

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND FEEDBACK

SOUTH WEST WALES CENTRE FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

*Sections marked with * should be completed by module lead*

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Programme: *	Secondary Post Graduate Certificate in Education		
Module: *	Curriculum Development and Enhancement	Module Level (6 or 7):	Level 7
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Module Lead:*	Jan Barnes		
Assignment Title:*	Reflections on Teaching and Learning	Assignment No (x of x):	1
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Referencing:	In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have read or quoted in order to complete this assignment (e.g. for books: surname of author and initials, year of publication, <u>title of book</u> , edition, publisher: place of publication).		
Submission:	All assignments must be submitted to Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. Note: the Turnitin version is the primary submission and acts as a receipt for the student. Late submission of the electronic version of the assignment will result in a late penalty. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum grade D. Over one week late, Refer. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may grant an extension.	Date:	
Module lead to tick to indicate if a hard copy version of the assignment must be submitted.*			YES
			NO ✓

Assignment 3 - ECSP7002(C): Curriculum Development & Enhancement (785)

For this assignment, reading is a key part. You will need to demonstrate your ability to identify key points in professional and academic literature relevant to your chosen area of study. Use this understanding to inform your own choices in the classroom and to evaluate your own practice. **There should be clear evidence of the links between your reading and your practice throughout your assignment, not solely in the initial literature review section.** There should also be clear evidence of your engagement with professional and academic literature so as to inform practice and reflection.

Allocating 'Directed Improvement Reflection Time' during the lesson will improve the standard of work produced by pupils and increase their overall grade.

Introduction

School X is the oldest comprehensive in Gwent. It was formed in 1965 by the amalgamation of four schools found in the town. School X lies in the heart of the community and is an English-medium mixed 11 to 16 school maintained by Blaenau Gwent local authority (Welsh Government, 2018). There are now 649 pupils on roll, which is substantially less than previous years as a result of the closure of the sixth form (Estyn, 2016). Around 28% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average of 17.1% for secondary schools in Wales. Approximately 50% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales (Estyn, 2016) that being said, school X was ranked a 'green school' in 2016, as a result of their high standards and grades achieved at the end of year 11 (Welsh Government, 2018).

School X's mission statement is 'Working Together for Success' which is evident throughout the school, where the aims of the school set out their aspirations to provide the best possible opportunities and education for the pupils, preparing them for life bound school.

It is very important that every learner is able to achieve their fullest potential and have opportunity to reflect on the feedback given to them, which will hopefully improve their work. All teachers give pupils feedback, which is meant to provide pupils with advice and support on how to improve their work to reach their fullest potential. However, I question the usefulness of this. Pupils often ignore their feedback, and therefore fail to make any significant improvements. Therefore, feedback is ineffective, and pupils work suffers as a result. I propose to investigate the effectiveness of designating time within lessons to allow pupils to reflect and respond to their feedback.

One of the Specific Areas for Development for school X is the use of 'Directed Improvement Reflection Time' (DIRT) to impact progress. Students become more involved in the learning process and from this gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard (Education, Cambridge Assessment International, 2018).

I have decided to focus on this AfL strategy with a year 9 and 10 class, to maximise pupil outcomes to enhance their preparation ready for their future GCSE exams. The year 10 class consists of twenty-four mixed ability pupils, who are achieving grades between A*-F. The year 9 class is a top set with 30 pupils, with predicted global grades A* - C. It is very important that every learner is able to achieve their fullest potential and have the opportunity to reflect on the feedback given to them, which will hopefully improve their work. All teachers give pupils feedback, which is meant to provide them with advice and support on how to improve their work to reach their fullest potential. However, pupils often ignore their feedback, and therefore fail to make any significant improvements. As a result, feedback can be ineffective, and pupils work will not improve. I propose to investigate the effectiveness of designating time within lessons to allow pupils to reflect and respond to their feedback, which will conclude whether allocating DIRT during lessons will improve the standard of work produced by pupils and increase their overall grade.

Literature Review

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is an approach to teaching and learning that creates feedback which is then used to improve pupils' performance. Pupils as a result become more involved in the learning process and from this gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard. If pupils understand what is expected of them they are more likely to reach the top marks within each question. One way of thinking about AfL is that it aims to 'close the gap' between a learner's current situation and where they want to be in their learning to do this (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2018). The AfL strategy that this essay will focus on 'Directed Improvement Reflection Time' (DIRT), which is where pupils are given the opportunity to reflect, respond and act upon the feedback given to them.

Feedback plays a crucial part of every teacher's daily routine regardless of their experience, the subject they teach or the ability and age range of their students. The importance of high-quality feedback has been evidenced by many academic studies and is notably outlined by Professor John Hattie in his book *Visible Learning for Teachers*. Hattie found that feedback has more effect on achievement than any other factor and is among the most common features of successful teaching and learning (Petty, 2018). Feedback takes on two forms – verbal feedback and written feedback (Biddulph, et al., 2015), and although there is literature to suggest feedback on the whole is positive, there is an enigma. While feedback is among the most powerful

moderators of learning, its effects are among the most variable (Hattie, 2010). This is supported by Dylan William who questioned whether feedback was helping or hindering the pupils? William said that “No matter how well the feedback is designed, if students do not use the feedback to move their own learning forward, it’s a waste of time. We can debate about whether feedback should be descriptive or evaluative, but it is absolutely essential that feedback is productive” (William, 2014). DIRT would solve this problem as pupils would be ‘trained’ to use their time wisely to act upon the feedback given to them. This supports Hattie, as teachers who internalise and practice feedback will be well on their way to teaching that improves learning. The best way in which to understand feedback is to consider Sadler’s (1989) notion of the ‘gap’: “feedback aims to reduce the gap between where the student ‘is’ and where he or she is ‘meant to be’ – that is, between prior or current achievement and the success criteria” (Hattie, 2010, p. 129). Students must have a ‘growth mindset’ to understand that their increasing efforts will enable them to tackle more challenging tasks and are capable of achieving the highest levels. However, some strategies to reduce the gap are less productive. If pupils do not have a ‘growth mindset’ they may be happy to just ‘get by’ and abandon goals, and thus, eliminate any gap. This often leads to nonengagement in pursuit of further goals (Hattie, 2007). Engagement is key to ensuring that pupils are making the most of their feedback, and if they are not engaged it is likely that the feedback will have any effect.

A teacher’s role is an important one when trying to close the gap. In most cases pupils need to be told what needs to be done or be given some success criteria. They can assist the pupils by clarifying goals, enhance commitment or increased effort to reaching these goals through effective feedback. However, to ensure this is effective, teachers must know where their pupils are and where they are meant to be to ensure they are challenged and pushed into the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky believed that the ZPD was the difference between each child’s learning and their development and found that the results of a study he conducted indicated that children’s learning and developmental levels are interrelated.

Having spent time marking pupil’s books, it is important to allow pupils to respond and reflect upon the comments given to them. Which may move them into the ZPD, as they stretch and challenge themselves to reach the top marks as marking provides pupils with formative or summative feedback on their work. However, what pupils are required to do with this feedback can vary widely (Elliott, et al., 2016). In my placement, before introducing DIRT to my lessons, some feedback was completely ignored, other pupils responded ‘okay’. The time I spent giving pupils feedback was irrelevant because it hadn’t been acted upon and as a result no pupils made any improvements on their work. Didau stated that 70% of all feedback given by teachers to pupils ‘falls on stony soil’ (Didau, 2013) and feels like DIRT is the difference to ensuring that pupils act upon the feedback given to them. This is a new acronym that is becoming more common within

the teaching community, however there is very little research to confirm that it has an impact on pupil's grades. DIRT is mainly aimed at secondary aged pupils. Jackie Beere states that DIRT "is properly trained peer assessment or self-assessment where students measure their progress against the original objectives in mini plenaries and think about what they have learned – what worked and what didn't. They spend time on improving their work, amending it and responding to feedback" (Beere, 2014). Many schools are now adopting and adapting this strategy in a number of ways. But the overall result remains the same, it is to ensure that the time teachers have invested in the marking process is maximised as the pupils have to actively engage with the feedback. DIRT is about having the highest expectations of students and them having the highest expectations of themselves.

Making the time to review feedback within the classroom routine helps to focus the pupil's minds on improvement and enable it to be a meaningful component of the pupil's learning journey. Valuing the process of improvement also teaches children to continually strive for their very best and puts them in the driving seat of their learning as it is allowing them time to reflect/act upon the comments that have been written, as feedback. Within Quigley's research, there are a number of strategies to ensure DIRT works effectively within the classroom, which was considered when planning my research (Quigley, 2013).

First of all, feedback must be focused. If feedback basically told pupils to improve their answer, their response will usually be less than successful. Pupils need specific support and to avoid overloading pupils it needs to remain focused on how to improve their work. If pupils are receiving quality feedback that is targeting and precise, in each subject area then cumulatively they should learn clear patterns regarding how they need to improve in specific areas as well as recognising common patterns. This was difficult to draw upon throughout my research as DIRT wasn't used consistently within School X, and therefore pupils were not 'trained' to make the most of their time. As a result, before completing my research I ensured I spent a number of consecutive lessons explaining to pupils what was expected of them through mini DIRT activities.

Although there is an extensive amount of research on feedback, there is very little on DIRT. Elliott, et al., conducted a study to find evidence that would inform teachers' decision-making about marking. Although they looked at whether pupils were given the opportunity to reflect on their feedback they found that student survey responses were used as the measurement of impact, rather than directly examining attainment, where as I wanted to look at whether DIRT increases pupil's grades.

There are limitations with this, as pupils may be bias and as a result the data will be skewed. Hence why I decided against using pupil's surveys, but I did adapt this slightly to look at whether pupil confidence

matched their grade at the end of the DIRT session. Elliott, et al, found that in some cases it appeared that the studies had taken for granted the fact that pupils were given time to consider and act upon feedback, which may explain why the evidence base on this aspect of marking is underdeveloped (Elliott, et al., 2016).

How much, if at all, do you use the following marking practices? - Giving pupils time in class to write a response to previous marking comments.*

All pieces of work I mark/most/some/few/none.



Figure 1: Findings from Elliott et al., - How often were pupils given time to respond to feedback.

The most basic question related to pupil responses is whether pupils should be given time in class to consider the feedback they have been given. While no high-quality experimental studies appear to have looked at this question, surveys in schools and higher education settings consistently suggest that pupils do not engage with or find it hard to act up the feedback they are given, and that pupils value the opportunity to respond to feedback. This is supported by William and Black (2002), who argue that teachers spend more time marking a pupil's work than the pupil will spend following it up – which runs the risk of undermining the feedback process (Biddulph, et al., 2015). Figure 1 shows that pupils are rarely given the opportunity to response to their feedback. That being said, it is also noted that if pupils simply use class time to provide superficial responses, then this is unlikely to improve outcomes (Elliott, et al., 2016). This was evident in the classroom as pupils would respond 'okay' or 'I will Miss/Sir' – they had just given a superficial response rather than responding to improve their work based on the feedback provided.

In response to this, many schools are increasingly introducing whole-school policies requiring teachers to provide explicit feedback that pupils then have to respond to. Most common is 'what went well' and 'even better if'. 'What went well' enable teachers to provide pupils with feedback at all key stages. Hebblethwaite (2015) found this an effective way for pupils to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This method can

also give opportunities for 'effective learner response' whereby they respond to the 'even better if'. Hebblethwaite found that this strategy was extremely effective when it came to GCSE and A Level marking with levelled response answers (Hebblethwaite, 2015). This was because they were easily able to show what level the pupils were working at and what they needed to do to move their answer up into the next level, and potentially grade.

Hebblethwaite stated that this was a good method for students to go back over their work and add in and improve based on their 'even better if'. However, this strategy is only effective if pupils go back and reflect on their work and as Didau (2013) found, almost 70% of feedback is left without any form of response. Seeing this personally in schools, it would only work, and pupils would only respond if teachers made time within the lessons and told pupils answer their EBI question. This, supporting the need for DIRT within lessons.

Given this, it appears that there is a strong case for allocating DIRT to pupils within lessons, giving them the opportunity to consider and respond to marking in class (Elliott, et al., 2016). It is not necessarily the lesson where they write the work that is important, but the feedback time afterwards. This is the opportunity for pupils to reflect on what they did well and also what they need to do to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Harris (2018) states that "in order for feedback to be useful it must refer to the success criteria; in other words, 'you got this score' because 'you did that.'" (Harris, 2018). This suggests that success criteria are key to ensuring pupil progress as it supports pupils unlock their future potential rather than dwell on their past performance. Harris argues that this feature of marking should be positive and specific; it may refer to the success criteria or it may be a specific target for the pupil to work on. Either way it must be actioned by the pupil for progress to be made. Hattie suggests that success criteria is often too vague or in terminology that pupils do not understand and therefore fails to serve the purpose that is to enhance the pupils learning (Hattie, 2007). It is important for the success criteria and feedback to be specific and simple enough for the pupils to understand what is expected of them in order to close the gap. Although Hattie critiques the complexity of success criteria, he does acknowledge that if feedback is not directed toward the end goal or success criteria then it becomes of no use to the pupils. For example, pupils are often given feedback on presentation, spelling and punctuation, which of course is important, but if they are failing to meet key points on the success criteria then this should be a priority in the feedback.

Some studies have looked at when pupils should be provided with feedback over the course of longer projects or pieces of work. There is promising evidence suggesting that pupils who receive mid-project written feedback are more likely to act on it and view it as helpful (Elliott, et al., 2016).

School Policy and Practice

School X School Improvement Plan (SIP) provides a rigorous and detailed indication of the vision for the school's future development and clear direction on how the school will contribute to achieving local and national priorities. Continuing to improve the quality of marking and feedback by ensuring that all staff provide useful feedback and closing the gap activities to maximise pupil outcomes, which plays a vital role in the SIP. This is to ensure pupils are being stretched and challenged to achieve their fullest potential. As a result of this School X has a detailed marking policy that all staff members should adhere to.

The overall aim of the marking policy is to 'improve the standards by allowing pupils and teachers to 'close the gap' whereby pupils make amendments to work in order to improve and extend skills', this links with Sadler's notion of the gap. There is a key focus on DIRT stating that 'DIRT should be given by the teacher in the lesson when books or work is returned to pupils. The time allocated may be varied, but pupils must be able to read the advice given to them and act upon it in lessons – or as homework if the task is a lengthy one, such as redrafting an extended piece of writing. However, although this is in the policy, there is little emphasis on the importance of DIRT and as a result is used inconsistently throughout the school. This therefore makes DIRT challenging for the teachers who try to put this into their lesson, due to the lack of routine. As Beere says, DIRT 'is properly trained' and therefore consistency is important. The more the pupils are trained to actively respond to their feedback and to use DIRT efficiently the more likely they are to improve their levels of work and therefore their overall grades.

School X does place an importance on feedback, however the actual school policies are limited. From discussions with, and feedback from teachers, it has become apparent that most teachers are aware of what DIRT stands for, however a detailed DIRT policy does not occur within every classroom and is only lightly touched upon within the feedback policy. Therefore, it could be said that the implementation of a consistent DIRT policy could be utilised to improve learner engagement and progression even further (Bentham & Hutchins, 2012). This would benefit learners as they would understand exactly what is expected of them. This AfL strategy will only be successful if teachers actively implement the strategy, as it is stated that DIRT can be irrelevant and a 'waste of time' if pupils do not act on the feedback given to them (Didau, 2013). Therefore, it could be argued that without teacher input and vigilance this AfL technique may not have the desired effect on pupil's grades.

Methodology & Ethics

Research ethics deals with how we treat those who participate in our studies and how we handle the data after we collect it. Many current ethical guidelines have their origins in the Belmont Report, which has been prepared but the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

Before conducting my research, I completed a proposal form, which identified three key questions that I wanted to answer through my research. These were:

1. To what extent does providing pupils with dedicated improvement reflection time within lessons improve their grades?
2. What impact does DIRT have on learners grades?
3. Do pupils respond to feedback without dedicated improvement reflection time?

I was able to then construct my research to try and answer these key questions. Once the proposal form had been approved, before conducting my research, I completed an ethics form which considered these guidelines as well as following the Ethical Guidelines of the University and the Educational Research guidelines produced by the British Educational Research Association (BERA). This ensured that there was respect for all those who were engaged within the research at all times.

I explained what was going to happen to each group in detail, and ensured they understood and agreed to their participation without any duress, prior to the research getting underway (BERA, 2011). Within this period, I was able to make certain that participants understood why they had been chosen to participate and how the results were going to be used. Participants verbally consented to their participation, as this is already school policy, my senior mentor agreed that I did not need to gain written consent. That being said, pupils had the opportunity to withdraw their work from the research for any or no reason (BERA, 2011), at any time but still completed the DIRT session as part of their normal school day.

All information and data collected from the student's work has been kept confidential, following the BERA guidelines which states that participants are entitled to privacy and therefore my research needed to ensure their rights to confidentiality and anonymity were considered (BERA, 2011). This was done as I was the only person with access to the data, and all data presented within this report has been made anonymous.

I considered a number of methods prior to completing the ethics form to ensure it was a good fit for the purpose of the research study. Within this research I decided to use 'Pre-test-post-test' control group designs as these were well suited to investigating the effects of the educational intervention put in place. It is said

that tests are a “powerful method of data collection, an impressive array of tests for gathering data of a numerical rather than verbal kind” (Cohen, et al., 2005). The ‘Pre-test-post-test’ method enabled me to gather quantitative data, which has been analysed and evaluated, to reach a conclusion regarding the intervention success.

Vanderstoep and Johnston propose that the benefits of using quantitative research is that the findings of the study will ‘reflect the overall population’ and will allow for ‘statistical validity’ (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009, p. 7). That being said, this is argued by Cohen et al, who argues that this would be a non-parametric test as the sample size is so small, and as a result makes ‘few or no assumptions about the distribution of the population or the characteristics of that population’ (Cohen, et al., 2005, p. 318). Cohen states that non-parametric tests are good for being tailored to particular institutional, departmental and individual circumstances and as a result offers valuable information based on student performance. However, it cannot be used to compare the results from other schools across the country as parametric tests make no assumptions about the wider population (Cohen, et al., 2005).

Pre-post testing was essential to the research, however I needed to consider a number of guidelines. Cohen et al, stated that the pre-test may have questions which differ in form or wording from the post-test, however they must test the same content. They also needed to be the same level of difficulty in both tests, and therefore I needed to avoid making the test easier. There were a number of problems identified relating to pre-post testing, which was a factor I needed to consider. Although I ensured the questions were the same to avoid changing content or difficulty, it is argued that pupils will absorb the knowledge from the first test and they will answer the next test feeling more confident naturally. It is also questioned whether the change in results are caused due to the learning in the class between tests or simply the natural maturation of the pupils. Keeping this in mind, to try and overcome these problems, I tried to keep the time between tests to a minimum. By doing this, there was very little time for pupils to learn anything ‘extra’ which could have been added to their answer and very little time for them to mature.

The purpose of this study was to determine if small groups of pupils improved their overall test scores as a result of DIRT within their lessons. A GCSE class were required to answer a question based on the topic learnt that lesson. This was the ‘pre-test’ which enabled me to test what the pupils had understood within the lesson. The ‘post-test’ was conducted after the pupils had been given DIRT time within the lesson, where they acted upon their feedback and redrafted their answer. Exactly the same strategy was conducted with a year 9 class, but they were not given DIRT within the lesson.

Once they had completed each test they were given a set of traffic lights for a plenary activity as shown in figure XX. Pupils were asked to indicate how confident they were in answering the questions after receiving their feedback. They were asked to rate on the traffic light system with red being 'unconfident' and green being 'confident'. This then enabled me to compare their levels of confidence with their grade. This gave me qualitative data that was needed to understand the underlying opinions of pupils and identified how the pupils felt about their experiences and I was then able to draw out some anomalies. For example, if a pupil scored just 1/2 marks but marked themselves as confident I would be able to query their confidence levels and ensure the feedback was relevant to ensure they were able to reach the relevant marks.



Figure XX: Traffic light strategy to test pupil's confidence.

This was an important element to the research as theorists believe that consistent integrated AfL strategies will increase pupil confidence as it allows them to develop and feel as though they are capable of reaching the highest grades.

Evaluation

This study was based on pre and post-tests being given to two classes at School X over a sequence of lessons. The pre-test was a GCSE past exam question, and exactly the same exam question was given to pupils for the post test. I decided to do this as Cohen et al, stated that questions needed to test the same content and to be the same level of difficulty (Cohen, et al., 2005). Therefore, the only way I was able to do this accurately without effecting the difficulty of the questions was to give pupils the same question and to redraft their it based on feedback provided to them. Pupils had been taught the content and information needed throughout a sequence of previous lessons, which enabled them to answer this question in the pre-test. The only issues they may have faced when answering the question was not understanding what it was asking or not knowing how to reach the full amount of marks available as a result of the lack of experience presented to them. This would have been rectified for the year 10 class with their DIRT and feedback. Beere (2011) stated that DIRT was essential to raising awareness and confidence in learners as pupils would understand

exactly how to improve their work. Implementing DIRT within some of my lessons enabled me to identify whether the intervention had an impact on the standard of their work and their overall grade.

A big problem I faced was that pupils did not understand what was expected of them, and what they should do during their DIRT within lessons. The first few times we tried this, there was a lot of disruption and very few pupils were focusing on the task in front of them and as a result very few responded to their feedback. This supports what Beere (2014) says about pupils being properly trained on how to use DIRT and how to respond to their feedback otherwise it would result in pupils being unengaged with their feedback and would therefore make no difference to their standard of work or overall grade.

After a series of lessons and training sessions, pupils understood what they needed to do with their feedback during DIRT activities. Once I was confident pupils would use their DIRT time wisely, I gave each group their pre-test which was a past paper exam question on the topic that we had studied over previous lessons. The pre-test alone was a good teachers tool as it enabled me to establish what the pupils had understood from the lessons and provided me with the information I needed to ensure the personalised feedback for each pupil filled the gaps in knowledge and ensure they understood how to progress to reach their fullest potential.

After completing the pre-test, I needed to ensure year 10 pupils were provided with, personal, simple yet effective feedback that would enable them to progress and reach their fullest potential. I needed to ensure I considered Sadler's (1989) notion of the 'gap'. The pre-test enabled me to provide pupils with early feedback if need and assist them where necessary, while there was time to take corrective action through extra revision activities. As I have been teaching this class for a few months, I understand their capabilities, which allowed me to ensure the feedback provided to them was understandable and they would be able to close the gap from where they were, to where they needed to be (Hattie, 2010).

Overall the pre-test results provided useful information about the knowledge of the pupils, however when marking it no pupils received full marks, even if they were capable to do so. I was then able to introduce the intervention with my year 10 class to see whether DIRT would improve their overall grade and compare this to the year 9 class whom did not receive the allocated DIRT within the lesson. This needed to be carefully considered with my mentor, as there could have been an ethical issue whereby pupils were not and receiving the same standard of teaching and as a result be at a disadvantage. Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) reported that to ensure research is ethically correct, there must be fairness in the distribution of benefits across all participants. In this study one group was not benefiting from the intervention so there was a risk

here, especially as pupils may have thought this was unfair. This was one of the major problems I faced, as I needed to ensure that no pupil was at a disadvantage and I needed to ensure that their education was not being affected as a result of not providing them with the opportunity for DIRT within their lessons. However, it was agreed with my mentor that as it was a year 9 class not receiving the intervention they were not at a disadvantage as they are not actually in their GCSE year yet, and will have plenty of time to receive the benefits of DIRT in future lessons. Whereas year 10 needs all the support available to them to ensure they know exactly what is expected of them to prepare for their exams at the end of year 11. Although, DIRT is within the school SIP, it is used inconsistently throughout the school, and therefore the year 9 class stated they were happy to participate and did not feel that they were at a disadvantage.

After pupils answered their GCSE past paper question, at the end of the lesson I gave them a traffic light card to mark "how confident were you when answering the GCSE question provided to you?". I decided to do this as research conducted by Cambridge Assessment International Education suggests that AfL strategies increased pupil's confidence as it creates a sense of 'self-efficacy' and encourages them to feel that they are capable of more and are able to improve. The traffic light system would allow me to distinguish trends between the levels on confidence in pupils and also the marks they received.

The pre-test results were as expected. I did not give either class any support or mark scheme prior to the pre-test, so they needed to solely answer the question based on what they understood from previous lessons. None of them scored the full marks available to them and when asked to complete the traffic light plenary, there were few who marked themselves as 'confident'. Figures 1 and 2, illustrates the number of pupils in year 9 and 10 that marked themselves as unconfident to confident. The ratios within each class are similar during the pre-test stage, with the majority saying they were okay with answering the question. Which is a fair comment looking at the results in figure 5 and 6.

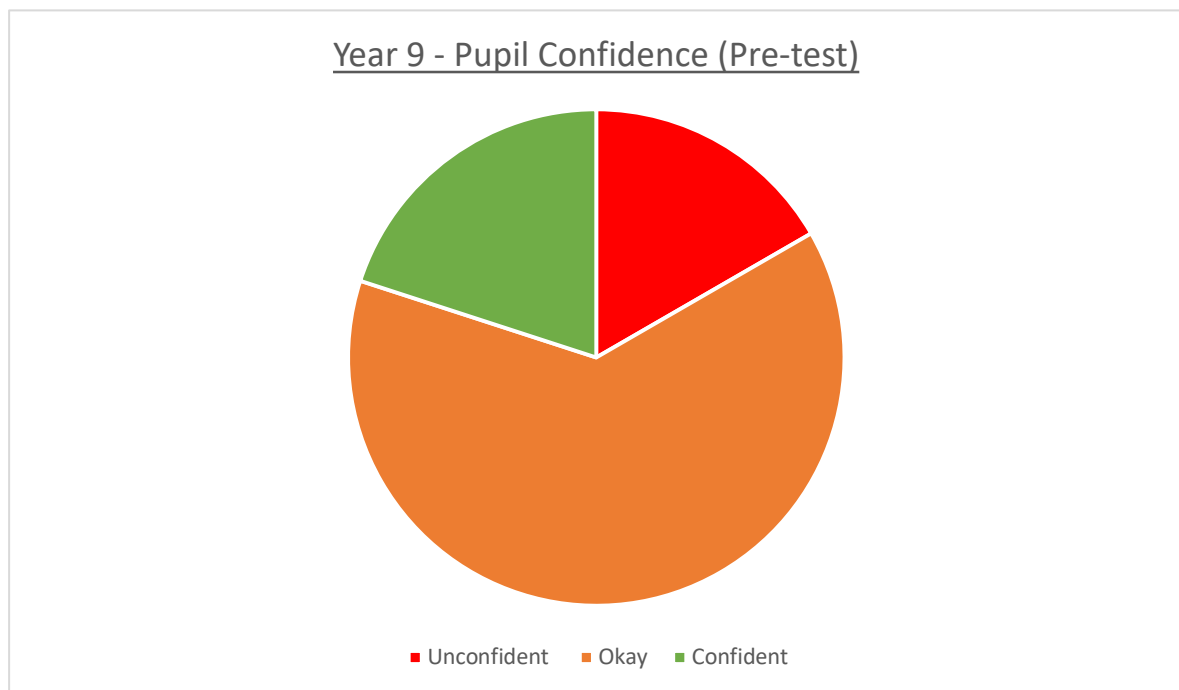


Figure 1: Year 9 – Pupil Confidence (Pre-test)

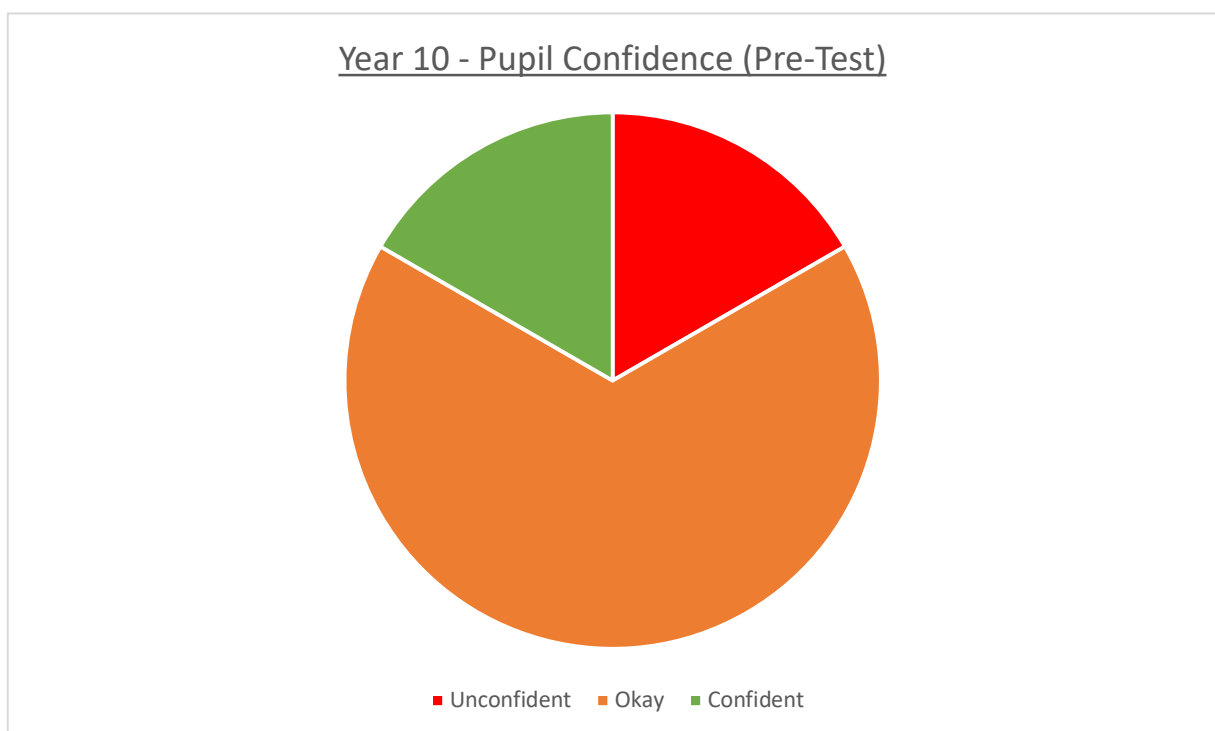


Figure 2: Year 10 – Pupil Confidence (Pre-test)

I collated this information and provided personalised feedback on every pupils work that they would be able to understand and act upon. The following lesson, I then asked pupils to sit exactly the same test, the only difference was, that I gave year 10 the opportunity at the start of the lesson to reflect and act upon on their feedback given to them. During this DIRT session, pupils worked independently responding to their feedback and comparing their answer to the mark scheme provided to them on the board. This enabled pupils to

identify where they were, and where they needed to be in order for them to reach the full amount of marks available to them. The mark scheme helped pupils challenge themselves further to achieve the marks that may otherwise be unattainable. The year 9 class was not given this DIRT time, and was asked to answer the test straight away. Most of the year 9 pupils, copied out their original answer with a few minor adjustments.

Again, after completing the post-test pupils were given the traffic light system to compete in exactly the same way they did the first time. The year 9s confidence levels remained the same with very few changes, compared to the year 10s results whom, changed drastically which is illustrated in figures 5 and 6. After the DIRT session, there were not any year 10 pupils who felt unconfident in the post-test, and only 9 pupils marking 'okay'. This is a huge improvement as before there were only 4 pupils that felt confident in their answers, and supports Beere's (2011) idea that DIRT not only raises awareness but also pupil confidence.

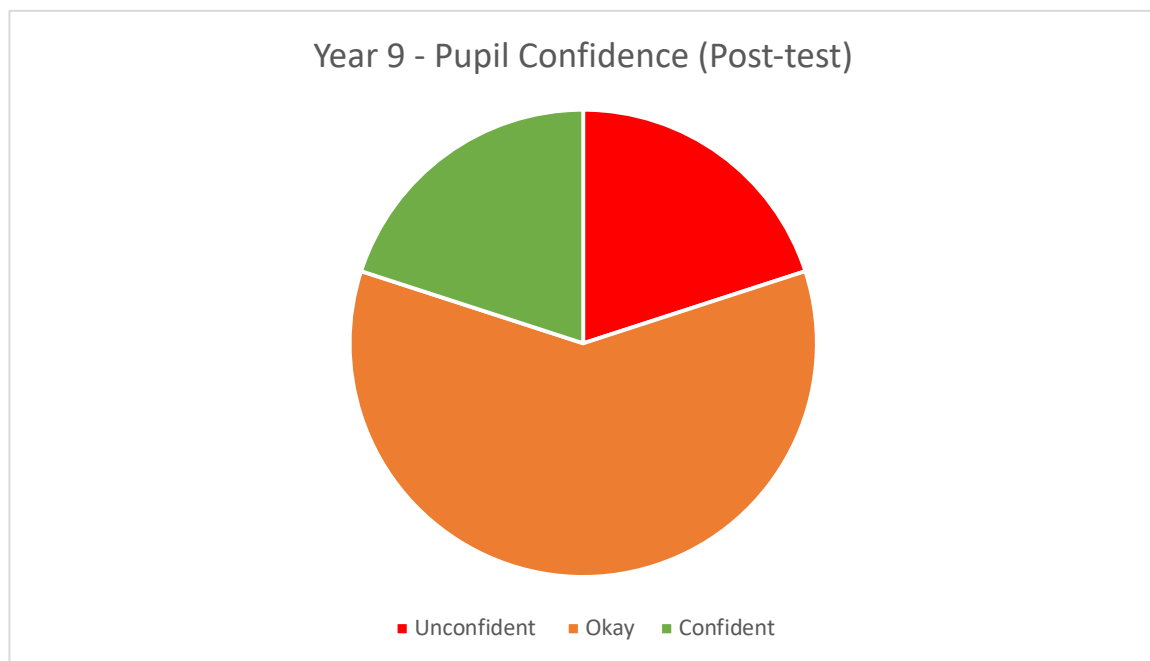


Figure 3: Year 9 Pupil Confidence (Post-test)

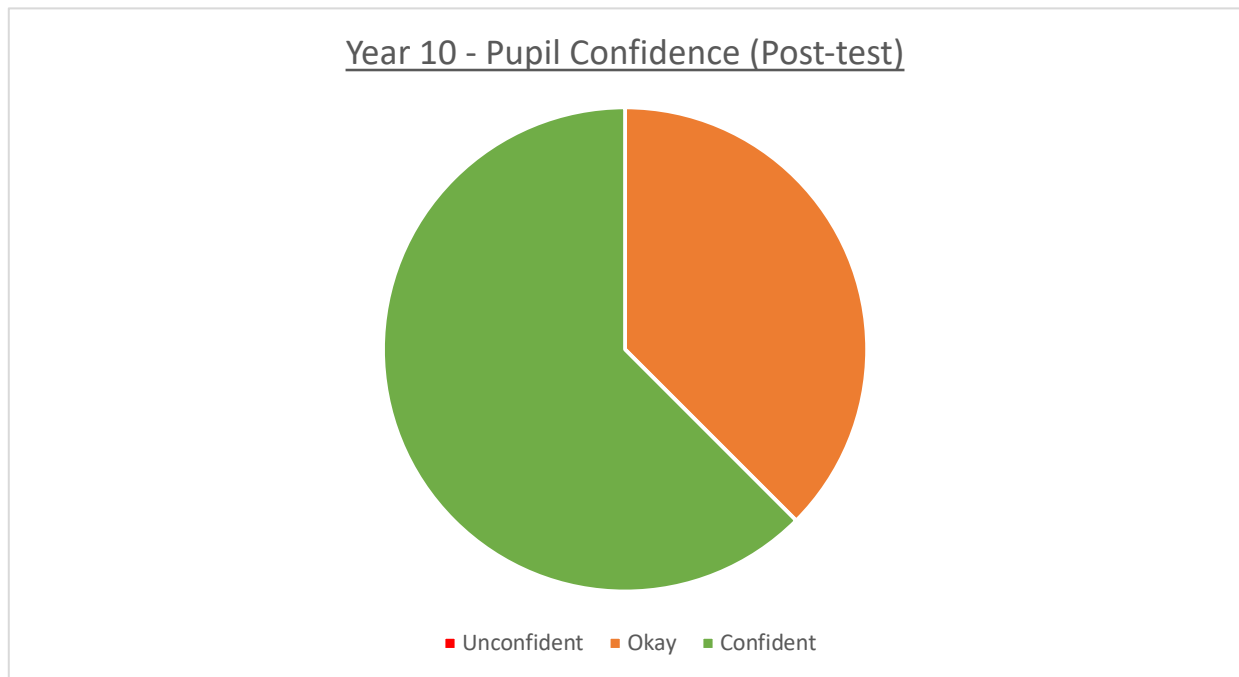


Figure 4: Year 10 – Pupil Confidence (Post-test)

These confidence levels are in correlation with the test scores which are shown in figures 5 and 6. It is interesting that the pupils who's confidence grew also increased their overall grade. There was very little change from the year 9 class whom did not benefit from the intervention as you can see in figure 5. Most of the marks remained the same, apart from just a few pupils who's grades fluctuated slightly. There was so significant improvement to their overall results, in fact whilst marking their books, it was evident that they had not taken on board the feedback provided to them, as most pupils wrote exactly the same answer in the post-test as what they had written in the pre-test. Not only did year 9s test scores stay the same, but their levels of confidence also remained the same.

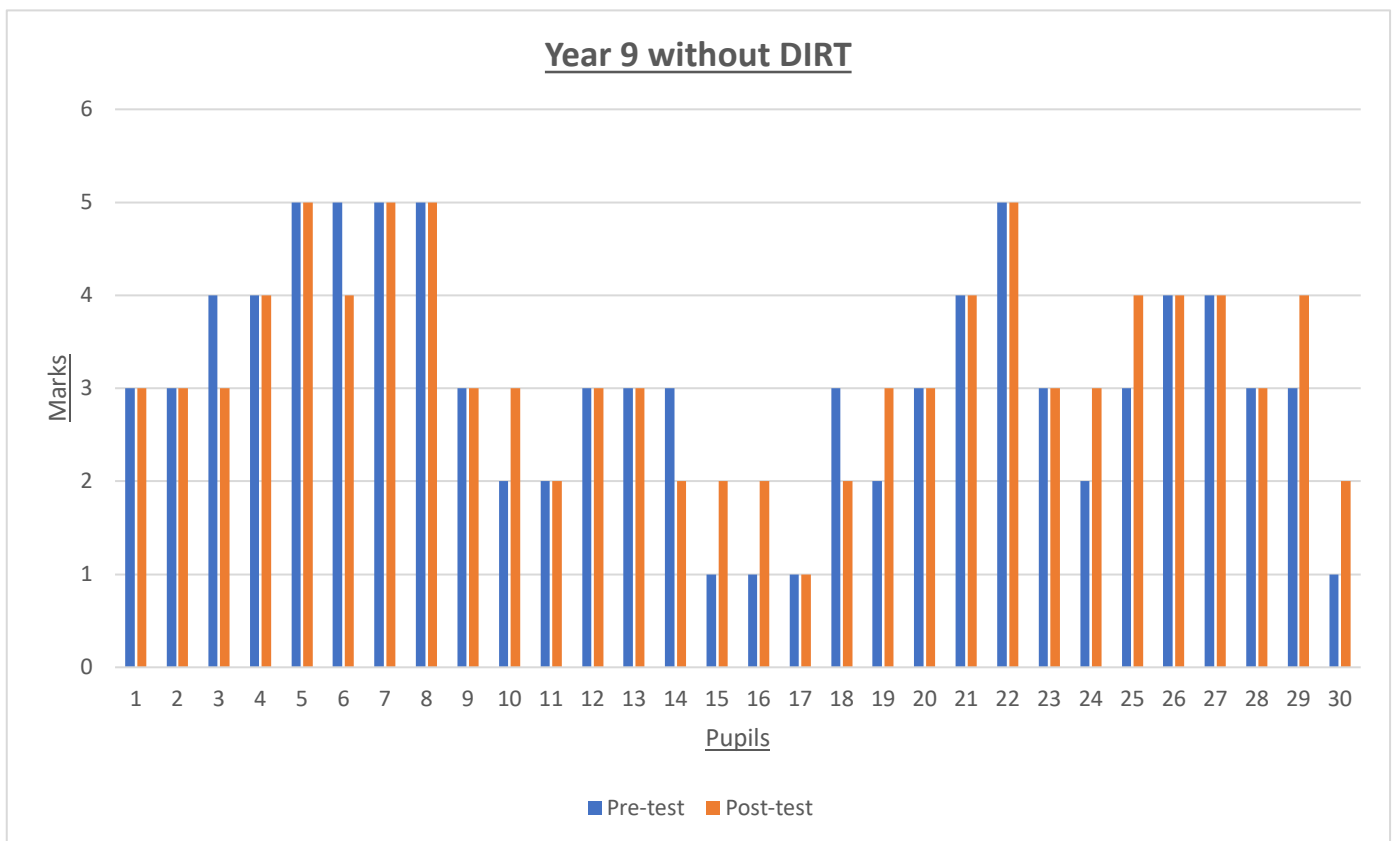


Figure 5: Year 9's pre-testing results

The results for the year 10 class improved by a huge amount, in some cases some pupils were awarded an extra 4 marks. This is a huge achievement for pupils, especially as it is a mixed ability class. During the DIRT pupils were able to identify where they had lost marks, and what they needed to do to improve. They were all given simple, personalised feedback with terminology from the WJEC mark scheme as well as the mark scheme itself. Figure 6 illustrates the improvements in marks, which correlates the data collected from the confidence scores.

For example, 'Pupil 9' only scored 1 mark in the pre-test and had labelled themselves as unconfident on the traffic light system. During the DIRT session 'Pupil 9' was able to ask further questions about their original answer, as well as reflect on the feedback given to them. This enabled me to provide extra verbal feedback to ensure the pupil fully understood what was expected of them. Not only did 'Pupil 9' have the opportunity to understand where they had gone wrong, but they also had the opportunity to compare their first answer with a mark scheme to identify what point were missing out of their answer. This pupil went on to improve their answer by 4 marks, and scored 5/6 in the post-test. It was evident that after responding to the feedback given to them, they had time to acknowledge and reflect on the comments provided to them.

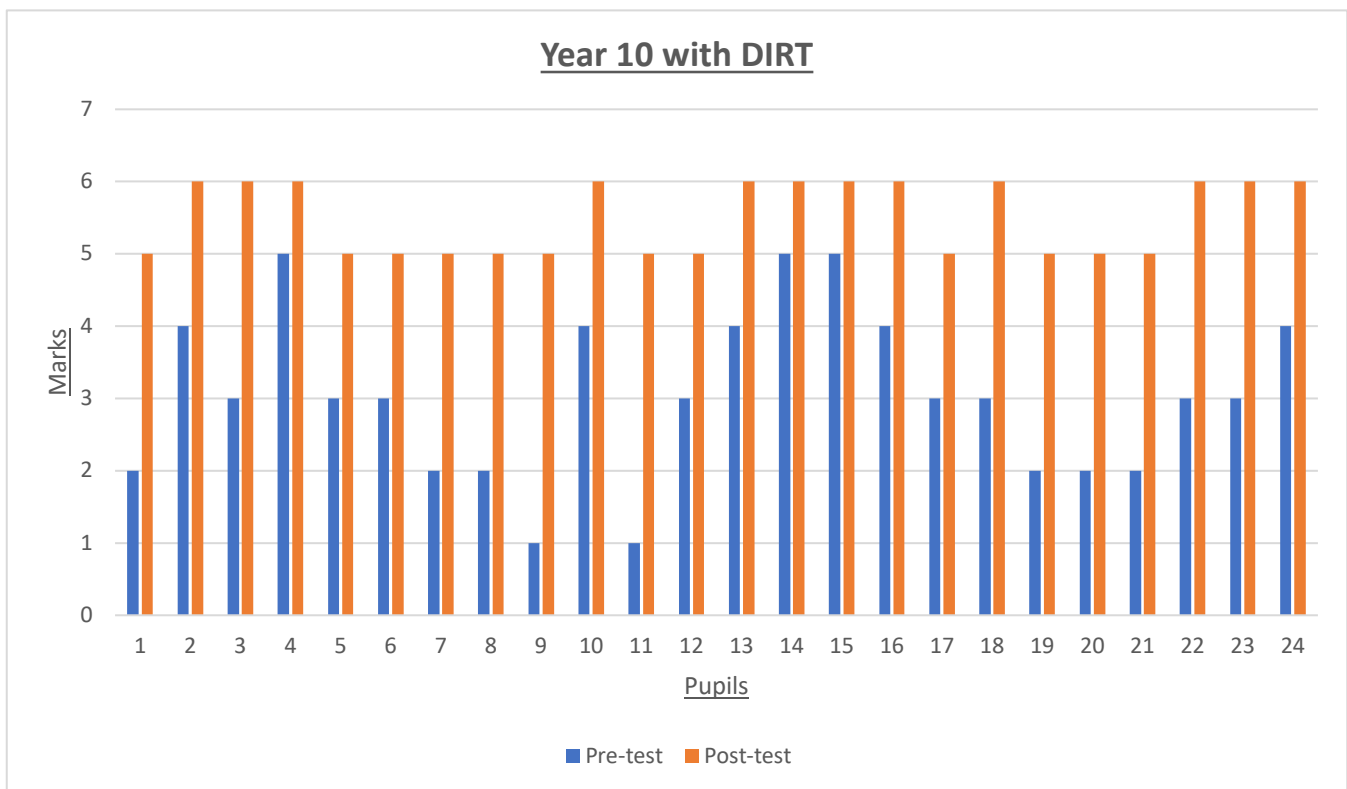


Figure 6: Year 10's with DIRT

It is evident that the time spent reflecting on feedback was beneficial to the year 10 pupils as all of them had made a significant improvement, which enforces the idea that this process of learning is essential to raise awareness and confidence as pupils are more likely to understand what they have done right / wrong and the steps that must be taken to improve their work.

Conclusions

My investigation questions were identified at the beginning of the process which enabled me to ensure my research was created with these questions in mind, however there were a number of limitations identified throughout. There was very little research surrounding whether or not DIRT had an impact pupil grades within schools, however there was an extensive amount of literature surrounding the effectiveness of feedback. The thing that most researchers agreed on was Wiliam's (2014) statement whereby he said that regardless of the quality of the feedback, if pupils do not reflect on this their learning will not move forward and therefore feedback is a waste of time.

I introduced DIRT which enabled pupils to reflect on their feedback within class time and improve their overall grades as a result of the information given to them. This not only turned the pupils into reflective practitioners, but they were also developing their GCSE skills. I had given the pupils the same question in the

pre-post testing, however as they began to understand the key words and what the question was asking of them, they were able to take these skills away and answer a similar question of the same difficulty.

Overall, the research was a success and it was evident from the information and data collected that DIRT does impact the learners grade as it gives them time to reflect and respond to the feedback given to them. Every pupil within their year 10 class that received DIRT was able to improve their marks by at least 3 marks. This is due to the fact pupils were given the time to reflect and absorb the feedback given to them. They were able to understand why they had received the marks they did, and what they needed to do to improve further.

The year 9 class was not given the opportunity to respond to feedback within the lesson, and it is evident from their results that they failed to acknowledge the comments within their book. As most pupils made very little adjustments which coincides with Didau (2013) who argued that 70% of all feedback provided to pupils was ignored and 'fell on stony soil'. This is a huge percentage, of pupils who are failing to improve on their work, and some may be working under what they are capable of. It was evident throughout my research that by giving pupils the time to reflect on their feedback within the lesson they were more inclined to respond to it and therefore had a better understanding on how to improve their work. Although this is praised throughout extensive amounts of literature, to see the true benefits it must be adopted within schools and used consistently as pupils need to be trained in the process.

Limitations and future development (800 words)

There were a number of limitations identified throughout the study. The biggest problem was the time constraints, I only had a number of weeks to collect the data. As pupils only receive an average of three lessons per week I needed to ensure this was done efficiently to enable me to collect the information and data needed. Ideally, this type of research would be repeated with other groups as well as the same class to ensure consistency. However there were not enough classes with the ability to answer a GCSE question. Although the DIRT activities need to occur within a set amount of time to avoid the risk of pupils grades increasing due to natural maturity, there is nothing stopping teachers from pre-post testing throughout the year as long as the pre-post test is done within a certain time period. This would ensure that DIRT is impacting the pupils grades and not hindering it.

Secondly, my sample size was extremely small. Cohen et al, argues that as the sample size is so small it would be a non-parametric test and therefore few or no assumptions can be made about whether DIRT in fact impacts pupil progress as it needs to be completed on a larger scale. To get a better understanding of

whether this intervention would work across other counties / within other schools, it would need to be done with a number of class in different schools to ensure the overall population was reflected. This can be done through quantitative research like mine, however it needs to be done on a larger scale for it to be valid (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

To enhance this study further, it would have been better to introduce the intervention without participants knowledge, to see whether the findings were true without them acknowledging and being told what was expected of them. Obviously, this is difficult as it results in areas of deception, where pupils could feel as though their individual rights have been exploited.

I would also consider a 'no grade' policy. As there is extensive research to suggest that pupils are happy to just 'get by' and as long as they are happy with their result they will not respond to feedback. It would be interesting to see whether giving the pupils their work back without a grade would encourage them to respond to the feedback provided to them.

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