

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.

There are two types of critical incident; either it is “a significant turning point or change” or, more likely, it is more a “commonplace event” that becomes “critical through analysis” as explained by Tripp (1993, p.24-25). In this instance the observer has chosen an example of the latter and will provide a critical evaluation of the causes, effects and overall behaviour of the observed child and the impact that it has on the child’s learning. Methods and techniques that could be used to improve the outcome for the child when similar situations occur will be explored. Thus, providing effective reflective practice to aid the child’s learning (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2019).

Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle develops the work of Kolb and his Learning Cycle and encourages teachers to evaluate, analyse and reflect on their experience or observation. “Arguably one of the most famous models of reflection” (The University of Edinburgh, 2019), Gibbs’ Cycle leads one through six stages and these will be used as the framework for this essay. The stages are split into two groups; the first three are about what happened – Description, Feelings and Evaluation – and the second three – Analysis, Conclusion and Action Plan – allow the teacher to learn from the experience which leads to improved practice.

The observations took place in two schools located in South West Wales in the same county and local authority but within different socio-economic areas. One school was a small rural school of 220 pupils in eight classes with 4% of pupils eligible for free school meals (My Local School, 2018). In contrast, the school in which the critical incident took place is a large, 622 pupil, urban primary school. The school takes children between the ages of 3 and 11 years of age and on average there are three classes in each school year. There is a Learning Resource Centre (LRC) for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and 30.1% of children are eligible for free school meals (My Local School, 2018). The last Estyn (2017) Inspection took place in 2016 and they found the school to be “good” with the chance of improvement as “excellent”. Specifically of interest to the observer was that Estyn (2017) found that the outcomes of well-being, provision of care and support and guidance to be “excellent”. The report said, “The school promotes pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.” (Estyn, 2017, p.10) The observation took place in one of the two

Year 6 classes during an afternoon lesson that was split into Activity Rotations. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the school, children and teachers will not be used throughout this essay. The observer read all the required school policies before undertaking the observation and the class was aware that they were being observed (BERA, 2018).

Observation in a classroom setting is most commonly used as a way of assessing and developing teachers. It is used as a form of review and intended to provide focus for progression – reflected practice (O’Leary, 2012). Hopkins (2014) refers to different types of observation. The observer used an open and unstructured form of observation, writing down everything that was seen and then this was transferred into an ARC model (Appendix 1). The observer is aware of the Hawthorne Effect – a change in behaviour as a result of being observed (Cherry, 2018) – and that the children may have acted differently if they had not been observed.

Observation is common in the subject school, so the children are accustomed to being observed. It is therefore thought that the Hawthorne Effect will be minimal in this instance. To limit the Hawthorne Effect further it would have been beneficial to be unseen by the children, i.e. a Complete Observer (Gold, 1958). However, this approach of observation, for example using hidden cameras is ethically unsound and is widely regarded as deceptive. An alternative could have been to inform the children and then video record the lesson. A video log of the incident, enabling multiple viewings would have reduced the risk of the observer missing key elements and thereby interpreting events incorrectly.

The observer has no formal training in observation techniques and has very little experience in observation. But the observer is aware of the possibility of subjective judgements and making assumptions when observing in a classroom setting and the effects that they may have on the evaluation. For this reason, the observer took a non-participating approach to ensure that involvement did not affect the incident. To improve the observation further it would have been beneficial for two non-participant observers to focus on the same incident. This would have provided two accounts of the situation, making it a more complete and accurate observation.

The observer was aware of the school demographic before undertaking the observation and has made every effort not to make any assumptions based on this. The personal circumstances and the school’s experience of the child are not known to the observer and only the basic information was sought to put the situation into context. This allowed for the observer to keep an open mind (Wragg, 1994).

A child walks into the VIP area late and joins a table of children who are doing a Paper Fortune Teller Challenge. When the child walks into the room, nobody acknowledges the child. The child finds an empty space and sits down, fiddles with the scissors and paper that are on the table and randomly cuts the paper. The child is quiet and undistruptive but does not participate in the challenge and appeared to be daydreaming or thinking about something else.

Another child at the table asks the subject child for help, which is given but then the child reverts to fiddling with the paper and scissors. The TA goes over to encourage the child to get their book, which the child does. Together they select a challenge and the child then engaged with the task.

Figure 1. The observed incident.

The observed incident took place during a Year 6 afternoon lesson split into Learning Group Rotations. There were 8 children in the Very Independent Person (VIP) area in total and there was one Teaching Assistant (TA) in the room with them as well as two non-participant observers. After the incident occurred, the observer enquired as to why the child was late for the lesson. The class teacher informed the observer that the child had spent a bit of time with the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).

The well-being of the 'subject child' must have been a cause for concern for the class teacher as a meeting with the ELSA had been arranged for the child. Donaldson (2015) has identified "The Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales" (Welsh Government, 2015) set out in Figure 2.

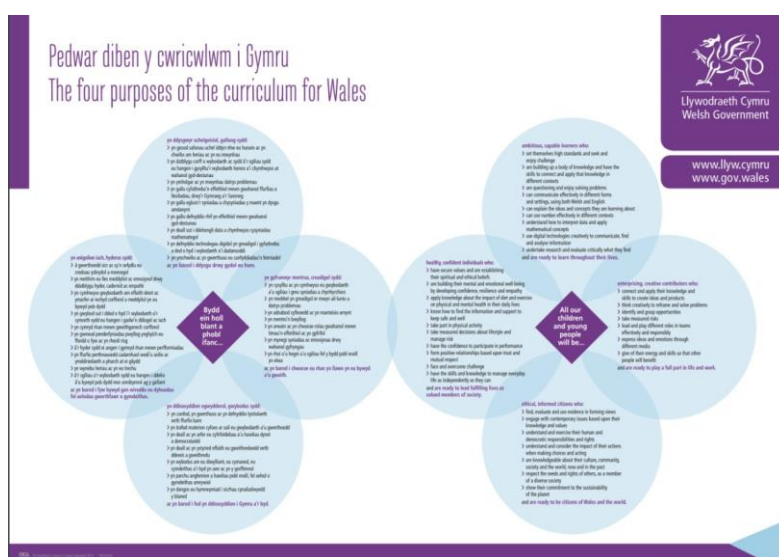


Figure 2. The four purposes of the new curriculum as suggested by Donaldson (2015) (Welsh Government, 2015)

For the subject child the focus seems to fall on the fourth purpose “healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society” (Donaldson, 2015, p.30). In particular; the provision of an ELSA means that the children within the school know exactly who to go to for support and that needing this kind of support does not set the child apart from its peers. This support allows the child to learn resilience and empathy which, in turn, enables them to build up their mental and emotional well-being. The ELSA helps the child gain the skills and knowledge to manage everyday situations with confidence; it is hoped that they learn to respect and trust the ELSA. Donaldson (2015) highlights the need for children to form strong positive relationships. The observed child had clearly received some positive assistance from the ELSA as the child was willing to help its peer and was, with prompting, able to engage with the VIP challenge.

In the VIP area the child takes ownership and responsibility for their own learning and the intention is clearly to encourage children to be self-reliant and embrace the attitude of “ambitious, capable learners” – another of the four purposes (Donaldson, 2015, p.29). When working in the VIP area, the child has the choice of activity and the level of challenge. This is set out in a traffic light system, the most straightforward is red and most challenging is green. Giving the children this option allows them to learn at the level that they see is suitable for them, therefore, subconsciously selecting their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). For this freedom of choice to be successful there needs to be an ethos, as set out by Donaldson (2015) of enjoying challenges and problem solving and aiming for high standards. The teacher creates the challenges, and they can, therefore, be designed specifically to make use of knowledge recently acquired in class. Accessing previously acquired knowledge in a different situation is a skill that Donaldson (2015) sees as vitally important. The teacher also often designs VIP tasks to involve elements of research and critical evaluation – further skills Donaldson (2015) sees as an important part of a child’s development.

The observer chose this incident to critically analyse as the theory behind children’s behaviour and attentiveness in lessons is of great interest. The observer wondered how the observed scene would have been different if the child had not spent time with the ELSA before the lesson and how the ELSA’s input affects the child in both the short and long term. The observer will also look at the research behind independent learning as the setting for this incident was the VIP challenge area. This literary review therefore focusses on the research into providing the right environment for learning and a child centred learning approach. The literature review doesn’t look into the requirement for success criteria, however the observer is aware that this could have been another area of research.

The ELSA's key role in the school is to aid children in learning how to identify and control their emotions as well as those of their acquaintances. The ELSA Network (2019) acknowledges that some children will need more help and guidance with learning to manage their emotions than other children. It is also accepted that difficulties outside school are more likely to lead to the requirement for support within school. This support facilitates three things; firstly, it provides the child with a safe and trusted adult to talk to; secondly, it provides the child with the framework to develop their emotional understanding and thirdly, by managing the emotions, it allows the child to enjoy and focus on their learning (ELSA Network, 2019).

The provision of an ELSA suggests a constructivist, child centred approach is employed in the subject school. One of the most influential educational theorists with constructivist views on children's learning was Piaget. Piaget (1936) had a theory of cognitive development where he believed that children think differently to adults. This was contrary to the previous belief that children's brains were simply a smaller version of an adults. Piaget (1954) found that children's brains develop through four stages as they get older. The observed child is at the age to be in Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage. Malik and Marwaha (2019) describe this stage as the one in which children start to be able to comprehend logic. It is in this stage that children begin to understand the theory of mind at that their view of a situation may not be shared by others.

Vygotsky has a slightly alternative view to Piaget. Vygotsky (1978) stated that children learn through their interactions, therefore, creating the idea of social constructivism. Vygotsky's research showed the benefit of social interactions on a child's development, exposing the relevance of language and interaction on learning. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) determines the difference between what a child knows and what that child can know with help from an adult or peer.

Like Vygotsky, Bruner also believes in the role of adults in a child's learning. Bruner (1978) describes this through using the provision of scaffolding. Scaffolding is created where an adult provides an interactive framework that enables the child's learning to progress. Mcleod (2019) says that by providing four steps of scaffolding it allows children to attain more from their learning. Adults can simplify the task, motivate and encourage the child, highlight important elements and provide 'model' answers. Where an adult provides these steps, a child is more likely to achieve the learning objective (Mcleod, 2019).

Looking at this incident specifically; the teaching staff in the school had made a decision that spending the first part of the lesson with the ELSA was more important than being present in

that lesson. It is, therefore, presumed that the teaching staff had decided that the 15 minutes spent with the ELSA would result in a happier and more productive child for the rest of the day. Certainly, that 15 minute meeting with the ELSA, seemed to the observer, far more beneficial to the child, than the child being present from the start of lesson but distracted throughout.

The TA gave the child time to settle into the classroom, only engaging with the child once the child had started to participate in the lesson i.e. helping the other child with the challenge. The brief settling down period gave the subject child the time to process the message received from the ELSA and allowed time to adjust to the environment before having to engage in a task.

It seemed to the observer that the teaching staff working with an ELSA gave the subject child additional confidence in the support system provided by the school. Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015) is emphatic in its recommendation that children must have access to information and support they require for emotional and physical well-being and in this instance the declared ideal seemed to be working in practice. In Chapter 5 of Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015, p. 63-72) talks about the 12 pedagogical principles. One of these principles is that "Good teaching and learning supports social and emotional development and positive relationships" (Donaldson, 2015, p. 69). This pedagogical statement is completely supported by the provision of an ELSA and teaching staff who are proactive in the effective use of their ELSA.

As mentioned earlier, a VIP challenge area provides the environment for independent working where children are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility of their learning. Gershon (2014), agrees with Donaldson (2015) that the development of independent learners is a key requirement of a school. Children need to learn how to think independently to prepare them for later life and the world outside school.

Gershon (2014) goes on to say that for this independent learning to be effective a committed mindset from the teachers and acceptance by the children is crucial. Dweck (2012) refers to a Growth Mindset – the key here is the perceptive view of failure. With a fixed mindset, challenge is avoided and getting things wrong is seen as failure, therefore a child with a fixed mindset does not see the point in trying as they believe their intelligence is fixed. However, where a Growth Mindset exists Dweck (2012) says challenge is embraced and making mistakes and receiving feedback is positive as the child feels able to learn from the experience. The provision of VIP challenges within the subject school, shows that the school is very supportive of Dweck's (2012) theory and actively encourages students to this way of thinking.

From the outset, the teacher needs to encourage this positive attitude to mistakes and reward children for their effort and persistence. The teacher is the lynch pin as they are largely responsible for creating the children's learning environment (Lang-Raad, 2018). The provision of the VIP challenges shows that the teachers are supportive of a student-centred classroom as the choice provided by the challenges allows the child to learn on their own terms (Morsadi, 2018).

Peer feedback is further evidence of a Growth Mindset. The subject child was selected to help by a peer, despite the presence of a TA and two adult observers. Working independently and collaboratively with peers is a key to a child centred learning environment, it demonstrates that the children can take control of their learning. Sackstein (2017) believes that by empowering children to provide peer feedback and to graciously and productively receive this feedback rather than to see it as failure creates children who are more engaged and self-aware. By removing the fear of failure, risk taking and exploration can be more freely enjoyed. Gershon (2014) encourages teachers to use open ended questions for students as it removes the likelihood of the children getting the wrong answer and instead opens up the question to the child's interpretation. Gershon also encourages teachers when faced by direct questions from children to turn the question back on the child. This process allows the child to explore the question whilst also receiving the teacher's input – scaffolding (Bruner, 1978).

Rogers and Freiberg (1994) believe providing the right environment for learning is dependent on whether a child feels safe and supported within that environment. Rogers and Freiberg (1994) looked at the work of Aspy, Roebuck and Black (1972) whose work concluded that children learnt more and were better behaved when they were in a learning environment with teachers that offered support and understanding. They also found that in child-centred classrooms there was less disruptive and destructive behaviour. This suggests that there is a high correlation between a teacher's interpersonal skills and the behaviour of the children within their class.

As set out in the Professional standards for teaching and leadership (Welsh Government, 2017) reflection is an important part of pedagogical development. When reflecting on the observed incident several questions become apparent. 1) Would an alternative teaching approach be more appropriate? 2) Is the lack of guidance in the VIP area too much for the child? 3) Should the ELSA have continued her support of the child into the lesson?

The school in question takes a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. The ARC process (Appendix 1) highlights that an alternative teaching style could be beneficial. The behaviourist learning theory has plenty of research that supports its efficiency

(Pavlov, 1897/1902) (Watson, 1913) (Thorndike, 1898) (Thorndike, 1905) (Skinner, 1938). Through their research these theorists all believe that behaviour can be taught or conditioned. Behaviourists believe that physical behaviour is what should be addressed not the emotions that lie behind it. The effectiveness of a behaviourist approach is evident, and the results are relatively easily to assess objectively as the behaviour either does or does not change as a result of a reward or punishment.

The observer was unaware of reason for the child's meeting with the ELSA. However, if it was due to unacceptable behaviour, the behaviourist approach would have been to simply punish the child, possibly without the child being offered the chance to explain why they had behaved in that way, in the expectation that this alone would have a beneficial effect on the child's behaviour. The child in this case is likely to be 10-11 years old and is probably already aware of what constitutes acceptable behaviour at school. So, the problem with expecting the children to simply learn from their mistakes is that the school and adults, who have the duty of care for the children, do not have the opportunity to find out the reason for the behaviour or allow the child a chance to explain themselves. If the child is aware of the school rules, punishing the child for not conforming to them doesn't really achieve much apart from make the gap between teacher and child ever greater. As shown earlier, teachers who show little empathy are more likely to have badly behaved children in their class (Aspy and Roebuck, 1972).

The behaviourist approach does not give the child a voice. This lack of communication denies the school the opportunity to find out if there is something wrong at home or if the child is struggling mentally or emotionally. Superficially, behaviour may improve, and the school has pupils that more readily conform. In many individual cases, however, this is just addressing the tip of an iceberg and ignores a far greater problem that lies beneath (Miller, 2019).

While research shows that a behaviourist approach can improve behaviour, the child probably learns nothing more than how to react differently to the trigger event. As with Pavlov's dog, behaviour is trained but there isn't any deeper understanding. If school is meant to prepare children for the real world, is behaviourism beneficial? A dog is reliant on its owner to provide it with food, however, a child will become an adult and will not always have a teacher, to reward it or punish it. Therefore, it may be more important that a child understands how their emotions may lead to certain kinds of behaviour and an adult's assistance (i.e. a constructivist approach) may be essential in achieving this. There is no doubt that an awareness of acceptable behaviour is important, but if this is addressed in a child-centred environment, where the children themselves input their opinions a consensus

may be achieved, and the outcome may be more effective. It is believed that classroom/school rules created through consultation with pupils are more readily accepted than rules solely created by the school establishment (Shalaway, 1998).

The ARC process also highlighted that the freedom of the VIP area may have been too much for the child. It is assumed that the child was struggling emotionally, hence the meeting with the ELSA. Therefore, should the child really have been expected to be able to work independently when re-joining the lesson. There is a potential here for better communication between support staff. The ELSA, class teacher and TA could all have discussed the desired outcome for the child to ensure they are all working towards the same aim. Further to this, an option could have been that the ELSA accompanied the child into the lesson to ensure they were happy and able to participate fully. This follow up would have eased the child's transition back into the lesson (Gershon, 2014).

A potential next step has been identified in an alternative learning environment which could be a good stimulus for children's learning – i.e. a Forest School. Research on Forest Schools (Murray, 2003) (O'Brien and Murray, 2005) (O'Brien and Murray, 2006) shows that they are beneficial in increasing self-confidence and self-esteem. They can add an extra dimension to the structure that is already exists in the school and can provide further benefits derived from engaging with this unfamiliar environment. This outside learning environment can help children to develop social skills and to directly see the consequences of their actions. The forest also helps motivate children as the woodland setting is stimulating for them and encourages their independence. It gives them freedom, time and space to learn and explore ideas, thereby contributing to the preparation of children for their future as "ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world" (Donaldson, 2015). Logistically, Forest School trips are something that need to be planned well in advance. The ideas and associated benefits of the outdoor learning are not limited to a Forest environment. The Muddy Hands Report (Prisk and Cusworth, 2018) has found that children engage better with the learning when outdoors and are happier for the rest of the day after being outdoors. Utilising the outdoor areas within the school grounds can therefore provide an excellent learning environment. This allows children to receive the benefits of outdoor learning without limitation by resources.

In conclusion, it appears that the scaffolding provided by the ELSA helped the child who was able to focus on their task once they had settled back into the classroom environment. However, the ELSA's support could have potentially continued into the lesson to ensure a more fluid transition from one-on-one support to independent learning time.

Whilst appreciating the principles of a behaviourist approach, as an observer of this incident it is hard to see that such an approach could have been of any obvious benefit to the child. This experience as an observer may have been simply a snapshot but it did demonstrate that the principles of a more constructivist approach to teaching has obvious benefits. It creates an inclusive environment where the needs of children with varying levels of emotional development can be embraced and nurtured with the likelihood that there will be a significant educational benefit.

Encouraging outdoor learning could be a beneficial next step and one that the observer would be particularly interested in investigating further for the subject child. The observer believes that experiencing learning in a different environment would give the subject child the opportunity to improve relationships with peers and allow development of emotional wellbeing.

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Appendix 1

Observation / Field Notes 1

Date: 25/09/19

Lesson Details: Year 6, 8 children – afternoon lesson

Classroom Culture: Freedom to get on with their own work

Objectives: VIP area challenges

Direction: challenges are set out on the display for the children to select the level and type they would like

Access and challenge: Varying levels of engagement

Assessment: no formal assessment

Specifics/Critical Incidents: A few children have Paper Fortune Tellers, they appear to be on task and working well but then one of them picks up a pair of scissors and waves them about a bit. Another child tells her to stop, which she does and puts them down.

Another child then walks in and joins the table, she sits down and picks up a piece of paper and the scissors and just randomly cuts at the paper. She is quiet and undisturbed but completely off task and day dreaming. Another child at the table asks her for help, which she does and then she goes straight back to playing with paper and scissors. TA notices and encourages her to get her book, which she does, they then select a new challenge and just as the child engages it is time to swap. I later found out that the girl was late to the class as she had been seeing the ELSA due to some problems at break time.

Another child is researching the Queen on the computer and writing and drawing in his VIP book. He points out to Teacher that her full name is “Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor”. Teacher looks and says “yup”. Teacher waits a bit and then says, “Please can you have three facts by the end of the lesson”. He then gets straight on with writing the queen's name in the book and finding another fact. As he writes if he makes a mistake he crosses it out and corrects it in a red pen.

Assisted Reflective Conclusion (ARC) Model 1

Date: 25/09/19

Critical Incident: Child walking in late and not focusing, until directed by teacher.

Feelings: The child was either distracted by what had made her late, didn't see the point in focussing after missing so much, found the Paper Fortune Teller task too easy or simply didn't want to start something new. The child clearly understood as she explained it when the other child asked for help. As soon as the Teacher guided her and gave her attention she became engaged in her new challenge.

Remember and Understand: When the child walks in late, nobody acknowledges her. The child simply finds an empty space and sits in it. She then fiddles with the scissors and paper. I was surprised that she didn't try and communicate or interfere with her peers, I got the impression she was deep in thought. When another child at the table asks her for help, she does so willingly, before going straight back to playing with paper and scissors. When the Teacher notices and encourages her to get her book, she does and they then select a new challenge and just as the child engages it is time to swap. I later found out that the girl was late to the class as she had been seeing the Health and Wellbeing Assistant due to some problems at break time.

Evaluate and analyse: The child was late for the lesson as they were with the ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant.

Health and wellbeing – if upset or having problems struggle to focus. “Children and young people need to experience social, emotional and physical well-being to thrive and engage successfully with their education.” – Donaldson Report – Successful futures

Clear guidance is required – girl unaware of learning outcomes or success criteria until the teacher sat down with her - Blooms Taxonomy & 4 Elements of AFL – sharing criteria with learners

Conclusions and actions: There are a number of components at work here and the health and wellbeing was addressed as the child was seeing the specialist before entering the class. However the wellbeing of the child still affected the child when in the class. Imagine the result of the lesson if she hadn't seen the specialist.

Clear guidance needs to be provided more quickly so that the child has the opportunity to learn from the moment they re-enter the class room. Paramount that the learning objectives are always available and accessible to the children.

Zone of proximal development – task too easy, child not challenged, leads to boredom – Vygotsky (1978)

Ferre Leavers – “emotional well-being is seen as being at the root of involvement (Linda Pound Contemporary Thinking and Theories)

Russell Grigg – Becoming an Outstanding Primary School Teacher– good overview

Observation / Field Notes 2

Date: 26/09/19

Lesson Details: Year 1, 27 children – entering the class room and registration

Classroom Culture: All children come straight in and sit in the carpet meant to be silent, some whispering and fidgeting but generally calm and quite.

Objectives: To calm the children from play time and prepare them for the day ahead.

Direction: Very clear that they sit quietly and join in with each activity.

Access and challenge: Yes all children are engaged some a little fidgety/looking around but they are still interacting.

Assessment: No real assessment apart from general observation on how the children are engaging and how they feel.

Specifics/Critical Incidents: Vivaldi, Four Seasons playing as children enter classroom – wellness and link to autumn term and harvest. They discussed the music, a few children thought it might be Harry Potter, one girl new it was Vivaldi and is going to bring in a book with Vivaldi in it.

Bore da song plays out from computer, all children appear to sing it. This is followed by the register “Bore da (childs name)” they say “Bore da (teacher name)” followed by their lunch choice and how they feel. If they are not feeling “da”, “hapus” or “ar ben y byd” Teacher will ask them why.

Child A is fidgeting in the corner. Teacher says to Child C that it would be better to smile as it uses muscles than frowning. Teacher then makes a sad face, wipes her hand across her face and changes to a smile. Child C and a few others giggle and Teacher says well done that’s much better. Child A then changes his fidget from being with his shoes to waving his hand up and down his face changing to and from a happy and sad face. Teacher spots him and asks him to turn around and sit smart.

Picking sticks – to select who are the monitors for the day. Teacher says the sticks are special and they know who is sitting smart. A child points out that a girl got to be a monitor yesterday and that she gets to be a monitor again. Teacher says the sticks must have thought that she was a super helpful monitor so they choose her again. A few names were preselected on the monitor list but the children didn’t seem to notice.

Assisted Reflective Conclusion (ARC) Model 2

Date: 26/09/19

Critical Incident: Picking Sticks for Monitors

Feelings: That the picking sticks allow for a range of children to be chosen for roles they themselves may not volunteer to do. They also take the decision away from the teacher. However they do allow the teacher to disguise the fact that she does preselect some children. It does also mean that some children are selected two days in a row!

Remember and Understand: The Teacher says that it is time to choose the monitors for the day so she better get her picking sticks. The Teacher then says the sticks are special and they know who is sitting smart (encouraging the children to continue sitting well on the carpet). The first few monitors are selected without contention but on the third monitor selected by the sticks a child points out that the selected child was a monitor the previous day. The teacher says the sticks must have thought that she was a super helpful monitor so they choose her again. A few names were preselected on the monitor list but the children didn't seem to notice as no comment is made by any of the class.

Evaluate and analyse:

Picking sticks – positives and negatives.

Carol Dweck – avoids the fear of failure Linda Pound – Contemporary thinking and Theories

John Holt – How children Fail 1964 – Fear of failure

Conclusions and actions:

Sticks allow for the teacher to step back from the selection process.

Next step – monitors become a privilege, so it is something that needs to be earned rather randomly selected

Observation / Field Notes 3

Date: 26/09/19

Lesson Details: Year 1, 27 children – First lesson

Classroom Culture: All children sitting on the carpet, some whispering and fidgeting but generally calm and quite.

Objectives: Carpet time before the first table activity.

Direction: Very clear that they sit quietly and join in with each activity.

Access and challenge: Yes all children are engaged some a little fidgety/looking around but they are still interacting.

Assessment: All activities on the carpet are verbal either in groups, to a partner or individually – hands up or calling out. So assessment is through observation and listening

Specifics/Critical Incidents: Bead number frame each 10 is either white or red – Teacher says lets count in 10s. Teacher moves them along as they count. Class seem engaged and interested in general.

Singing 2x table – Teacher sticks a 100 square on the board, even numbers are red. Teacher plays a 2 times table song from her laptop. The children join in. Teacher counts the numbers on her fingers and points to the number square. Children sing along, this is repeated 3 times. Children appear to be enjoying singing and knowing the words rather than worrying about the numbers. Teacher then asks a few children what a sum is.

The same approach is then applied to the 10x table. Everyone appears to join in with this one. Once it has been sung three times and again selects a few children to answer individual sums. The teacher says “Well done, I think you’ve got the hang of that one” and the children agree and one child says “please may we do it again?”. At the end of the lesson I discussed this with Teacher and she said they have done it every day since the start of term. She recorded their singing in the first week and she will record them again at half term so that she can see and hear the improvement. She also watches all the children while they sing each day to see if they are joining in. She then asks individuals a sum. So there is a variety of continuous assessment.

Assisted Reflective Conclusion (ARC) Model 3

Date: 26/09/19

Critical Incident: Singing Times Tables

Feelings: The children enjoy singing. They don't really realise they are doing maths. I wonder whether they really know the tables. And if individual sums were asked of them all how many of them could actually answer. However it doesn't create an awareness and understanding of the tables

Remember and Understand: The teacher plays a 2 times table song from her laptop. The children join in. The teacher counts the numbers on her fingers and points to the number square. Children sing along, this is repeated 3 times. Children appear to be enjoying singing and knowing the words rather than worrying about the numbers. Teacher then asks a few children what a sum is. The same approach is then applied to the 10x table. Everyone appears to join in with this one. Once it has been sung three times and the teacher again selects a few children to answer individual sums. The teacher then says "Well done, I think you've got the hang of that one" and the children agree and one child says "please may we do it again?".

At the end of the lesson I discussed this with Teacher and she said they have done it every day since the start of term. She recorded their singing in the first week and she will record them again at half term so that she can see and hear the improvement. She also watches all the children while they sing each day to see if they are joining in. She then asks individuals a sum.

Evaluate and analyse: So there is a variety of continuous assessment.

Petty – making it interesting and engaging

John Holt – How children Fail 1964 – Fear of failure

Repetition makes you remember - <https://medium.com/peak-wellbeing/the-reason-for-repetition-how-repetition-helps-us-learn-10d7eea43e95>

Conclusions and actions:

Is this useful for Year 1 children who still struggle with basic addition and subtraction.

Should they start introducing individual tables questions to see if any information is retained out of the context of the song.

Is background knowledge necessary or is rote learning enough

Observation / Field Notes 4

Date: 02/10/19

Lesson Details: Year 2 - 27 children – Maths Lesson after lunch

Classroom Culture: All children sitting on the carpet, some whispering and fidgeting but generally calm and quite.

Objectives: Carpet time before splitting into groups at tables

Direction: Very clear that they sit quietly and join in with each activity.

Access and challenge: Children are engaged in general, although a bit of fidgeting

Assessment: Assessment is through observation and listening as well as selecting children to answer questions

Specifics/Critical Incidents: To start the lesson the children chanted the 2 and 10 times tables. No music (unlike in Year 1). Teacher uses the magic picking sticks to ask individuals questions after each set of times tables. For some of the time the picking sticks were in the pot however for the rest of the time they were all on her lap so some names were selected – children didn't notice! A few children that were asked specific tables struggled with the answers.

Topic of the maths lesson – 2D shapes. Class were looking at the board and asked what the six sided shape was. The fidgety child called out Octagon, Teacher said please don't call out and that that isn't quite right. After the discussion about hexagons and then heptagons the teacher asked the name of the eight sided shape. The fidgety child stuck his hand in the air as high as he could, desperate to be noticed but wasn't chosen.

The teacher went through each of the shapes again and then asked if anyone knew the welsh word for each of the shapes.

Assisted Reflective Conclusion (ARC) Model 4

Date: 02/10/19

Critical Incident: Fidgety child not being chosen

Feelings: The child struggles with concentrating on the carpet so is often given negative feedback whilst he's on the carpet. He is however quite good at maths so to reward him for listening and concentrating may be it would be good to choose him when he has his hand up.

Remember and Understand: The topic of the maths lesson was 2D shapes. Class were all sat on the carpet looking at the board. The teacher asked the class for the name of the six sided shape. The fidgety/disruptive child called out "Octagon". The teacher said please don't call out and that that isn't quite right. After the discussion about hexagons and then heptagons the teacher asked the name of the eight sided shape. The fidgety child stuck his hand in the air as high as he could, desperate to be noticed but wasn't chosen.

Evaluate and analyse:

Assertive Discipline – Lee & Marlene Canter – reward for good behaviour.

Reality Therapy – Glasser (1965) Choice of behaviour – choose to disrupt or to sit still

Ginott Model – 1971 behaviour improves with positive teacher interactions

Conclusions and actions:

Reward is needed where the child confirms as previously instructed, as he is trying to demonstrate the behaviour asked of him

Does the fact that he's a fidgety child need to be addressed – fidget toy,

Is carpet time too long?