

ECAD 7004 – Researching the Learning

What are the perceptions of staff and reception age students of the relationship between pupil-choice and engagement in learning?

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Aim, Focus and Purpose of the Research

This essay examines the significance of pupil choice in education, aiming to explore its impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. Motivated by a desire to address the dynamic relationship between autonomy and learning, the research seeks to explore the mechanisms through which pupil choice influences children's educational experiences.

As a student teacher, this assignment provides an avenue to improve my own personal practice. Pupils leading learning, wider reading and research findings, as well as continuing professional learning, are all professional standards for teaching and leadership (Hwb.gov.Wales) that are being developed through this research project. Through personal observations during my practice so far, I have discovered that many teachers appreciate the theoretical applications of pupil choice but are apprehensive when putting the concepts into practice in the classroom. This essay aims to explore the perceptions of both teachers and pupils so that in the future, potential concerns may be addressed.

The research took place in a one form-entry Primary School in the outskirts of Cardiff. The 2023 Estyn report for the school was generally positive; however, it noted a lack of opportunity for pupils, particularly in the earlier years, to develop independence, with activities being too directed by adults. The pupils in question for this essay are reception age pupils situated in a small class of 16.

Overview of relevant literature

In education giving the pupils choice in their activities is seen as a key motivator in their learning: This approach is integrated into the Foundation Phase Curriculum (Hwb.gov.Wales), which emphasizes hands-on experiences and play to promote discovery and independence. While overall structure is important, offering choices helps scaffold opportunities for students to explore their own decision making and learning.

The impact of choice on motivation has long been recognized in theories of motivation like Lewin's field theory (Lewin (1951), described in Chak (2002)) and supported by research in the "science of learning" field (e.g. Bransford 1999; Hirsh-Pasek et al 2015). This identifies four fundamental conditions that create the best opportunities for children's learning: When children are cognitively engaged with a meaningful experience (that connects with their existing knowledge and creates new understanding), that is socially interactive and when there is a goal. This aligns with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) but importantly makes the child more of an active participant in their learning rather than passive, so also fits with

Piaget's developmental theory (Kuhn, 1979), which identifies how children learn through actively exploring their world.

Thinking about the child's age and development will always be important in applying these theories as one approach will not fit all. Also thinking about context, using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological theory, we can appreciate how different children will find different experiences meaningful, maybe related to their family or community background or individual differences.

Engagement in tasks involves behavioural, emotional, and cognitive aspects (Fredericks, Blumenfeld and Paris, 2004). Providing pupil choice activates all three, encouraging taking the initiative, interest, problem-solving, and effort. The concept of engagement also has many similarities with the concept of motivation, often conceptualised through Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 1985). SDT is a key psychological framework for understanding intrinsic motivation (ie doing something because it is itself satisfying rather than to achieve an external reward). The model suggests that tasks that combine autonomy, competence, and relatedness promote intrinsic motivation (Ryan et al., 2013; Patall et al., 2010). The research evidence in SDT shows that motivated pupils stay on task longer, learn more effectively, and perform better academically (Ryan and Deci 2000; Reeve, 2009).

Although SDT proposes that there is a universal, inherent drive within individuals to master internal motivations, there is some debate about whether this neglects individual variations in motivation and behaviour (Hodgins et al., 2007) and also contextual influences on decision-making processes, such as societal norms and external pressures (Patall et al., 2008). As with many theories, in creating a coherent model, it may oversimplify the complexities of human development and factors contributing to overall well-being (Lévesque et al., 2004). Therefore integrating SDT principles and offering choice as part of that in the classroom may hold promise for enhancing engagement among primary school children, but on-going evaluation of its effectiveness within diverse classroom environments is essential (Ünlü & Dettweiler, 2015).

The Montessori method, developed by Maria Montessori, epitomises pupil choice: It emphasizes child-directed learning and self-directed activities at their own pace within multi-age classrooms (Lillard, 2020), aligning closely with SDT principles (Debs et al., 2022; Nwabuwe & Osagiede, 2023). The method's emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning is described as leading to positive outcomes in several domains such as academic performance and cognitive development (Phillips-Silver & Daza, 2018). However, research on the educational outcomes for children who attend Montessori schools is limited both in quantity and quality and the results are inconsistent (Lillard 2012). The implementation of

the method varies significantly (Beatty, 2011, Frierson 2015) with the stronger claims for its effectiveness associated with centres who implement with high fidelity to the standard Montessori approach (Liliard, 2012). Recognising these limitations and taking them into account, the most recent evidence, based on a meta-analysis of 33 studies, demonstrates positive effects of the approach on cognitive abilities, social and motor skills, creativity and academic achievement (Demangeon et al, 2023). Further research on the global introduction of Montessori schools is necessary to understand its effectiveness and implementation in different cultural contexts (Debs et al., 2022).

In summary, several key theories of development and motivation identify the potential of pupil choice in enhancing learning and it is central to the Foundation phase of the Curriculum: Choice can increase engagement which in turn promotes a deeper understanding, the pupils will be more personally invested in their learning, it can help to cater to individual differences and foster independence. However, it is important to be mindful of those individual differences and consider that for some children making choices might be challenging, in particular children of reception age, depending on their life experiences prior to coming to school. Using qualitative methods of observation, focus group and survey the aim of this research is to explore those individual differences and consider how reception age children respond to choice and how teachers view pupil choice in their approach to engagement with learning.

Explanation of Case Study

Case study research is a strategy adopted by researchers in social, clinical and educational settings, which uses an example of the phenomenon being examined to facilitate in-depth exploration in a real-life context (Priya, 2021). The approach often uses qualitative methods such as observation, surveys, interviews etc but can also include quantitative data, depending on the topic and rationale for the research. There are several key methodologists in case study research in relation to education including Robert Yin, Sharan Merriam and Robert Stake (Yazan, 2015). They differ in several regards, for example their definition of a case, the study design, data collection etc. These differences will be reflected in the discussion of the strengths and limitations below but are described in full detail by Yazan (2015).

Yin (2014) identified three main purposes for using case study methodology; descriptive, explanatory and exploratory: It is often used to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon as commonly used in sociology research. However, it may be explanatory,

seeking to explain why or how certain things happen: Yin's work cites case studies of political events e.g. the Cuban Missile crisis as examples of this, where a case study of one key event can be used to understand how something so momentous occurred. Case studies may also be exploratory, providing in-depth description as part of initiating novel research questions or formulating hypotheses which can then build towards the development of theory (Eckstein, 1992).

This approach offers strengths, but also limitations.

Strengths:

Quality and depth of data: A key strength of case study research is its ability to provide in depth detailed data drawn from multiple sources. Yin (2002) identifies six most common sources as documents, archive records, observation, participant observation, physical artifacts and interviews but also clarifies that there will be many other potential sources; Stake takes it much wider and proposes that this includes informal impressions as well as the more formal data (Stake, 1995). The depth of data in a case study allows for understanding of the complexity of issues.

Holistic Perspective: Case studies enable researchers to examine a phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach enables the researcher to explore all the aspects that may be influencing a phenomenon eg the social and cultural setting in which it occurs as well as the more pragmatic logistics. The researcher can then explore how these characteristics contribute to the outcomes.

Flexibility and Adaptability: The flexibility of the approach means researchers can adapt their methods to suit the case, using the best data collection techniques for example depending on the setting, the research question, and resources.

Theory Development: Case studies can go well beyond the specific study, they can provide data to support, improve or challenge existing theories, advancing knowledge in a particular field.

Limitations:

Subjectivity and Bias: Researcher bias and subjectivity are a potential limitation at all stages of case studies. The different methodologists' approach this in different ways eg Yin takes a much more structured, positivist approach and Stake a more constructivist, meaning-driven approach (Yazan, 2015). However, to mitigate this risk, all recommend triangulating data from multiple sources to validate the data and their findings.

Resource Intensive: Collecting and analysing qualitative data from multiple sources requires significant time and effort.

Limited Generalisability. Findings may not be easily applicable to other contexts or populations without additional research.

Difficulty in Replication: Case studies are inherently context-dependent. Researchers can conduct multiple case studies to enhance validity, but exact replication is often impossible.

These strengths and limitations need to be considered when employing case study methodology and findings should be interpreted with caution.

For the purpose of this case study, six participants will be chosen at random from a pool of children that have received parental permission with the aim of gaining a representative sample of pupils. All teachers and learning support assistants across the school will have access to the questionnaire with the aim of maximising responses: However the representativeness of the sample of respondents will be considered during the analysis of the results.

Research Methods

Drawing on the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) guidelines, the methods selected were focus groups and classroom observations with reception age pupils and questionnaires for staff. Ethical considerations were prioritised while gathering the qualitative data.

Focus Groups:

A focus group is described as “a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 2) It enables a researcher to collect data from multiple people simultaneously, an important consideration in research over a short time-frame. and can be less threatening than interviews (Krueger and Casey 2009) which is important in working with young children. Many of the strengths and limitations come from the group discussion process itself (Acocella, 2011): The discussion process can help the participants develop their ideas, comments may stimulate further contributions etc which means you can get a wide range of views within a relatively short amount of time compared to individual interviews. However, the group can be dominated by one or two people if it is not well

facilitated, people might feel they need to conform with others views, and the data can be difficult to analyse (Acocella,2011)

Information sheets and consent forms for the focus group were sent out to parents of children in the reception class (Appendix E). This convenience sample approach was selected as they were familiar with the researcher, had similar experience (Acocella 2011) and were accessible. Generally children feel safer with other children they know and in a familiar setting so running FG in classroom groups provides a safe environment (Adler, 2019) . The aim was to include up to six children in the focus group, using random selection if there was more than six whose parents gave consent.

The group was planned at a time to minimize disruption and maintain the natural flow of classroom activities. At the start the plan was to begin with open questioning surrounding pupil choice and whether the children prefer the activities that they choose to complete (Appendix B), or the ones that they work on with their teacher. Over time, due to the nature of the open questions, this would lead into pupils talking about what they enjoy doing the most in the classroom. Following recommendations by Lund, Helgeland, and Kovac (2016), age-appropriate questions should focus on "what" or "how" rather than "why," with prompts encouraging elaboration and an either/or approach for preference clarification if needed.

Staff Questionnaires:

A staff survey using a questionnaire distributed to primary school staff members, was implemented following 's (2018) guidance on ethical considerations in survey research (Appendix C). The questionnaire which consisted of 10 open-ended questions and one scaled question was designed to gather staff perceptions of pupil-choice methodology, including its implementation, effectiveness, and observed impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. It was administered on-line so staff completed them on their own, answering questions at their own pace.

Questionnaires can act as an initial way to get a broad understanding of issues. They are more commonly associated with quantitative research, but this questionnaire was designed to collect mostly qualitative data, using open-ended questions which means that the data will be in participants own words. Braun et al 2021 in their discussion of the use of surveys in qualitative research, describe how they have been under-utilised because of the misperception that they are too rigid (lacking ability to tailor questions or ask follow-up questions etc) to have value in qualitative research. However, they can make it possible to gather more people's views than interviews and it is possible that people feel more able to

express their true views in an anonymous, written form than in a person-to-person interview. This may be particularly true in the context of this work where a student teacher is asking senior staff for their opinions – so the people work together and exist in a professional student-teacher relationship. Another potential advantage of a questionnaire is when, as in this situation, the interviewer does not have extensive interviewing skills.

The data collected will be a combination of qualitative and quantitative data (using coding), to gain an understanding of how the teachers feel that pupil choice affects their pupil's motivation.

Classroom Observations:

Structured classroom observations (Appendix A) were conducted in accordance with BERA's (2018) recommendations for observational research in educational settings. Prior consent was obtained from the school, and steps were taken to ensure that observations did not infringe upon students' rights or disrupt the learning environment.

Observation of people is one of the key data collection methods in qualitative research, to help us understand how they act and behave in a setting: It involves systematically watching, listening, and documenting behaviours, interactions, and phenomena as they occur in their natural context (which could be classroom, place of work etc). (Smit and Onwuegbuzie, 2018).) Observation has the main advantage of providing detailed contextual insights into behaviours and phenomena, but it also presents challenges, including potential biases and ethical considerations. (Smit and Onwuegbuzie, (2018).)

The method taken was non-participant observation (remaining distant, not interacting but observing) using an unstructured, direct observation approach to allow for a more flexible first-hand observation, rather than structured (using a pre-determined checklist of behaviour categories for recording). The observations were done in “snapshots”, short bursts of time rather than continuously to fit in with the flow of the classroom. Although a checklist was not used, the mnemonic WRITE developed by Lareau (2021, cited in Hirst 2023) was used to think about the types of things to record:

W: who, what, where, how

R: reaction

I: inaction (non-verbal responses)

T: timing

E emotions

The data was collected using written field notes, written either contemporaneously or as soon as possible after the observation to maximise the detail. These notes included both description and more analytical/interpretative thoughts, separately recorded where possible as advised by Patton (2002).

Ethical Considerations

The focus group session followed BERA's (BERA,2018) guidelines on conducting research with children and young people. The structure of the session had to be age-appropriate and so this informed the questions being asked, the duration of the session and the numbers in the group. The timing of the session was chosen to minimize disruption and maintain the natural flow of classroom activities. Keeping them in a group of children that they are familiar with may help them to feel safer to express their opinions (Hoppe et al, 1995).

The focus group adhered to principles of confidentiality, ensuring that children's identities and responses were protected. If pupils with specialist provision were chosen for the focus group, the class learning support assistant could have been present if requested. The pupils were reassured that what they said in the group would not be discussed with other people. The children chosen were continually reminded that participation was optional, and assent was checked throughout as outlined in appendix F.

In the survey clear instructions were provided to ensure informed consent, and measures were taken to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of responses. Staff members had the option to participate voluntarily, with no coercion or pressure to disclose personal information.

All ethical considerations were put forward to the University of Trinity Saint David ethics committee in an application for ethical approval presented in appendix D. Approval was received before any research took place.

Results/Analysis of results/Discussion

Results

The survey and observations were carried out over a three-week period and the focus group was conducted at the end of that time.

From a staff group of 18 teachers and 9 learning support assistants eligible to complete the survey, there were eight responses: seven (88% of total) from teachers (4 key stage 1 and 3 Key stage 2), representing a 39% response rate and one from an LSA (response rate of 11%).

Five observations were conducted during different types of lessons.

Parents of thirteen children gave their consent for the children to take part. Six children were randomly selected, and the group met during a morning mathematics lesson. There was a facilitator and a note taker with the group that took place in the familiar classroom setting.

Analysis

Adopting the hybrid approach to thematic analysis as described above, the following deductive codes with examples of behaviours that could be included in those codes, were developed from the Self Determination Theory of Ryan and Deci (Ryan and Deci 2000). All the data collected across the methods were analysed using these codes and additional codes created if the ideas were not captured adequately by these codes.

Autonomy: taking responsibility and making decisions independently, (without external prompting), expressing preferences, setting goals for oneself, exploring new experiences, ,

Competence: taking challenges and setting goals to achieve them, practicing, not giving up and improving, motivated by positive feedback about achievements

Relatedness: forming relationships with people, providing and receiving support, showing an understanding of other's needs, collaboration, sense of belonging.

Survey

The key themes in the staff responses to “what does pupil choice mean to you” and the relationship between choice and engagement, were in relation to autonomy, with words “independence”, “own” “making decisions” and “leading” recurring several times. One person offered a broader definition relating to the whole of school.

“Pupil choice to me means that children are involved in choices and decisions made in class and throughout school using their own voice, opinions and ideas”

Staff named many ways in which they introduce choice in the classroom ranging from choice of resource, to how they present their learning. One respondent commented on the variation between children, and another referred to their experience that it is easier to offer in some subjects, e.g. literacy than in others e.g. maths.

Two of the inductive themes that came through several responses that do not seem to come from the SDT model are the importance of choice in generating curiosity and creativity: These potentially fit with “autonomy” but stood out as different to the other ideas in that code.

A theme of “need for scaffolding” emerged from the potential disadvantages of choice highlighted by staff. This related to children always making the same choices so needed guidance to try something new, or also choosing something beyond their stage of development so needing more help with those activities. Five of the eight respondents thought age made a difference to the advantages/disadvantages of choice which fell into the “they don’t know what they don’t know” when they are younger type of answer, but one person said age doesn’t change the fact that in their view children choose what feels best for them. Five respondents thought there was enough choice in the curriculum currently.

Focus Group

The children’s responses reflected their preference for doing things with the teacher and they liked doing different things at home and school. Three children mentioned playing with friends and several of them would choose physical activities. Unsurprisingly as the children are in the Foundation Phase, the word “play” came up the most (e.g. “playing in the kitchen”, “playing with dragons”) and the activity that they had done with the facilitator just prior to the focus group (making cakes). Naturally, given their age, pupils slowly became restless and began removing assent and wishing to play. For this reason, only a limited number of the planned questions were able to be asked.

Observations

Different children had different responses to choice. Some approached it with excitement, others quite calmly. One child, who generally doesn't interact a lot, chose an activity that involved others and interacted for 5 minutes before then going back to playing by himself. When the choice was in a group activity, one child was unsure whether to follow the others when they got bored of the task, looking like he was torn between staying with something he enjoyed or staying with the group. For one child, although they initially rushed to make a choice and seemed excited, smiling etc, they then looked very anxious, pacing up and down trying to interact with the teacher. Three of the children, spent quite a lot of time trying to impress or seek the approval of the teacher. One was using his own reward system and seemed excited to add a sticker for his work.

Summary

Bringing the results of the three activities together, there was clear support for the concepts of "autonomy" and "relatedness" in thinking about the relationship between choice and engagement: The staff responses showed how important they think choice is in engagement and highlighted the concept of autonomy; the observations and focus group emphasising relatedness. The need for scaffolding choice came through in the observations, with some children struggling with it and most of the children seeking teacher approval or guidance quickly after a choice has been made. This is most probably related to the age of the children, thinking about their developmental stage, but also, they may well have had a lot of adult direction or potentially not had opportunities of much choice prior to starting school. The need to attend to individual differences was a key finding from the observations and this has been identified as a criticism of SDT: Clearly this is important to consider in the classroom when giving children choices.

Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the findings of this research study were consistent with the research in the area of pupil choice and its relationship to learning. In terms of support for the SDT model of motivation, there was less evidence about the link to "competence". However, this could well reflect the short time frame of the study and potentially also the age of the children involved, given the focus in the Foundation phase on learning through play. Had the study been

conducted in High school there may well have been very different findings. Working in one setting with one age group reduces the generalisability of the findings.

The methods used had validity and taking three different approaches allowed the data to be triangulated. However, in addition to the short time frame, being a single researcher raises the challenge of bias so although the work was discussed with others, ideally there would be several researchers conducting and analysing. Conducting the work with the class where you teach has benefits of familiarity but that can also be a disadvantage (e.g. if they wanted to say things about the teacher); it also makes it much harder to be a non-participant observer. Leading a focus group is a skilled task so training in that method would potentially have led to more content. Suggestions to improve the approach for future studies would be to broaden the timeframe, age-range, setting and training for the researcher in focus group methods. Ideally observations could include video, but this would be more complex ethically.

Pupil choice is integrated into the curriculum and based on these research findings it is implemented well in the Foundation Phase. However as suggested by the staff survey, it can be more difficult in KS2 because there are more specific learning objectives and clearly choice has different impact for different children. Within the generic policy of offering choice, the research indicates that it is important to take a more detailed look at individual differences for young children, thinking about how they react to choices. The findings would support further research into whether choice benefits particular children, eg those who are naturally more social, or does it offer different opportunities to different children ie for those who prefer to be alone, a chance to spend time in solo activity. As one of the staff said do children always choose things that are right for them, or do we need to scaffold choice more for some than others?

With regards to my own personal practice, I believe I have developed my understanding of research studies, in particular case study methodologies. This will be beneficial as in the future, when I wish to conduct my own personal reading surrounding a topic, I will have a greater understanding of the processes that were undertaken and be able to form my own opinions on matters that I may have previously not been able to. In terms of my own pedagogy, I have developed my abilities as a research-informed practitioner. I will be able to take my findings from the literature review as well as the case study I completed and implement findings into my own practice to improve myself as a teacher. As mentioned in the introduction, I have made clear progress in at least three professional standards during this research project: Pupils leading learning, wider reading, and research findings, as well as continuing professional learning.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Observation form template

Who, What, When, Where, How (Description of the scenario)

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

How:

Reaction (How did the child react to the choice given?)

Inaction (Were there silent or nonverbal responses to being offered a choice?)

Timing (Are children rushing around the classroom to play/complete the activities that they have chosen?)

Emotions (How does the child appear? Are they happy, sad, indifferent etc.?)

Appendix B – Focus group questions

- What types of things do you like doing in the classroom?
- What about your friends – what do they like doing? Do you like doing it with them?
- What types of things do you like doing at home/when you are on holiday?
- What things do you like doing with the teacher?
- When the teacher tells you that you can choose, what types of things do you do?
- Which area in the classroom do you like best
- What would you have in the best classroom in the world/dream classroom?
- (Give them two objects or point out two different types of activity) which of those do you like best (why)
- How do you know when someone is doing something interesting
- If you were the teacher and I was in your class, what would you get me to do?

Appendix C – Teacher/Learning Support Assistant Questionnaire

Section 1 of 2

What are the perceptions of staff and reception age students of the relationship between pupil-choice and engagement in learning?

B *I* U ↔ ✕

As part of my PGCE I am completing my research project on pupil choice and its effect on engagement in learning. I am using classroom observation, pupil focus groups and a staff survey to gain an understanding of the perceptions of staff and pupils and I would be very grateful if you could complete the following survey as part of this project.

Taking part in this survey is entirely your choice. You can leave the survey at any stage and withdraw your responses at any time. The survey will likely take about 10 minutes to complete. Please answer as many questions as you are comfortable with. At the start of the survey you will be asked for a name/pseudonym. This is just in case you wish to withdraw your answers at a later date. You can also choose to not answer this question if you prefer. If you would not like this option and wish to remain fully anonymous, you may do so by not completing the question. Your survey responses will be stored on the UWTSD cloud, data and transcripts will be password protected in electronic folders on UWTSD systems and subject to university protocols. The results will be included as part of my research submission and this may include anonymised quotations from responses.

Any questions about this survey please contact me on [REDACTED]

I have read all of the information in the survey description and I have been able to discuss this study with the researcher if I wished. If I asked the researcher any questions, I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

I allow the researchers to access, read, and use my survey responses as explained in this form

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Role in School (Please tick the box that applies to you)

- ☐ Teacher KS1
- ☐ Teacher KS2
- ☐ Learning Support Assistant

Name/Pseudonym - Only if you wish to have the option to remove your data from the study

Short answer text

1) What does the term "pupil choice" mean to you?

Long answer text

2a) To what extent do you agree with the statement "Pupil choice increases engagement in learning"?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Completely Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Completely Agree

2b) Could you provide a bit more information on your view of how choice may relate to engagement?

Long answer text

3) How do you introduce choice in your work with children in the classroom?

Long answer text

4) What in your opinion are the benefits of children having choice of task?

Long answer text

5) What in your opinion are the disadvantages of children having choice of task?

Long answer text

6) Does the age of the child affect your answers to 4 and 5?

6b) If your previous answer was yes - In what way?

Long answer text

7) In your opinion, should we try and introduce more choice for pupils in the classroom?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7b) If your previous answer was yes - How could we go about doing this?

Long answer text

Is there anything you would like to add about pupil choice and its effect on engagement in learning?

Long answer text

Appendix D – Ethics Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	[REDACTED]			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Yr Athrofa UWTSD			
4	Campus:	SA1 Swansea Waterfront Campus and Innovation Centre			
5	E-mail address:	[REDACTED]			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	[REDACTED]			
For students:					

April 2022*

1

PG2 Ethical Approval Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

7	Student Number:	██████████
8	Programme of Study:	PGCE Primary with QTS (Full-time) (PGCE)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	██████████

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
2	If <u>Yes</u> , please indicate source of approval (and date where known): <i>Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>	Research Degrees Committee	☒	14/03/24	
		Institute Research Committee	☒	14/03/24	
		Other (write in) ██████████	☒	14/03/24	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, fourth edition (Bera 2018)	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail <u>address</u>					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD ~~Athrofa~~ Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If <u>YES</u> then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐



PG2 / E1 FORM

9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐
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Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If <u>Yes</u> , please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	What are the perceptions of staff and reception age students of the relationship between pupil-choice and engagement in learning?		
2	Proposed start date:	14/03/2024	Proposed end date:	31/07/2024
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a Non-Specialist Audience when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how Existing Research has informed the proposed activity and <u>explain</u> <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
3	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of this activity is to become a better evidence-based practitioner. The purpose of this research is to collect and analyse qualitative data on the perception of reception age pupils and staff surrounding the use of pupil-choice in a primary school classroom. Pupil choice is an intentional methodology employed by teachers in which they allow pupils to be the orchestrators of their own learning. E.g. Pupils will have free choice a large amount of the time in the classroom to choose which tasks they complete. (this box should expand as you type)			
4	Research Question What are the perceptions of staff and reception age students of the relationship between pupil-choice and engagement in learning? (this box should expand as you type)			
5	Aims of Research Activity The aims of this research activity are as follows: - To gather qualitative data on reception age pupils' perspectives on pupil-choice in the classroom. - To collect qualitative data on staff members' perceptions of the implementation and impact of pupil-choice methodology. - To explore the frequency and nature of pupil choice within the primary school classroom environment.			

	- To examine the perceived benefits and challenges associated with implementing pupil-choice methodology from both pupil and staff perspectives. - To gain insights into the potential effects of pupil-choice methodology on pupil engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity Objective 1: Conduct a literature review - This will first investigate research conducted by Alfie Kohn, Jean Piaget and Edward Deci. These researchers all emphasised the importance of autonomy, active learning, and exploration in the development of a child's cognitive ability. It will then further investigate modern interpretations of this method in schools such as the Montessori schools, who implement these research methodologies worldwide. These will all be considered with a critical ~~lense~~ <u>lense</u> in which all sides of the arguments for and against autonomy in the classroom will be presented. Objective 2: Conduct research with a representative sample – A Sample will be chosen at random within the reception class from the pool of children who have parental permission to take part in the research activity. Research will consist of a focus group, a staff questionnaire, and classroom observations as listed in proposed methods. Objective 3: Interpret data – The data will then be collated and analysed to reach the aims of the research study. This will be compared to the literature review to gain a further understanding of staff and children's perceptions of the use of pupil choice. Finally, conclusions will be drawn with regards to the implications of the research on my own personal teaching practice and potentially others. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a <u>brief summary</u> of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods <u>here</u> ~~but~~ should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	Drawing from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines, the proposed methods prioritize ethical considerations while gathering qualitative data from reception age pupils and staff members. 1. Focus Groups: Structured focus group sessions will be conducted with reception age pupils following BERA's guidelines on conducting research with children and young people. The sessions will provide a safe and inclusive environment for children to express their views and experiences regarding pupil-choice practices in the classroom. This will be age-appropriate questioning, to encourage participation and elicit rich insights. Focus groups will adhere to principles of confidentiality, ensuring that children's identities and responses are protected. Focus groups will take place at a time to minimize disruption and maintain the natural flow of classroom activities. If pupils with specialist provision are chosen for the focus group, the class teaching assistant may be present if requested. The focus group will consist of 6 children and will begin with open questioning surrounding pupil choice and whether the children prefer the activities that they choose to complete, or the ones that they work on with their teacher. As students are of a reception age, it is anticipated that questioning will have to be refined, a "either or" approach will be taken. E.G, would you like to do this task or this task? This will be conducted in the group of 6 and any child may answer the questions to ensure that assent is given. The data collected during this group will be qualitative data that I may use to gain insight into the opinions of children on pupil choice within the classroom. Notes will be made to summarise answers for each child within the group. 2. Staff Questionnaires: Questionnaires will be distributed to primary school staff members, aligning with BERA's guidance on ethical considerations in survey research. The questionnaires will be designed to gather staff perceptions of pupil-choice methodology, including its implementation, effectiveness, and observed impact on student engagement

	and learning outcomes. Clear instructions will be provided to ensure informed consent, and measures will be taken to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of responses. Staff members will have the option to participate voluntarily, with no coercion or pressure to disclose personal information. The data collected will be a combination of qualitative and quantitative data (using coding), to gain an understanding of how the teachers feel that pupil choice affects their <u>pupils</u> motivation. 3. Classroom Observations: Structured classroom observations will be conducted in accordance with BERA's recommendations for observational research in educational settings. This will employ non-intrusive methods, to document the frequency and nature of pupil choice within the classroom environment. Observations will be conducted discreetly to minimize disruption and maintain the natural flow of classroom activities. Children will be aware that they are being observed as it will be discussed at the beginning of the lesson. Detailed field notes will be taken, capturing contextual factors and interactions that may influence pupil-choice practices. Prior consent will be obtained from the school, and steps will be taken to ensure that observations do not infringe upon students' rights or disrupt the learning environment. The data collected will be a combination of qualitative data (personal observations and comments) and quantitative data (Tally charts, tick sheets) <u>in order to</u> gain perspective on what pupil choice looks like in practice and visible effects that it is having. (this box should expand as you type)					
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.					
8	The research activity will take place within a primary school in a town a few miles away from the centre of Cardiff. (this box should expand as you type)					
	Research activity outside of the <u>UK</u> If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, <u>particular cultural</u> and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the <u>research</u> then please state this.					
9	(this box should expand as you type)					
10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>NO</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> </table>	NO	☒	YES	☐
NO	☒					
YES	☐					
11	If <u>Yes</u>, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. (this box should expand as you type)					
	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?					
12	A prosperous Wales	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>☐</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	YES	NO	☐	☒
YES	NO					
☐	☒					



PG2 / E1 FORM

13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☒	☐
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	Mental health is a key feature of "a healthier Wales". This research activity looks at how pupil choice can affect motivation, which is strongly linked to having happier, mentally healthier students.		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method:	☐	☐
	(this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).



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If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☒	☐
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.		
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)	☐	☒

Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected? Maximum of 30 (this box should expand as you type)
11	Who will the participants be? 6 Children Approximately 20 members of staff (Teachers/Teaching assistants/ (this box should expand as you type)
12	How will you identify the participants? Children will be chosen at random out of a pool of children within the reception class who have received written parental permission. Teachers and Teaching assistants will all have access to the questionnaire and may choose to complete it. To complete the form, the teachers will first complete a consent form and may withdraw their consent at any point during the study. Everyone will be continually reminded that participation is optional.



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	(this box should expand as you type)
--	--------------------------------------

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
(this box should expand as you type)				

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
(this box should expand as you type)				

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.			
If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.			
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes ☐	No ☒
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		

	Risk to participants: 1) Emotional Distress for children during group discussion. 2) Disturbance to relationships. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: 1) Ensure access to support and revise the approach if needed. Collaborate with gatekeepers to clarify support services availability. Address any potential distress in interviews with young participants. Clearly explain interview conduct, topics, and rights to participants. Maintain regular communication with participants to reaffirm consent and provide updates. 2) Ensure confidentiality and anonymity of those participating in the research at all times. Work with gatekeepers to promote an understanding of the nature of the research, and to gain assurances that the young people's participation in it is fully supported and will not result in recrimination by staff or peers. The teaching assistant may be present if children with additional needs are present, however, all questions will be considered to be determined if they are appropriate in this case and children may choose not to answer questions if they wish. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: 1) Allegations while conducting <u>interviews</u> 2) Participants may wish to <u>withdraw</u> 3) A confidentiality breach due to data <u>being</u> released accidentally. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator: 1) Ensure access to a suitable space that secures the confidentiality of the of the participant contributions, whilst also being visible to other colleagues. 2) In the case of withdrawal from the student group, discussions would be conducted with the remaining participants and new participants will be recruited from the pool of children with parental consent. 3) The research will be stored on the UWTSO cloud, data and transcripts will be password protected in electronic folders on UWTSO systems and subject to university protocols. However, GDPR statements will be included in any participant information and consent and that the researcher has completed training on GDPR and will ensure that all records are kept in secure cloud locations as a precaution and not on any hard drive. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Reputational damage <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: Ensure adherence to the UWTSD code of ethics and research standards and commonly agreed standards of good practice. Ensure compliance with data storage regulations and university guidelines and security procedures. Ensure that research methodology is robust and that methods are appropriate. Adhere to the UWTSD code of conduct (and also the EWC code of conduct if you are a teacher). Establish clarity regarding procedures on reporting of disclosures in field <u>work</u> settings. Work with partners to promote a comprehensive understanding regard the nature of the research <u>in order to</u> avoid misunderstandings and manage expectations. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: Use of paper <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: This research activity will mostly use electronic systems. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

Disclosure and Barring Service			
	YES	NO	N/A
7	☒	☐	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not <u>available</u> please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number. 001769439161		

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	After the focus group, I will thank pupils for their help and tell them that we are no longer doing the focus group so that they are no longer being observed. For the questionnaire, an email will be setup for participants if they wish to request access to the final report. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent

	Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Online questionnaire - screen before the questions start <u>that acts</u> as a consent form, informing participants that by clicking on the NEXT button they are providing consent. Focus groups and observations – Parental consent form will be sent prior to research being <u>conducted</u> (this box should expand as you type)
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	All data will be anonymised prior to analysis and write up. (this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, <u>in particular by</u> reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants <u>is considered to be</u> personal data.	X	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	An identifier must be stored for GDPR purposes so that if withdrawal of data is requested, I may delete their records. All data will be stored securely on the UWTSD cloud with an authenticator. Any data presented within the write up will be anonymised. (this box should expand as you type)		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	"Special category data" means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) <u>religious beliefs</u> or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes).	☐	X
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	 (this box should expand as you type)		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☒
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All paper consent files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet which only I have access to. All data will be kept in password protected personal computer. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. If any cloud storage is needed, the University Office 365 system will be used, which will be encrypted and the data in the cloud is anonymised. The data will be stored until receipt of the result and then deleted. Participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them and these data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	The Researcher <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The Researcher <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not <u>why not</u> .		
	Each participant's electronic consent form and data from interviews, class observation and questionnaire will be stored in a secure place in a password protected personal computer or the University Office 365 system which will be encrypted. Signed informed consent forms in paper form will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will be unavailable to anyone except the researcher. On receiving the feedback and mark for this piece of work, the signed informed consent forms will be destroyed. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If <u>so</u> please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒



PG2 / E1 FORM

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.	
	In submitting this <u>application</u> I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/	
1	Signature of applicant:	Date: 14/03/2024

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Date:
3	Signature:	14/03/2024

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:	Date:
5	Signature:	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where <u>appropriate</u>). ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the <u>above named</u> research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY Once complete, submit this form via the MyTSD Doctoral College Portal at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).
RESEARCH STAFF ONLY All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

Appendix E – Parental Consent Form**CONSENT FORM**

PROJECT TITLE: What are the perceptions of staff and reception age students of the relationship between pupil-choice and engagement in learning?

Name of Researcher:

██████████

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 09/04/2024 for the above study.

☐

2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my child from the study at any time, without giving any reason.

☐

3. I understand that my child can choose to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

4. I understand that the information given by my child will be used in a university assignment.

☐

5. I understand that my child's name will not appear at any time.

☐

6. I agree for my child to take part in the above study.

☐

Child's name

Parent signature

Date

When completed, please return to

██████████

Thank you.

INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: What are the perceptions of staff and reception age students of the relationship between pupil-choice and engagement in learning?

Dear Parent / Guardian,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am studying for a PGCE qualification at University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I am currently a student teacher within [REDACTED] and am teaching in your child's class.

I would like to invite your child to participate in my research project. The title of the project is listed at the top of this page. The project aims to understand how a child making choices in the classroom can affect their motivation. Through your child's participation, I hope to further my understanding of this topic and improve the quality of my teaching.

If consent is given, your child may be chosen at random to work in a focus group of 6 children with me, answering a few open-ended questions surrounding the different choices that they make within the classroom e.g. Which toys they play with and what they enjoy doing.

All names will be kept strictly confidential and will only be known by myself. Your child's participation in this study is completely voluntary so you or your child can withdraw from the study at any stage. Your child will also be asked to give their assent before the beginning of the study.

After careful and precise analysis of the data obtained from the lesson observation and group interview, I would be happy to provide you with a copy of the findings at your request. The results of the research will be discussed in a university assignment that will contribute to my PGCE course. The results of this study will be stored on the secure university one drive and all raw data will be destroyed once the assessment has been marked.

I thank you in advance for your time. If any questions do arise, feel free to contact me at your convenience. I will be in the classroom at the end of every school day!

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Appendix F – Details of gaining assent

During the focus group, the children were first given the option to sit down at the table and answer questions. They were reminded at the start of every question that they were not required to answer the question and that there was no reward or consequence either way. Throughout the focus group, some pupils requested to leave and go and play, which was allowed and so they left the focus group.