

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

The purpose of this study is to provide a critical evaluation of an incident that occurred within a classroom. A critical analysis of an incident within a classroom, carried out by a teacher, or student teacher, has the potential to inspire better practice and develop pedagogical skills. It is fundamental to teaching practice that one reflects on incidents within the classroom and analyses the incidents deeply to learn and develop new techniques and ideas to promote good aspects of the observation, and alter what needs to be changed (Krull, Oras, and Pikksaar, 2010; Fook, 2015). Evaluating critical incidents is a vital aspect of the teaching practice as reflective practice allows for necessary improvements to be made to ensure the education of children is progressing and adapting. Critical reflection is stressed by Brookfield (1998), through critically reflecting on our practice we are able to consider our practice through different perspectives, or using Brookfield's metaphor, lenses. Through doing so, one can take a step back and examine an incident thoroughly, discovering different aspects that haven't been considered before. A critical reflection will be carried out through recording observations within the classroom, and a critical incident will be identified (Appendix 3). The study will then go on to discuss important literature and theories surrounding the critical incident. This will help create a deeper understanding of the critical incident and to understand the incident within the wider context of learning and practice. The study will reflect on the incident, suggesting potential next steps that could be taken.

The observation took place in a primary school that takes children aged between 3-11 years. This school has an intake of two to three classes per year group, in 2016 the school had 598 pupils (Estyn, 2016) however, the number of pupils has since risen slightly. The school is a pioneer school which means it is dedicated to working with the Welsh Government to develop the Welsh curriculum and help roll out the new 2022 curriculum for Wales (Estyn, 2016). In 2016 approximately 33% of pupils were eligible for free school meals and 25% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs (Estyn, 2016). The school is a Gold Rights Respecting School, children are aware of their rights within the school and children's rights are displayed throughout the school. The classrooms observed during this study were Year 1 and 2 classrooms (Appendix 1-4). The critical incident discussed in this study was taken from a Year 2 classroom with 30 pupils in attendance (Appendix 3). In order to protect the privacy of the children, this study will be in line with the BERA guidelines (2018). This

means that all participants in the observation will remain confidential and anonymous in order to protect the privacy of those involved.

There are various different techniques to making a classroom observation. Examples of this include diagrammatic techniques such as sociograms or bar charts. Alternatively, one can use a checklist technique, a Positive, Minus, Interesting grid, time and event sample and so on. These techniques are all useful for recording observations for different purposes. Depending on what type of information one is looking for these different techniques can be utilised. For this study a written observation sheet is used to record case studies from within the classroom. The study will then chose an incident from the observation sheet and discuss it within the literature review. It is important to note that a critical incident is not a dramatic event within the classroom, it is made critical by the analysis of the incident (Tripp, 1993; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011; Joshi, 2018). The observation records qualitative data, referring to and engaging with the critical incident through a narrative account (Angrosino, 2012). The observation was recorded through an Observation Sheet and an ARC Sheet closely resembling Gibbs Reflective cycle (Appendix 1-8). The reflective cycle encourages the observer to describe the incident, discuss how they felt, evaluate and analyse the incident, coming to a plan of action at the end (Gibbs, 1988). Furthermore, it was important to take a non-participatory approach when observing the critical incident in order to have the least impact on classroom dynamics. It should also be noted that given the nature of being in a Year 1 and 2 classroom, a reactive observation was necessary. Reactive observation essentially involves being a non-participant observer, however, when necessary one will step in. Young children expect adults in their classroom to engage with them and often have questions and ask for help, one cannot simply ignore a child without having a negative impact (Angrosino, 2012). This also brings into question the Hawthorne effect. Through being present and observing the classroom, one could argue that this had a profound impact on both the children, and the teachers actions within the classroom (Kumar, 2014). This influence is incredibly difficult to avoid. The goal was to limit the impact that the observer had on the classroom and consequently on the results. Another drawback to this style of data collection is the potential for observer bias, looking for things to reinforce a preconceived theory, thus affecting what is being observed and recorded (Kumar, 2014). However, when considering the different observation techniques, a written style observation was the most appropriate technique for this study. This is best said by Kumar (2014), who argues that a case study is the best model for a thorough, holistic and in-depth exploration of the critical incident. This point is supported by Laura Day Ashley (2012) who suggests that case studies have the ability to answer 'why' and 'how' and therefore have the potential to evaluate and explain the findings.

Firstly it is important to set the incident in context. The incident took place in a maths lesson, after playtime. The lesson objective was to revisit subtraction and the children were to complete subtraction sums in their workbooks from a list of sums given to them on a handout. The critical incident involved two children who are very capable learners. These More Able and Talented (MAT) learners were taking part in a maths focus group supported by their teacher. The two learners found the subtraction sums simple and moved through the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels very quickly compared to other learners in the class. The two MAT learners told their teacher they had completed the work. As a result, the teacher created a new Platinum level on the spot for the MAT students to complete. These new sums were more suited to their ability and challenged the learners to progress.

The critical incident can be linked to Donaldson's Four Purposes of the curriculum in a number of ways. Firstly, the purpose of creating ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives, can be found in this incident very easily. The MAT learners in question wanted to succeed and progress in their learning. The learners worked quickly through their set task and were keen to move on to more challenging sums. They held high standards for themselves and sought a challenge, this is key to Donaldson's curriculum. It is evident that the learners are ambitious, they want to do well and to learn. Creating a positive engaging environment in the classroom that allows children to feel comfortable and prepared to learn and challenge themselves is vital for attaining this aspect of Donaldson's learning purpose. The attitude and engagement of these two MAT learners shows that they were enjoying solving the problems put in front of them (Donaldson, 2015).

Secondly, this incident can be linked to another one of the Four Purposes. The purpose of creating healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society. The learners had the confidence and were comfortable to ask the teacher for different, more challenging sums that were more suited to their ability. Their confidence in their ability allowed them to work independently from the rest of the class (Donaldson, 2015). This confidence in their own ability is valuable and very important to the children's development and self-image, this will benefit them greatly throughout their education and as adult in the working world.

This literature review will consider various key areas of the education of MAT children within the classroom. Firstly, one will explain what is meant by a MAT learner. Secondly, the study will discuss the use of mixed ability groups within the classroom. The study will then go on to discuss the application and value of differentiation within the classroom.

In the context of this study, a MAT learner is defined as a child who is achieving above the expected outcomes of their own age, this can be in one area of learning or more. The MAT

policy of the school states that the term MAT refers to around 20% of pupils who have the capacity to perform at the highest levels (Appendix 9; Welsh Government, 2013). This critical incident brings in to question the identification of MAT learners, how to manage their needs within a classroom, and the provisions required to help them reach their full potential. The importance of supporting all children, including MAT learners, reach their full potential is emphasised by Ofsted's former Chief Inspector, Sir Michael Wilshaw (2016). He highlighted a concern that MAT learners were not reaching their full potential. In order to support MAT learners, one must first identify the MAT learners within the classroom. This can be done in a variety of ways such as teacher assessment, ability profile tests, observation, and so on (Welsh Government, 2013; Appendix 9). The two MAT learners involved in the incident, found the work suitable for the rest of the class, too easy. This can cause a range of problems from losing interest and not being challenged, to poor behaviour within the classroom or feeling frustrated (Donnelly & Scott 2009; CCEA, 2006). Once identified, it is vital that the teacher helps the child reach their full potential and nurture their academic growth effectively.

There are two main options when grouping children within the classroom based on ability. One is to have same ability groups, the other is to have mixed-ability groups. It has been suggested that having mixed ability groups can encourage MAT learners to learn more deeply through explaining to, and teaching friends how to complete a task (Donnelly & Scott 2009). An alternative positive of using mixed ability groups can be linked to the work of Pink (2009). Pink suggests that it is important to master a new skill, not just move on to something harder. The MAT children were able to complete more challenging sums, however, it is more challenging for children to master new skills and be able to apply these skills independently. Mastery will help enrich their learning so the children have a deep understanding of what they have been taught. One method of promoting mastery, is to encourage children to teach the new skill, to ensure they fully understand it. This technique works well within a mixed ability group setting as MAT children can work with peers, explaining new concepts and helping other children who may find it difficult. This technique is often referred to as a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). Within the context of this critical incident, the two MAT learners were placed in a mixed ability group, but were not encouraged to support other learners within their focus group. The use of mixed ability groups within the classroom provided the perfect opportunity to utilise this technique.

On the other hand, it is also common practice to separate children into groups depending on their ability, as such, MAT students would be given their own personalised tasks to carryout. It has been questioned whether mixed-ability groups within a classroom challenge MAT learners enough (Ofsted, 2013). This suggests that grouping children by ability could be

more beneficial. More challenging, specifically designed, individualised, work can be set for these children to stimulate them further. This point is supported by the Council of Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). The CCEA (2006) suggests a beneficial approach may be to take MAT learners out of the classroom for more challenging work, or work at a faster pace. However, it is important to note that having out of lesson sessions for MAT students is not necessarily a realistic option throughout the day. Ricci (2013) suggests that ability groups are useful, however, these groups ought to be fluid. Fluidity would allow children to move between groups, depending on their ability throughout the year. Circumstances may cause ability to fluctuate. Fluidity between groups will avoid restricting children to one ability group over a long period of time, when they could have changed. A combination of these strategies may involve having mixed ability groups within the classroom, but ability groups when appropriate. Mixed ability and ability groups both have pros and cons, therefore a middle-ground approach can be taken. As suggested by the Welsh Government (2019), a combination of these strategies will help the MAT children be more well-rounded learners (Welsh Government, 2019).

Within a similar vein, the critical incident also brings attention to the role of differentiation within the classroom. Differentiation was a key tool used to help tailor work for the MAT children within this incident. A one size fits all approach to teaching does not allow for each child's unique, individual needs, and can limit a child's potential. According to the Welsh Government, MAT learners ought to be challenged and their achievements celebrated (Welsh Government, 2019). Differentiation of the curriculum involves providing different provisions for the specific needs of these MAT learners, and responding to each individual's needs to provide appropriate work for their level (Kulik & Kulik, 1997; Ricci, 2013). Providing these provisions is very important in challenging and encouraging the MAT learners to reach their full potential. Extension and enrichment of the work can take place, this means not only giving options of harder work, but also giving opportunity to apply what they have learned and to be creative with their new skills (CCEA, 2006; Ricci 2013). Enrichment would allow MAT children to not simply move on to harder work, but to explore the topic more deeply and with more breadth. When considering extension, it is important to consider the work of Vygotsky on the Zone of Proximal Development. Challenging MAT learners should not simply involve giving them harder work. The needs of each child should be considered and work should be set that challenges children just out of their current ability, the logical next step, to encourage further learning (Pritchard, 2009). However, it should not be so challenging that it is far beyond their capabilities. The child should be able to do the work, but with the support of the teacher. This relates to Bruner's theory of scaffolding (Bruner 1978). This theory suggests it is essential that the teacher should provide necessary support

to the child to enable their learning. The child should not be expected to complete this more challenging work on their own (Pritchard, 2009; Tomlinson, 2001).

An alternative aspect of differentiating tasks for MAT children is the need to provide a challenge that poses the risk of failure. It has been argued that it is important to create a healthy Growth Mindset within the classroom (Dweck, 2008; Didau, 2015; Duckworth *et al.* 2007). Ricci (2013) and Dweck (2006) both stress how MAT children can avoid being challenged and situations in which they may fail. MAT children may feel pressure to do well, and are not used to failing as they find the work they encounter to be rather easy. Within the critical incident, it was apparent that the two MAT children were used to being right, and expected to always be correct and ahead of the other children. As a result, when they face a challenge they struggle with, they may avoid it, or have a knock in self-esteem when they eventually fail. This is avoidable through creating a Growth Mindset within the classroom where children enjoy challenges, knowing that failing is a part of learning and it is not a bad thing. This concept is supported by the CCEA (2006), it is important not to demoralise children. Creating a healthy Growth Mindset is also very complimentary to Donaldson's (2015) Four Purposes. It can be linked to creating ambitious, capable learners. It could be argued that one cannot be a capable learner without having a Growth Mindset and the ability to welcome potential failure.

Within the context of this study, the importance of Assessment for Learning (AfL), and its role within differentiation is significant. AfL uses ongoing formative assessments to learn where the children are succeeding and where they require help. The teacher is then able to adapt their teaching to make changes whilst the learning is ongoing. The work of Wiliam and Black (1998) was influential in understanding the need and benefit of formative assessment within the classroom. The impact of their work was ground-breaking in creating a culture within schools of valuing formative assessment and understanding how important it is to helping children learn. The four key areas of AfL are; sharing criteria with learners, use and quality of feedback, quality of questions/quality of talk, and peer and self-assessment. A range of different techniques can be used to carry out these four elements of AfL. Within this critical incident it is clear that quality and use of feedback was crucial for supporting the MAT learners and ensured that the MAT children were given work that was more differentiated and modified for their ability (Tomlinson, 2001). In this critical incident, the teacher was using an AfL technique of 'live marking' the learners work within focus group. Through doing so, the teacher was able to see the MAT learners work during the lesson. As a result, the teacher was able to check the children's work and ensure that they had understood it properly. She was able to see that the work was not challenging enough for them, this led to her making the decision to give the two learners more challenging work. This is very

important and AfL is very effective here, as necessary changes were made within the lesson, when the teacher's input was most valuable to the learners. Here, it is possible to draw on the theories of Maria Montessori who believed work should be led at the child's pace (David L, 2016). Similarly, Piaget believed children were lone scientists, actively seeking to understand of the world around them (Pritchard, 2009). This can be seen to be true in this incident where the MAT learners wanted harder maths questions to challenge themselves. This can also link back to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Pritchard, 2009), as previously discussed. There is an overwhelming consensus that children should be taught at a pace that suits their individual needs, however, in a classroom with around 30 children, this can be very difficult to practice.

A concern of differentiating work for MAT children was highlighted by the classroom teacher in this incident. The teacher in question was aware of the impact of differentiating more advanced work for MAT children, and how this might impact other children within the classroom. The teacher shared a concern that the lower attaining children within the classroom may be disheartened by the ease at which the MAT learners complete the classwork (Pritchard, 2009). As a result, the MAT learners in this incident did not have a 'Platinum' level beyond the typical Bronze, Silver and Gold. The teacher would make up new work for them on the spot. This approach, is very considerate of the other learners, however, it brings in to question whether MAT learners are being challenged enough, or held back for the benefit of other learners. Furthermore, Taylor (2017) has outlined various drawbacks of differentiation, from using it as a way of scaffolding for less able children in mixed ability groups, to teachers not fully understanding how to implement it correctly in the classroom. Didau (2016) also raises a very important aspect of differentiation, time and resources unfortunately cannot always allow for true, individualised, differentiation.

Within the teaching Professional Standards, the Welsh Government stresses the importance of teachers reflecting on their own practice (Welsh Government, 2017). This is important as it encourages growth and improvement of one's own practice. Furthermore, through reflecting and evaluating observations, we are able to engage with pedagogical theory, exploring and deepening our own understanding. Through evaluating the critical incident, one is able to suggest various next steps. These next steps are intended to show how we can take the excellent practice observed, and attempt to suggest alternative ideas that may support further practice.

Within the literature review, the uses and benefits of differentiation were discussed. A next step that could be introduced is to create a more structured level for MAT children to work with (Appendix 7). Currently, the teacher uses an excellent, well established differentiation

method of Bronze, Silver and Gold levels within a classroom. To take this idea further, a new Platinum level could be created which could be more tailored to the individual needs of the MAT children. This could help advance their progression steps more quickly and keep the children more challenged and engaged in the lessons. Furthermore, it would allow the teacher to have a clearer direction to take the MAT children in, rather than making up more challenging work on the spot. This more planned approach would also allow for more well developed provisions to be set up for these children. Taking planning further, having a more long term, individualised plan for the progress you want to see in that MAT child's work within the classroom.

In line with this idea is to create more opportunities outside of the classroom for these children to take part in, if that is something the children would be interested in. These provisions outside of the classroom could be set up within the schools MAT framework, for instance, a club could be established for MAT children who share similar interests. The Welsh Government (2019) suggest the importance of enrichment activities that enable learners to explore concepts they have encountered. This can also be linked to Sticht's Functional Context theory (David L, 2015), giving children context to their learning and being able to apply it outside of the classroom can have a great impact on developing skills. Children's knowledge can be supported through the activity and context it is taught to them in (Aydede & Robbins, 2009; Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). In order to put this in to action, children could be asked about their interests. This would give greater insight into what they may like to learn more about. The school could then put provisions in place to support these interests. It is important to note that the school in question has a range of extra-curricular activities for children to take part in (Appendix 9). That being said, it can be difficult to implement this without the budget for it however, it is important that one knows options available to help enrich these children's learning.

A key aspect of the literature review was the use of Assessment for Learning. During the critical incident the teacher used live marking within a focus group. As a result, the teacher was able to adapt the children's task. A next step in relation to AfL could be to take more formal approach to AfL. One is able to assess the children's learning within the classroom to assess whether the child's progress in advancing as quickly as their ability allows. This can be linked to the Progression Steps in the new curriculum (Hwb, 2019). We need to ensure that the children are given the opportunity to be introduced to these next progression steps properly. This is preferable to briefly introducing it to them in an activity and in a sense letting them figure it out for themselves, as seen within this observation. A suggestion could be to allow for extra time within the classroom to explain more complex ideas to the MAT children.

For my professional development, I will try and implement as many of these techniques in my practice as possible to provide a rich and well-rounded education for MAT children in my classroom. I have learned a great deal from the teacher in this observation, such as utilising excellent AfL techniques including live marking and focus groups.

To conclude, this study has evaluated a critical incident observed in a classroom from a two day observation period. The study has contextualised this incident within the classroom and identified how it can be linked to Donaldson's Four Purposes. The study then went on to evaluate the critical incident through engaging with theorists in order to learn about the key areas of theory and pedagogy related to the incident observed. The study evaluated the use of mixed ability or ability grouping, the importance of differentiation within the classroom, and the necessity of utilising Assessment for Learning techniques. Following this evaluation the study proposed next teaching and learning steps that can be applied to teaching practice in order to further support the excellent practice observed within the school. These next steps include planning a more structured framework for MAT learners, expanding the provisions made available to them, and continuing excellent use of AfL strategies. This approach was taken as being a reflective practitioner is a vital part of the Professional Standards for Teaching, and acquiring these skills is necessary for continuing the practice into one's teaching career.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 25/09/2019
Lesson details: • Year 2 • Morning lesson • 30 children • Theme: Rumble in the Jungle
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?) Morning lesson – some children arrive late and take longer to settle on the carpet. Children sat on carpet listening to teacher explain the days activities. Children split in to 4 groups – 2 focus groups, 2 independent learning groups. These are on rotation 20:20:20. Those in focus groups are very focused on learning, having constant supervision. Some children in independent study groups are focused, others are struggling to keep themselves on task.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) Theme is 'Rumble in the Jungle'. Purpose of the focus groups: Continue research facts about sloths. Purpose of independent study groups: Seesaw app – complete true/false fact sheet. Second independent study group can choose 1 AoLE and complete pre prepared activity in that area.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) Majority of children are clear about what to do. IWB has lesson instructions telling the children what groups are doing what. Teacher also explained all activities at beginning. Use of MKO, if unsure, ask a friend. However, some children in the independent study groups are unsure of the task they need to complete. Some are unsure how to use the Seesaw app correctly.

Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) Students in focus group are given lots of support and easily engage with the lesson. Independent learners less engaged, but some are engaged. An EAL child given extra support and individualised work as he cannot engage with the other activities. Some children do not understand how to use the iPads and apps and are therefore not fully engaged.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching? Talk on carpet about lesson ahead and what is expected of children. Focus groups have live marking throughout their task. The teacher is continuously monitoring and helping the children. Success criteria given to learners . Independent learners save work they have done on the Seesaw app so teacher can see their work at a later point.
Specifics / Critical Incidents Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss? • Child signing other children's' reading records if they had read at home on the previous evening. Child is given responsibility. • Carebear passed around carpet. Children say how they feel this morning. Child says he feels sad. Child is comfortable within the classroom to say his feelings. Carebear activity is used to spot children who often feel sad and to keep an eye on them. This child says he is sad most days, he is closely monitored. • Child with EAL is unclear on what he should be doing, wandering around with iPad. Teacher spots him and gives him directions for a different activity, more suited to his needs and ability. • Disruptive child in independent learning group. Wandering around with iPad using it to 'like' other children's work on the Seesaw app. Didn't understand how to use the app or access the work he needed to do on the app. Because of this he spend the full 20 minute rotation being disruptive to other children.

Appendix 2

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 02/10/19
Lesson details: • Year 2 • Maths lesson in the afternoon • Harvest festival music practice • 30 children
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?)

Children sit on carpet engaging with teacher doing a mathematics activity using whiteboards to settle them down before lesson input begins.
2 children are not sat on the carpet with the others. These children have alternative routine to help manage their behaviour, instead they are colouring a picture to wind down after lunch before they can focus on a task.

Objectives

(Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?)

Clear purpose of lesson. Children are revisiting multiplication.

2 focus groups – teacher led, working on multiplication with resources.

1 independent study groups – children to access 'MyMaths' app and do various activities set up on that app.

Direction

(Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?)

Children know the focus of the lesson is multiplication and are very clear on what they are meant to be doing. Teacher went over activities with the children when they were on the carpet. Asked children for questions. Told them where they needed to go to access the work.

Teacher set up MKO so children know to ask for support of someone else if they are unsure.

When on the MyMaths app children accessed multiplication lessons.

Access and challenge

(Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?)

All children were given support to access the iPads.

Mixed ability groups, children can access different level ability work. This allows for all the children to have access to work that is not too easy for them, but also not too out of reach of their abilities.

Children who are unable to engage with MyMaths app are allowed to use 'Lexia' app to support their learning instead.

Assessment

How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching?

Lollipop sticks, asking random children to share one problem they solved on their whiteboards in carpet time. This allowed the teacher to see where some children may need extra support and where others are progressing very well.

Live marking in focused group sessions. Green for Growth etc.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?

- 2 boys at beginning of lesson are allowed to colour instead of take part on the carpet in order to manage their behaviour and give them the time they need to calm down after lunch time.
- Other children asking why they get to do something different. Problems surface with fairness of treating others differently etc.
- Child goes for intervention just after starting independent study on iPad. When he returns from intervention his group have moved on to focused study. Childs behaviour dramatically changes, he hides under a table and tells a friend "I wish you were dead". Teacher suggests he goes to his 'safe space' to calm down, this is a technique used with this child often. RAG traffic light sheet used throughout

the day to monitor his behaviour and act as encouragement... "get all green today and your mum will be so pleased!".

Appendix 3

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 25/09/2019
Lesson details: - Year 2 - Maths lesson after playtime 30 children
Classroom culture (Are the students focused on learning?) Maths lesson begins with children sitting on carpet and taking part in an IWB activity. Children to pick different level sums to answer and work out on their white board. Children are focused, general fussing occurring but overall they are focused on the task. Children put in to focus groups are very focused on learning, with supervision and support from teacher and LSA.
Objectives (Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?) Introduction to lesson on carpet. Children revisiting work on subtraction. Focus groups are practicing subtraction in their workbooks with support of number lines, dienes and 100 squares.
Direction (Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?) Children given example of how to subtract on whiteboard in front of class during carpet time. They can see how other children have figured out the subtraction. Children are re visiting work they have gone over. Teacher support, answering questions. Instructions on rotations and groups on whiteboard for children to see. Success criteria in workbooks.
Access and challenge (Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?) iPad work for independent study groups focused on subtraction. Focus group are supported by teacher and LSA which keeps them engaged in lesson. Rotation of groups also help maintain children's focus, don't have time to get bored on each rotation, also ensures all students have focus time with teacher. Bronze, Silver and Gold level questions to advance in difficulty. All children have a level to suit their ability.
Assessment How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching?

Whiteboard activity to see initial understanding.
Live marking during focus group.
Success criteria RAG rating by children after task.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?

- Boy using 100 square and dienes to self-assess his work. He has the resources he needs to figure out the sum with physical objects, and self-assess.
- Boy excited to have correct answer in carpet time. Teacher asks if he will show the class how he did it. Boy stands up at front of the class and explains his work to the other children.
- "Miss we're done" MAT students are easily able to complete Gold level work. Teacher makes a new 'Platinum' level up for them on the spot and the two girls work together doing the Platinum level questions. Teacher continuously giving them more sums as they are high ability and work through the questions quickly.

Appendix 4

OBSERVATION / FIELD NOTES

(Questions adapted from Fletcher Wood (2016))

Date: 02/10/2019

Lesson details:

- First lesson of the day
- 29 children
- Literacy lesson

Classroom culture

(Are the students focused on learning?)

Children settle on carpet for start of the lesson. Once settled, children are focused on learning except for general fussing on the carpet.

Split into 4 groups: Teacher focused, LSA focus, independent learners on iPads and independent learners doing 'Amser dysgu' work.

Objectives

(Is there a clear purpose to the lesson? How do the lesson activities promote that purpose?)

Clear purpose. Teacher explains to children on the carpet that they will be writing a non-chronological report about sloths.

Focus groups are set up so the children can work on their piece of writing and use their previous work as examples. Children given extra time to write as it is necessary for the children to do their best work in their 'hot task'.

Direction

(Are the students clear about what they are doing and how to do it well?)

Teacher explains class is working on their 'hot task' which involves putting together all of their 'cold task' work for a final draft on the current subject – sloths.

Success criteria written on whiteboard with children's input.

Each child given success criteria and Mr Marker to work with during 'Hot task'.

Access and challenge

(Are all students able to engage in the lesson? Are all students challenged?)

ESL child is unable to engage with the main activity of the lesson. Instead he is doing an alternative activity, learning how to write letters with the LSA.

Children are all able to engage as they are using previous work they have done and putting it together into a report on a sloth in their books.

Assessment

How does the teacher assess student understanding before, during and after the lesson? How is this used in their teaching?

Teacher has looked at previous work in books, given feedback and now children are putting it all into their 'hot task' piece of work.

Success criteria as a toolkit for the children so they understand what to do, also prior to starting the hot task, children gave teacher ideas for success criteria on the carpet.

Live marking in focus groups as children are doing their work.

RAG rating their success criteria after finishing their work to check their final thoughts on the activity.

Specifics / Critical Incidents

Are there particular telling moments and examples which it would be helpful to discuss?

- RAG Success criteria. Children look over their success criteria before, during and after the activity to remain on task and understand what is expected of them. Some confusion, one aspect of success criteria it to use subheadings, when asked, a girl claims a subheading she had done is actually her title. Some confusion over terminology.
- Boy crying on carpet as he was not chosen to be MKO helper. Teacher tells him if he performs well perhaps next time he will have the chance to be a helper. Boy remains crouched on carpet upset.
- Boy stands up from carpet looking for colouring pencils. Teacher gives him a choice, you can sit back down on the carpet with the class, or read with the LSA. Boy chooses to read instead of sitting back down. Although boy feels like he made a choice, the teacher made the decision for him and presented it like a choice.
- Girl very excited to show teacher her work. Girl had used success criteria and examples from carpet to come up with her own interesting sentence starter, "Interestingly,". This shows that the girl had used her success criteria for what it was intended and self-assessed her work, making changes to improve it.

Appendix 5

Dyddiad/Date: 25/09/2019

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/Critical incident (focus): Child does not know how to use the Seesaw app so he becomes disruptive to other learners.

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings	I felt disappointed and a bit frustrated that the child did not know how to access the resources he was expected to use.

<i>Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?</i> <i>“What are your feelings regarding the experience?”</i>	
Cofio a Deall/ <i>Remember and Understand</i> <i>“Allwch chi restru elfennau'r achos yng nghyd-destun y dysgu?”</i> <i>“Can you list the aspects of the incident in the context of learning?”</i>	The child is told that the independent learning group is to access the Seesaw app and complete the True/False fact sheet on the app that the teacher has uploaded there for them. The child spends 5 minutes getting an iPad, fiddling with it and then opens Seesaw app. The child then goes on to use the app like a social media app and ‘likes’ all of his friends work on the app. The child is unsure of what he is expected to do, because he is in the independent learners group, there is no adult present to help guide him on what to do or to try and keep him on task. Because of this the child wasted the full 20 minutes in that rotation and didn't gain much from the activity.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ <i>Evaluate and analyse</i> <i>“Beth y gellid ei gadw yr un fath i sicrhau addysgu a dysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?”</i> <i>“What could be kept the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?”</i>	The use of the Seesaw app worked well for some of the children in the independent learners group and the benefits of such a task are clear to see. However, the child in question did not have the necessary understanding and explanation for how to use the app. A positive aspect of the independent learning time is that it gives children for freedom and less supervision so they need to think for themselves and problem solve. However, for this child, this challenge may be too difficult for him. Furthermore, the use of independent learning time allows the teacher and LSA to have focus groups that ensure that all of the children are getting time and attention from an adult in the room. Because these sessions are on rotation, this ensure all children are focused and supported within the lesson at some point. Therefore, this independent learning time is a positive experience overall for the children, although it does have its drawbacks. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, work was too hard for child, so the child was unable to engage.
Casgliadau a chymau gweithredu/ <i>Conclusions and actions</i> <i>“Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r mater a nodwyd?”</i> <i>“Beth y gellid ei wneud nesaf?”</i> <i>“What are your possible solutions to the issue identified?”</i> <i>“What could be done next?”</i>	A solution to this issue could be to ensure that all children have an understanding of how to use the app Seesaw, and what is expected of them in the independent learning time. This could be done by dedicating an entire lesson to digital competency, and explaining to the children how to use the app in question. The independent learning in this case, requires the children to complete a set task. It could be argued that children should not be expected to do this in independent learning environments, and the children should be free to engage with the task in their own personal way. This can be linked to John Holt's theory that children should be able to learn what they want, when they want, which is a Humanistic approach to learning. Going forward, the children could have more of a say in what they do during independent learning time, with this choice the children's engagement could increase.
Y profiad newydd / <i>Transformed experience</i>	

Appendix 6

Dyddiad/Date: 02/10/19

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/Critical incident (focus): Child has a dramatic outburst due to being taken out for intervention and as a result missing his time on the iPad.

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad? <i>“What are your feelings regarding the experience?”</i>	I felt concerned for the child’s wellbeing and uncomfortable with my role as an observer in this situation.
Cofio a Deall/ Remember and Understand “Allwch chi restru elfennau’r achos yng nghyd-destun y dysgu?” <i>“Can you list the aspects of the incident in the context of learning?”</i>	The child in question was taking part in the independent learning session where he was on the iPad. An LSA took the child out for an intervention session. When the child returned the rotation time of 20 minutes was over and his group had moved on to a focus group task, thus leaving him with no time on the iPad. The child then hid under cushions on a chair outside of the classroom in the independent study area, and told a friend “I wish you were dead”. The teacher came out of the classroom to deal with the situation and told the child to go to their “safe space”, which is an area within the classroom where this child has been told to go to calm down after a poor behaviour episode.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ Evaluate and analyse “Beth y gellid ei gadw yr un fath i sicrhau addysgu a dysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?” <i>“What could be kept the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?”</i>	The teacher has established a trusting relationship with this child and understands his individual needs. Because of this, the teacher was able to deal with the situation quickly, having had a behaviour management set in place previously for this individual child. The relationship between the child and the teacher was very important for this child’s behaviour management and I believe having this relationship and this plan in place to manage their behaviour was effective and beneficial to the child. The child in question has been identified as a child who requires extra support for their behaviour, and this type of outburst is a regular occurrence. Having spoken to the teacher I understand that the child’s reaction to missing their time on the iPad is a reoccurring occurrence that is anticipated by the staff. The child felt like they were being punished. Ferre Leavers – emotional well-being is at the heart of involvement.
Casgliadau a chymau gweithredu/ Conclusions and actions “Beth yw eich atebion posibl i’r mater a nodwyd?” “Beth y gellid ei wneud nesaf?”	The child in question was anticipating one thing, and suddenly was taken away to do something else and felt like they were missing out on their iPad time. After talking to the teacher I understand that this is often a trigger for the child in question. To avoid this teachers should avoid triggering the child in this way and tell the child that they will be going for intervention before. Alternatively, teaching the child about their trigger so they understand how they are feeling and what to do when they feel that way could help prevent such extreme behaviour changes. The child felt that he had been made to do something he didn’t want to do and missed out on something he did want to do. This can be applied to Glasser 1965 Reality Therapy. Give the child

<i>“What are your possible solutions to the issue identified?”</i> <i>“What could be done next?”</i>	choices and encourage to make better choices, taking away any choice in the matter made the child feel powerless and disappointed.
Y profiad newydd / Transformed experience	

Appendix 7

Dyddiad/Date: 25/09/2019

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/Critical incident (focus): MAT learners easily complete hardest level of work set for class.

Profiad/ Experience	
Teimladau/ Feelings <i>Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?</i> <i>“What are your feelings regarding the experience?”</i>	I was impressed by the level the learners were working at and pleased to see the teacher was available to give them more challenging work. However, I was also concerned that had the teacher not been available, they would not have been challenged during the lesson.
Cofio a Deall/ Remember and Understand <i>“Allwch chi restru elfennau'r achos yng nghyd-destun y dysgu?”</i> <i>“Can you list the aspects of the incident in the context of learning?”</i>	The MAT learners were working in their focus group and given the same sets of subtraction questions as the rest of their mixed ability group. These sums came in 3 different ability levels, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The MAT learners completed the Gold level easily and quickly and said to their teacher “miss we’re done”. When the teacher had finished explaining something to another learner in the focus group, she gave the two learners some more challenging sums to try, the Platinum level. The MAT learners then worked together and started on the harder subtraction sums. When they finished their sums they would ask the teacher for more as they went.
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ Evaluate and analyse <i>“Beth y gellid ei gadw yr un fath i sicrhau addysgu a dysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?”</i>	The relationship between the teacher and the children was very good, the classroom culture ensured that the children felt comfortable enough to ask for more work and to say it was too easy for them. Furthermore, the use of a focus group working alongside the teacher ensured that each child within that focus group was given individual attention and help from the teacher. This allowed the children to receive feedback and for the work to be modified to the children's ability. It could be argued that this shows learner led learning, the children dictated the pace at which they were working and the teacher was able to adapt to those children's needs. In the case of these MAT learners we can see aspects of Piaget's theory that children are lone

<i>“What could be kept the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?”</i>	scientists who are actively seeking out to understand the world, these learners wanted to learn more and to challenge themselves. Similarly, this can be linked to John Holts ideas about children deciding what they want to learn and at what pace. Although the children were in a focus group and given work to do, they were able to decide that they wanted to learn more, and set the pace for themselves and the teacher adapted to them.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ <i>Conclusions and actions</i> <i>“Beth yw eich atebion posibl i’r mater a nodwyd?”</i> <i>“Beth y gellid ei wneud nesaf?”</i> <i>“What are your possible solutions to the issue identified?”</i> <i>“What could be done next?”</i>	The issue within this incident is that the MAT learners were not suitably challenged for their ability. As a result, they finished very quickly and had to wait for the teacher to finish helping other learners, before asking for more challenging work. This meant that the learners were sitting waiting to learn, when they were eager to be challenged. A solution to this issue could be have individualized work prepared for the MAT learners within the class planning, such as a new ‘Platinum’ level. They were not being challenged and their ability had not been measured in a way that could be used to really challenge these learners to reach their full potential, instead they were given work that was made up on the spot. A solution to this could be to assess these children’s abilities more formally, and come up with a detailed plan to challenge them throughout the year. By having a longer term plan for these children, there would be a goal for them to attain, rather than simply guessing what they could achieve. Alternatively, enrichments activities within and outside of the classroom could be used to support MAT learners learning. Clubs and enrichment activities in independent learning sessions could be put in place. Use AfL techniques such as live marking etc.
Y profiad newydd / <i>Transformed experience</i>	

Appendix 8

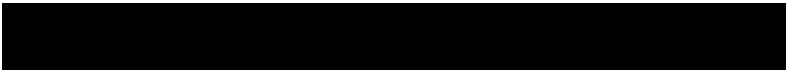
Dyddiad/Date: 02/10/2019

Digwyddiad critigol (Ffocws)/*Critical incident (focus)*: Girl excited to show teacher her work because she used the success criteria to improve her work and wrote “Interestingly,”.

Profiad/ <i>Experience</i>	
Teimladau/ <i>Feelings</i> <i>Beth yw eich teimladau ynghylch y profiad?</i> <i>“What are your feelings regarding the experience?”</i>	I felt proud of the girl and happy to see a child excited about learning and improving their work. However, I doubted whether she had really learned about interesting sentence starters, or simply copied from the success criteria in front of her.
Cofio a Deall/ <i>Remember and Understand</i> <i>“Allwch chi restru elfennau’r achos yng</i>	Use of AfL techniques, success criteria used during ‘hot task’. The use of a success criteria during a hot task (bringing various cold tasks together in a summative piece of work), is very useful for children to know what is expected of them in order to do well. However, in this example a problem arises, did the child really learn interesting sentence starters, or did

<i>nghyd-destun y dysgu?”</i> <i>“Can you list the aspects of the incident in the context of learning?”</i>	she simply copy it from the success criteria without understanding its purpose?
Gwerthuso a dadansoddi/ <i>Evaluate and analyse</i> <i>“Beth y gellid ei gadw yr un fath i sicrhau addysgu a dysgu effeithiol yn y dyfodol?”</i> <i>“What could be kept the same to ensure effective teaching and learning in the future?”</i>	The Assessment for Learning technique of using a success criteria worked very well in this situation. The girl was able to reflect on her own work by self-assessing, and then using the success criteria, knew where to make improvements to her work. The changes were made using a cold task and hot task. This technique allowed the girl to do her research and learn new skills in the cold tasks she had previously done. Then she was able to use the skills and information from the cold tasks, to create a hot task piece of work to demonstrate what she has learned. The use of a cold and hot task demonstrates both Assessment For Learning and Assessment of Learning, the cold being AfL and the hot AoL.
Casgliadau a chamau gweithredu/ <i>Conclusions and actions</i> <i>“Beth yw eich atebion posibl i'r mater a nodwyd?”</i> <i>“Beth y gellid ei wneud nesaf?”</i> <i>“What are your possible solutions to the issue identified?”</i> <i>“What could be done next?”</i>	It could be argued that the girl was relying too heavily on the success criteria, as a result her improved work is not an example of her having learned something new in the long term. The scaffolding provided by this success criteria may have in fact prevented the child learning how to use interesting sentence starts herself, and had this scaffolding been taken away, the child may not have known how or when to do it. A possible solution to this could be to introduce the success criteria at the beginning of the lesson, and taken it away until the end of the lesson so the child had to think about it herself. As this was a ‘hot task’, the child should have previously had this scaffolding to help her understanding in previous ‘cold tasks’. The hot task works as an assessment of learning, her use of new techniques should have been measured here without the scaffolding to really see if what she had learned had sunk in.
Y profiad newydd / <i>Transformed experience</i>	

Appendix 9



Policy for More Able and Talented

Updated May 2018

Striving for Success for All!

Rationale

At [REDACTED] Primary School, we aim to provide a curriculum that is appropriate to the needs and abilities of all our children. We recognise that each child is unique, displaying a range of intelligences and abilities. Staff at PDCS have high expectations of all pupils. We plan and match work to individual pupil abilities. Skill-slips and Learning Ladders help to develop pupils' skills for learning. Staff give high-quality feedback to pupils to nurture their reflective and evaluative skills. We endeavour to create stimulating and challenging learning experiences that promote our pupils' independence, problem-solving, decision making, thinking and collaboration within the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs). We strive for all our children to become 'Visible Learners' that embrace challenge and are highly engaged independent learners. We plan our teaching and learning through listening to the voice of the pupil, this way we provide more able and talented pupils with a high degree of autonomy. We respect the right of all children in our school, irrespective of differences in ability, to access a number of areas of learning, and to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfilment and eventual development into active and responsible adults.

The aims of our school include valuing the success of all our children and make reference to using a variety of methods of teaching and learning to provide equal opportunities for all. They also identify the commitment to giving all our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards.

This policy guides the way in which this happens for our More Able and Talented pupils at [REDACTED] Primary School.

Aims and objectives:

- To provide more able and talented pupils with a high degree of autonomy to ensure they receive a suitably broad and balanced curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills progressively;
- High expectations of pupils' achievement and use of a range of creative strategies to challenge and extend pupils learning;
- To provide additional enrichment activities to enhance teaching and learning;
- To identify specific skills and talents;
- To widen opportunities and expectations by extending teaching and learning skills;

- To make use of the wider community and partnerships/'subject experts' within areas of learning to enhance learning opportunities;
- To promote positive parental engagement opportunities;
- To create an inclusive culture of high aspirations and achievement for all.

Whole school definitions:

- In Wales, the term 'more able and talented' refers to about 20% of pupils who require enriched and extended opportunities to develop their abilities or talents in one or more areas of learning (academic, creative, sporting, social, leadership);
- Most able (or exceptionally able) refers to approximately the top 20% of pupils with the capacity to achieve or perform at the very highest levels.

Identification and tracking of more able and talented children

Identification of MAT learners includes the use of;

- Results of statutory tasks and tests
- Results of whole school assessment procedures
- Tracking data on INCERTs and SIMS
- Checklists
- Teacher identification - Pupils are assessed regularly to ensure that they are making appropriate progress. MAT children are identified when they reach high levels of attainment across the curriculum, or in particular skills.
- Discussion with colleagues
- Self/Peer Identification
- Links with parents - The children's progress is discussed with parents during parent meetings and 'Goal Setting' evenings.
- Beginning to use NACE
- Teacher assessments
- Whole school MAT register
- National reading and numeracy test outcomes

At [REDACTED] Primary School we make sure the identification process is rigorous, transparent and fair. Where attainment is not high but there are indications of potential high ability, the school strives to identify that potential and nurture it. The school provides an integrated holistic approach to our More Able and Talented vocational and academic learners who have exceptional abilities in artistic, creative, sporting, leadership or entrepreneurial activities.

The school's approach will be to identify MAT learners by focussing on their potential, encouraging learners to 'Think more. Learn more. Be more.'. The names of learners identified as MAT are recorded on a list so that their progress can be specifically tracked. Pupils remain on the list unless they cease to fit the criteria and they will then stay on a shadow list.

Learning and Teaching Provision

"Flexible use of groupings and tasks that enable more able and talented pupils to deepen their knowledge and consolidate and extend their skills at an appropriate level." (Estyn, 2018 p.6) - Are we currently capping children through setting? As we are not giving them access to all tasks within a year group. What teaching and learning pedagogies can we implement to tackle this?

Teachers in PDCS provide MAT pupils with high- quality opportunities to assess their own work and peers.

Peer assisted learning

Flipped Learning

Use of Year Group/Wing topics provide pupils with a balance of breadth - Pupil Voice

Transfer and Transition

- Transition within the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 and between classes relies on effective communication systems. Teaching and support staff have transition meetings in the summer term to pass on relevant information on MAT pupils.
- Transition from Foundation Phase has a well-developed Transition Plan involving parent meetings and visits for children to their new classes and teacher.
- Transition from Key Stage 2 to [REDACTED] School currently consists of one full day for Year 6 pupils to visit and experience a range of lessons in the Comprehensive School. Year 6 teachers meet with the Head of Year 7 to discuss each child individually. A parents welcome evening. Currently all pupils will transfer to Year 7 with a pupil profile and this gives information on the needs of MAT learners including tracking of assessments and achievements. PDCS has signed up to the new transition project called 'Survivor' due to start in 2019, encompass Year 3 to Year 7.

Additional enrichment provision

As a pioneer lead school we strive to use the wider community and partnerships/'subject experts' within the different Areas of Learning to enhance learning opportunities. Estyn (2018, p.4) states effective schools promote ***"access to additional provision and targeted support that is relevant to the needs of more able and talented pupils..."***.

Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs)	In school	Partnerships/'Subject Experts'
Expressive arts & Enterprise		Torch Theatre - Shakerspare Artists - Andrew Bailey Up Beat Music Lauren Owens - Mojo Marketing (marketing a product) [REDACTED] Music Department Area Orchestra
Health and well-being		Mikey Newman - PARKOUR/Freerunning tutuion Reaching Wider - Trinity (Michele Hitches Nutrition) Swansea City Football
Humanities		[REDACTED] National Park Rangers
Languages, literacy and communication		2 Steves Michael Harvey Phil Okwedy - Story Telling Animation - Sarah King
Mathematics and numeracy		Business in a box - Business plans and finance - Christina Morgan
Science and technology		Darwin Science Big Bang - [REDACTED] College [REDACTED] STEM - P [REDACTED] College ACE day UWTSD (aspirations) Ryan Peters

Leadership?????		
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