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ECAD6007

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A Critical Evaluation and the Identification of Next Teaching and Learning
Steps Focussing on a Case study of an Individual or a Group of Learners,
Based on an Observed Critical Incident.

Introduction

“A critical incident is any unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during class, outside class or during a teacher’s career but is ‘vividly remembered’” (Brookfield, 1990, p. 84). Likewise, Tripp (1993) stated that “...a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event. To take something as a critical incident is a value judgement we make, and the basis of that judgement is a significance we attach to the meaning of the incident”. Such incidents are produced by how a practitioner views a particular situation with significance and meaning.

I will explore, critically analyse and reflect upon a case study of an individual learner, based on an observed critical incident. Critical evaluation of research and examining critical reflection models will aid my understanding of the role of a developing teacher in practice, the approaches they utilise to meet the diverse needs of all learners and how these are related to the observed incident.

Practitioners are faced with critical incidents which impact teaching and learning and require reflective thinking. “Incidents only really become critical when subject to this conscious reflection, and when teachers formally analyse these critical incidents, they can uncover new understandings of their practice”. (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

“Reflection is a process of self-examination and self-evaluation in which effective educators regularly engage to improve their professional practices”. (Shandomo, 2010).

“Reflective practice is an important tool in practice-based professional learning settings where people learn from their own professional experiences, rather than from formal learning or knowledge transfer”. (Mathew, Mathee and Peechattu, 2017). It is the most important source of personal and professional development and improvement.

The Role of Critical Reflection

Over recent years, there has been a significant shift in Wales’ education system. In 2009, Wales experienced exceptionally low assessment results which caused concern for the education sector. (PISA, 2009., p68) stated, “...the mean score of pupils in Wales was significantly lower than that in the other parts of the UK.” This is one of the many significant factors contributing to the need for a transformation in Welsh education.

Following this, in March 2014, Professor Graham Donald conducted a review of the curriculum and assessment arrangements within schools across Wales. Within the review report ‘*Successful Futures*’, Professor Graham Donaldson stated that “...the need for change is very clear if we are to develop a curriculum which supports and enables world-class teaching and learning in the twenty-first century” (Donaldson, 2015., p21). Here, Donaldson emphasises the need to reassess the purpose of education across the country and make suitable adjustments for long-term improvement that would provide the best education possible for children and young people.

The ‘*Successful Futures*’ report, (Donaldson, 2015., p28) states “young people should all leave school having experienced a broad education that equips them to thrive in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.” The report also highlights key recommendations for the New Curriculum, 2022 and introduces the ‘Four Purposes’, that will underpin effective teaching and learning throughout Wales. “The purposes should guide all future decisions about national and local educational priorities, and underpin all teaching and learning in Wales.” (Donaldson, 2015., p4). The Four Purposes are that all children will be:

- Ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives,
- Enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the
- Healthy, confident individuals are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Alongside the 'Four Purposes', Donaldson also provides five teaching standards that guide and support professional practice. These are; collaboration, pedagogy, leadership, innovation and professional learning

The ambitions for this new curriculum need teachers' professional skill and judgement in selecting the right teaching methods." (Donaldson, 2015., p11). Additionally, sound pedagogy will be an integral part of the successful implementation of the Review's proposals on curriculum and assessment. "It requires high-quality teachers with a sound understanding of the 'why', 'how', and 'what' of teaching". (Donaldson, 2015., p12). To support this, practitioners are constantly performing critical reflections. The role of critical reflection is essential for teachers to continuously develop professional practice. (Tripp, 2011., p8) states that "...critical incidents are not 'things' which exist independently of an observer and are awaiting discovery like gold nuggets or desert islands, but like all data, critical incidents are created. Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event."

There are various theoretical models that can be used within the process of critical reflection, such as; Brookfield's Four Lenses, Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, Schon's Reflection in Action and Kolb's Reflective Cycle. I will be exploring different reflective models and demonstrating the importance of critical reflection, and how it is used to develop professional practice.

Observation

My reflection will comply with BERA guidelines to ensure complete anonymity through a generic identification process. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) believes that educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any persons – including themselves – involved in or touched by the research they are undertaking. (BERA, 2018) Researchers should recognise the entitlement of both institutions and individual participants to privacy and should accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. (BERA, 2018).

The observation took place at school 'X' within the City and County of Swansea. At school 'X', there are 481 mixed-gender pupils, aged 3-11. This figure includes 75 part-time pupils in the Nursery. The school consists of 16 single-year classes, including two nursery classes (Nursery AM and Nursery PM). (Estyn, 2018., p2). Around 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. (Estyn, 2018., p2) This is slightly above the average for Wales of 19%. The school identifies 34% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is higher than the national average of 21%. (Estyn, 2019.,p 2). Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs. (Estyn, 2019.,p 2). Very few are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils are of white British ethnicity and very few pupils have English as an additional language. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home. (Estyn, 2019.,p 2). Additionally, school 'X' is situated in a deprived area. This is supported by (WIMD, 2019., p3) which states "In the 2019 Index, Swansea has an above average proportion of its LSOAs featuring in the most deprived 10% in Wales, with 17 (11.5%) of its 148 LSOAs in the 191 (10%) most deprived."

Critical Incident Linked to Donaldson's Four Purposes

At around 09:20, child 'A', arrived late at the Nursery, who is usually always on time to school. Due to Child 'A' arriving late, they had missed the class' morning routines and daily emotion check-in. Upon arrival, child 'A' rushed to take off their bag and coat and was called immediately to start a cutting activity along with the rest of their group. Child 'A' sat at the table but was disengaged due to not being given clear instructions or the time to process what they needed to do. This caused the child to get upset and refuse to participate in the cutting activity. The teacher noticed this was out of character for the child and approached them to see what had happened. It became clear that child 'A' was very tired, was rushed to the school, and had not eaten breakfast due to running late. As a result of this, routines both at home and in school were disrupted, causing the child feelings of uncertainty and unsettlement. Such feelings were the factors contributing to the child's challenging and negative behaviour. (See appendices for critical incident form 1).

The teacher had a verbal check-in with child 'A' and made the decision to give the child time to settle into the class before returning to the cutting activity to do their work. The child went to play in the class areas for around five-ten minutes and was then called to return to the activity. The child had a complete change in behaviour and attitude as a result of the time the teacher provided for the child to settle into the class. The child returned to the activity with a positive, enthusiastic attitude and approach, leading to achieving the learning objectives/outcomes. (See figure 1 for evidence of the completed activity in the child's book.)

The significance of this incident was child 'A's experience that morning, which impacted their emotional well-being and development in school and the pedagogical approach that the teacher adopted to resolve it. This pedagogical approach focussed on the child's well-being before expecting any academic outcomes. The honest and positive

relationship between teacher and child also allowed child 'A' to discuss their feelings and emotions and come up with a solution that would benefit the child most. The teachers' practice adopted some of Donaldson's 12 Pedagogical Principles. Such principles are;

- encourage learners to take increasing responsibility for their own learning,
- support social and emotional development and positive relationship,
- maintain a consistent focus on the overall purposes of the curriculum.

(OECD, 2013) states that "...learning cannot – and should not – be understood as a purely cognitive activity: practitioners need to be aware of and responsive to students' emotions and motivations in order for successful learning to happen... They must feel competent to do what is expected of them and learn better when they experience positive emotions". Furthermore, the emphasis on the child's well-being and the positive relationship between the teacher and pupils supported one of the Four Purposes; healthy, confident individuals. The teacher's role in encouraging the child to talk about their feelings contributed to building mental and emotional well-being through developing confidence, resilience and empathy. The child was also provided with the opportunity to make measured decisions about their lifestyle when the teacher provided child 'A' with the option to settle into the class and regulate their emotions before returning to the activity to complete it. The teacher's approach also increased the child's confidence levels to participate in the task by being given the opportunity to reflect on the morning so far and to make independent decisions to influence their learning. Lastly, positive relationships were formed based on trust and mutual respect, by having a verbal check-in and encouraging the child to overcome the challenges they had encountered that morning.

Literature Review

The observed critical incident requires an inquiry into child development theories. To deepen understanding of the observed critical incident, theorists such as Bronfenbrenner and Maslow will be investigated and how each of their theories impacts a developing child's social, emotional and cognitive well-being.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

“Urie Bronfenbrenner studied the relevance of children’s social environment through his approach to the ecology of human development. Bronfenbrenner’s aim was to describe and study the impact of children’s environment, without losing the importance of children’s individuality.” (Lindon, 1998., p166). Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1989) is a systematic view that contributes to our understanding of development by incorporating broad socio-cultural factors in children’s lives.” (Doherty and Hughes, 2009., p43)

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory (1979) is known as a ‘systems theory’ that explores the different factors which directly influence the developing child. Bronfenbrenner defined the ecological environment as a ‘nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1997: 514). The ecological systems theory proposes that development can be explained with this complex system of relationships over a period of time but not for a single factor, with the conception of the developing person and the environment around them and the interaction between the two.

“Bronfenbrenner viewed children as at the centre of their personal world, a world that is influenced by many factors outside a child’s or the family’s direct control” (Lindon, 1998., p166)

Bronfenbrenner divided the person's environment into four concentric circles: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the Exosystem, and the macrosystem. "Thus, a child's development is the result of a changing mixture of ecological systems." (Doherty and Hughes, 2009., p43).

Such theoretical literature explains the observed incident and how it impacted the child's development, as it refers specifically to the microsystem of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system. Child 'A's day began at home with their immediate family and environment around them. However, what child 'A' experienced that morning was out of their direct control and negatively affected the child's emotional well-being. This effect on the child then rippled through the system to the mesosystem and impacted their social, emotional and academic development in the school setting. "Bronfenbrenner's theory can be seen as extremely relevant to the classroom, and the importance of home and school, working together in the child's best interests cannot be understated." (Aubrey and Riley, 2016., p121) "The transition a child makes from home to school or early years setting is a significant one and marks a change in the role of the child from a member of a family group into a participant in a more formal setting, which for the most part is populated by strangers" (Macblain, 2014). This highlights the importance of a positive transition from home to school since this can potentially impact other transitions throughout the day, and the child's engagement in their education. In relation to the critical incident, child 'A' did not experience a positive transition from home to school, causing a disruption to their routine and impacting their emotional well-being.

(Eraut, 1994) states "...as practitioners it is not enough to know about theories and to apply them without any thought because the implications have to be worked out in practice." Despite the richness of Bronfenbrenner's model and how it reflects the complexity of everyday life, it has been criticised that "...Bronfenbrenner failed to pay attention to the individual psychological needs of the child." (MacBlain, 2014) Furthermore, (Doherty and Hughes, 2009) suggest that "...Bronfenbrenner's theory takes little account of the different ecologies which the child is likely to encounter, particularly in an increasingly globalised society..."

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a developmental psychology theory devised by Abraham Maslow in 1943. "Maslow proposed a psychological theory that humans are motivated by a series of needs, starting with the most essential. To demonstrate this, he constructed a linear hierarchy of needs beginning with physiological needs and proceeding to those of safety, love, and self-esteem, ending with those of self-actualisation." (Stoyanov, 2017., p10). Within the hierarchy, each level of needs must be fully met in order for development to continue to the next level. "Maslow believed that physiological needs are at the base of the hierarchy and if these physiological needs are not met then children will not be able to move up the hierarchy to the next level" (Johnston et al., 2018, pp.36–37). "Maslow recognised that while our needs are diverse, it was important for the advancement of the field of psychology to identify, group, and rank them in terms of priority." (Stoyanov, 2017., p10).

The set of needs is as followed; physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualisation. According to Maslow (1954), an individual's fundamental needs are physiological such as breathing, food, water and sleep. Maslow's theory "...proposes that our actions are not automatic, unconscious responses to externally imposed forces such as demands or rules; rather, they are driven by "intrinsic goals" such as our aspirations towards self-development and by social values such as selflessness." (Stoyanov, 2017., p10). This implies that deprivation of the physiological factors within the hierarchy can negatively affect an individual's actions and behaviour in response to demands or rules.

In relation to the critical incident, Maslow's theory can provide insight into the relationship between an individual's needs and well-being. For example, child 'A' arrived late at school without eating breakfast and having only a little amount of sleep. Due to this, the child's physiological needs were not met, impacting their well-being and

causing feelings of unsettlement which resulted in challenging behaviour. Maslow (1954) believes that when an individual's physiological needs are not met, the individual cannot engage with and fulfil the four other needs within the hierarchy to reach self-actualisation.

Although there is a theoretical foundation of Maslow's theory, such as the understanding that research states deprivation or deficiency of physiological factors such as sleep, food, breathing and water each have a negative impact on an individual's social, emotional and cognitive development, there are gaps in the Hierarchy of Needs that must be considered. Furthermore, when discussing the physiological requirements of an individual, Maslow (1943) does not state to which degree the needs must be met. To explain, if an individual experiences an unusual loss of sleep and misses an occasional meal due to circumstances out of their control, does this mean that an aspect of their physiological needs is not met, and the individual cannot engage in meeting the other four stages of needs? Or does Maslow's theory only consider those who considerably lack these physiological factors?

An arguing perspective has been generated which states that "More recent research has suggested that the ranking needs change with age and differs between groups." (Tay and Diener, 2011). This implies that there are inaccuracies and limitations to Maslow's theory and that it is outdated. In addition to this, Alderfer (1972) adapted Maslow's approach to the workplace, condensing the needs into three stages; existence, relatedness and growth. "Alderfer's model suggests that needs may be activated simultaneously, as opposed to the strict, hierarchical sequence of Maslow." (Brooks, 2018., p107). Despite Alderfer's adaptation of the model and its approach to the workplace, there is still a gap in research in regard to the hierarchy of needs which can be related to the education sector.

To conclude this literature review, I believe that the theories explored and the evidence I have gathered, have provided insight into the social and physiological factors which impact a child's social, emotional and cognitive well-being and development, which also

relates to the critical incident. Through exploring Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, I have gained a deeper understanding of the literature and research which provide explanations for certain situations which will occur in schools and impact a developing child. I am now confident in my knowledge and understanding of the critical incident and will be able to carry this forward into my own teaching practice in the future to aid reflection and my role as a continuously developing teacher.

Reflection, Evaluation and Next Steps

Critically reflective practice is a crucial process of analysis involving teachers exploring research and making assumptions that frame how practitioners work. Winch et al. (2013) has argued that it is the capacity for critical reflection which distinguishes the best teachers from others. However, a contrasting opinion is that there is a lack of empirical research demonstrating the evidence base supporting reflective practice. (J. Hargreaves, 2004).

Theorist Brookfield (1994) suggests that an outstanding practitioner is a highly reflective one, meaning that we should view our professional practice using others' lenses to inform, support, guide and improve our practice. Brookfield's Four Lenses, suggests that as practitioners we need to reflect upon practice from multiple perspectives in order to move forward. Brookfield refers to these alternative perspectives as the 'four lenses', these are; our self lense, the child's lense, our colleagues' lense, and the literature lense. (See figure 2). When evaluating which model would best support the reflective process after observing the critical incident, I considered two contrasting reflection theories: Brookfield's Four Lenses and Gibbs' Reflective Cycle.

In contrast to this, a further reflective model produced was Gibbs' Reflective Cycle. (Gibbs, 1988) reflective model comprises six structured, distinctive stages: description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and an action plan. The reflective cycle

includes an emotional dimension by revisiting thoughts and feelings during an incident. Gibbs recommends that reflection should take place after the experience. Gibbs's (1988) pragmatic reflective cycle encourages a description of the situation, analysis of feelings, evaluation of the experience, making sense of the experience through analysis, arriving at conclusions where the other options are considered, and reflection upon experience for the learner to consider what they would do if the situation arose again. (See figure 3)

When comparing the different processes for reflection between Brookfield's Four lenses and Gibbs's six-stage cycle, it is clear that Brookfield's reflective theory "suggests that as practitioners we need to reflect using four different lenses and it is all four lenses of Brookfield's theory are thought to give us a different perspective of a situation, an activity or an event that will inform your practice and allow you to move forward". (Pendrey, 2022). Despite the Lenses being unstructured and non-systematic, this theory acknowledges the learner's and colleague's opinions and also refers to the theoretical literature. I will structure my reflective analysis with the guidance of Brookfield's Four Lenses.

The observed incident occurred with an individual child and impacted each of the perspectives which comprise Brookfield's Four Lenses. Through the 'self lens', I observed the teacher reflecting on the situation and empathising with the student. The teacher realised that the child needed time to regulate their emotions and settle into the class before expecting any academic outcomes. This is where the teacher then asks the child for their perspective on the situation, to understand their thoughts and feelings, from the student's lense. Through observation, it was evident that the teacher had reflected on the incident so far and the potential causes for it and an appropriate approach that could be adapted to meet the needs of child 'A'. By doing so, the teacher demonstrated care and empathy for child 'A'. "Seeing ourselves through students' eyes makes us more aware of the effects of our words and actions on students." (Brookfield, 207., p8).

The teacher furthermore engaged in conversation with the teaching assistant who was overseeing the cutting activity with child 'A'. The teaching assistant provided feedback on their observation of child 'A' and their disengagement prior to being taken away to regulate their emotions. This was beneficial to the teacher's reflection as it contributed to the informed decision to put child 'A's well-being at the forefront of the incident and how they would manage it, avoiding any further disruption to the child.

The final lense, is the literature lense. The literature lense relates to the theoretical knowledge which underpins decision-making to inform and/or amend future practice. I observed the teacher's theoretical considerations during and after the incident, it was clear that they adopted an approach best suited to the child's individual requirements at that time whilst ensuring the well-being of the other students. Additionally, I observed the teacher's consideration for the reasons why the child had a negative experience that morning and how it could be transformed to avoid any further impact on learning. This was also demonstrated through previous experience and knowledge which aided beneficial decision-making.

I now understand the role of critical reflection and how it develops a professional teacher's practice. I can also able to identify the most suitable reflective model to reassess certain situations and how to move forward from them. This has led me to understand how to implement this in my own developing teaching practice. I will explore elements of the different teaching approaches and strategies and ensure that students' well-being is at the forefront of all decision-making. My observation and reflection supported this as the teacher encouraged the child to take their learning into their own hands and devise a strategy that would benefit them most with the guidance of the teacher. This allowed the child to return to the activity with increased confidence and a positive disposition to work.

Conclusion

Within this assignment, I have critically analysed relevant research and child development theorists, exploring the relationship between an individual's social environment and how it can impact their social, emotional and cognitive well-being and development. By investigating Bronfenbrenner (1997) and Maslow (1943), I was able to understand the themes related to the critical incident, gather different viewpoints and explore recent developments in research. Maslow (1994) provided good insight into the psychological and physiological factors impacting child development, yet proved to have many limitations, such as a lack of empirical research and is very outdated. However, Bronfenbrenner's (1997) ecological systems theory is directly related to the critical incident and despite contrasting viewpoints, I believe that this theory is very relevant to the classroom as Bronfenbrenner states "...a child's ability to learn in the primary may depend no less on how he is taught than on the existence and nature of ties between the school and the home." (Bronfenbrenner, 1979., p51).

To conclude each of these points, I believe that the environment around an individual can directly impact development but also the approach that a teacher adopts to address a situation relating to this is extremely important. For example, a teacher must support social and emotional development and positive relationships within the classroom and ensure a safe space for learners to take care of their emotional well-being.

Furthermore, the research conducted in relation to reflection has aided my understanding and knowledge of the role of reflection and its importance in developing teachers' practice. This furthermore outlines (Gov Wales, 2018) professional standards; pedagogy. Firstly, the review of research contributed to pedagogy, specifically advancing learning by reflecting on learning and planning the next steps. Secondly, my approach has outlined the importance of pedagogy: four purposes for learners by emphasising the importance of healthy, confident individuals and that children's wellbeing is paramount. Finally, I am grateful that this assignment has allowed me to

reflect on professional practice and has provided me with knowledge and experience I will take forward into my own developing teaching practice.

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Appendices

Figure 1: Evidence of child 'A's completed work as a result of the time provided to settle into class and return to the cutting activity.

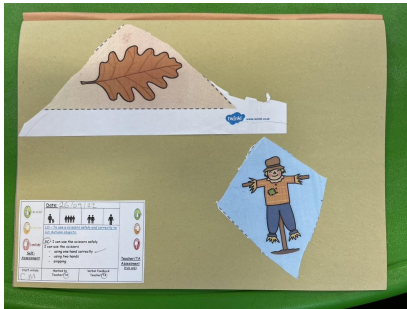
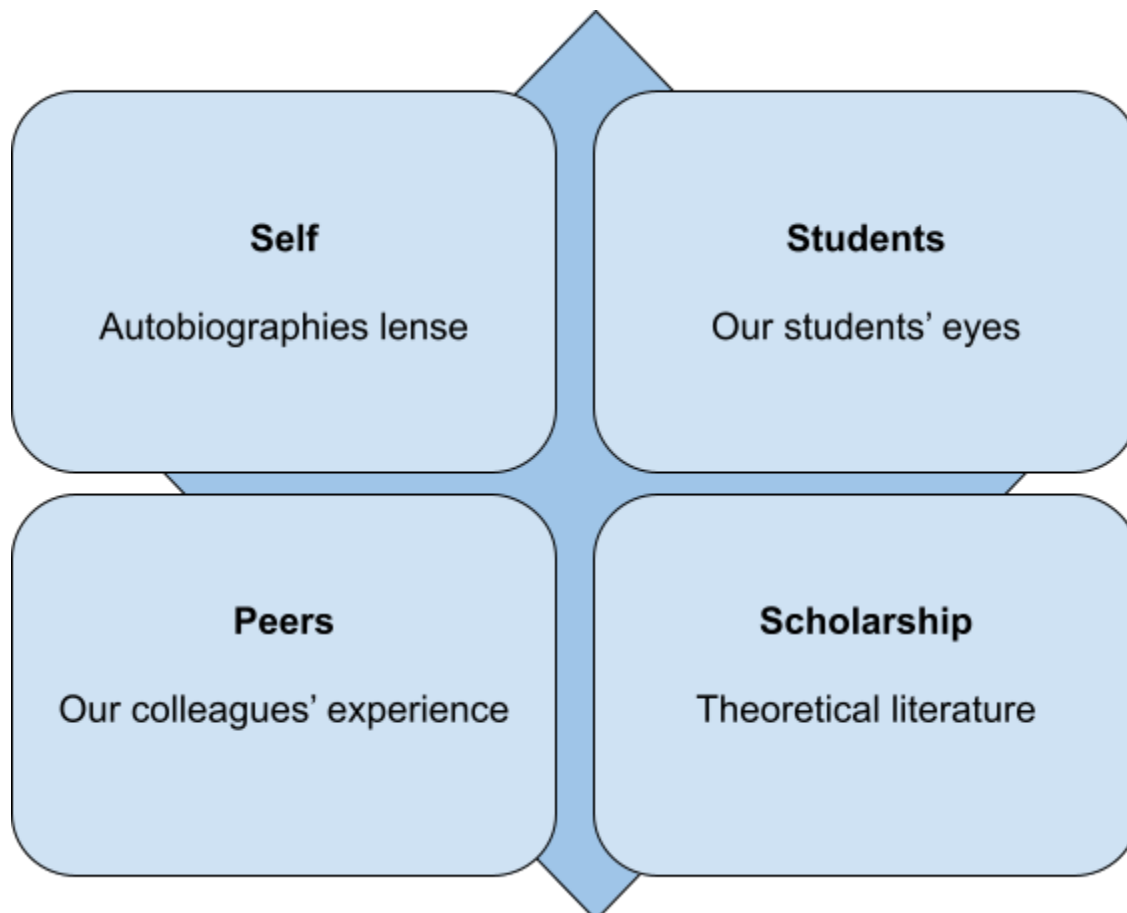
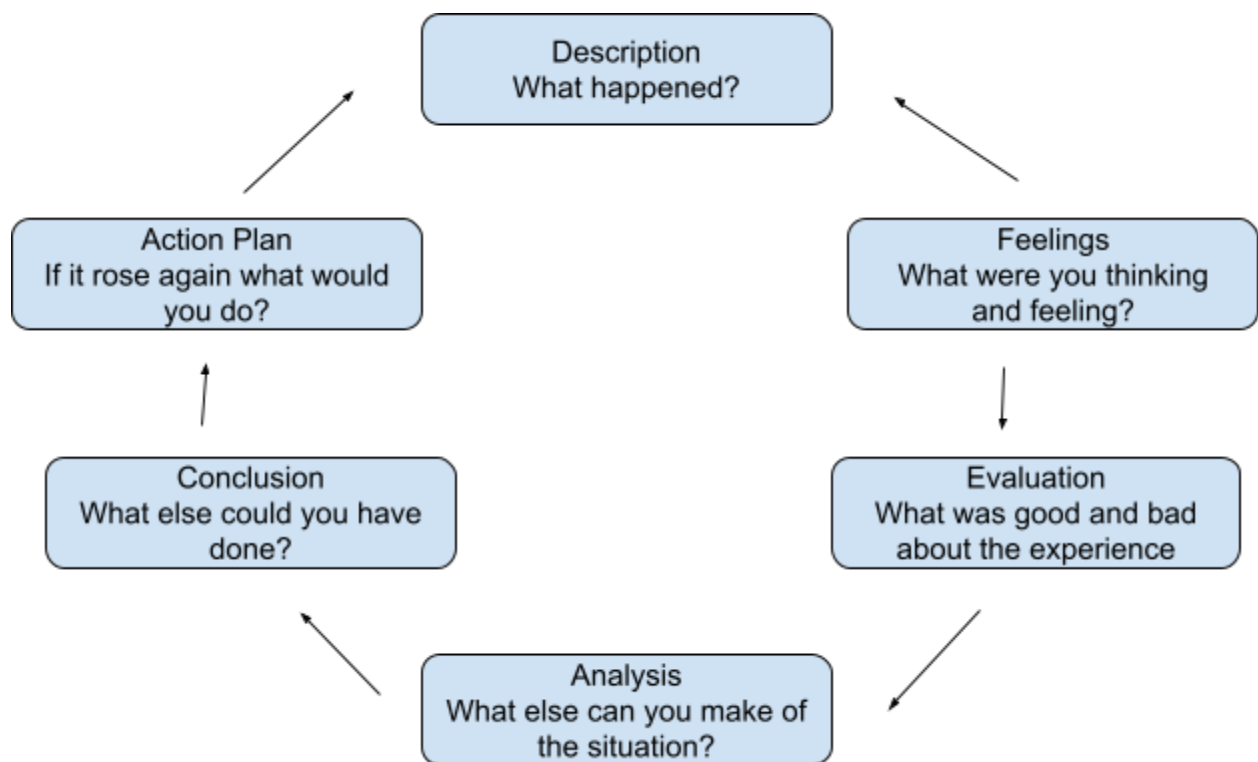


Figure 2: Brookfield's Four Lenses



Above is a diagram of *Brookfield's Four Lenses* model which I created using 'Google Docs' for visual aid, based on models illustrated within Pendrey, A. (2022). *The little book of reflective practice: a practical guide to the early years*. New York: Routledge, pp.72–100.

Figure 3: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle



Above is a diagram of *Gibbs' Reflective Cycle* which I created using 'Google Docs' for visual aid, based on models illustrated within Pendrey, A. (2022). *The little book of reflective practice: a practical guide to the early years*. New York: Routledge, pp.72–100.

Critical Incidents Observation Forms

Critical Incident Observation Form 1:

Date and time, year group: Nursery AM 26.09.22 09.00-11.30
Where and When? The critical incident took place at around 09:20 in the AM Nursery class after the register and morning routines had taken place. There were three activities and a 'Baseline' assessment taking place throughout the course of the morning, which would work in a rotation to ensure that by the end of the week, each group will have completed all of the activities.
What happened: a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work) At around 09:20, child A, arrived late at the Nursery, who is usually always on time to school. Upon arrival, child A took off their bag and coat and was called immediately to start a cutting activity with the rest of the group. The child was disengaged and wasn't given the time to process what was needed to do due to missing the lesson introduction and explanation from the teacher of the different activities taking place throughout the session. This caused the child to get upset and refuse to participate in the cutting activity. The teacher noticed this was out of character for the child and approached the child to see what had happened. It became clear that the child was tired, had not eaten breakfast, and was rushed to school due to running late. As a result of this, routines both at home and in school were disrupted, causing the child feelings of uncertainty and unsettlement. Such feelings were the factors contributing to the child's challenging and negative behaviour. The teacher made the decision to give the child time to settle into the class before returning to the cutting activity to do their work. The child went to play for around five-ten minutes and then was called to return to the activity. The child had a complete change in behaviour and attitude as a result of the time the teacher provided for the child to settle into the class. The child returned to the activity with a positive, enthusiastic attitude and approach, leading to achieving the learning objectives/outcomes.
Possible areas for exploration: • Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory • Humanistic Approach • Bowlby's Attachment Theory • Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Notes: The incident took place around thirty minutes into the school day, after the Nursery's morning routines had taken place. Child 'A' who arrived late, entered a busy environment as the rest of the children were transitioning from the carpet to their group activities. The child was already unsettled prior to entering the classroom, therefore the busy environment made this situation worse for the child.

Critical Incident Observation Form 2:

Date and time, year group: Nursery AM 27.09.22 09.00-11.30
Where and When? The critical incident occurred at 08.50, as the AM class entered the school for the morning session. Myself, the class teacher and an LSA were at the gate, greeting the children enthusiastically as they were walking up to their class. The parents/caregivers must leave their child at the gate, and the children then walk a short distance independently to the classroom. The rest of the LSAs wait in the classroom to welcome them and assist in taking their coats and bags off. The LSAs in the class guided the children to sit on the carpet until all of the class pupils arrived and the class teacher returned from the Nursery gate to the classroom.
What happened: a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work) The teacher, an LSA, and I were greeting the children at the gate. Many were walking up to the class excitedly and with a positive attitude. However, child 'X' was at the gate, crying and clinging to their parents, refusing to leave them and becoming distressed. The class teacher approached the child and started to work with the parents to encourage the child to school. Due to the child's upset and negative behaviour, the parents were becoming anxious and agitated. To prevent the child's behaviour from negatively impacting the other students entering the class, and to avoid any further upset and anxiety for child 'X', the teacher guided the parents and child 'X' to a less-crowded area just away from the school gates to provide a calming and less overwhelming environment. The teacher comforted the parent and their child and reassured them that despite the difficulty to get child 'X' into school, the child always settles in fine, and is always happy, engaged and involved. The teacher spoke to the child empathetically and with a neutral tone. The child eventually started to calm down, therefore the teacher explained calmly and clearly, the fun activities they had planned for the day ahead. The teacher also made a point of praising the other children who were modelling good behaviour by walking into the class with self-control, confidence and a positive attitude. When the child was calm and communicating effectively, the teacher asked the child if they were ready to walk into school with the rest of their class, to which child 'X' responded 'yes'. Child 'X' then walked alongside another pupil into the classroom with no distractions or negative behaviour.
Possible areas for exploration: • Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory • Humanistic Approach • Bowlby's Attachment Theory • Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Notes: The environment in which the situation occurred was extremely busy as it was during the drop-off time for the Nursery morning session. The class teacher, an LSA, and I were greeting the children enthusiastically at the gate and many children were leaving their parents/caregivers and walking up to their class positively and confidently. However, this is a situation that some pupils may react differently to. Due to the busy environment, a child could find it very overwhelming, resulting in unsettlement and a change in behaviour.

Critical Incident Observation Form 3:

Date and time, year group: Nursery PM 27.09.22 12.50-15.20
Where and When? The critical incident occurred during the afternoon of observation in the PM Nursery class, at around 12.50 just after the children had left their parents/caregivers at the gate and were entering the classroom independently.
What happened: a detailed description of the critical incident (the more detail the better to refer to in your later work) The pupils were entering the class after leaving their parents at the Nursery gate. Upon arrival in the class, most children were taking their bags and coats off independently and hanging them on the correct peg with a picture of the child's face on. The LSA's were there to support anyone who had difficulty in doing it themselves but still encouraged the children to have a go independently. The immediate transition from the door where the children took their coats off, to the carpet was smooth and calm as the teacher had already put nursery rhymes on the interactive whiteboard and there were orange lines on the carpet at the front of the class, so the children knew where to sit. This was extremely interesting to see, as the children did not follow any temptation to play in the classroom areas and tough spots as they knew that they must follow routine and rules to sit on the carpet until the class teacher or LSA returns from greeting children at the gate and comes in to start registration.
Possible areas for exploration: • Pavlov's Classical Conditioning • B.F. Skinner - Operant Conditioning
Notes: The environment in the classroom was calm and controlled. The teacher had put a strategy in place to reinforce the class routine and to ensure the children would behave in response to the stimuli. For example, hearing the nursery rhymes on the interactive whiteboard and seeing the orange lines on the floor. There were distractions around the class including the learning areas and tough spots, however, the children did not pay attention to these, and instead went straight to sit on the orange lines, on the carpet. The strategy in place was effective as it promoted a calm and settled environment so that the class was ready to start their day.