

Targets	How you have worked on this	An example can be found on
Make synthesis and critical analysis and evaluation a frequent and consistent feature of your writing.	Combined sources to back up research.	Research found by Black and Wiliam (1998a); Topping (1998) and Van Zundert et al. (2010) argue that...
Please refer to the referencing guide for the errors identified on page 2 and page 3.	Used the Harvard referencing guide.	Throughout

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 your professional practice.

During this assignment I am going to conduct a small-scale research study and critically evaluate the impact of chosen research tools and data. The aim of the study is to improve my own professional practice whilst exploring staff and pupils' perceptions of assessment for learning (AFL), particularly self-assessment. Black and William (1998a) demonstrated in a wide-ranging research review that through implementing AFL within the classroom, such an approach could improve both exam results and learning (Teaching Expertise (2020). AFL has become a core principle within Curriculum for Wales (2022) with the Welsh Government (2013) stating that AFL is an approach to teaching and learning that involves learners being engaged in their own learning journey. This links to the Curriculum for Wales (2022) as it encourages learners to take control of their own learning, enabling them to engage within the 4-purposes of the curriculum. My research question for my study is 'What are teachers and Year 5 learners' perception of self-assessment?'. The study will take place within a year 5 class in a large school in South Wales with approximately 400 pupils. I have chosen self-assessment as my chosen aspect of AFL because self-assessment is something that I struggled with throughout my education therefore I would like to explore both teachers and pupils' perceptions of it. Based on my experience I found that not all learners engage with self-assessment appropriately therefore I have decided to focus particularly on self-assessment within my study. This study adopts the 'Mosaic Approach' whereby the research design is fixed around mixed methods and gaining the perspective of the child (Research, 2020). To conduct this study, I will be using the research tools of both a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire will be created to collect data based on staff perceptions of self-assessment whereas the interview will be created to collect data based on pupils' perceptions of self-assessment.

Cambridge University (2019) define assessment for learning as, an approach to teaching and learning that creates feedback which is then used to improve students' performance. There are two types of

assessment, formative and summative, which are often referred to as AFL (University of Greenwich, 2022). Summative assessment is a type of assessment which happens at the end of a topic, term or yearly, for example a written test, observation or a task. Whereas formative assessment happens on a day-to-day basis, for example through questioning or quizzes. Formative assessment allows pupils and teachers to track progression regularly (NFER, 2022). According to Black and Dylan Wiliam's (1998) research in the UK, students who learn in a formative way in the classroom perform better academically than other students. In their book 'The Black Box: Raising Standards via Classroom Assessment', they provided evidence of how AFL could improve the teaching-learning process (Black, P., & Wiliam, D. 2006). The Welsh Government (2022) have identified that the use of AFL accelerates progress and believe that the purpose of assessment is to support the progression of each individual learner in relation to the 3 to 16 curriculums (Welsh Government, 2022). AFL strategies are divided into 5 categories including sharing learning expectations, questioning, feedback, self-assessment and peer assessment. This study focuses on self-assessment. According to Boud (1999), during self-assessment, students decide what standards must be met to produce a quality piece of work and how to apply those standards to their own work.

By evaluating the depth of their knowledge and understanding, students can take control of their learning through self-assessment. It offers a framework for people to consider their work, what they have discovered, and how they could improve (RSC Education, 2020). According to Coe et al., (2020), great teachers help pupils to plan, regulate and monitor their own learning; progressing appropriately from structured to more independent learning as students develop knowledge and expertise. This can be done in the form of self-assessment (Great-Teaching-Toolkit, 2020). Dr Cheryl Jones (2020) states that self-assessment is a key component of the AFL process and a very effective teaching technique. She emphasises that learners will be able to discover the gaps in their own learning if they are able to evaluate their own work; this will facilitate learning, promote development, and help learners manage their own learning.

Benefits of self-assessment include checking understanding, promote independence, consolidate learning, develops evaluative skills, deepens understanding and increases engagement (Twinkl, 2021). According to Dabell (2021) children have a vital role in taking ownership of their own education. Getting children actively involved in accurately assessing their own learning and acting on that judgement is one of the fundamental tenets of formative assessment. In agreement with this, Kumon UK (2012) states that children will learn more about the steps they need to take to fix any areas where they may be weaker if you encourage them to evaluate their own work. Research underpinning these theories has shown that pupils make more progress when they are actively involved in their own learning and assessment (NFER, 2012).

According to Fallows and Chandramohan (2001), a child's internal perspective can influence and deepen personal learning. Boud (1990) states that self-assessment is essential to all elements of learning because only the learner can make decisions about their own learning. Boud is further clarified by Nulty (2011), who states that students judge their own work and then as a result will modify their future behaviour. The NFER (2022) stated that teachers believe that students' attitudes have changed because they now want to be actively involved and in charge of their own learning. Previously, students would queue at the desk to receive teacher feedback, but now they are content with assessing their own work.

In relation to this, McDowell (1995) believes that when students self-assess their work, they can reflect on the amount of effort they have put into the task, which often a teacher does not see or take into consideration. However, Stanton (1978) believes that this raises the problem of incorrect grading, which casts doubt on the accuracy of the self-assessment approach. To get a good grade at the end, students who are under pressure to do well may be tempted to give themselves higher marks while self-evaluating. Despite the many benefits of self-assessment, research found by Black and Wiliam (1998a); Topping (1998) and Van Zundert et al. (2010) argue that peer assessment should be the main form of assessment used in schools. Their research argues that through peer assessment, children have the opportunity for a second opinion (Double, McGrane and Hopfenbeck, 2019).

Disadvantages of using self-assessment within the classroom include children not understanding the marking criteria and children overly criticising themselves (Twinkl, 2021). A disadvantage to self-assessment according to Dunlosky and Rawson (2012), Yan and Brown (2017), Joughin, Boud, and Dawson (2019) is that self-assessment is solely introspective and lacks calibration therefore this means the assessment of their own work is more likely to be subject to personal bias (e.g., overconfidence, relying on the amount of effort they have put in rather than the quality of their performance) and is therefore less useful for enhancing performance and guiding future learning. In agreement with this, Stanton (1978) stated that when pupils self-assess, they are often overly critical or overly generous in their marking, therefore making self-assessment less reliable.

This study adopts the 'Mosaic Approach' whereby the research design is fixed around a pragmatic approach with the aim of gaining the perspective of the child (Research, 2020). According to Alison Clark (2005) the aims of the 'Mosaic Approach' is to develop methodologies that include the voice of the children in the evaluation of early childhood services. The UNCRC (1989) state that children have the right to have their own voice, this is why I adopted a 'mosaic approach' for my study. This approach combines research methods of observation and interviewing with the introduction of

participatory tools (Clark, 2005). The Mosaic Approach is a multimethod that makes use of children's active participation and design through tours, photographs, maps, conversations, and observations to help children communicate about their environments more profoundly and effectively than they might be able to with just words (Clark and Moss, 2001). For my study I have chosen interviews and a questionnaire as my research tools.

Interviews are an effective way of getting qualitative and quantitative data. According to Bhandari (2020), qualitative research entails gathering and analysing non-numerical data (such as text, video, or audio) to better comprehend ideas, opinions, or experiences. Quantitative research, which involves gathering and evaluating numerical data for statistical analysis, is the antithesis of qualitative research (Bhandari, 2020). The quality of the interview data is dependent upon the interviews management of the interaction between themselves and child participants (Danby, Ewing and Thorpe, 2011). According to George (2022) interviews allow you to gather rich information and draw more detailed conclusions than other research methods. Bailey (1994) states that interviews provide more flexibility to both the interviewee and the participants involved. This is because questions can be added at the end of an interview if the data collected was not specific or detailed enough. This was something I took into consideration when planning which research tool I was going to use in order to collect data from both teachers and pupils. Interviewing pupils was my final decision as research shows that as the interviewer, I could judge non-verbal behaviour of the participants during the interview (Bailey, 1994). This is important when interviewing children as sometimes their body language says more than their words (Writer, 2020). George (2022) states that interviews can also be used to collect quantitative data. This was another reason I chose interview as a research tool because interviews can collect both types of data using one research tool. Despite the many benefits to interviewing, there are limitations to consider.

Bailey (1994) and George (2022) both agree that a limitation to interviewing is that it can be time consuming. This is because a lot of preparation must go into the planning beforehand. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017) quote that "Educational researchers cannot simply 'read off' the planning and conduct of research as though one were reading a recipe for baking a cake". I took this into consideration when planning for my research day and ensured that I had both questionnaire (see appendix A) and interview questions (see appendix B) prepared and trialled on family members to ensure that the questions were specific enough to retain detailed answers. According to Bailey (1994) interviews provide less anonymity. With this in mind, I ensured that I had consent from all participants before taking part in the interview and explained that I will keep them anonymised throughout the interview process and handling data afterwards (see appendix E and F). I also gave each participant a thumbs up and thumbs down card to show their consent throughout the

interview. I completed an ethics form (see appendix E) and created a consent form (see appendix F) beforehand as evidence that I am aware and understand the importance of consent, confidentiality and anonymity when taking part in any form of research. A common issue within interviews is controlling social desirability bias.

Nikolopoulou (2022) defines social desirability as respondents who submit responses to questions that they think would make them look good to others while hiding their genuine thoughts or experiences. My response to this during my interview was to allow the pupils to say what they thought, without adding my opinion or views. For the sampling, I chose to interview 6 children from the year 5 class within school A. I chose this number of pupils as I didn't want to be taking out half of the class during the day but wanted to ensure that I would have enough data to help answer my research question by finding out their perspective of self-assessment. I decided to split the 6 pupils into two groups rather than one whole group to hear everyone's opinions. The 6 pupils were chosen at random by the class teacher using lollipop sticks. This is because I wanted a random sampling of children. I chose to interview in groups rather than with each child individually for many reasons. I considered the benefits and limitations of both individual interviewing and focus group interviews and decided that group interviews would suit the year 5 class best. This is because focus groups result in more elaboration of topics or themes (Heary & Hennessy, 2006). I wanted my answers from the class to be specific and detailed and to achieve that I concluded that it would be best if children could bounce off each other's ideas. I recorded the results from the interview by transcribing on paper what was said during the conversation. I ensured to not write down any names and referred to the children as child A, B and C (see appendix D).

Debois (2022) states that there are many benefits of using questionnaires as a research tool. These include that they are inexpensive, provide fast results, practical and provide anonymity. This research solidified that questionnaires would be the best option for me to reach out to teachers to collect data for my research question, this is because fast results was something I needed as I wanted as much time as possible to collect and compare the data between each person that submitted a response. Despite this, there are many ethical issues that can occur when using a questionnaire as a research tool. BERA Guidelines (2018) state that you will need to obtain informed consent from all participants prior to completion of the questionnaire. I ensured I did this by visiting school A prior to sending out the online questionnaire link and ensured verbal consent before emailing out the sample. Guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, and non – traceability is extremely important when commencing any form of research (BERA, 2018). I ensured I did this through anonymising the data and not knowing what answers are from what teachers. Einola and Alvesson (2020) state that limitations to questionnaires include that they contain limited responses,

limited structure and question directed answers. Similarly, to this view, Debois (2022) stated that a lack of personalisation is a limitation to questionnaires. My response to this limitation was to provide questions that required personalised answers (see appendix A). According to Jones, Baxter and Khanduja (2013), the size of the sample chosen for the questionnaire is important as you must consider non-responders, lost questionnaires and improper answers.

In preparation for my research day, I created a questionnaire aimed at teachers as my target audience. I chose to sample teachers for the questionnaire as I wanted to ensure there would be flexibility for them to complete and take part in my study. Debois (2022) stated that questionnaires ensure no pressure is put on the participants. This research was something I took into consideration when making my decisions on what research tools to use for my study. Once I had created an online questionnaire (see appendix A) I created a shareable link and sent it to teachers within school A that taught in key stage 2 (KS2). I decided to sample KS2 teachers only as year 5 is my target audience and I wanted to ensure I gathered a wider perspective from teachers teaching at different ages within KS2. This ensured that the answers from the questionnaires would be appropriate for the age group and perspective that I want to achieve from this study. Out of 8 possible responses from the KS2 teachers I received 6. My research beforehand prepared me for having non – responders therefore I ensured to add two extra questions within the questionnaires to collect as much data from each participant as possible. I wrote my questionnaire with the aim of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to connect more deeply with my chosen audience and create a holistic picture (Osbaldeston, 2021). If I was to complete this study again, I would continue to distribute the questionnaires to teachers as I received great, relevant responses. Although I would distribute them across the whole school to see the different perspectives of self-assessment across different year groups throughout the school. The interviews were successful however next time, if I was to do the study again, I would like to see how different the perspectives of self-assessment are between children with lower learning abilities compared to the higher children within the class.

During my interviews with both groups of children, all 6 admitted that they do use self-assessment in class. Types of self-assessment included purple pen for corrections, tick box sheets for self, peer and teacher comments and two stars and a wish (see appendix D). Most children answered that they self-assess often, mostly in written work. When asked what they like about self-assessment child A stated that they like that it's independent and they like having their own opinion of their work. This solidifies the importance of the UNCRC (1989) where children have the right to have their own voice. Child A added that they like that there's more freedom, you know what you could have done better, therefore it is easier to improve. This concurs with the curriculum for Wales (2022) and the importance of children being in control of their own learning. Child B stated that when they know

they are self-assessing their work it makes them work extra hard. This evidence solidifies McDowell (1995) as he believes that self-assessment leads to more reflection of a piece of work and the amount of effort that was put into it. When asked if there is anything they find difficult about self-assessment two children agreed that they find it hard to criticise themselves and would prefer to peer-assess. This contradicts the findings of Stanton (1978) as he stated that children often overly criticise themselves when self-assessing. When asked if they prefer peer or self-assessment 4/6 children prefer peer assessment. The main reason for this is because they find that peer assessment is more interesting as they are reading a new piece of work and are often excited to receive their work back from peers to see what they thought of the work. The main limitation to peer assessment is friendship bias. They explained that often when peer-assessing a friend's piece of work, they are more likely to leave nicer comments than to someone else in the class, despite the level of accuracy that the work displays. This was insightful as this wasn't a limitation that I had considered before the interview with the children. Child C stated that they prefer to self-assess as they have concerns over whether their work will be assessed fairly, when they self-assess they know they are in control. This links to Dabell (2021) who stated that children have a vital role in taking ownership of their own education. A common limitation of self-assessment found by the children was that they often are unsure of the success criteria. This concurs with Twinkl (2021).

The data collected from the questionnaire showed different views of teacher's perspectives on self-assessment (see appendix C). Responses showed that all teachers use 5 strategies of AFL within their classroom. There was a difference when relating to how often self-assessment is used within their classroom with 1 response stating that they don't use it often, 4 stating that they use it often and 1 response stating that they always use it. When asked what methods of self-assessment they use within their classroom there were many similarities with success criteria tick sheets being the most popular. Linking with the data collected from the interview, the children agreed that the tick sheets were their preferred method of self-assessment as they can receive peer and teacher feedback as well as self-assessing. Sauntson (2019) states that teachers need to be taught to model good self-assessment. One response stated that children self-assess their work using two stars and a wish or what went well (WWW) and even better if (EBI) against the steps to success in writing activities. They may also comment on the writing rather than the individual steps and have started saying something that they have seen in peer assessment that they will use in their writing next time. This is a similar theme that was found within the data during the interview as the children stated that through peer assessing they could pick up on new vocabulary and different writing styles that they didn't think of before and will make them think about changing their own writing for next time. When asked what they think the benefit of self-assessment are, similar themes were found between

the interview data as responses included children taking responsibility of their own learning and self-assessment making children look more closely at their work in more detail. These results correlate and support the data found within the interview as both the children and teachers are seen to have similar perspectives of the benefits of self-assessment.

Similar limitations to self-assessment were found in the data produced in the questionnaire as the data found from the interview, as responses included that self-assessment is time consuming and that children may not fully understand the success criteria, these themes intertwine with the limitations found by the children within the interview. When asked how effective they think self-assessment is within their classroom, there was a 50/50 split between somewhat effective and very effective. Reasons given for this include that pupils clearly understand how self-assessment is used within the setting of school A and continuously use these strategies regularly. This then leads to better understanding of the expectations within the learning, and they can reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses. Despite this, another response stated that they believe self-assessment on its own is not good enough and a range of techniques would be best. This links to the results found within the interview, as the children stated that they prefer to self and peer assess together. The significance of these results show that the teachers and pupils both share similar perspectives of self-assessment. This was different than I originally predicted as I thought the views between teachers and children would be completely different to what they were.

To conclude, I have successfully met the aim of my study which was to find out what teachers and pupils' perspective of self-assessment was. The results from my data were not how I predicted as I discovered that both teachers and pupils share very similar views of the benefits and limitations of self-assessment, whereas I thought they would oppose opposite views. The data collected solidified the importance of AFL strategies as a whole and shows that school A are promoting AFL and children leading, they're own learning as the curriculum for Wales (2022) instructs. I believe that by completing this study it has improved my knowledge and my professional practice as student teacher as I have had an insight of the effects of one AFL strategy and can take these considerations forward with me in my development of a student teacher. Recommendations for transforming my personal practice would be to use another form of research tool if completing the study again such as an observation to see how my chosen AFL strategy is implemented within the setting itself.

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