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How can we use a self-assessment signalled response to measure as student's engagement within a lesson?

The Enquiring Teacher ECPP7001

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Aim:

The aim of this research is to discover whether using a self-assessment tool within the lesson, can help improve student engagement and understanding. Boud and Falchikov (1989) define self-assessment as the student reflecting upon their work in relation to success criteria. This has become imperative within my own teaching practice, as I wish for the students to be engaged with what they are learning and allowing them to provide instant feedback to myself, the educator. Furthermore, within my class, some students have been unable to verbalize if they do not understand, which then leads to them becoming disengaged with the lesson. Taras (2010) argues that self-assessment is extremely valuable. Consequently, for this research, the use of a blind self-assessment tool was decided upon. We wish to see if this use of a blind self-assessment response, in this case thumbs up, to the side or down, actually has an impact on their learning.

Research Context:

In relation with the Ethical Guidelines of BERA (2018), both school and student names are to remain anonymous and confidential within this essay. The schools shall be referred to as School A and School B, and the students as pupil 1 etc. Both of the schools are faith schools, one based in the Swansea area and the other based within the Neath-Port Talbot area. My partner and I taught in the same Key Stage and the same age class. This enabled us to compare ideas and experiences within this setting, before creating the question for this research project. Self-Assessment and how this impacts on the student's engagement within the lesson became a key focus for us. Their opinion and voice on their learning is essential (Jelly et al., 2000). This inspired us to have a focus on how students using a rating game, thumbs up, to the side or down, could show how they were engaged with the lesson, and how they deemed they were achieving in relation to the success criteria. Our question was then formed: "*How can we use a self-assessment signalled response to measure as student's engagement within a lesson?*" Consequently, this meant the class shall be subjected to a blind game of thumbs up, to the side or down, whilst having their head on the table so their rating stayed anonymous. The students will be asked to do this every ten minutes of the lesson, therefore, students can inform us, the teacher, if they feel they are succeeding or need help within the lesson.

Literature Review:

Self-Assessment is an important tool within the lesson as, Buyukkarci (2014), argues it engages both the student and teacher in the learning. It allows for the teacher to see how the students are engaged with the lesson and it also can inspire independence in a student's learning. Within Wales, developing independent learners has now become a prerogative with the implementation of the new curriculum (Donaldson, 2015). There has now been a new shift towards creating learners that can have an input and control on their learning. Consequently, self-assessment can provide some this independence, as Broad (2006) argues that self-assessment can be seen as autonomous learning. Therefore, the use of self-assessment within this research is pivotal, as it allows the students to successfully provide their engagement levels within a lesson and can be measured somewhat successfully.

Interestingly, there were some negatives over the use of self-assessment techniques, and how they can have a negative impact, or even harm the quality of teaching. Kananen et al (2002) argues that self-assessment can cause competition and confusion. This is due to students not being fully sure what they are measuring against. Broadfoot (1998) agrees with this and states that students will just assess what they feel is important to them. Thus, self-assessment can be perceived as not wholly successful if it is not clear or used successfully. Leach (2012) develops this further by stating students will unsuccessfully rate themselves. Therefore, when the self-assessment technique is used with the students, why they are using it must explicitly be clear, this will then help ensure that their result relates to what the teacher is asking for. Furthermore, Black et al (2004) presents a further pitfall and that is the confrontation between teacher and student, as the teacher may take their reaction as a criticism. This hostility could cause friction, and then spur a practitioner to not use self-assessment techniques further – the modern practitioner should therefore be open to the students providing feedback through the medium of self-assessment. Consequently, these scholars provide a different approach to self-assessment, however, they all possess a similar theme, and that is to make sure the students understand why and what they are rating. If this explicit understanding is missing, it may cause conflict and hostility within a classroom and ultimately impact student engagement.

In contrast to the negatives, other scholars see self-assessment as a pivotal tool within an educational setting, as it allows students to express their thoughts and response to specific work within a lesson – whether on an educational or emotional level. This tool is essential, as it is explicitly highlighted within the UNCRC in Article 13 (UNICEF, 2010), where a child has the freedom to express their opinion. Consequently, as educators we must allow for this to happen within our lessons, as it allows us to gauge whether a student has understood or how they are responding to the work at hand. This has been ratified by the U.K government, as educators, we must enable pupil voice – self-assessment can do this (Kasanen et al, 2002). Furthermore, Reiger, ed, 2012 cited in Shatri & Zabeli (2018) states self-assessment can improve planning and instructions in future practice. Allowing the students to rate how they have succeeded in relation to the success criteria is important, as it allows educators to then develop and change the lesson in relation to the classes need. Moreover, to provide engagement and create an effective learning environment, Vygotsky (1978) theorises that there must be a degree of communication about learning between student and teacher. Therefore, this certainly contradicts the idea that self-assessment may not necessarily be effective in engagement. If the student does not feel listened to, they may not engage fully with what is being taught within the lesson. In conclusion, there should be a community feel within the classroom, that allows the students and teacher to be honest with what is working and what is not.

Using self-assessment strategies can also provide instant feedback and continuous feedback within the lesson, this is valuable to the educator as it allows them to spend more time on a topic that students may not understand. This therefore makes the classroom an active environment as Bruce (2001) dictates, that it allows the students to stop and pay attention to what they have learnt and if they are succeeding. This view is supported by Andrade & Du (2007) as they state that students can reflect on how they feel and how they are succeeding. This, therefore, provides valuable information to the teacher and allows the students to develop as independent and reflective learners. It creates a proactive environment within the class, as the teacher can instantaneously respond to those that feel they are struggling. Moreover, self-assessment can go hand-in-hand with self-esteem, as Dweck (1999) presents the idea that students can develop self-awareness and self-resilience. It can be seen as an imperative to use self-assessment as educators can then gauge what external factors are impacting on the students when they come to undertake a piece of work. Consequently, Kasanen et al (2002) argues that self-assessment is imperative in creating an engaged

classroom, as long as the assessment is clear. All of this literature helped us refine our research question; refine our intentions within the study and if self-assessment does impact engagement. In regards to literature, all competition has been removed, as the technique is now a blind assessment technique. Furthermore, every time they are asked to assess themselves, it is to be made clear what they are intently assessing.

Lesson Study Methodology:

To undertake our research, we followed the principle of Dudley's model of Lesson Study (Dudley, 2015). Lesson Study is research that is done in action, and which focuses on teacher learning, as it allows teachers to work together to research a topic that may be beneficial for students in the long run. It is a simple co-operative reflective technique (Pollard et al., 2014). Therefore, it enhances the practice of all teachers involved and contributes to their pedagogical and subject content knowledge, which a practitioner needs to continually develop throughout their career. Dudley himself points out limitations with Lesson Study (LS), as he states that the model can be used incorrectly and not develop teacher's skills (Dudley, 2015). As a result of this, it should be ensured that the LS is going to be productive and focus on real development of the issue at hand. Due to this being a small-scale study, to enhance a co-operative approach to refining our teaching skills and developing our understanding of pedagogy. It will not directly impact the wider study on the impact of self-assessment within the wider world, however, it may impact our future teaching within schools.

Observation:

A variation of methods were used to collect data within the research, these included: non-participant observations; focus group interview with a sample selection of students and reflections on all aspects using specific reflective models - which shall be outlined in detail. For the research, three sample students shall be observed, and their results shall be a reflection and representation of the class as a whole. In relation to this, all data measured shall be qualitative data, as Wragg (1994) summarises observation is a form of qualitative data. In relation to this, as an answer to a specific question is being searched for Mack et al (2005) states this shall be qualitative data. A non-participation/direct observation technique

shall be used (Sharp 2012; Kawulich 2012). Thus, meaning that the observer shall not interact with those being observed, however, the observed know that they are being observed. This shall then negate any chance of interference with results from the observer. Furthermore, our research shall be structured in the observation.) Thus, the agenda shall be clearly understood (Sharp, 2012). This type of observation was decided upon, as we are to measure the level of engagement within the lesson. Consequently, to measure engagement, we have modified Leuven's Scale of Engagement, Laevers (2008), this observation sheet is viewable in Appendix 1. As evident, our observation sheet is in the format of a rating scale, which Herr (2015) states is a good way of recording something specific – thus was necessary for our research. This, therefore, allows us to measure their engagement and response to the lesson and work provided – this data shall then be measured and can quantify how the students have engaged in the lesson. Moreover, Herr (2015) states a pitfall of rating scales, that information may be missed. This provoked us with the notion on how to overcome this issue, thus an 'other comments' section was provided to allow for further observation. Further limitations were that we have only one lesson each to observe if the self-assessment helps students within the lesson. There may have been limitations to the results, as for on this day, there could have been external factors impacting on the students that we were not aware of. Thus, the levels within the Ecological System Theory can be used as a tool to remember external factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Interview:

When developing our research methodology, the aspect of interviews were imperative as this allowed for the pupil's voice to be heard and provide feedback on the research. The Welsh Government is focused on allowing students to have opportunities to provide feedback and opinions on decisions, WG (2011). This was then considered in our research, as we felt that pupil voice was imperative. Thus, to allow for us to gather this feedback, we decided to use a focus group for interviews, as Breen (2006) iterates that a focus group is valuable in finding out student experiences in research. Thus, this was deemed an acceptable method to find out information and data from individuals, Breen (2006) points out that data received from focus groups is qualitative data and should be transcribed in some way. Consequently, the information we received, shall be qualitative data, and the individual who is not asking students the questions shall transcribe all information provided. When this data is transcribed,

it shall be in relation to BERA (2018), all information will remain confidential. Furthermore, we took a sample of three students to interview, there may be a degree of limitation with this size of group, however Morgan (1998) argues having too many interviewees can may not provide focused results – thus for our research a small focus group was opted for to provide optimal results. Building on this, people are more comfortable in a group format Krueger & (Casey, 2000; Cheng 2014). This form of interview was deemed suitable, as this took away the pressure of a one to one format interview. In comparison to the positives of focus groups, the limitations must be explored, for example, the interviewer themselves may lack the ability to interview well. Sharp (2012) suggests lots of dangers for interviews, for example, leading questions. As a result of this, before the interview, the interviewer must practise and rehearse their interviewing technique. In conclusion, all of this impacted on how the interview questionnaire was formatted and created, and this is available to view in Appendix 2.

Reflections:

The last aspect of our research methodology was the aspect of reflection Reflective practice creates the most effective teaching practitioner (Ofsted 2004; Schleisser, 2014). As a result of this, once all of the research has been undertaken, there shall be reflection on all of the results and data that has been obtained. This is imperative as it allows us as researchers to compile the most important information and if the question posed has been resolved. To do this in relation to the research that has been undertaken, the reflections shall use these models: the Four Lenses of Reflection (Brookfield, 1998) and The Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1998). These reflective models are seen in the creation of a reflection sheet for the research undertaken, this is available to view in Appendix 3. These models shall be used to reflect on how the lesson went, what worked, what could be changed and if the information gathered provides answers to the question posed. A reflective practitioner should scrutinise themselves to develop their craft (Schon, 1983). This is imperative in the case of our research, as reflection should scrutinise if the research was carried out effectively and what can be developed and changed to make it more successful for future research.) However, the practitioner, may not be effective in reflection (Wyse and Rogers, 2016). To negate the issue of the reflections being unsuccessful or lacking, the desire to use the different reflection models was imperative.

Ethical Considerations:

When undertaking a research project concerning children, the practitioner must take every responsibility to be ethical.

Collins Dictionary defines ethics as the “philosophical study of the moral value of human conduct.” (Collins Dictionary, 2019)

Before any of the research has been undertaken, we as a researcher have completed an ethics form, which is available to be perused in Appendix 4. Here it is evident that this research is to be undertaken in compliance with the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice (2017) and the BERA (2018) guidelines. Mohr (2001) argues that the students are the main responsibility for the teacher in research. This is important, as we must understand that the students have the right to: give consent; assent; withdraw consent; for their data to not be shared and to remain anonymous in the study. Our duty is that they are protected at all times. As our research pertains to working with children, Doyle (2007) reminds us of the notion of informed consent and the need to gather parental permission. Thus, before the research is undertaken with the students, their parents shall be informed first, and their permission is imperative in allowing the research to go ahead. Furthermore, the emotional impact on the students should be taken into consideration, and if there is any risk of causing emotional distress, the study should be halted, and that student’s well-being put first. As a practitioner, we must be aware of current affairs in relation to data storage, especially due to the new General Data Protection Regulation (2018), this act has transformed how data is now stored and what can be stored. Consequently, it is imperative for us as researchers to be aware of what is happening in a wider context when undertaking research. This is especially true in regards for doing research for the university - as we need to keep ourselves and the university safeguarded.

Lesson Study 1 Analysis:

In Appendix 5, the lesson plan used for this lesson has been attached. Here it shows that it was planned to stop the class six times and ask for a rating of the lesson. This by them placing their heads on the table and then using their thumbs to rate their engagement, feelings and how they felt they were succeeding in relation to the success criteria. A Literacy lesson was planned, where they had ten minutes to write a short story, this then allowed us to plan our rating stops efficiently. Thus, providing natural stopping points throughout the lesson, was a way to not disturb their learning by forcing them to stop at a point where they may have felt they were succeeding.

In the first lesson, the children were spread about the classroom, and being the observer this time, it was easy to see and observe each child. Just before the lesson, they were reminded that they were going to be observed and if we still had their consent before starting. Ensuring consent is imperative (Doyle, 2007). This ensured that the research was ethically strong – and that there would not be issues regarding the research later on. At the beginning of the lesson, the whole class was informed of the technique that was to be used within the lesson and how often. Thus, the children confirmed that they understood what was to happen and the lesson proceeded with its first self-assessment. In relation with BERA (2018) all students shall remain anonymous. After the first self-assessment rating, Child 1 rated themselves as high, this was in relation to Leuven's Scale of Engagement (Laevers, 2008), whereas, both Child 2 and Child 3 rated themselves as low. This was an interesting baseline for the lesson, as we could now understand that there may have been external factors impacting on the two rating as low. It is imperative to keep the Ecological System Theory in mind (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). During the introduction, all three, from an observational point of view, showed strong engagement and were very excited to answer questions about the topic. Child 1 was the only child that showed any loss of interest by twiddling with their hair. At the end of the introduction, the second self-assessment took place, and all three children were now rated as high in relation to the scale. This was interesting for Child 2 and 3, and they had raised considerably from their rating of low. This showed that they were engaged with the lesson and understood the expectations and success criteria of the task.

The children were then presented with an image and had to create a story regarding the image, they were given ten minutes and undertook another self-assessment. Within these 10 minutes, all three were showing good engagement from an observational point of view, however, Child 1 and 2 now rated themselves as moderate. Child 3 continued to rate themselves as high. Child 1 and 2's result was interesting, as from an observer's point of

view, they were writing, smiling and getting on with the work, however rated themselves moderately. The children then had ten minutes with a new image to create a story and then undertook another self-assessment, Child 3 observationally, was very chatty and distracted however rated their engagement as high. Child 1 continued their rating as moderate, and Child 2, even though looking flustered, rated themselves as high. This is interesting in itself, as what the teacher may see, may not be how the student is actually feeling within themselves. They then proceeded to have another ten minutes to undertake the task, and then undertook the fifth self-assessment in the lesson. Observationally, Child 1 was intense in their activity and was very engaged and this matched their own self-assessment which was rated as high. Observationally, Child 2 showed good engagement initially, however, began to chat and cause low level disruption. Interestingly, Child 2 rated themselves as moderate, which conformed to what was being observed, as if they had realised, they were not explicitly attaining the lesson goal. Child 3 began the task by chatting, however, became intensely engaged in the activity and their self-assessment matched this, as they rated as high. Finally, the plenary challenged the students to read their stories to the class and how they had succeeded in regard to the success criteria. Child 1 and 2 were intently engaged within the plenary, whilst Child 3 was half-engaged and was chatting to those on the table. In the final self-assessment, Child 1 now rated as extremely high, whereas Child 2 and 3 rated themselves as high. This was interesting, as Child 1 rated as moderate a few times within the lesson, however, at the end rated their engagement and success as extremely high.

After the lesson, the three students were then taken to the meeting room and undertook the focus group interview. The students had a moment to discuss their thoughts and opinions, and then proceeded to answer specific questions. The feedback was very interesting, as all the students were very positive about the use of the self-assessment technique. All three were positive of it being a blind self-assessment, as others would not be able to see your response. Child 1 liked that you could rate how you felt you were doing and how engaged you were, and the teacher could then quickly act upon it. Child 2 stated that it allowed them to be honest about feelings in the lesson, and that it makes them feel more confident to say. Interestingly, Child 3 developed their response further, by stating that it made them remember there was a success criteria within a lesson, and the self-assessment reminded them what they needed to do to achieve. A key theme in all of their responses was that they were able to voice their opinion in the lesson, and it allowed the teacher to see how they were engaged and succeeding. Listening to the student is imperative (Flutter, 2007). Thus, this was vital

feedback, as it links to the idea of the students having a voice in their education and the want to create an environment where they feel confident and engaged.

In relation to the lesson, the other researcher and I reflected upon how the lesson was structured; how the lesson went; how the students responded to the self-assessment technique and how their feedback provided key information for the next lesson. For instance, we had considered not doing as many self-assessment moments in the next lesson, however, the students in the focus group stated that they found the amount used impactful - as they felt that they were intently involved within the lesson. Furthermore, we decided to be very clear and explicit in the next lesson on why the self-assessment was being used in the lesson, and that it was being used to rate their engagement - as well as being honest in their rating. As sometimes students are not honest in reflection. (Clayson and Hayley, 2011). Moreover, we decided that when we were asking them to assess themselves, they would be reminded in that moment what they were rating; how they were rating and to take a moment to think about their rating. We had to remind ourselves of what was theorised about students not rating what we ask (Broadfoot, 1998). Thus, we needed to be clear in our intentions. These modifications would then provide our research with better evidence to understand if continually using self-assessment can impact their engagement and understanding within the lesson.

Lesson Study 2 Analysis:

In the second lesson, I was now in the position of teacher, this lesson was to follow the similar structure to the last one - as impacted by our feedback from the students. In addition to this, it was also to be the exact same content within the lesson, this would enable us to explicitly see how the self-assessment technique impacted on student learning and not the topic. Furthermore, in relation to the reflections that were taken previously, the reasoning behind the self-assessment was to be made clear and frequently throughout the lesson. Teachers can sometimes be unclear in expectations (O'Donovan et al., 2004). Consequently, before the lesson started, the self-assessment technique was discussed and why and how it was to be used throughout the lesson. Thus, at the beginning of the lesson, the first self-assessment was undertaken, both Child 1 and 2 were rated as high, and Child 3 rated as moderate – this was another reminder for us to think about external factors on a child's attitude. During the introduction, Child 1 and 2 were very eager to share and discuss ideas, whereas, Child 3 was not very engaged during it, which links back to their initial self-assessment result. At the end of the introduction, the students were asked once again to rate

their engagement and understanding, interestingly, all three children were rated as high, and were now sure of the success criteria and task at hand.

They were now given ten minutes to write their story, once this time was up, they were asked to do the self-assessment again, however, reminded of why they were doing it. During the ten minutes, observationally, all three were engaged with the story writing and interestingly were all rated as high. This shows direct correlation of their external and internal attitude. The students were then presented another image and given ten minutes again. Observationally, Child 2 stopped working at this point and stared at the image on the board for a good minute, but then began to write their story. From an observer's point of view, this could have been viewed as a lack of engagement, however in the next self-assessment they were rated as extremely high in engagement and understanding. Furthermore, Child 1 was also rated as extremely high, whilst Child 3 was rated as high. This is interesting, as a child may seem to be disengaged, but as an educator, we must allow them thinking time to enable them to formulate what they are going to write. Increased thinking time allows answers to be more enhanced and developed (Rowe, 1974). Once again, the children were given ten minutes to write the last story, observationally, all three students were engaged with the activity and were asking questions related to improving their work. The students were then asked to rate how their engagement and understanding, interestingly, Child 1 now dropped from extremely high to moderate. This result is interesting as it shows the fluctuation of how a student feels they are succeeding and understanding a lesson, and as an educator we must be prepared to understand how attitude changes. In comparison, Child 2 and 3 rated themselves consistently as high. Consequently, when it came to the plenary and sharing stories, all three students wished to share their work with the rest of the class, showing they were happy with their engagement and understanding of the task at hand. In the final rating of the lesson: Child 1 rated high; Child 2 extremely high and Child 3 high.

Similarly, to the previous lesson, we held the focus group interview immediately after the lesson, as we did not wish a change in timetable to impact on our research in anyway. In similar fashion, the students had a moment to discuss what they thought about the continuous self –assessment. The feedback was very similar to previous group of students, they were all very positive over its use, as they enjoyed being able to provide feedback on how they are doing. In comparison to the other focus group, all three of these children highlighted that they were concerned that some other students could have peaked at how they rated themselves and talked about ways of overcoming this. Furthermore, Child 2 liked that you could express your

feelings and were able to tell the teacher if they were struggling, instead of going up to them.

Child 3 felt that it allowed them to be more confident as they had a voice in their learning.

Child 1 liked that the teacher could see how they were doing, and if they had not done much the teacher would not get annoyed as they could see they were struggling. The key theme in all of their feedback was similar to the other focus group, it allowed them to express themselves and how they were engaging and understanding the lesson. Students having a say is valuable in an effective classroom (Jelly et al., 2000). The students we interviewed conformed to this idea. The students felt as if they had a say in how the lesson went and that things could have been changed if a lot of people did not understand it.

From this experience, we realised that both focus groups wanted their teachers to use more self-assessment techniques within their lessons. Although, our study was not large and only limited to two lessons and focus groups, this information would be important to share, as it confirms with lots of theories that students wish to have a say in the classroom and that self-assessment reminds them of how to succeed in the lesson. Similar research like this, on a larger scale, would be valuable in determining self-assessment impact within lessons.

Discussion:

The research findings provided some valuable feedback for understanding if self-assessment can improve pupil engagement and understanding. In relation to theory that has already been looked at, Kasanen et al (2002) argued that self-assessment can cause competition. This in some regard is true, as students in Lesson Study 2, were worried about others seeing their rating. Ultimately, the students were confident that we had taken this into consideration, and by using a blind self-assessment technique, they went on to say that they were willing to rate how they truly felt. This was evident in both Lesson studies, which shows that students from different areas and schools agree on its impact. Therefore, this shows that using a blind self-assessment technique can negate any fear or competition between students. Furthermore, our research counteracts Black et al's (2004) opinion that it can cause confrontation between student and teachers. From a researcher's perspective, it was insightful to be able to respond to the students immediately in the lesson, and to be able to change explanation if a majority did not understand the task. In relation to the interviews, it was valuable in finding out what they thought could be improved, and this was done holistically not competitively. They enjoyed being able to comment on the lesson and were not fearful to speak to the teacher.

The main similarity that was evident in both Lesson Studies, was the notion that the students felt they could communicate how they felt and that their voice mattered within the lesson. This finding in our research is extremely important, as a lot of theories underpinning self-assessment argue that this is one of the most important features. As previously stated, Kananen et al (2002) argues that self-assessment creates engagement. This is evident in the students feeling that they could express themselves within the lesson, they felt that they could be honest with the teacher about how they were engaging and understanding what was happening. These findings also highlight the similarities that arose around having a classroom where communication is encouraged. Communication is an extremely valuable tool (Vygotsky, 1978). Our findings back this up, as both groups of students continuously conveyed their happiness at being able to show the teacher how they felt in relation to engagement and understanding. Additionally, the importance of pupil voice within their learning came to the forefront of the research, as using the self-assessment technique, the children felt listened to and understood. This is a valuable finding, as student voice and independence is being pushed for (Welsh Government, 2011; Donaldson, 2015; UNICEF, 2010). This can be succinctly linked to Broad (2006) who argues that self-assessment is autonomous.

The findings show that students from two different schools within Wales wish to have a say in their education and this helps with their engagement. Yes, the study scale that we have used can be seen as a limitation, as it is not a large-scale research finding. However, it is still important that within both Lesson Studies, pupils having a technique to be engaged and have a say is important to them. Consequently, for my class and future classes, self-assessment is going to be a vital tool, as it allows for quick tests of engagement within the lesson and developing the pupil voice.

Conclusion:

Consequently, even though the research and findings that were found, have some strong implications on self-assessment and its impact on engagement and understanding, there are a few limitations in relation to the research conducted. One limitation of the research was the scale of the research and also the time-taken to undertake the research. Lesson Study is a wide scale and lengthy research method (Dudley, 2015). Therefore, the research may have had a different outcome if a larger amount of results were collected. Even though steps were taken against this, another limitation with this research could be that of the observers. Observers

could unwittingly look for different things (Sharp, 2009). This may have been the case with the observations that were undertaken by both of the researchers on this project, that our interpretations of what was important may have actually been different. To combat this, both research partners decided to pilot the observation technique of observing children in relation to Leuven's Scale of Engagement. We discussed how we would rate the children in relation to the scale, by discussing how we would rate the position of their thumb. Consequently, this allowed us to see if we were assessing succinctly and would therefore provide us with somewhat accurate results. If this was not undertaken, this would have impeded our research, as our findings would not have correlated with one another. Thus, by piloting the method, we actively worked against any limitations that could have arisen, and certainly affected our outcomes. One final limitation could have been the group size of those interviewed, as if more than three were interviewed, there would have been a wider side of results. However, as previously stated, Morgan (1998) motioned that it would not provide focused results. Thus, this was strongly taken into consideration.

In addition to this, the findings in this research shall now impact my personal future teaching experience, after analysing all of the data and scrutinising feedback, it has become explicit that self-assessment has a positive impact on pupil engagement and understanding. This is due to self-assessment helping educators reflect on if the students have understood what has been taught. Good educators are good at reflection (Schon, 1983). Therefore reflection is imperative. This explicitly suggests that the link between reflection and self-assessment is imperative in creating a classroom that is effective. Additionally, the research has reaffirmed the principle that students need a tool to rate engagement, as it allows them to have share their voice within a lesson. Especially as the research has been undertaken within Wales, and the and the New Curriculum being implemented by states that pupil voice and independent learning is imperative (Welsh Government, 2011; Donaldson, 2015).

As the research has shown that self-assessment can help improve engagement, this shall therefore be used within further teaching practice and shall be shared with other practitioners who wish to find a way to include pupil voice and develop independent learners within their lessons. If this research was to be undertaken again, it would be developed further, in regard to time-scale and the size of participants taken part within the research. This would then be able to inform and educate the wider community.

Recommendations:

If this research was to be undertaken again, there would be a strong focus on the negative which was raised. Within the pupil feedback, they were concerned about others peeking at how they have rated when asked to self-assess. I would try and develop the skills to create a piece of computer software, which would enable students to continually rate their engagement and understanding in lesson, securely and anonymously. Thus, there would be no fear of their result being discovered and the teacher could access the results instantaneously on their computer. This software would then be shared with fellow practitioners, so that all students are allowed to have their voice heard, in relation to Article 13 (UNICEF, 2010).

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Observation form

Appendix 2: Interview Questionnaire

Appendix 3: Reflection Model

Appendix 4: Ethics Form

Appendix 5: Lesson Plan

Appendix 6: Observation Form – Lesson 1

Appendix 7: Interview Questionnaire – Lesson 1

Appendix 8: Observation Form – Lesson 2

Appendix 9: Interview Questionnaire – Lesson 2

Appendix 10: Reflective Form