

Targedau / Targets	Sut rydych wedi gweithio ar hwn / How you have worked on this?	Ceir enghraifft ar / An example can be found on:
<u>Targed/Target 1</u>	You need to read more widely around the subject. Your references list shows a limited engagement with suitably academic literature.	This can be found throughout my written response to the question and in my reference list.
<u>Targed/Target 2</u>	Whilst there was an attempt to synthesise some research, this was limited by the lack of wider reading.	This can be found throughout my written response to the question.

ECAD5010

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

Within this assignment, I will be discussing the findings of a research study focusing on the Assessment for Learning strategy Peer Assessment. My focused research will be based on a research question "Do staff and year 5 learners value the use of peer assessment when working towards progression in their learning?". This research was conducted in School A, which is considered a large, multicultural, double-form entry school based in the city centre, where 55.7% of the pupils on the role at this school are currently living in the top 30% of the most deprived areas in Wales, as defined by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019. Furthermore, 22.9% of the whole school population lives in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in Wales, and 5.3% live in the top 10%. The three-year average for Free School meals for children is 25.9% for 2019 – 2021. For the financial year 2021-2022, the pupil development grant was set at £112,700. 22.1% of the children on the role are classified as children who use English as an Additional Language, whereas 12.2% have Additional Learning Needs (School A, 2019). During observation prior to the research collection, it was noted that the year 5 learners of school A were competent in marking the work of their peers. This research study considers the strengths and limitations of the Assessment for Learning strategy and peer assessment from both the teaching staff and the learners' viewpoints. The teaching staff can address and develop the learners' progression when the pupil's voice is

understood. This research uses the mosaic approach to focus on pupils' voices and will use mixed-method research tools to collect data from staff and learners.

Peer assessment is used as an Assessment for Learning strategy whereby learners assess the learning of their peers and provide feedback based on formative assessment. Black and Wiliam (1998) suggest that teachers and their learners develop the use of formative assessment styles by providing information which is then used as feedback to revise the teaching and learning activities in which they are involved (Black and Wiliam, 1998). Where formative assessment lends itself more towards the learner leading their learning journey, summative assessment "typically is an attempt to measure student attainment at the end of a learning period" (Florez and Sammonds, 2013). Roscoe and Chi, 2007, have suggested that peer assessment has the potential to provide learners with opportunities to discuss and indicate their understanding. There is also the opportunity for the learners to produce new ideas stemming from existing comments and to develop their prior knowledge by clarifying any misunderstandings or differing opinions (Roscoe and Chi, 2007). This can be challenged, nonetheless, as van Zundert, Sluijsmans, and van Merriënboer (2010) have argued that it is impossible to suggest an entirely effective peer assessment method. They state that it cannot be known which peer assessment method can "benefit student learning and yield satisfactory psychometric qualities such as reliability and validity" without further, in-depth research. In support of this, the National Foundation for Educational Research has discussed that learners develop the ability to peer assess through modelling learnt behaviours. They suggest that this is best demonstrated by modelling the learner's high-quality work and allowing the class to peer mark it collectively. It is also recommended that the peer marking should consist of giving topic-specific feedback that follows the lesson's success criteria. This allows the learners to develop the skills needed to effectively assess the recorded tasks of peers (National Foundation for Educational Research, n.d.). Despite this, Hartley (1998) argues that learners participating in peer summative assessment hold minor importance in the overall result of learners achieving grades, as there is doubt over the accuracy of peer marking (Hartley, 1998, p136). There is a continuous debate over the accuracy of learners marking the work of their peers, with Stefani (1994) partially supporting Hartley's suggestion that there are some close links between teacher and learner

marking, with the learner's assessment generally lower than the teacher's grading (Stefani, 1994). However, in contrast to this, it can be argued that the learners are more lenient to their peers and can often tend to over-mark (Boud and Holmes, 1995). Bostock (2000) summarises that peer assessment can require a more time allowing approach, suggesting that there is potentially more preparation required than traditional methods (Bostock, 2000). They also suggest that it can be more beneficial for the learners as they receive higher-quality feedback which they find more useful. Despite this, summative peer assessment was useless to both the teacher and school as it does not allow for additional time for the teacher, as the results are deemed "too unreliable". When discussing peer assessment in a practical environment, it is realistic to state that it can be conducted with or without anonymity. Panadero and Alqassab (2019) have proposed that it is beneficial to the outcomes of peer assessment when using anonymity, detailing the focus of the peer assessing learner, which is exclusively set on the task being assessed rather than who has created the work. They have also suggested that the learner being assessed will consider anonymous feedback more valuable to their progression as there is less likely bias. Therefore, they are more likely to adjust their work based on peer assessment feedback (Yu, 2012). There is also the benefit for the marker that there will not be any potential repercussions to their marking. Without the support of anonymity, a peer marker may feel obliged to give feedback with bias as there may be the suggestion of potential negativity and personal motives (Peterson and Peterson, 2011). However, this method of peer assessing has been questioned about encouraging and promoting learners' relationships with peers. Strijbos et al. (2009) have considered the effect of the learner's "cognitive, interpersonal and self-regulation skills." during the process of formative assessment (Strijbos et al., 2009). They have implied that it is imperative that the peer assessor and the peer-assessed are known to each other and that they engage in discussion. This discussion may include critical feedback on the task meaning that any negative connotations can be argued and any bad feelings put to rest. These face-to-face exchanges of verbal feedback during the formative assessment are in place as mid-task guidance to steer work in the right direction, as opposed to summative peer assessment, which is conducted at the end of a task, boosting the ability for learners to work together as a team and take constructive feedback and apply this to any tasks.

The methodology adopted throughout this research study uses the mosaic approach to collect data and obtain the relevant research needed. The mosaic approach is defined as using the "voice of the child" as it is an integral focus of the research within school settings. Although initially developed for research, Clark (2005) has detailed how the mosaic approach has since been blended with teaching for use within the classroom, displaying how teaching and research can be linked to benefit each other (Clark, 2005). The mosaic approach can also be linked to the Reggio Emilia approach to education, whereby the learners and their education are closely linked to the parents and community to support learners from all backgrounds to explore and succeed in the environment around them. They are also encouraged to express themselves through differing methods, including what Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (2012) use the blanket term of "languages", which they detail as "expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, ethical, metaphorical, logical, imaginative and relational" (Edwards, Gandini and Forman, 2012). For this research study, a mixed methods approach to research will be conducted using a range of research tools to collect and evaluate the data, also adhering to the research of Clark and Moss (2011), who have suggested the use of the mixed method approach to research can be likened to "individual tiles". Clark and Moss use the term "individual tiles" to describe mixed method research to gain insight into the research topic, allowing all 'tiles' of research to form together to create the bigger picture (Clark and Moss, 2011). The research for this study will be obtained via a detailed questionnaire aimed at the teaching staff throughout all three progression steps within school A and through an informal, semi-structured interview process with learners in a year 5 class within progression step 3. The questionnaire aimed at teaching staff is in place to gain insight into their perceptions of how peer assessment works in their classroom and how, in their experience, it can progress or hinder a learner's development and progression (see appendices for a blank questionnaire). A strength that would be considered when using a questionnaire as a research tool would be anonymity whilst submitting the questionnaire can often lead to more honest and detailed answers, often leading to quantitative data collection. Despite the potential strengths, the Welsh Government (2015) have suggested that the limitations of an online questionnaire could produce a lack of responses from participants, which will affect the qualitative data collected (Welsh Government, 2015). The National Foundation for Educational Research has also supported this as

a limitation, adding that a lack of resources is available when discussing questionnaires to ask any follow-up questions to ambiguous responses (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2013). However, Hunter (2012) counteracts this argument by suggesting that the use of e-questionnaires to conduct research in a short space of time offers satisfactory data quality and responses, implying that the disadvantages often discussed with standard questionnaires are "no longer valid" (Hunter, 2012). From the data collection of this research, each form of the research tools used has the potential to generate both qualitative and quantitative data (see appendices). It was unlikely that the data could be triangulated throughout the research collection day as only two data sources were collected. Despite this, there could be an argument that the data is triangulated as the researcher has observed peer assessment taking place within the group of participants before this study. Heale and Forbes (2013) suggest that this method of research correlates with the mixed method approach to the collection of research data, stating that this methodology often "allows the limitations from each method to be transcended by comparing findings from different perspectives" (Heale and Forbes, 2013). This primary research is conducted in School A, with learners who are nine and ten years of age in a year 5 class within progression step 3. Each interview consisted of an in-person, face-to-face focus group, led by the researcher, of between five and six learners from diverse ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds, genders, and academic abilities. The purpose of interviews with learners is to collect primary research data on a topic with which they are familiar while adopting the mosaic approach to gain the true voice of the learners. A strength of face-to-face interviews with the learners is that they are encouraged to discuss a part of their learning, in which they can voice opinions and discrepancies in a safe environment rather than following the interpretations of their learning from a member of the teaching staff (Eder and Fingerson, 2001). Opdenakker (2006) has discussed another strength of face-to-face interviews as a prime opportunity to gain a higher quality of research that cannot be achieved through questionnaires as a research tool. They suggest that social cues, such as tone of voice and body language, can be observed during an in-person interview allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of what the interviewee is communicating (Opdenakker, 2006). They also imply that the importance of social cues during an interview can allow the researcher to explore to a better degree what information they are aiming to gather during the data collection.

These social cues can also be seen as a limitation of in-person interviews. When discussing this research study specifically, the learners can often disclose an unconscious bias towards the researcher, as there is already an established bond and rapport. During interviews where the researcher and the learner are known to each other, the learner will often want to please the researcher, meaning they are more inclined to give them the answer the learner thinks they want. This can result in unreliable research data when evaluating this qualitative data (Phellas, Bloch and Seale, 2011, pp.23–32). Each learner can discuss their feelings and experiences of peer assessment through semi-structured questions set by the researcher (see appendices for a list of research questions). Prior to the research interviews commencing and throughout, the researcher included transparency in the research and conveyed to all learners by making them aware of the purpose of this research and giving a choice on whether they wanted to participate, in line with the ethics form completed prior to the research collection day (see appendices). They were also made aware that all research collected would remain anonymous. They hold the right to withdraw from the research at any time without needing an explanation, per the BERA guidelines for conducting ethical research (BERA, 2018). This learner assented to participate and was paired with the consent given by the school setting as they deemed it unnecessary to gain consent from the parents. All research was to be conducted within the school building for educational development and progression. Throughout this research, all learners were informed that all data disclosed would remain confidential and would only be used for this research study, allowing the child to follow articles 12, 13 and 16 of the UNCRC Rights of the Child, outlining the respect, freedom of expression, and their right to privacy (UNICEF, 1992).

The research which was conducted during this time was to collect data on the research question, "Do staff and year 5 learners value the use of peer assessment when working towards progression in their learning?". Before this research, it was expected that the learners would be knowledgeable of peer assessment as they displayed areas of competence when taking part in recorded tasks during lessons led by the researcher during PTE2. However, while collecting the data, a limitation of conducting research on peer assessment as an assessment for learning strategy appeared as learners disclosed throughout the interview that they had not accessed

peer assessment since then. This was also apparent during School A's last Estyn inspection, whereby inspectors advised it to "Provide pupils with greater and improved opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback" (Estyn, 2014). School A has been inspected within the last month; however, with the latest inspection report yet to be published, it cannot be determined whether this recommendation has been met. This initially affected the findings of questions 1 and 2 of the interview (see appendices) as they were closed questions to gather quantitative data. As a result, it was found that the learners needed help responding to these questions. During question 3 of the interview, all learners discussed how they conducted peer assessment in their classroom by using green pens to tick correct answers and dot incorrect answers. This school-wide system encourages those with incorrect answers to progress throughout their work rather than marking them with an 'X', which can have negative connotations. When discussing with the learners, some disclosed that they do not benefit from using the dot, as they are not encouraged to use their peers' feedback to correct or seek help for incorrect answers. Several learners in group 2 voiced that they have a session once a week set aside by the teacher to conduct RRI, which they described as 'Reflect, Respond and Improve'. This session is specifically designed to reflect and respond to a comment made by the teacher or their peers and to allow the learner to improve and progress in their learning. Some learners commented that they marked their comments with their initials while leaving a comment for their peers. This produced contrasting arguments as some learners approved of leaving their initials, as it allowed for further explanation and discussion of their comments.

In contrast, others had strong negative feelings towards it, suggesting that it has led to confrontation or ill feelings with some peers. When discussing with the learners if they often have access to peer-assessed tasks, a vast majority of the learners in each focus group commented on the lack of peer assessment available to them, voicing that they had not used this method of feedback since the autumn term, when the researcher was allocated to this class while out on PTE. During question 4 of the interviews, where learners were asked which methods of peer assessment they use, they discussed that during spelling tests, they are occasionally asked to swap books with their talk partners to peer mark. The National Foundation for Educational Research suggests it should be a conscious decision of whom peers exchange

books with. They state that learners should swap books with peers of similar academic ability in that topic rather than a random swap. They add that learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) have support from the teaching assistants to buddy up with (National Foundation of Educational Research, n.d.). This style of summative assessment proved popular amongst some learners, as they commented that they enjoyed doing this as it made them feel important and like they were the teacher, while others discussed feelings of pressure and anxiety at the thought of making a mistake. This response also links into question 5, whereby a few learners also added that they often had feelings of anxiety when swapping books with their peers as it is potential for their peers to "make fun or laugh" at their work. An implementation for the teaching staff as School A in response to these learner interviews could imply a professional conversation is needed with the learners and their peers on what constitutes acceptable responses during peer assessment. Most learners have expressed during their interviews that they suggest only positive language be used during feedback during strategies such as '2 stars and a wish' as they feel that the wish can often be used to mock or ridicule a peer's work. The National Foundation of Educational Research supports this recommended implementation for teachers, stating that they must "allow pupils to become accustomed to the process before they are asked to evaluate and comment on their classmates' work" (National Foundation for Educational Research, n.d.).

Alongside this qualitative data collection, there was also an attempt to collect quantitative data through an anonymous questionnaire aimed at teaching staff. Regrettably, the research shows that only one response was received during the time allocated for the data collection (see appendices). From the little data recorded, I can infer that teachers within progression step 3 find that verbal peer assessment can benefit their teaching by providing immediate feedback to adapt their teaching styles to provide the best learning experiences for the learners. From question 6 of the teacher questionnaire, the research mirrors the general response from the learner interviews, suggesting that the learners dislike that their peers give written feedback in books as they are personal to the individual. The research from the questionnaire suggests that peer assessment is rarely accessed within School A, with the sharing of success criteria being the preferred choice of Assessment for Learning strategy. The responses show that success criteria are more accessible to

learners in progression step 3, as they show a list of expected outcomes of the learner, allowing for a more independent learning process. As a result of this lack of data collection, should this research study be conducted in the future, the researcher should consider distributing the questionnaire to a larger cohort of teachers to have a larger number of responses and a more in-depth collection of research data.

To conclude, this research study to collect data on peer assessment within the school setting has produced data that both support and discredit the use of peer assessment within the classroom. The research suggests that learners often disliked the peer assessment process and would prefer to self-assess any work produced within the classroom. However, often value the feedback that comes from their peers. This study also produced results that the researcher did not expect.

Responses from the learners regarding how peer feedback often negatively affects their mindset and how they experienced anxiety around the presentation of their books suggest that they hold their recorded work in high regard, which is personal to them. By using mixed methods of research tools, the research can show clear strengths and limitations from both the perspectives of the learners and the teaching staff, and the latter need to adapt their teaching styles to find which methods work best for the progression of their learners. An apparent limitation of this study is the lack of responses to the questionnaire resulting in the absence of quantitative data for analysis. For future research projects, it would be beneficial to collect data that several factors be considered to allow for a more reliable set of data responses.

For future practice relating to professional development within my teaching career, this research study has developed skills for each strand of the Qualified Teaching Status. Regarding the three strands of Pedagogy, each can be influenced and developed through the progression of this research study. Leadership and innovation are also strands in which the researcher can extend their development as each is required to organise and conduct research with mixed data collection methods.

Word count: 3538

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