident in a positive way as it would allow Child A to feel safe in expressing their thoughts and emotions. They have been given the right to be themselves and have a

voice within their school environment. Students receive the opportunities to join pupil voice groups, which can help shape the way the school develops (Mentally Healthy Schools, 2022).

For the duration of the first day in School X, the observation took place with the age group of five- to six-year-olds. The New Curriculum states that there are five clear progression steps for children's development, with pupils aged five being around Progression Step One (Hwb, 2020). These progression steps should be viewed as reference points rather than a judgement and an expectation of children (Hwb, 2020). According to Donaldson, this creates a set of prospects that should challenge children to achieve high personal aspirations (Donaldson, 2015, p. 64). The proposed progression steps are intended to reinforce the need for authentic and profound learning (Donaldson, 2015, p. 67). In some ways this can be seen as a beneficial and inclusive strategy as all children develop differently, and progress at their own paces. However, it can also be seen as slightly too loose of a strategy that only pinpoints the ages of 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16 (Hwb, 2020). One progression step covers the development of two years (Pickles, 2021). A child "making typical levels of progression will not achieve the descriptions of learning" (Pickles, 2021) until the end of their second year. Pickles explains that the New Curriculum does promote individualised learning, but in order to do this schools need to effectively share structure, language and understanding of assessments (Pickles, 2021).

Donaldson's Four Purposes

Within the New Curriculum, Donaldson stresses the importance of introducing and developing the Four Purposes throughout (Donaldson, 2015, p. 29). These purposes include:

- ❖ Ambitious capable learners
- ❖ Enterprising creative contributors
- ❖ Ethical informed citizens
- ❖ Healthy confident individuals

It is suggested that these purposes should be integrated into school inspections and be reported on by Estyn on a regular basis (Donaldson, 2015, p.103).

The critical incident took place in a Physical Education lesson for children aged five to six in school X with a TA in charge. When asked to line up in gender separate lines, Child A, born male, chose to both queue with the girls and change with the females in their class. When asked about this, the TA explained that it was something that had been happening a lot recently and was unsure whether Child A simply felt more comfortable within the girls' company or whether it was a gender identity issue. The TA seemed to be accustomed to this and explained that Child A had the right to choose, and staff are supporting of this. This supports the school's mission of being a Rights Respecting school, allowing children to have a voice with the support from staff to do so (UNICEF, 2022).

It cannot be assumed that Child A is having gender identity issues, and staff must remain supportive and understanding, as well as creating a safe and an inclusive environment for all. Nevertheless, this critical incident made the researcher wonder about children questioning their gender identity at a young age, and how schools should support any pupil with this identity matter. This situation highlighted how gender is used as a way of grouping children and how this may impact the development and understanding of children (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022).

During the children's Physical Education lesson, they were being assessed on their ability to execute mobility and coordination exercises. These are non-gendered physical activities, meaning students did not necessarily need to be separated by sex. Once this had been completed the children were again separated into gender-based teams to play a game in which two children were 'sharks' and the rest were 'fish' and had to be caught, essentially a type of tag or stuck-in-the-mud game. Again, this was an unnecessary decision of segregation. Child A had approached the 'girls' team' but was instantly rejected by the females in the class and told to join the 'boys' team'. This seemed to affect the child emotionally, however the child remained engaged with the game and overall session. This could be a sign that Child A is aware of social norms from a very young age, learning how others perceive him (Ashley, 2010).

After the game, the children did a cool down session in order to lower their heart rates and calm down. During this time, the TA approached the researcher and explained what exactly she had done during the session; what muscles were engaged during the exercises and the purpose of the game was to simply create enjoyment

for the children. When asked why she decided to separate the game into gender teams, explaining that the researcher had noticed Child A would tend to identify with the girls more rather than the boys, and that currently student teachers are being taught to use gender neutral language. Teachers can improve their practice through using gender neutral language as it creates more inclusivity within the school setting and can directly influence children's understanding of gender (Sager, 2022).

When asking about the complex subject of gender, and the difficulties of the subject to juggle within the classroom, the question of how she would tackle this issue occurred. In England, this has already been addressed with the BBC reporting on a letter addressed to Government stating that gender language can limit children's aspirations and potential (Smith, 2021). As a result, the Government have suggested that teachers should actively challenge gender stereotyping, with the Department of Education stating that "schools should be places where all pupils feel safe and are protected from harm" (Smith, 2021). This debate continues with Ofsted undertaking a review into these issues (Smith, 2021).

The lead TA agreed that Child A might be struggling and explained that she had never thought about it before. The TA then expressed that she would have a discussion with other members of staff about this issue. After roughly 20 minutes, the TA came back and said they had decided to change teams or groups in P.E from gender based to children being separated by coloured bibs or numbers. This demonstrates how reflection on lessons can improve learning and teaching, creating a better educational experience for students (Gibbs, 1988).

This incident can be connected to two Donaldson's Four Purposes. It can be linked to one of the Four Purposes; Healthy, as the incident in question was during a Physical Education class. The idea of whether Child A is questioning their gender, where they may lay on the gender spectrum can connect to "building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy" (Donaldson, 2015, p. 30). This also could establish their beliefs and building their confidence surrounding their decisions about lifestyle (Hwb, 2020). This case can also be connected to another one of the Four Purposes; Ethical, as it could involve other children in a school with a child that is struggling with their identity by "engaging with

contemporary issues” (Donaldson, 2015, p.30), knowledge about society, and “respecting the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society” (Donaldson, 2015, p. 30). The critical incident highlights how the staff and children interact through the classroom routines and relationships with one another, developing their own identities and learning about how to be inclusive and ethical in their actions (Parker; Barnes; Kohler-Evans, 2016).

Literature Review

Upon reflection of this critical incident, there are many paths that can be taken in terms of research that could lead to and include various subjects. The critical incident raises the theme of gender identity in school, gender identity in young children, child development stages, emotional literacy, class management, and inclusive practice. The literature review has been divided into three key areas relating to the critical incident. The first being gender identity in children, the second will be focused on the role of the teacher in creating an inclusive environment, and finally, the way in which stereotypes may be perpetuated by seemingly ‘innocent’ school routines.

Feminist theorist, Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1999), can be used as evidence in understanding gender identity, noting that “gender is performative, as gender identity is based on gendered acts – meaning and/ or feminine ways” (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022, p. 2-3). Gender identity is an act and something that is taught and learnt, rather than something that occurs naturally. Ashley (2010) agrees with Butler, stating that boys “undergo a period of gender learning which is fundamentally different from the experience of girls” (Ashley, 2010, p. 258). The idea of young boys being “socialised into the norms of hegemonic masculinity” (Ashley, 2010, p.257), is prominent in terms of gender identity when children, in particular boys, are growing up. Social constructivists take on the view that gender identity, learning, and the development of sex roles have resulted in the term “hegemonic masculinity” which was brought about by the “uncover[ing of] the degree in which the dominant ideology” (Ashley, 2010, p.261) is present when learning our roles within gender. This relates to the power and dominance of men gained through vilification of women and gay men. Attachment theory is used by Ashley to examine this process of how “boys separate from their mothers in order to undergo gender socialisation” (Ashley, 2010, p. 261) at school and outside of the home. It can be said that our

gender identity and the idea we have of gender is completely performance based and can be controlled by the way we have been taught and how others may see us.

The role of teachers in creating an inclusive environment is essential. It is well known that there is a gender imbalance within the teaching profession, with females outnumbering males exponentially (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022, p.4). It has been recorded that teachers believe that they could be capable of challenging stereotypes within their classroom but have not had any form of training during the course of their teaching programmes (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022, p.1). There have been many investigations into the theory that teachers' personal beliefs can affect and transmit to their students' achievements and academic performance (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022, p.5). Inclusion within the classroom means to include all students regardless of need or circumstances, where all learners feel welcomed and valued (Knight; Clegg; Conn; Hutt; Crich, 2022). In an ideal world, diversity inclusion would consist of students and teachers learning from each other equally (Knight; Clegg; Conn; Hutt; Crich, 2022). However, the idea of inclusion might not be fully met in every situation. It can be argued that it is "equitable education would involve segregated provision for pupils" (Knight; Clegg; Conn; Hutt; Crich, 2022). Many teachers have expressed that an inclusive classroom should be one of an "authentic representation of society" (Knight; Clegg; Conn; Hutt; Crich, 2022). The celebration of diversity aligns with liberal values and views that schools and teachers typically aim to nurture in their learners (Knight; Clegg; Conn; Hutt; Crich, 2022). From this research it is clear that the use of inclusion improves the process of learning as well as the way educator teach.

Stereotypes are an unconscious notion and "children can show gender-typical behaviour and interests from an incredibly young age" (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022, p.2). The curriculum in the UK has been criticised by Gilchrist and Zhang, claiming that the curriculum has "failed with regards to avoiding gender stereotyping, by not offering teachers proper guidelines about how to address such issue" (Gilchrist; Zhang, 2022, p.4). An example of this is gender segregation being persistent within the classroom from seating plans to the general style in which we teach, with girls benefiting far more than boys in many areas. Ashley explains that boys learn gender stereotypes, norms and show their feelings of insecurities through the theory of attachment behaviour (Ashley, 2010, p. 263). Gender stereotyping is present in many aspects of school life, including in books, language, and some activities or topics. In

2021, the English Government was called to address this issue and ideas used in schools (Smith, 2021). Stereotypes, in theory, can limit children's aspirations and potential, as well as cause long term and long-lasting damage to their self-worth and image (Smith, 2021). In Wales, this is a controversial topic as seen in Wiltshire where they were forced to change a decision on having a gender-neutral toilets due to parental complaints and anger (Mal, 2021). The ideas to have a gender-neutral bathroom was criticised by parents, expressing that they felt that liberal views were being pushed onto their children, making this a political issue (Mal, 2021). Concerns regarding that children should be left alone so "kids can be kids and enjoy their time in school" was raised (Mal, 2021). This is something that continues to be explored in Wales, with varied opinions either supporting the notion of gender inclusion or the idea that children should not be exposed to such decisions at such a young age.

Evaluation

Looking back on this incident, using Gibbs' Reflective Model (1988) helps to demonstrate the way in which gender roles are used within the primary classroom as evidenced by the critical incident. When the critical incident was first observed it created feelings of curiosity and intrigue within the researcher. This meant that the researcher was prompted to investigate further into this aspect of teaching and learning. Based on this model and critical incident, it can demonstrate approaches that will inform teachers on their professional reflection and practice (Gibbs, 1988). After revising over this critical incident, considering possible avenues of research, and students could be affected emotionally, a successful identification of what the response was by the staff and the researcher has led to looking at what could be done differently in the future through looking at the outcome of the event.

The response from staff during this critical incident can be reflected on and seen as progressive and accepting, showing that the children have a safe space in order to be themselves. The teacher had used their own method of reflection, after a prompt question from myself, and resulted in the change from a gender separated lesson plan to a more inclusive session that aligns with the New Curriculum for Wales. The steps taken by the teacher demonstrated the protocol in which needs to be followed for the purpose of developing the educational settings for children. The instructor leading the session reflected on her lesson, thinking of Child A's needs and feelings,

and approaching fellow professionals about the incident in question, analysing and evaluating. After this, the teacher concluded that in future she would introduce the method of coloured bibs or numbers to her Physical Education lessons, receiving information that the observation had helped her with her own professional practice.

Although this evolution was conducted within the session, the question still remains of should the teacher talk to the children about gender and identity, and how could this be taught, especially at such a young age? Government guidelines tell us that schools must tackle discriminations on any level, however there is no new legislation on this (Gov., 2016). From research, according to the UK Government schools can independently decide on what facilities they want to provide to their pupils from uni-sex bathrooms to the school uniforms policy (Gov., 2016).

Research has led to the examination of Jamie Solomon and her work on gender roles in the classroom. Solomon's research was conducted in a San Francisco Bay preschool, with the focus on children aged 4 to 6 within a class that had a diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomical backgrounds (Solomon, 2016, p. 63). She claims that "without prominent caring adults" (Solomon, 2016, p. 63) there to guide and help children contemplate outlooks on gender, children will develop concepts that conform with society's stereotypes. It is expressed in the article that educators should offer pupils "different perspectives" (Solomon, 2016, p. 63), including concepts, in order to give children "access to a range of roles, expressions, and identities" (Solomon, 2016, p. 63). Without this, educators prohibit their student's growth and preventing them from reaching their potential (Solomon, 2016, p. 63). Educators should consider how the curriculum materials may affect and offer prospects for their class to go beyond the traditional gender boundaries (Solomon, 2016, p. 65). Children undertake gender roles that are well-defined by our culture, impacting their play and what props are used, as well as demonstrating interests (Solomon, 2016, p. 67).

Solomon (2016) believes that no single approach could increase the opportunity for children to explore gender roles and broader approaches to further children's ideas about identity is needed. She offers future research and strategies to modify the teaching practice through fostering flexible thinking, finding opportunities to challenge children's perceptions and push them outside theory comfort zones in regard to peer relationships, and promote skills in children's own identity (Solomon, 2016, p.

70). This is very important research as it gives the reader a massive insight into how, as teachers, we can approach this subject.

Conclusion

To conclude, the critical evaluation taken place over the two-day observation was successful, resulting in identifying a critical incident and the next possible teaching and learning steps. The approach taken towards the critical incident was one of careful consideration, with the use of Tripp's (2012) pedagogical theory of professional practice, Donaldson's (2016) Four Purposes, and Gibbs' (1998) six step reflection model.

From the research conducted, it is essential that we allow children to ask questions, be prepared to answer these queries, and allow pupils the freedom to explore gender roles, identities and not be labelled or have any assumptions attached to them. When students start asking questions, then and only then, should we challenge their perceptions and ideas. At the same time, like Solomon (2016) suggested, as educators we must allow a range of resources and opportunities in the curriculum for children to have a gender neutral and safe place to grow, where they can challenge their boundaries.

Appendices**OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES****Record 1**

Date and time, year group: Monday the 26th of September 2022. Year 1 and 2 group.
Observed from 1.00pm-2.30pm.

Where and When: *Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context*

The critical incident observed was seen both in the classroom and the hall in which the children partook in Physical Education. Within the classroom, the children were learning which of the four purposes that the subject Physical Education would come underneath. This was followed by a gender split to get changed, and forming a line ready to enter the hall.

What happened: *a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work)*

This critical incident surrounds one child, for this example, the child in question will be referred to as Child A. Child A was born male and as the day progressed it became clear that they were much more comfortable with the females of the class. This can be shown when the girls were asked to enter a separate room. When this was announced to the class, Child A made the decision to enter the separate room with the other girls within their class. This was not met with any form of harsh questioning, and Child A was more than welcome to choose this option. Again, when asked to queue up in two separate gender lines, Child A chose to enter the 'girl's line'. This is where the Teaching Assistant explained that this particular child had been doing this for some time now and was not sure if it was whether they felt more comfortable with the girls or whether they simply may identify more with the female gender. This is something that cannot be presumed, and thus far I had seen a lot of gender barriered lining, queuing, and groupings.

Once in the hall and after the main mobility and coordination exercises, the children were set a game to play. During this game the children would split into two teams, once again gender separated, and where they were told that boys would stand at one end of the hall, and girls at the other. This is where Child A, again displayed that they would like to be on the girl's team, however, the girls in the class informed Child A that, "you are a boy, you need to sit over there." Child A seemed to be deeply saddened by this and was reluctant to join the boys team. This

was something that did not receive any type of intervention by teachers. The child however seemed to continue with the game and the session without any type of misbehavior, trouble, or problems.

After the lesson had finished and the children were in a 'cool down session,' in which they all lay down quietly, the teacher approached me and explained exactly what she had taught them, the lesson plan she had followed, and how she had implemented different shapes, engaged different muscles, and finished with a fun game. I had asked the teacher as to why she decided to separate the children by gender, explaining my concern for Child A's mental wellbeing in discovering who they may be. This was a concern of mine especially as we are being taught ourselves that we must use gender neutral language and create a safe environment for children to express themselves in any form. The teacher replied, "you know, I have never thought about that," and followed by explaining she would talk to other members of staff about the issue.

Approximately ten to fifteen minutes later, the teacher came to find me while the children were getting changed back into their school uniforms, in which Child A chose to change with the boys. The teacher explained to me that after considering what I had observed, and discussing it with her fellow teachers, in future, the children will be given coloured bibs to separate them into teams. This would make the lessons gender neutral, fair, and modern to go along with the new Curriculum in Wales. She also thanked me for my comment.

Areas of possible exploration: *what you think could be "under the hood" in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider?*

Possible areas of exploration could include many things such as gender based activities within the classroom, play yard, and small things like queuing for break and lunch times. This can be expanded into the language teachers use around the children. For example, instead of saying "good morning guys" change it to "good morning everyone." It is simple things such as this that we do not realise could have a large impact on children within the classroom setting.

From this I could research into what teachers can do with a child perhaps experiencing or exhibiting gender identity changes or struggles. This can also be expanded upon through questioning if the uniforms are gender segregated or seating plan may go by the assigned gender of the child. We must also consider whether the children understand the complex subject of gender and how they would cope or acknowledge the transition of another child.

Notes: *any details you can note (is it a busy environment, is it after lunch, are there lots of distractions, are directions made explicit - the more you can refer to the better here)*

- After lunch
- Directions to get changed or participate in the exercise was simple and easily understood by the children
- Hall was simple with very little distractions

Record 2

Date and time, year group: Monday 26th of September 2022. Year 1 and 2 class. A morning session, 9.30am-10.30am.

Where and When: *Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context*

The classroom is an open plan room that connects into another year one and two class. There are two small tables with a large carpet space, which has small coloured dots with the children's names. The walls are coloured in calm, pastel tones with the school mascot, the four purposes and children's work adorning spaces on the walls, as well as a visual timetable for the children to see. There is a large screen in front of the carpet area which displays work set out by the teacher or songs and entertainment for the children to take part in.

What happened: *a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work)*

During the morning session the children undertook an English lesson, where they reviewed sounds, they knew and were learning, such as:

All students seemed to be engaged with the teacher, repeating sounds back to her and calling out words that were connected to that sound. Once this was completed the children were set into five different groups. The first did some English work with the main teacher, the second were sent into another room with the Teaching Assistant to read a book that they had been studying, the third played with playdoh, the fourth played on iPads, and the fifth group concentrated on spelling.

For this observation, I had been paired with the spelling group. They were all given white boards with pens and tasked to write as many words as they could. These words could be absolutely anything they wanted. Once beginning this task, the children seemed extremely confused. Understanding this was a task to see how well the children did as independent learners and where they were with their spelling, I attempted to help the children start their work. I connected two or three words to the sounds they were learning earlier in the session such as: door, book, and -. Once the children had an idea of what exactly they needed to do, I asked them all individually if there was a word they would like to spell with the group or like to learn to spell. This seemed to work well with the kids asking how to spell words such as: Stop, Spain and Family.

However, I could see a slight issue with the complete independency of choosing their own words. Very quickly it became clear that the children were choosing easy words such as: Dog and Cat. This seemed to be a way of perhaps avoiding difficult words or shows the lack of confidence within the child to try something new. Before being able to face this issue myself, it was time to tidy away and finish their English session for the day.

Areas of possible exploration: *what you think could be "under the hood" in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider?*

Possible exploration within this particular task could be a set group of words that the children must attempt to learn and write, or they could be given a more specific task of using the sounds from the earlier session to create words. This would connect well with the first thirty minutes to the rest of the lesson. Research into childrens development within spelling, reading, writing, and communication skills.

Notes: *any details you can note (is it a busy environment, is it after lunch, are there lots of distractions, are directions made explicit - the more you can refer to the better here)*

- very seperated environment with a lot of freedom for the children to do whatever they pleased within the set task
- the children I was with looked to me to lead them rather than leading themselves due to the lack of understanding of their particular activity

Record 3

Date and time, year group: Tuesday 27th of September 2022, Year Five and Six, both morning and afternoon.

Where and When: *Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context*

The classroom is quite small with a large carpet area. The walls are beige with colourful displays, including a small wall dedicated to the Welsh language. The tables are all in L and U shapes, facing to the front of the class. On the wall, near the teacher's desk, there is a large screen in which work is presented, with two white boards next to the screen. There are no doors or windows on the inside of the building, however there are bars on the outdoor windows that look onto the play yard.

What happened: *a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work)*

The third critical incident will be self-assessment and peer reviews or evaluation. This seemed to be a technique the teacher used throughout his lessons, including both the Mathematics lesson in the morning, and the English Literacy session in the afternoon.

The first sight of this was at 10.00am when the children were given their Ninja Maths workbooks. These are small leaflets that are filled with small challenges that the children can do for five to ten minutes. After completing a session sheet, the children would then be given the answers on the screen and were trusted to mark their books themselves. This is a type of self-assessment as well as showing the trust between teacher and student.

Maths continued after a break, where the children were given more worksheets, focusing on ascending and descending numbers. Here the children were reminded to use the "Three Before Me" technique, in which the pupils would have to ask themselves about the situation in question, then ask a friend, and finally ask their table before approaching the teacher. This can be a form of self-evaluation and peer assessment, as they are learning from one another, as well as teaching each other. This also helps to create a bond between their classmates.

At 2.00pm, the English Literacy lesson began with the class being split into four groups. Group one and two had completed their work from Monday and thus had computer time or were allowed to read. The other two groups needed to assess the stories they had written earlier in the week. This was a task I was asked to help with. The children and I were given a check list of

what to look for in their stories. These things included a title, dialogue, an adjective, and an exclamation point. Some to understand this, whereas others were completely confused as to what an adjective was or what a paragraph may look like. This form of assessment really worked in terms of teaching the students about storytelling and writing. Thus, making sure their stories included if not everything, most of what they needed to create a great piece of writing.

Areas of possible exploration: *what you think could be “under the hood” in these incidents? What avenues of research could you consider?*

From my critical incident, I could go down the path of researching the importance of self-assessments and peer evaluation compared to teacher reviews, markings, and comments. This could lead to avenues of which system of assessment is better for each age range, as well as considering all the subjects that could incorporate this and how they would be added to the lessons.

Notes: *any details you can note (is it a busy environment, is it after lunch, are there lots of distractions, are directions made explicit - the more you can refer to the better here)*

- Due to the open planned classrooms, there were many distractions for the children including others walking past, noises from other classrooms, and having to go into the corridor to collect any items they may need like subject books, reading books, and resources.

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