

Assignment ECAD6007-C

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

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1. Introduction

The Oxford dictionary states that a critical event is something “having the potential to become disastrous; at a point of crisis”. However, it offers another definition in that a critical event is something “having a decisive or crucial importance in the success, failure, or existence of something”.

Generally, a critical incident is “...an unplanned and unanticipated event that occurs during a lesson and that serves to trigger insights about some aspect of teaching and learning” (Richards and Farrell, 2010). It is an event that, upon reflection, can leave a significant imprint prompting deeper analysis and investigation.

Some events appear minor but after deeper analysis and questioning they become critical incidents. Indeed (Tripp, 2002) states that “...a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event.”

Such incidents could be a turning point in a situation where a teacher is obliged to do something significant to stop it developing further or to capitalise on it. Critical incidents are not always obvious at the time and may be events that only deemed critical upon further reflection and analysis. Incidents aren't inherently bad, they can (Helmi and Pius, 2018) “...be associated with positive feelings as well as along as they are highlighting further improvement points at different levels”. Analysing and reflecting on such incidents allow teachers to quiz their teaching techniques, help them to advance their skills and implement better practices in future lessons.

This assignment will investigate how critical incidents can be analysed through reflective practices and observational methods, the interpretation of which can help with long-term implications.

2. Observation

The primary school is located on the edge of the M4 corridor within the Rhondda Cynon Taff local authority. The village, according to an ONS (Office for National Statistics) has a population of around 3,500.

It is an English medium school that houses six classes: three in the foundation phase and three in key-stage 2 with some classes of a mixed-age ability. The latest inspection report compiled by Estyn rates it as good (Estyn, 2014).

The school currently has 147 pupils with a gender ratio of around 51% girls to 49% boys. Some classes are of a mixed-age ability. Approximately 26% of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, which is above that of the local authority average of 21% and the Welsh national average of 18%. Approximately 22% of the children have additional learning needs, slightly below the national average. Approximately 8% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and no pupils are looked after by the local authority. (MyLocalSchool, 2019).

The school is an eco-green flag school recognised in excellence in environmental action and learning as well as being rated “Highly Effective” by the National School Categorisation System (WAG, 2019). The school name is kept anonymous to respect everyone who is engaged within this research. (BERA)2018.

The primary school provides a well-balanced and stimulating curriculum inclusive to all children which provides the statutory requirement of National curriculum and foundation phase as well as extra curricula activities.

The observation will take place in the mixed-age class Reception/Year one.

3. Methodology

In order to effectively write about critical incidents, their impacts and subsequent analysis we must first gather case material data. For this assignment we will be focusing on an observed critical incident.

We will be using one of the four main classifications of observation methodologies. Observations are “...one way to collect primary data” (Kumar, 2014) and can be described as “...the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Observations allow the researcher to gather evidence in a natural, first-hand, setting rather than through second-hand data (Creswell, 2012). Observations can handle “formal, informal, planned and unplanned” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) interactions.

Selected Methodology

The method chosen for this assignment observation is “Observer as a Participant”. It can be further classified into a Participant or Non-Participant role. Both sub classifications can make the role as an observer known to the group being monitored but the participant may sit amongst the children whereas a non-participant may sit on the periphery of the classroom making observations. It could be the case that the observer moves between these two roles fluidly.

Issues with observational methods include, but are not limited to:

- Those being observed may not act the way that they would normally. The observed may behave or act in such a way that they hide their intentions or actions from the observer Kawulich (2005) also known as the Hawthorne effect.

- Unless careful it is easy to introduce bias into the observations.
- Two observers may see events differently from each other.
- You must be careful to record what you see rather than what you infer.

Observations carried out for this assignment will be that of a non-participant. This was chosen because I hope that being on the periphery of the classroom, I can get a “bigger picture” of what is happening. Whereas I feel that if I was observing as a full participant, I may miss out on interactions that are happening elsewhere as my focus would be more close-by. However, due to the age range of the class I’ll be observing I’m fully aware that I will be a curiosity to the children and at various points I can’t help to be a full participant. This occasional closer action may also offer me closer more nuanced observations that may otherwise go unmissed.

An observation lays the groundwork that forms a case study. A case study sets out to and can be defined as (Gustafsson, 2017) “...an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit” and (Yin, 2003) “...examine complex phenomena in the natural setting to increase understanding of them”. In the theme of this assignment, the case study is something that sets out to perform an in-depth analysis used to illustrate (Wholey et al, 1994) “...a complete understanding of a process, program, event or activity”.

The case study here will be to observe critical incidents within a classroom environment. Although case studies can be both qualitative and quantitative, they often tend to be qualitative and in relation to the classroom and the subject matter is the paradigm that will be used. The descriptive quality of case studies can provide an in-depth investigation that makes them easy to understand for those not associated with the subject matter.

However, a negative aspect of case study is that the sheer volume of collected data has the potential to overwhelm. It’s also difficult to cross-

check the findings as the collected data tends to be descriptive. Bias can also play its part such as fabricating events that never happened or removing events in order to support a hypothesis (Simundić, 2013).

4. Four Purposes

The new curriculum is based on four areas that focuses on mental health, confidence, and basic, life and work skills. These being:

- ambitious capable learners
- healthy confident individuals
- enterprising creative contributors
- ethical informed citizens

During the observation all children sat on the carpet in the reading area and listened to a story about a T-Rex. A short while into the story several children pointed out that a T-Rex was on one of the shelves in the classroom. The teacher acknowledged the children's connection of the book with the toy and praised the children and brought the toy down from the shelf and into the reading circle. The teacher then continued with the story using a variety of reading techniques to engage the children with the story.

During the story a child stood up from the carpet and walked away to the play kitchen area and proceeded to play with the toy food. She continued playing with the food immersing herself with play cookery. When several other children tried to follow her into the kitchen the teacher, through positive reinforcement, informed the children that it was reading time. One of the children brought some play toast into the reading area and asked the teacher where they should put the toast. The teacher acknowledged the child and said, "Thank you very much, but I've had my breakfast this morning so maybe we should put the toast back into the kitchen" and reminded them of the classroom rules and asked the child to re-join the other children in the circle.

At the end of the story the teacher asked several questions to see if the children understood the story and then proceed to connect the story with a real-life situation. The teacher asked if children ever felt sad as the T-rex did in the story.

The children were told that they could discuss their stories between themselves or share their feelings with the teacher. This gave a great opportunity for the teacher to connect with children and discuss their mental health and emotional wellbeing as well as practice oracy skills and learning new vocabulary.

This interaction employed the “healthy, confident individual” aspect of the four purposes. The teacher was able to read a story that had an underlying element to it that allowed the children to discuss the importance of feelings and how to discuss them. The teacher was positive in asking the children to return to the reading area but at no point let the children believe that they had done anything bad. The children found that they were able to add to the conversation, by pointing out that there was a T-Rex on the shelf and were rewarded when the toy was brought to the reading circle which would boost their confidence.

Through this activity the children were able to form positive relationships and have mutual respect with the teacher and their peers. Activities like this allow children to be able to become more confident talking to adults about their emotions and become more resilient. The well-being of the children plays a paramount role in the new curriculum and situations like this help to enhance it.

5. Literature Review

The areas identified within the observation encapsulate that of well-being, mental health, positive reinforcement and a humanistic approach. I will discuss these in greater detail.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is a type of operant conditioning (Standdon, 2003) that "...controls behaviour through consequences" and these rewards can be both positive and negative. Such behavioural systems aren't limited to the classroom. For example, one form of positive reinforcement may be to reward a dog with a treat when they come back to you in the park after calling their name. There are several forms of positive reinforcement:

- Natural reinforcement – studying hard for GCSEs pays dividends when you find that you received many A*s – this form of reinforcement doesn't need an external person or entity
- Social reinforcement – when being told you've done a great job by peers, teacher employers etc
- Physical / tangible reinforcements – when a child receives a reward or treat for a certain behaviour – although this can have negative consequences especially if a child is given a treat to keep them quiet if they are behaving badly in public – it can enforce the pattern of bad behaviour equals treats
- Token reinforcements – when perhaps employees may earn points during a year that can add up and be spent at the end of the year

The form of reinforcement used in the classroom during the observations was of a positive social reinforcement. A study (Hall, 1968) has shown that

children that were initially studying very little increased their studying by up to twice when receiving verbal praise for their efforts over those children that did not. The children that interrupted the story by pointing out that there was a T-Rex on the shelf were rewarded by the teacher retrieving the toy from the shelf and bringing it into the reading circle and being praised for their observations. The children weren't being rewarded for their interruption of the story, but they were being rewarded for their connection of the story with a toy on the shelf. The children would have felt happy for their observations being positively recognised and for being praised. The effect of this is that children would feel confident in the future to make such observations. When child a brought the play toast into the reading circle it was distracting for both the teacher and the other children. The interruption also had no bearing on the story. However, the teacher praised child a in such a way as to thank them for their kind offer but reinforced the need to sit back down with the rest of the children. Child a, in their mind, made a kind gesture to the teacher that was received positively. The teacher controlled the situation with kindness and praise but also achieved the goal of having child a sit back down with the group in a positive manner.

Humanistic Approach

The humanistic approach in the classroom infers that one should treat and teach the child as a 'whole', that all children are innately good 'at the 'core' and strong focus should be placed on the children's well-being and emotions. Innately good means that all people are born inherently good and any deviation from that is often due to social or psychological experiences.

The humanist approach goes back a long way but gained significant scholarly traction in the 1950's in America. Humanistic approaches in education derive from the work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Maslow (1943, 1954) is well known for the Hierarchy of Needs and theorizes that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Certainly, these can be applied to the classroom environment. The basic needs of water, food and shelter can be and should

be provided by the school. This is certainly why free school dinners are available to those children from poorer backgrounds. Hunger would surely diminish one's capacity for learning. Maslow also recognises the needs for protection, love & belonging and esteem. Again, the classroom should provide all of these – it should be a sanctuary where a child feels wanted, warm, nurtured and can feel that they can achieve. There are critics of Maslow's theory in that he only studied an elite group of people (Mittleman, 1991) and that it doesn't factor in the mindset of those that can skip lower levels due to their strength of character. It may be true that some children can achieve even though facing adversity but the lower levels of the hierarchy of needs are as important today as the day they were written. Where Maslow is thought of as the "father of the movement" Carl Rogers (1969, 1995) added to it by pointing out that all children has an intrinsic need for self-actualization and to learn. He suggests that although not inherently bad, the existing notion of a teacher and child relationship could be stifling progression. He suggests that the case of a teacher teaching and of a child listening and obeying is a passive relationship and that we should strive to move beyond this model. Rogers says that children should be given the freedom to learn. Here we could say that yes, let children have their own ideas brought to the table. Let them bring activities from outside of school to the classroom. This increases engagement far more than a regimented lesson would. He even goes as far as saying there should be no set curriculum and that teachers should encourage children to "seek new knowledge" and provide the tools and support necessary to facilitate this. I would say that this is one step too far and surmise that not all children necessarily know what they need to learn. I would say however that straddling the line between the two systems is extremely beneficial. It would increase engagement by allowing the children's ideas to be recognised and used. This will certainly keep the child motivated which Rogers suggests could easily be dampened after several years in school. He suggests removing the curriculum and to encourage choice and "inquiry learning". It's highly unlikely we could move to this model as children arriving at higher education from primary would have such disparate levels

of education. We could however allow encourage inquiry learning which could be implemented by listening to how the children interact with a lesson and if questions are raised, we could peruse the answers. The pursuit of the answers would go beyond the planned activities, but it would encourage free thought and give reward. Gage and Berliner (1991, 1998) certainly recognise this and had similar ideas with their 5 basic objectives of promoting self-independence, taking responsibility for what is being learned, developing curiosity, developing creativity and an interest in the arts. Giving these within the structure of the curriculum can only affect the children positively.

Well Being

It is becoming more recognised of the role that schools provide in the provisioning of mental health in the UK and around the world (DfE, 2018). Every day, children are facing complex issues brought on by the stresses and pressures of an increasingly fast paced world. The Association of School and College Leaders (2016) found that 90% of surveyed schools reported an increase in anxiety and stress over the last five years. Therefore, the school is increasingly striving to become a source of stability for every child and offer as much support as they can to promote well-being and monitor children's mental health. It seems that mental health and wellbeing in schools is a relatively new phenomena, but we can go back to the mid 1970's and see that writers such as (Spady and Mitchell, 1977) introduced the conceptualisation of the school operating as a social system to influence the development and wellbeing of individual students. It may be that it's thought of as a relatively new phenomena due to the increased awareness of its connection with social media and its effect on children. Whether or not social media is a large contributing factor is not necessarily known but what is known is that a 2016 report by the Office of National Statistics survey of children's mental health showed a marked increase in reported mental health issue over the previous report (Green, 2004). The fact remains that Facebook launched in 2004 and Twitter came into being in 2006 and Instagram in 2010 it's hard to believe that it's just a coincidence.

Whilst schools can play their part in helping children with mental health issues, partly due to the time spent there, 190 days a year (Long, 2019), they must also be aware that schools themselves can be contributors with school issues being one of the top five reasons for poor mental health (Young Minds, 2014). Schools are duty and statutory bound to provide support to children and full guidance can be found in the (DfE, 2020) document Keeping Children Safe in Education. The school's unique position is that they can implement a "whole school" approach (DfE, 2018) by the creation of culture, environment, policies attitudes and awareness. Mental health doesn't need to be taught as a separate subject and can be integrated into cross-curriculum lessons such as sex education. A culture can be set up which should clearly define expectations both of the school and of the pupil and can bring in families and the community. Such clearly defined culture will allow, for example, bullied children to know exactly where they can go for help rather than bottle things up.

Tackled early, such conditions will dramatically reduce the number children that grow into adults with embedded issues such as anxiety, depression, stealing etc. It's a well-known fact that mental health issues also affect academic progress (Agnafors, 2020) and this makes the role of a teacher not that of just an educator. This however can be a double-edged sword as it's been shown that teachers are more and more are becoming overwhelmed by these additional expectations and responsibilities (Guardian, 2016) with 93% of teachers stating that stress levels affect their ability to teach and 43% planning on leaving the profession in the next 5 years.

6. Reflection

By analysing our day to day activities as teaching practitioners through a system of critical self-reflection we can better assess our achievements and become better teachers.

“Reflective practice is ‘learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice’ (Finlay, 2008).”

If every practitioner accomplishes such a routine practice, they will help themselves as well as the students. Teachers will feel more confident and children will learn better. Reflective practice according to Stephen Brookfield (1998) suggests considering four aspects in our reflection. Brookfield breaks the reflective practice down into four areas he denotes as “lenses”: the autobiographical, the student’s eyes, the colleague’s experiences and the “theoretical”.

Autobiographical Lens

The autobiographical lens is where the teaching practitioner reflects on their own experiences and makes decisions on which areas need to be strengthened or modified. The observed incident led me to realise that allowing a child to disengage from listening to a story and letting them play has greater impact on their emotional well-being than forcing them to return and listen. In first instance I believe that all children should participate on the same activity and there should be no difference between one child and another but reflecting upon this incident and looking at the whole picture I realise that what the practitioner did was far more beneficial for the learner.

Learner Lens

The learner lens or “students’ eyes” allows for reflecting on the success of a teacher practitioner by gauging feedback from the students. For such a young age group I would need to look at areas such as body language,

perceived comprehension and morale. Time with the children gives opportunity to get to know one's students' feelings, emotions and the way they learn best. During the incident the teacher was able to quickly identify that the child who left the carpet did so very quietly, they seemed to be very contented in playing in the kitchen which I think helped the teacher to assess the situation and make a quick decision of what would work best. I wonder that if the child behaved differently the teacher would react the same way. Similarly, seeing that the children reacting positively for them noticing a toy that related to the story and having it brought into the reading circle is another way to generate learner feedback.

Peer Lens

The peer lens or colleague experiences can really help all practitioners. Getting to know one's colleagues and their experiences can help the teaching group. This would involve getting feedback on teaching plans, asking for advice, asking for feedback (try to take on board criticism good and bad to aid a positive outcome) and discussing each other's triumphs and mistakes. If you have learned a new technique, then pass it on to others through, maybe, learning circles. Due to the current climate of the covid pandemic I had very little time to spend in class and subsequently little time to discuss in detail with the teachers. However, I did get the opportunity to briefly discuss the observation with one of the teachers which helped me to understand the decision which was made and helped me to see it from a different perspective. Her opinion was that the child at such a young stage needs time for such breaks and it works much better if such breaks are allowed rather than disturbing the entire group from enjoying the activity. She explained that it is very important to assess every situation independently and decide quickly. Knowing your children's abilities will allow you to make such decisions.

Theoretical Lens

The theoretical lens suggests that practitioners should be aware of and make use of literature and theories on teaching. Keep up to date with current

practices and read journals. Applying this to my observation shows me that well-being and mental health is paramount and beneficial for every student. Children learn better in a positive environment and through positive reinforcement. The New Curriculum of Wales places emphasis on children's wellbeing and mental health and in fact it is imbedded in one of the four main purposes to become healthy confident individuals.

Having the opportunity to observe such incidents has helped me to see the learner from a different perspective and open my eyes to other approaches and techniques. It will help me on my professional journey to become a practitioner who will take in to consideration the learner, my own experience, colleagues' points of view as well as theories that underpin best practices to create the best outcome and opportunity for the learner.

7. Conclusion

This assignment focused on observing a Reception / Year 1 class in a nearby primary school to identify a situation which upon closer analysis could become a critical incident. The research method used was case study using non-participant as the main method of observation. This allowed me to focus on the classroom without being interrupted by learners and be able to critically analyse the situation.

It was interesting to see how teachers engaged and interacted with the learners and to work on planned activities. The activities I observed were that of reading a story on the carpet in a circle and of a basic maths lesson. The observation that raised the critical incident reported was that of reading a story. Here, the teachers set out clear objectives which were clearly understood by children, the teachers knew what they wanted children to achieve and they kept children engaged through positive reinforcement and asking opened ended questions to enhance learning. To bring the best outcome for children teachers collaborated throughout the lesson especially due to the mixed ages.

Based on reflection of my critical incident I was able to identify that positive reinforcement, wellbeing and humanistic approaches to learning has a beneficial outcome both on student and teacher. Every child has a right to learn and being surrounded in a happy positive environment where they can develop their full potential and flourish. To achieve such an environment, practitioners must continuously reflect on their teaching strategies and reflect on every lesson. In my reflection I used the critically reflective practice adopted by Stephen Brookfield which takes in account four different aspects to achieve the best environment for children to learn.

Children's well-being and mental health should be paramount for every school and classroom. This approach was heavily missed in the past and not enough emphasis but due to introduction of the New curriculum in Wales nurturing children and taking mental health and well-being into account will become a part in every school setting.

Appendices - Observation Reports

Date and time, year group:

30 September 2020 – 9.25am Reception / Year 1

Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information).

It is the start of the school day and the children are partaking in registration. The class is a combined Reception and Year 1 class that is large warm and inviting. It is split into several areas that are accessible and inviting to both age ranges. The room is L shaped allowing for the two age ranges to be taught separately so that the more advanced topics of year 1 wouldn't interfere with the activities of reception.

Classroom culture: (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The classroom is well appointed and has various zones in which activities can be performed. There is a messy play area, a play kitchen, carpet area and book area. A door leads to an outdoor play area. The current topics are displayed on the walls to focus, promote and reinforce learning. Most children knew the class rules and daily registration routine.

Objectives: (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?)

Directly after registration the children were asked to sit on the carpet at the front of the classroom and were given a welcome and subsequently informed of the day's routine and lesson activities

Direction: (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well)?

The class is spoken to as a whole and then separates into two to three areas based on their age and defined class year. A teacher assistant will take the younger children and reinforce the requirements. All sets of children are praised equally well.

Access and challenge: (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

A mix in class years could result in greater engagement by the reception class as they could feel more “grown up” with their older peers. There are several “stations” around the classroom such as tables with building blocks and other tabletop toys.

Assessment: (Can anything be observed about how student’s existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience?)

The children respond well to registration and have no issues with its structure.

Specifics / Critical Incidents: (Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching?)

Some children were saddened and upset that their parents could not bring them closer to the classroom and that they had to leave their parents at the school gate.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context.

Date/time. 9.25 am

Age/Stage of group. Reception year

People involved. 2 –3 children

Contextual information from field notes.

What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.

During registration several children were a little sad and distracted because their parents couldn’t walk them closer to the classroom due to restrictions imposed by covid. The children had to walk themselves from the school gate to the classroom. It interrupted registration for a brief period. The classroom

assistant was on hand to reassure the children and get registration back underway.

The teacher and assistant are both aware of the issues that covid can bring to the classroom and handled the situation well.

In terms of future practice, it is good to be aware of all environmental issues that can affect all children or individuals.

Date and time, year group:

30 September 2020 – 9.45am Reception / Year 1

Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information).

An indoor mathematical developmental lesson between mixed age ranges. The lesson was to include number skills using number facts and their relationships to each other. Numbers from 0 to 20 were compared and ordered.

Classroom culture: (What is the classroom ‘vibe.’? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

All children were sat on the carpet and were eager to learn. The children were focused engaged and happy. There was a positive attitude and vibe throughout the lesson.

Objectives: (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?)

The objectives were communicated clearly at the start of the lesson and it was clear that all children had good intentions as to what was expected from them. Questions were shown on the screen at the front of the classroom and numbered cards were supplied to the children on the carpet. The questions shown on the board were of an interactive nature that worked in unison with tiles taken from a bag held by the teacher.

Direction: (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?)

The children recited what they had learned in the previous lesson, counting up to 20. The teaching assistant sat amongst the group on the carpet to help engage the children as well as helping those that initially struggled. The assistant worked on the carpet with the children helping them organise their number cards.

Access and challenge: (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of

challenge?

All children were supplied materials in the form of numbered cards which were set up ready on the carpet. Children were asked at random to come to the front of the classroom to write a missing number in a sequence. The assistant was also working amongst the children doing the same activity on the carpet which prepared the children for the writing activity.

Assessment: (Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience)?

By asking children to write on the board it is easy to gauge individual development and the assistant sitting on the carpet was able to assess the children as a whole as it is possible that a child could perform well in a setting amongst peers but not so well individually.

Specifics / Critical Incidents: (Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

One child wrote a zero on the board when the number 1 was expected from them.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context.

Date/time. 9.45 am

Age/Stage of group. Reception / year 1

People involved. Year 1 child

Contextual information from field notes.

What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.

Child A was asked to come to the front of the class and write the number one on the board. Child A wrote the number zero and was informed by the teacher and other children that although it was indeed a number and that they were very close it wasn't quite correct. The teacher helped the child reflect on the previous lesson to help the child arrive at the correct answer however the child still had an issue. The teacher then directed child A to a set of number on the classroom wall and counted together again with the class. After this – the child correctly wrote the number one.

Date and time, year group:

30 September 2020 – 10.00am Reception / Year 1

Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information).

Second half of a maths lesson. Children were split into their year groups into two areas of the room. The older children worked through activities in their workbooks and the younger children played with table top toys based around number play. The older children were chosen to be observed as the L shape of the room prohibited observing both at the same time. The teacher worked amongst the year one pupils and engaged with them in the activities.

Classroom culture: (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The children had just had fun with numbers on the carpet as a unified reception / year one group and were and good spirits. They were eager to carry on the activities and showed no sign of tiredness.

Objectives: (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?)

Clear objectives were set out by the teacher and in the workbooks. The children had to take two numbers out of a bag and identify which number is smaller and which number is larger.

Direction: (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well)?

The teacher was very encouraging and asked many open questions that engaged the children.

Access and challenge: (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

If the children struggled with the activity the teach would use different

teaching techniques such as counting on finger and referring the children to the various number displays around the classroom.

Assessment: (Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience)?

After the initial activities the children were separated into their year groups and performed further activities. The older group was focused on ordering set of numbers into sequence and carrying out activities from their workbook. Two children were able to perform the tasks independently whereas four needed support from the teacher.

In the second half of the lesson two cards were taken out of a bag by the teacher and children were asked which was the bigger of the two numbers.

Specifics / Critical Incidents: (Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

One child used the numbers 1 and 0 to form the number 10 and placed it after the number 5 - only numbers 0 to 9 were in the bags.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context.

Date/time. 10.00 am

Age/Stage of group. Reception / year 1

People involved. Year 1 child

Contextual information from field notes.

What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.

Child B initially took out the numbers 1 and 0 from the bag and rather than place them in the order 0 and 1 decided to form the number 10 from them. Child B then took out another number, 5, from the bag and placed it in front of the other numbers. This wasn't obviously following the task exactly.

This showed a degree of initiative and independent thought from the child as they went beyond the task's parameters.

The teacher praised the child for their use of the numbers and said that although they hadn't followed the task totally it was very good thinking.

Date and time, year group:

30 September 2020 – 10.25am Reception / Year 1

Lesson details: (Context and focus -/AoLE/subject- is it near start of end of unit of study? Indoors/outdoors? Ability range? Any particularly relevant information).

The children were due to play outside as it was their first breaktime but due to the very poor weather it was decided that the children would be gathered on the carpet for story time.

Classroom culture: (What is the classroom 'vibe.'? What do attitudes, dispositions, behaviours towards learning seem like at this point in time?)

The children were in good spirits from the previous activities and were happy to have some reading time on the carpet.

Objectives: (What happens in the environment that communicates the purpose of the experiences? What can be observed regarding the way lesson activities relate to these purposes?)

The objective was to entertain and connect with the children as they couldn't go outside to play. After reading time the teacher often discusses the story and its impact with the children.

Direction: (What can be observed that helps learners understand what they are engaging in? What in the environment helps them understand how to achieve well?)

The story was about a t-rex and during the story some children noticed that there was a t-rex toy on the shelf. Realising this the teacher brought the t-rex into the group for the remainder of the story.

Access and challenge: (What can be observed in the environment that enables engagement of learners? What can be observed regarding levels of challenge?)

The story of the t-rex had sequences in the story that indicated that he may have been sad. After the story the teacher asked the children if they ever felt sad or lonely and gave them a choice to share their stories with the class, with a friend or with the toy t-rex.

Assessment: (Can anything be observed about how student's existing knowledge is used? Can anything be observed regarding the development of knowledge during or after the experience)?

The story and after-activity got the children to think about themselves and others' experiences.

Specifics / Critical Incidents: (Are there moments which cause you to consider aspects of practice when you come across them in future teaching)?

During the story a child, without asking, got up and went into the play kitchen area returning with the play toast and asked the teacher where they should place the play toast.

CRITICAL INCIDENT IDENTIFICATION RECORD

Details relevant to the research context.

Date/time. 10.25 am

Age/Stage of group. Reception / year 1

People involved. Year 1 child

Contextual information from field notes.

What happened? A detailed description of what you observed and what thoughts on pedagogy and practice occurred to you as a result, looking towards your research.

During the story a child, without asking, left the carpet and proceeded to move to the play kitchen. The child then returned asking the teacher where they should put the toast (pretend toast). The teacher responded by informing the child that the toast should be put in the kitchen. At this point all the other children stopped listening to the story and turned to gaze at the child with the toast. The teacher reminded the child of the classroom rules and addressed the child's behaviour. The child returned to the carpet and the story continued to the end.

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