

Targed/Target 1	Ensure the excellent levels of criticality in your writing extend to all points and arguments presented in your work.
Targed/Target 2	Check your referencing technique for minor errors and omissions in places.
Targed/Target 3	Be sure to make reference to core module reading in your writing. The absence of a reference to BERA when discussing ethical considerations was notable.

Design and conduct a small-scale research study, and critically evaluate the impact of chosen research tools and data/findings on the learner and on professional practice.

Introduction

This assignment's purpose is to critically evaluate the design and outcomes of a small-scale research study, the research tools, and the impact of findings on the learner and on professional practice. The study's aims were to gather an understanding of learner and staff perceptions of assessment for learning, specifically, of sharing the success criteria with learners. Research suggests that to support the learners with progression, they both need to understand assessment for learning. Both Jones (2005) and the Welsh Government (2022) agree that learners and practitioners require a shared understanding of assessment process to ensure that the learner's achieve progression, therefore, the rationale for both the assignment and the research is to develop my professional practice. The research question is 'What are staff and year 4 pupils' perceptions of sharing the success criteria with learners?'. According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2015), success criteria is how to inform the learners of what excellence looks like and how to achieve it. The research was conducted in a large primary urban school with approximately 330 children with sixteen full time teachers (Estyn, 2020). The research was important as assessment for learning is at the heart of the new curriculum for Wales, highlighted in the pedagogical principles, the Welsh Government (2023) state that by using assessment for learning principles in your pedagogy, it supports great teaching and learning. The hypothesis of this research was that learners would not have a sufficient perception of assessment for learning, specifically, what sharing the success criteria with learners is and why it is important. Before conducting the research on staff perceptions, the

hypothesis was that sharing the success criteria with the learners would be the least valued element of assessment for learning. The 'Mosaic Approach' was used for this research and the research tool used were questionnaires, completed by teaching staff and pupil interviews, conducted with a focus group.

Literature Review

Assessment for learning is described by Black and Wiliam (2018) as a pedagogical process that informs a teacher of what the learner understands, if the learners have achieved the learning and what they need to learn next. The Welsh Government (2022) agree with Black and Wiliam as they state that assessment will provide the practitioner with an idea of what the learner can do and what they need to do next to aid in their progression. There are four elements of assessment for learning, which have been categorised into the following; the quality of questioning and talk, sharing the success criteria with learners, use and quality of feedback and peer and self-assessment. According to Black and Wiliam (1998), there are two types of assessment, formative and summative assessment. Black and Wiliam report that formative assessment is the most important pedagogical tool a practitioner can use to support learners in progression. The University of Greenwich (2020) shares their value of formative assessment with Black and Wiliam as they state that formative assessment is where a practitioner can aid a learner by providing constant feedback throughout the teaching to achieve success by continually correcting misconceptions. However, they do state that learners could be disengaged as formative assessment does not provide a mark which may be seen as low stakes. Summative assessment is used when the learners have completed all the learning on the topic and complete a test or exam to receive a mark (Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, 2012). Spiller (2009) believes that the limitation with summative assessment is that it does not allow the learner to address their misconceptions which leads to a lack of understanding. Sharing the success criteria with learners provides the learner with steps as a guide of what they require to do to achieve a high level of success (Dunn, 2017). Griffith and Burns (2014) share evidence of three different practitioners using 'steps to success' as a form of sharing the success criteria with learners. It demonstrates that the expected final piece of work is broken up into steps, which the learners can use as a visual reference point to ensure they are meeting the broken down, more understandable, success criteria to achieve better progression within the learning area. Griffith and Burns continue to state that in their experience of using these, their learners are progressing faster with better understanding of the teaching. Austins Butterfly Approach is demonstrated in a video by EL

Education (2016) as an assessment for learning strategy where the learners have an opportunity to identify strengths and improvements on another piece of work, in effect, this can support the learner to have another attempt at completing a higher standard of work as they have developed a better understanding of the success criteria. Griffith and Burns also highlight this by providing evidence from a practitioner who provided his learners with work from other learners of an exceptional standard, that met the success criteria. These learners were then able to independently identify these strengths, which were the success criteria and were reported to complete their own work with high standards. These examples of assessment for learning strategies link back to key pedagogy as stated by The Welsh Government (2023), supporting learners to be independent in their learning. Another example of sharing the success criteria with learners is 'WAGOLL (what a good one looks like)'. According to Griffith and Burns, this is where the practitioner provides an example of a piece of work set at a high standard where learners can refer to and magpie ideas to support their understanding of the expectations and aid their progression in the learning. Hattie (2012) agrees with Griffith and Burns and he states that learners should be provided with an end goal, where they are able to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and argues that learners are left 'blind' without it. Gerzon (2020) shares another element of sharing the success criteria with learners and favors a co-constructed approach. This is where the learners share their idea of success with the practitioner to work together to create the success criteria. Gerzon believes that this allows the learners to better understand how to achieve the end goal as they are now part of the assessment process, this also encourages the learners to engage and reflect more on the success criteria to ensure that they have met it during the learning episode. It is important to consider the limitations of sharing the success criteria as a practitioner, one limitation being that practitioners can make the mistake of using unfamiliar language with the learners. This can cause misconceptions to gather with the learners before the teaching and learning has begun (Willis, Arnold, and DeLuca, 2023). In addition to this, Almarode et al (2021) suggest that another limitation with sharing the success criteria with learners is that the practitioner may set the success criteria focusing on the end goal without guiding the learners on how to get there. Willis, Arnold, and DeLuca (2023) propose a wider limitation for sharing the success criteria with learners, that practitioners need to develop their understanding of the importance of sharing the benefits of assessment for learning with the learners and engaging them to be active participants throughout the assessment process. This appears to link closely with Sadler (1998) who states that engaging learners in the assessment process allows them to become lifelong learners to keep using and developing their skills throughout their lives. Similarly, The Welsh

Government (2022) report that great teaching and learning supports learners to develop skills to become efficient lifelong learners.

Methodology

The research design used a pragmatic approach to gather quantitative and qualitative data from digital questionnaires and focus group interviews, which is a mixed method Mosaic Approach. Clark and Moss (2011) developed the approach to understand a child's perspective on their experiences. They highlight the importance of a child's opinion and value it in the research, which is important in this study as the aims throughout the study were to gather the learners' perceptions of sharing the success criteria with learners. The purpose of the interviews was to gather quantitative data, taking into consideration the learner's voice, allowing them to feel valued and heard, all children have a right to express their voice as article 12 states under the children's rights act (Unicef, 1989). It was important to conduct semi-structured interviews with the learners as it allows the research to ask questions using appropriate language for the learner. As a result of this, it allows the learner to understand and express their experiences accurately (O'Reilly and Dogra, 2017). According to Denscombe (2021), semi-structured interviews should be used over any other research tool when the study aims to gather information from experiences and feelings. Given this, a semi-structured interview was chosen. This also meant that by understanding children's nature when expressing their experiences, there could be a set of structured questions that allowed flexibility for the learners to express their feelings in their own way. The interview was conducted as a focus group, using a sample size of six learners. Focus groups allow children to feel more comfortable in sharing their experiences which support each other's thinking (McCrum and Hughes, 2003). However, it was important to consider the limitations that could occur with focus group interviews. Cohen, et al (2007) expressed that learners could become distracted during interviews, hence the importance of using child friendly language. Another limitation to consider was the positionality between the researcher and the learners, this could cause the learners to be unable to express their true experience due to the concerns of their relationship with the researcher, a teacher practitioner (Patton and Winter, 2023). As a result, an ethical consideration was to reassure the learners that it was a safe space to share their experiences, that they were able to leave the interview at any time, they were not required to answer the questions. In addition to this, the decision of a focus group was made based on an ethical consideration to allow the learners to feel more comfortable sharing their experiences with their peers to attempt to reduce the effect of the positionality (Holmes, 2020). Questionnaires are used to gather information from a group

of people to generate data and gather data, clearly representing the findings (Bell and Waters, 2018). Online questionnaires can be a fantastic way to gather quantitative and qualitative data; therefore, questionnaires were sent out via email on Microsoft forms to collect the data. Davies and Hughes (2014) and Bell and Waters state that the benefits of online questionnaires are that they are inexpensive, can be faster to gather information and can be a great way to send to large volumes of people. They also report that they allow for anonymity, this can support respondents to provide honest feedback. Denscombe (2021) appears to agree with Bell and Waters on the benefits of online questionnaires. Denscombe reports further benefits of online questionnaires and argues that not only are they environmentally friendly, but they make for easy data processing which is an excellent way to save time and to present the data using visual graphs, which support understanding. Although there are many benefits with using online questionnaires, it is important to consider the limitations when planning and using an online questionnaire in a research study. Denscombe mentions that response rates can cause problems within online questionnaires, often with few respondents. Another limitation suggested by Denscombe is that the depth of the detail in the answers from the respondent can be poor, almost useless leading to poor data for research. Using short questions can be a solution for response rates, if the respondent is provided with a variety of short questions, they are more likely to provide useful responses (Coe *et al*, 2021). Using a range of question types including closed questions, range questions, multiple choice questions, ranking, Likert scale and semi-structured questions, can support in gaining a good response rate but also support in gathering detailed, useful data (Thomas, 2023). It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that ethical considerations have been made when completing studies. In this case, there was a responsibility to the participants, who were the learners from the focus group and the teachers who completed the questionnaires. Not only is there a responsibility to them but to the wider community of educational researchers, the school in which the study was conducted, the professionals involved in the research and the policies (Welsh Government, 2015). An ethical consideration when researching is to know the topic, to be competent in what is being researched (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). It was important to research and plan an appropriate research question; it allowed the research methods to relate appropriately, meaning the data collected will be more appropriate, allowing a reliable evaluation (Farrugia *et al*, 2010). The potential risks to the participants, the researcher and the university were ethically considered and documented in an ethics form (see appendix one), the potential risks were identified, and considerations of mitigations were documented and used in the study. The questionnaire participants provided voluntary informed consent when participating in the

questionnaire, this meant that they were provided with all the research information before participating, they were also able to withdraw consent and withdraw from participating in the research at any point, this was highlighted in the questionnaire (see appendix two) (University of Oxford, 2021). The learners also provided voluntary informed consent; they were fully informed of all information for the research, which was explained in child friendly language to best suit their understanding as this is extremely important when providing consent to ensure they have understood the information (Cohen et al, 2007). They then provided oral consent to participate, understanding their right to withdraw consent at any point throughout and leave the research. If the children were unable to provide consent, due to a lack of understanding of the research question, the risks involved in participating in the research, and the benefits of the research, the headteacher of the school provided consent for the research to take place (see blank copy of consent form, appendix three), (BERA, 2018). Ensuring confidentiality throughout the research, the interviews were held in a classroom, highlighted in the ethics form (see appendix one). This meant that the learners were not seen or heard by any other pupils or staff at the school. The dual role of the researcher/teacher could pose a challenge for confidentiality; therefore, the aims and purposes were highlighted again to the learner, that the interviews were solely for evaluating the data gathered (BERA, 2018). It was important for the participants to feel comfortable and trusting of the researcher (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Given this, a rapport was built with learners using open body language, eye contact and head nodding (Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Anonymity was upheld with transcribing the interviews as pseudonyms were used to hide the learners names and to remove school identifiers (Bell, 2010). As Bell (2010) believes to be most important, the research study followed the university guidelines, BERA guidelines and the Education Workforce Council (EWC) guidelines throughout. Following the EWC (2023) guidelines, the data will be stored in a password protected database where only the researcher can gain access. No one other than the researcher and the module supervisor will see the data, as stated to the participants and highlighted in the ethics form (see appendix one) (BERA, 2018). Despite the research, there were limitations during the study. The first limitation to mention is arguably an ethical consideration. As seen from the pupil interview (see appendix four), a few statements made were repetitive and did not answer the question. It was a challenge to address some experiences shared by the learners due to the concern of running over the ten minutes, this would have been unethical (BERA, 2018). It could be argued that the inability to readdress experiences to check for understanding was due to an inexperienced researcher (Danby, Ewing and Thorpe, 2011).

Findings and Discussion

It was evident from the data that both the learners, from the interview and the teachers, from the questionnaires, value the use of sharing the success criteria with the learners. This data might imply that these learners could become lifelong learners from developing skills gained from participating in the assessment process (Sadley, 1998), which is important to the Welsh Government (2022). A limitation proposed in the literature review by Willis, Arnold, and DeLuca (2023) was that learners and teachers need to develop a better shared understanding of the assessment for learning process to be active participants in the assessment process, thus in effect will support in pupil progression (Welsh Government, 2022).

Looking at the qualitative data from the interviews, there were five key perceptions shared by the learners (see appendix four). They appear to be how they used the success criteria to check their understanding, know what to include in their work, progression, to understand when they have completed the task and when they would use the success criteria. The learners' perspective on what it meant to have the success criteria shared with them was that they were able to use the success criteria to check back over their work, using, what they call 'steps to success'. They referred to using the steps to success to check their work, go back and ensure they have included everything, to double check their work again and importantly, to check what they did not understand. The data indicated that the learners knew what to include in their work, what was expected from them. The learners referenced throughout the interview that having the success criteria would allow them to understand what other features they required to add or change to their work. Surprisingly, one learner discussed the use of success criteria aiding their progression. The learner stated that using the success criteria allowed them to prove how they completed their work, how they would improve their work and what they would improve in future. Moreover, the learners seemed to understand when they had completed their work, to the best of their ability by using the success criteria. They reported that they could check back and ensure they completed all expectations following the steps, allowing them to finish their work. It could be said that all the experiences shared by the learners encourages them to be independent within their own learning while using the success criteria, this is fantastic pedagogy according to the Welsh Government (2023). Similarly, all the learners seemed to agree that like Wiliam and Black (2018) state, assessment for learning informs them of what they have done and what they need to do next. A learner shared that using the success criteria supports them with progression, this links closely with Dunn (2017) who believes that high levels of success are achieved by learners when the success criteria is shared with them.

Following this, the questionnaires provided both quantitative and qualitative data. Not surprisingly, all participants reported using assessment for learning in their classrooms, this is key pedagogy for classrooms in Wales (Welsh Government, 2023). Looking at the quantitative data, out of the four elements of assessment for learning, 37.5% of the participants reported that sharing the success criteria with the learners is the most important element to them (see appendix five). Despite this, three participants voted it 8 out of 10 in importance to share the success criteria with their learners, one voted for 9 out of 10 and four voted it to be 10 out of 10 in importance (see appendix six). The effectiveness of sharing the success criteria with the learners is perceived by the participants as being very effective, scoring an overall 4.5 out of 5 in effectiveness in aiding pupil progression (see appendix seven). The participants use various strategies to support sharing the success criteria with the learners (see appendix eight). The qualitative data gathered from the questionnaires showed that all participants shared the same ideas of the benefits of sharing the success criteria with the learners. The participants report that sharing the success criteria supports the learners with understanding what is expected of them and shows them with what they need to do. It does this by providing the learners with steps to follow, most importantly, independently (see appendix nine and ten).

The data indicates that all participants might believe that it is important pedagogy to include the learners in the assessment process by sharing the success criteria with them (Welsh Government, 2023). It also supports what Black and Wiliam (2018) believe, that assessment for learning provides a clear understanding of expectation between teachers and learners. The data from the pupil interviews combined with the data from the questionnaires suggests that both the learners and the teacher value assessment for learning and a shared success criteria. They have similar perceptions of sharing the success criteria, that being, aiding in progression, understanding, expectations and success.

Limitations were shared by the questionnaire participants, the challenges they faced when sharing the success criteria with the learners. Firstly, a common limitation highlighted was that the language of the success criteria can be too complex for the learners to read and understand, the practitioners may agree with what Willis, Arnold, and DeLuca (2023), that complex language in success criteria is a limitation for practitioners. Another limitation reported in the questionnaire was that sharing the success criteria with the learners can be time consuming, especially when they do not understand them or must be differentiated (Willis, Arnold, and DeLuca, 2023). One opposing response from the questionnaire using a WAGOLL, when all other participants seemed to favor it. The perception reported that it can hinder a

learner's creativity when producing work, which Crichton and McDaid (2016) also believe to be true.

Conclusion

Despite the hypothesis of the research, the learners and the teachers appeared to have similar perspectives on sharing the success criteria with learners. It has been evident that both learners and teachers through interviews and questionnaires have a great understanding of what it means to share the success criteria with learners. The findings demonstrated a coincidence with what current and previous literature believe regarding assessment for learning, specifically, sharing the success criteria with learners. Literature suggests that the 'steps to success' that the teachers create as the success criteria for the learners is believed by both teachers and learners, and as Griffiths and Burns (2014) report, a better, broken-down understanding of how to achieve the goal resulting in better progression. Overall, the research has identified that the learners, the teachers and the literature all share the belief that it aids in pupil progression, it provides a clear understanding of expectations and creates independent and skilled learners. The purpose of assessment for learning is an informal assessment to provide the teacher with an understanding of where the learner is at and how to move them forward within their learning (Welsh Government, 2022), it could be said that the perceptions of sharing the success criteria with the learners supports all involved to be active participants in the assessment process (Willis, Arnold and DeLuca, 2023). This appears to be the pedagogy of what the Welsh Government (2023) expects in schools.

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