

**OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES - case study' and 'critical incident'' bridging activity**

**Record 1**

*Date and time, year group:*

26th September 2022

14:30 - final lesson of the day for year group 7

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

*Subject - French - Languages, literacy and communication*

This was in the final lesson of the day, after a late lunch (13:15 - 14:15) for year seven pupils in a mixed ability class.

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

Pupil X was repeatedly slouching in his chair and resting his head on the table. Despite the teacher asking him not to, he would sit up straight for a few minutes then slowly return to slouching with his head resting on the table. He seemed very disengaged, disinterested and possibly tired or otherwise unable to focus and engage.

The teacher had asked the class to copy short phrases from the whiteboard into their work books and use dictionaries to translate key words. They were asked to work in pairs and work quickly as there would be a prize for the team who completed the task first. Pupil X was not following the instruction or engaging with his team. His head remained on the table. The teacher came over to him and offered to write the phrases in his workbook for him, she quickly took his workbook and copied the phrases down and returned it to him. On receiving his workbook back he sat up in his chair, focussed on the task and joined in with his peers in the group, asking them which words they had already found. He very much wanted to be involved in the work his group was doing but clearly copying the words into his book himself had been a barrier to his involvement. I walked around to look over the shoulders of the group and I saw that his handwriting development appeared to be delayed. I assume that he may have dyslexia or otherwise require additional support in the class in order to be able to engage.

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

How barriers to development experienced by pupils with additional needs can hinder their participation in the classroom and enjoyment of and engagement in the learning. How teachers can notice a pupil's response to those barriers and efficiently support to remove the barrier without drawing a lot of attention to the issue and therefore supporting the pupil to feel included and engaged.

I could explore methods of differentiating lessons to include and engage all pupils - what kind of resources can you have ready in advance, what kind of signs to be aware of and subtle and effective responses that will quickly engage a pupil and prevent them feeling overlooked, excluded and ultimately frustrated and disengaged from learning.

**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)

This was the final lesson of the day, after lunch and after a sports lesson and a full day of lessons where reading and writing were an essential part of the lesson. If pupil X had felt excluded at any point during previous lessons this could have been compounded by another difficult and unsatisfying lesson where they felt confused, behind and unsupported.

Even a fairly low level of support made a big difference to this pupil's attitude and posture and involvement in the lesson. I got the impression this pupil wants to be engaged and involved in what his peers are doing but may feel confused and left behind at times which could build into resentment and complete disengagement with learning if his needs are not met in every lesson, allowing him to feel engaged and part of the group activity of learning.

## **OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES**

### **Record 2**

*Date and time, year group:*

26th September 2022

12:30 - final lesson before lunch for year group 7

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

Sports lesson, health and wellbeing - gymnastics in the gym for girls only. The teacher had set out gymnastics equipment such as spring boards, trampettes and crash mats. The teacher was playing loud and high energy music as the pupils arrived - the pupils seemed to be excited and in high spirits as they arrived.

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

The pupils were asked to find a partner to work with. Some pupils were left without a partner and the teacher asked them to raise their hand so she could pair them to work together. The teacher asked pupil A and pupil B if they would be happy to work together and they agreed. There was giggling amongst some of the other pupils. The teacher was concerned that the giggling was directed at either of both pupil A and B. She asked the class to be quiet and asked the whole class to remember to be kind to each other. She told the class that she was sensitive and that everyone was sensitive in their own way and that this was a space where all pupils should be kind and supportive to each other. Rather than calling out specific pupils she spoke generally and referred more to the positive behaviour and positive outcomes rather than punishing or focussing on the negative behaviour. This allowed the high energy and enjoyable atmosphere to continue and also stopped what could have been an element of unkind behaviour before it escalated.

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

Understand what is bullying and act quickly

Anti-bullying strategies

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/aba-our-work/our-other-programmes/anti-bullying-wales>

Facilitating positive group work and modelling compassion and kindness.  
Rewarding kind behaviour (behaviourist theory)

**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)

The teacher did not focus on the negative behaviour because she acted very quickly before she was 100% sure what it was. She simply quickly asked the class to listen to her and gave clear and simple instructions on the kind of class behaviour and atmosphere she wanted to see and why it was important. This felt like an effective way of diffusing a potential situation quickly while offering an opportunity to remind the class how and why compassion and kindness are important in groups and society.

## OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

### Record 3

*Date and time, year group:*  
27th September 2022 14:30

**Where and When:** Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context  
Maths lesson year 7  
Final lesson of the day.

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

The lesson was, mode and range of a sequence of numbers. The class were asked to complete a task individually that was displayed on the whiteboard. After a set period of time the answer was displayed on the whiteboard and the pupils asked to mark their own work. Pupil X raised a hand to ask why the answer was 19 when they thought it should be 21. The teacher supported the whole class to work through the process to find the answer - which was 19. The teacher thanked pupil X for their courage in asking her to check the answer and awarded the pupil an achievement point. Based on the result the teacher assessed that the class would need to revise long subtraction skills in their next lesson.

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

Humanistic theory: Thanking a pupil for their courage in asking a question that they didn't understand. Encouraging an environment where pupils are not afraid to make mistakes or admit they are confused or do not understand. Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.  
How Children Fail by John Holt - "A teacher's job is to help them overcome their fears of failure and explore the problem for real learning."  
Basic human needs should be met for learning to be achieved - feeling safe is an essential requirement for learning.  
Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and James F. T. Bugental : Self-esteem is a key learning element in humanistic learning theory.

Connectivism: Learning is not simply an individualistic task, learning is a collective experience and group problem solving allows pupils to learn from each other as well as from the teacher.

The teacher also reflected on their own practice and assessed that a revision session would be beneficial to the class.

**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)

## OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

### Record 4

*Date and time, year group:*

26th September 2022

12:30 - final lesson before lunch for year group 7

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

Sports lesson, health and wellbeing - gymnastics in the gym for girls only. The teacher had set out gymnastics equipment such as spring boards, trampettes and crash mats. The teacher was playing loud and high energy music as the pupils arrived - the pupils seemed to be excited and in high spirits as they arrived.

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

The teacher asked the pupils to pair up during the lesson to work on a sequence of movements that flow into one another - building on a sequence that had started to design in the lesson the week earlier. The pupils were asked to incorporate a piece of the gymnastics equipment that they had been introduced to and able to practice on earlier in the lesson.

This lesson was well structured with clear progressions and clear outcomes and aims that the pupils were made aware of.

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

Behaviourist theory -

Set achievable tasks that gradually increase in difficulty making sure learners are successful regularly. This lesson was structured so that pupils were introduced to new equipment, had time to practise using it in small groups, then were set an achievable task where they built on the work they had achieved last week developing their choreography to include the new equipment. The teacher engaged and interacted throughout the lesson, asking regular questions for understanding and feeding back with praise to encourage engagement and enjoyment of the task.

Group work - the pupils were designing choreography together, they needed to negotiate, try things out, see

what worked and what did not, make errors and rectify them, provide constructive feedback to each other and reflect on their own performance. Because they were all working simultaneously in a busy room with music they appeared to feel unselfconscious and confident to try out ideas, make mistakes and encourage each other. They all appeared to be enjoying and engaged with the learning.

Scaffolding supports a pupil's development of a new skill or an understanding of information by breaking it down into manageable tasks linked to the pupil's prior understanding. The American psychologist Jerome Bruner highlighted the importance of adult intervention to support or 'scaffold' learning and enable a child to make progress. In order to scaffold effectively the practitioner needs to be aware of what the child already knows in order to build on it.

**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)

Directions were clear and explicit, the lesson was split into distinct sections with specific outcomes and clear targets. The pupils clearly felt confident and unselfconscious because the teacher was fully engaged and modelling enthusiasm and enjoyment of the activity.

## OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

### Record 5

*Date and time, year group:*  
27th September 2022  
14:30

**Where and When:** Context of the observation – subject/AOLE, general classroom context  
Differentiated task within a Maths lesson - year 7. Mixed ability class.

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

The teacher set a differentiated task for the class to solve a number of problems to find the mode of a sequence of numbers. The teacher had taught the skill and the task was to assess understanding amongst the class. Pupils could choose to solve a number of problems in either the 1 star column, 2 star column or 3 star column. This allowed pupils to set their own targets and be as ambitious as they chose to be. The teacher walked around the classroom observing and responding to questions.

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

Behaviourist theory - The student is the authority on how they learn and has the opportunity to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning.

In a mixed ability class a differentiated task allowed some pupils to aim for more ambitious targets while others worked to achievable goals.

The task allowed the teacher to gauge understanding amongst the class.

**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)

Some pupils were not very engaged during part of the lesson however the teacher used regular praise to reward positive behaviour and did strategically ignore some low level disruption in order to focus on the learning for the majority of the class.

**1. What did you do and why?**

*Describe your professional experience. You may wish to refer to your role or involvement, why you had engaged in this experience and the intended outcomes. You can also mention any particular professional standards you have chosen to focus on.*

I noted a number of critical incidents during my time observing teaching in practice in a Comprehensive High School. Over two days I carefully observed the way a number of teachers used a variety of learning theories and teaching methods to establish a positive learning environment and promote positive learning habits and behaviours to meet the four purposes of the Welsh Curriculum. My goal was to observe some of the learning theories I have been introduced to in lectures at University, used in practice in the classroom, in order to better understand how to successfully implement them with pupils in schools in order to facilitate successful learning and positive learning experiences for pupils. By continuing to observe and analyse a variety of teaching methods implementing learning theory I shall refine my understanding of the concepts, shape my developing teaching practice and advance my professional learning.

**2. What have you learned?**

*You might want to consider some of the following: why is this experience important or relevant? How does it relate to your overall learning, development and/or use of the standards? Did it meet the intended outcomes? Any lessons learned? What are the implications for colleagues and learners? How will you share what you've learned?*

While spending two days with a class of year 7 pupils who had only been at the High School for 3 to 4 weeks I observed a number of different teachers using Humanist based methodology to ensure that the pupils felt safe, secure and confident in the school and in their classroom. This felt particularly important for a group of pupils new to the culture of a High School which is often significantly different to the culture of a Primary School. Observing teachers attending to these needs throughout the lessons and throughout the day in various ways aided my appreciation of the relevance of Behaviourist theory within my own teaching practice and gave me many examples of how to embed the theory in real lessons. I observed examples of teachers not attending as successfully to those needs which also assisted in highlighting how important and relevant the theory is. I observed pupils engaging significantly more successfully in lessons where the teacher used a variety of methods to embed the theory into their lessons. I shall use the examples I have documented in my observations as I develop my own lesson plans, using the theory in general and also the examples specifically. I shall share my observations with my peers and hope to learn from their various experiences during bridging.