



**MODULE CODE : ECAD5014**

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2314717

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to find relevant sources prior to independent research using the prompt(s):

1. Find the most relevant and recent sources to evidence the use of Pre and Post RAG scoring, and self-assessment in Key Stage 2 education in primary schools. Include reference to relevant educational theorists as well as recent studies.
2. Find the most relevant and recent sources to evidence the use of semi-structured group interviews and Microsoft Forms questionnaires as research tools in educational research.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work.

| Targets From Previous Assignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | How I Have Addressed These Targets Within This Assignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Continue to broaden your literary scope, tapping into cutting-edge research and diverse academic discussions. Consistency in flawless referencing should remain a priority. Consider contributing original thought that reflects an amalgamation of your extensive reading. | Within this assignment I have aimed to engage with a range of literature – including key theorists and recent studies. I have continued to use the Harvard Referencing Guide to ensure accurate referencing. I have also aimed to add elements of original thought where necessary. |
| Sustain your high level of critical analysis, ensuring a balanced investigation of contradictory or incomplete data. Explore opportunities for original contributions to your field, perhaps through research projects or academic paper submissions.                       | Within this assignment I have ensured to be critical and offer opposing views when considering theories, opinions and sources.                                                                                                                                                      |

#### **ECAD5014 – Researching the Learning: what, how and why am I teaching?**

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

#### **How effective do year 6 teaching staff and learners find Pre and Post RAG scoring as a method of Self-Assessment?**

##### **Introduction** 395

This small-scale research study investigates the effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG (Red, Amber, Green) scoring as a method of self-assessment among Year 6 learners and teaching staff. Pre- and post-RAG scoring is an Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategy where students self-assess their understanding before and after a lesson using colour codes to reflect confidence levels, helping teachers tailor instruction to address learning gaps, common misconceptions, and successes (Education Endowment Foundation, n.d.). Self-assessment alone encourages students to reflect on and evaluate their own understanding and performance, promoting autonomy and deeper engagement by identifying strengths and areas for improvement (Black & Wiliam, 1998). As defined by Welsh Government, Assessment for Learning (AfL) is an ongoing process that involves using evidence and feedback to identify where learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there, promoting deeper

understanding and improving educational outcomes (Welsh Government, 2010). The rationale for this research is rooted in the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) within the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022), where 'Pedagogical Principle 7' states that "good teaching and learning means assessment for learning principles" (Welsh Government, 2023). This is emphasised where ESTYN states "Effective assessment practice occurs when priority is given to the role of formative assessment in teaching and learning " (Estyn, 2022).

Conducted in a mixed-ability Year 6 class in a large community school (School X), this research provides insights into how both learners and staff engage with RAG scoring, contributing to a deeper understanding of effective self-assessment strategies amongst Key Stage 2 learners. In this study, learners School X use the Welsh colour names - *coch* (red), *oren* (amber), and *gwyrdd* (green) - when engaging in Pre and Post RAG scoring, reflecting the bilingual context of the school and aligning with the Curriculum for Wales' emphasis on Welsh identity (Welsh Government, 2020).

Throughout this study, I aim to develop my personal research skills, through the implementation of two different research methods; questionnaires and a semi-structured group interview. By understanding the perceived effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG scoring, this study seeks to enhance my future professional teaching practice by identifying strengths, challenges, and potential improvements in the approach. This ability to consider the impact of AfL strategies within a Key Stage 2 classroom will enable further development of the QTS Standard, 'Pedagogy: Refining – Assessment' throughout my PTE3 experience.

## Literature Review [714](#)

Assessment for Learning (AfL) has long been recognised as a fundamental component of effective pedagogy, with considerable research underscoring its role in enhancing pupil progression (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Rooted in constructivist theory, AfL emphasises formative assessment practices that encourage student autonomy and reflective learning, rather than a rigid, summative assessment approach to feedback (Sadler, 1989). However, the extent to which specific methods, such as Self-Assessment and Pre and Post RAG (Red, Amber, Green) scoring, effectively support pupil progression, remains subject to debate.

Black and Wiliam's (1998) work demonstrates that formative assessment methods significantly enhance learning when students engage in self-assessment and peer assessment processes. The authors argue the importance of providing students with clear criteria for success allows them to better understand learning objectives and take ownership of their progress, enabling access to self-assessment and peer-assessment approaches for all learners. This perspective aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory, where effective scaffolding enables learners of all abilities to move through their zone of proximal development (ZPD), thus aiding their progression in

learning. Yet, it remains unclear whether methods like RAG scoring offer sufficient scaffolding or simply create a surface-level understanding of progress.

Areas of RAG scoring, as a method of Self-Assessment, suggest that it promotes metacognition by encouraging learners to reflect on their performance against clear criteria (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020). It provides instant feedback, which is often cited as essential for improving learning outcomes (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In the context of the Curriculum for Wales, where emphasis is placed on its Four Purposes, developing ambitious and capable learners (Welsh Government, 2020), RAG scoring appears to align with the broader goal of fostering learner autonomy. This is emphasised within The Great Teaching Toolkit, which highlights that self-assessment enables students to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement, and take ownership of their educational progress (Teacher Development Trust, 2020). Moreover, research suggests that self-assessment methods increase motivation and engagement by positioning learners as active participants in their educational journey (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). In the context of Pre and Post RAG scoring, students can visibly track their progression, which may enhance motivation (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020). However, it is important to consider whether this motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic. There is a risk that students may prioritise achieving a higher RAG rating over genuine learning (Kohn, 1999).

Despite its perceived benefits, RAG scoring is not without criticism. A key challenge is the reliability of self-assessment, with research indicating that learners often overestimate or underestimate their abilities (Dunning et al., 2004). Inconsistent self-assessment could undermine the validity of RAG scoring as a tool for accurately tracking progress. Furthermore, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) caution that self-assessment is only effective when learners fully understand the criteria, which may not always be the case in primary education. Supporting this, Rachel and Tom (2022) argue that RAG rating can be problematic, as students may overestimate their understanding and prematurely disengage from further learning.

Another issue relates to the emotional impact of self-assessment. Studies show that negative self-assessment outcomes can demotivate students, particularly those with lower self-efficacy (Pajares, 1996). In the context of RAG scoring, consistently receiving a 'coch' rating could reinforce feelings of failure rather than promote improvement. While some learners report feeling motivated to improve, others may disengage, suggesting that the emotional consequences of RAG scoring warrant further investigation.

Teacher involvement is another crucial factor in the effectiveness of RAG scoring. Black and Wiliam (1998) argue that formative assessment should inform teacher feedback, yet it is unclear how consistently this occurs with RAG scoring. Research indicates that students benefit most when self-assessment is coupled with timely and constructive feedback from teachers (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, if RAG scores are merely recorded as data points without meaningful feedback, their impact on aiding pupil progression may be minimal.

Additionally, accessibility concerns have been raised regarding RAG scoring. Colour-coded systems can be problematic for colourblind students, potentially leading to exclusion or miscommunication (Dalton et al., 2019). Adjustments, such as using symbols or tick boxes, may improve inclusivity.

## Methodology 1206

The research tools used when conducting this study employ a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both semi-structured group interviews and Microsoft Forms questionnaires. The selection of these methods is grounded in their complementary nature, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of teaching staff, and Year 6 learners perspectives on Pre and Post RAG scoring. According to Bryman (2016), using mixed-methods when conducting research enhances the depth of data collection by integrating qualitative and quantitative elements, thereby strengthening the validity of findings. However, it is crucial to critically evaluate the appropriateness of these tools within the specific context of educational research.

A semi-structured group interview is a qualitative data collection method that balances structured questioning with the flexibility to probe emerging themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). I have chosen to implement this research tool for its capacity to facilitate in-depth discussions among Key Stage 2 learners while ensuring that key topics are addressed systematically. Unlike fully structured interviews, which may restrict participant expression, semi-structured interviews allow researchers to explore unanticipated insights (Denscombe, 2021). Given the cognitive and communicative development of primary school learners, this adaptability is particularly advantageous, as it enables researchers to modify questions to suit participants' comprehension levels (Punch & Oancea, 2019). Furthermore, group interviews foster peer interaction, which can help alleviate individual anxieties and encourage more open discussion (Morgan, 2019). Research indicates that children often feel more comfortable sharing opinions in a familiar peer setting rather than in one-on-one interviews (Greig et al., 2020). Additionally, the social dynamic within a group setting can generate richer data by allowing participants to build on each other's responses (Smith, 2021). However, potential challenges include the risk of dominant voices overshadowing quieter participants, potentially leading to biased data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To mitigate this, I, as the interviewer, will employ inclusive facilitation strategies, such as direct prompts to quieter individuals and equal-turn policies (Silverman, 2020). Despite its strengths, the semi-structured group interview method has limitations. Firstly, younger children may struggle to articulate their thoughts coherently in a group setting, leading to potential data distortion (Christensen & Prout, 2018). Secondly, group interviews introduce a risk of conformity bias, where participants may align their responses with peer opinions rather than expressing independent thoughts (Robson & McCartan, 2016). While careful moderation and observation can help counteract these effects, it remains an inherent limitation of the approach.

In addition to qualitative interviews, this study employs Microsoft Forms questionnaires to collect quantitative data from Year 6 teaching staff. A questionnaire is a structured instrument used to gather standardized information from respondents (Brace, 2018). Microsoft Forms was selected due to its user-friendly interface, accessibility, and ability to generate real-time data analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). The platform facilitates the collection of large-scale data efficiently, enabling statistical comparisons that enhance the study's reliability (Bell & Waters, 2018). The decision to use questionnaires with teaching staff is based on the need to obtain standardised insights into their experiences and perspectives on relevant educational themes. Unlike interviews, which can be time-consuming and require extensive scheduling, digital questionnaires allow participants to respond at their convenience, reducing time constraints and increasing response rates (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, self-administered surveys eliminate interviewer bias, ensuring that responses are based solely on participants' perspectives (Bryman, 2016). While Microsoft Forms offers several advantages, it is not without limitations. Firstly, the lack of direct interaction means that respondents cannot seek clarification on ambiguous questions, potentially leading to misinterpretation and unreliable data (Wilson & Joye, 2017). To mitigate this, the questionnaire will undergo pilot testing, amongst peers, to ensure clarity and appropriateness of language (Fowler, 2020). Secondly, response rates may be affected by participant workload, as teachers often have limited availability to engage with additional research activities (McMillan & Schumacher, 2018). To address this, the questionnaire will be designed to be concise, with an estimated completion time of under 10 minutes to maximise engagement. Additionally, ensuring anonymity in responses will encourage more honest and open feedback, reducing the likelihood of social desirability bias (Dillman et al., 2017).

During the designated Research Day, in School X, the semi-structured group interview will be conducted in the community room with five randomly selected Year 6 learners, ensuring a comfortable and familiar environment for open discussion. Additionally, at 8:30 AM, the Microsoft Forms questionnaire will be distributed via email to six Year 6 teaching staff, allowing them to complete it at their convenience throughout the day.

To ensure a rigorous and systematic analysis of the collected data, both qualitative and quantitative methods will be employed. The semi-structured group interview will be transcribed in full, after which thematic coding will be applied to identify recurring patterns and key themes (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Thematic analysis is a widely used method for interpreting qualitative data, allowing researchers to systematically categorise responses and draw meaningful insights (Nowell et al., 2017). The coding process will involve an initial open-coding phase, where emergent themes will be identified, followed by axial coding to refine categories and establish relationships between themes (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). This approach ensures that the analysis remains data-driven while also allowing for researcher reflexivity, thus enhancing the reliability of the findings (Flick, 2018).

When collecting responses to the Microsoft Forms questionnaire, a quantitative analysis will be conducted using the platform's built-in data visualisation tools, such as automatically generated graphs and tables. These visual

representations will allow for the identification of trends and patterns within the responses (NFER, 2021). Descriptive statistics, including percentage distributions and mean values, will be used to summarise key findings and provide a clear overview of staff perspectives (Bell & Waters, 2018). While quantitative analysis offers the advantage of objectivity and scalability, it is important to acknowledge potential limitations, such as the lack of depth in responses compared to qualitative methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In conducting this research project, I will ensure adherence to the ethical principles outlined in the 2024 BERA (British Educational Research Association) guidelines. The ethical considerations will be rigorously followed, as outlined in my Ethics Form (See Appendix 14), which provides a clear overview of the steps taken to ensure the protection and dignity of all participants. In terms of consent, I will seek voluntary, informed consent from all teachers involved in the study, who will individually agree to participate in completing the questionnaires (see Appendix 16). Additionally, I will request blanket consent from the Headteacher at School X, for all learners to take part in the interviews, ensuring that institutional consent is secured prior to participant recruitment (See Appendix 15). For learner participants, I will seek assent individually, ensuring that all learners understand the nature of their participation and voluntarily agree to take part in the research process (BERA, 2024). As highlighted within the Ethics Form shown in Appendix 14, I will make sure it is clear to all learners that leaving the semi-structured group interview at any point will not lead to any consequences. This approach aligns with the ethical frameworks discussed by Cohen and Manion (2018), which emphasise the importance of clear communication, transparency, and the respect for participants' autonomy in educational research. Furthermore, I have made provisions to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of participants, in accordance with the ethical standards expected within educational research (BERA, 2024).

## Discussion and Findings [1542](#)

In exploring the effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG scoring as a method of self-assessment, the data shown in the Transcript of the Semi-Structured Interview (See Appendix 2) provides valuable insights into both the perceived benefits and challenges of the AfL strategy, from the perspective of Year 6 learners. The responses indicate that students generally find the method motivating and empowering, as it encourages self-reflection and gives them immediate feedback on their progress. Learners expressed positive emotions when successfully completing their RAG scoring, particularly when their self-assessments were green (L3, L6). However, highlighted within the literature review, the emotional impact of RAG scoring can also be negative. For instance, some students, such as L4, reported feeling disappointed when their work was scored 'coch', which aligns with research by Pajares (1996), who notes that negative self-assessment outcomes can diminish motivation, particularly for those with lower self-efficacy. This aligns with Kohn's (1999) concern that extrinsic motivators, such as achieving a higher RAG rating, may overshadow intrinsic learning goals. Therefore, it can be argued that it is essential that RAG scoring is used in

conjunction with meaningful feedback from teachers, as suggested by Hattie and Timperley (2007), to ensure it serves as an effective tool for promoting student learning.

The interview data also highlights that Pre and Post RAG scoring encourages self-reflection and metacognition, a key aspect of formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Learners noted that the method allows them to track their learning progress and make adjustments. This is shown where L6 states “It means you can instantly know if you have done good or bad and what you need to improve on” and “Having a toolkit that miss puts on the board to tell us how to mark our work makes it easier to see what we have done well and how we can push our work to the next level”. This is an observation consistent with Andrade and Brookhart’s (2020) findings that self-assessment promotes deeper understanding by encouraging students to evaluate their own performance. This aligns with the social constructivist theories of Vygotsky (1978), who argues that learners develop through scaffolded support, such as the use of clear criteria for self-assessment. The toolkit provided by the teacher, as mentioned by L6, aids students in identifying what they have done well and where they can improve, reinforcing the scaffolding approach to self-assessment discussed by Black and Wiliam (1998).

However, the data also highlights some challenges, particularly regarding the reliability of self-assessment. This can be seen where L2 stated “I find it difficult to know where I am at and what colour to pick. Like when we were doing BODMAS in maths, I put gwyrdd and stayed gwyrdd but I didn’t know if I should choose oren” and when asked how learners decide which colour to select, L3 stated “I usually do rock, paper, scissors in my head.” It is clear here that students sometimes struggle with deciding the correct RAG colour, especially when their understanding of a task feels ambiguous. This issue of inconsistent self-assessment is supported by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), who caution that self-assessment can be ineffective if students do not fully understand the criteria for success. This concern is echoed by Rachel and Tom (2022), who argue that students may prematurely disengage from learning when they overestimate their understanding, a risk in the context of RAG scoring.

The issue of colour blindness in the context of Pre and Post RAG scoring, as mentioned by L5 and L3 in the transcript, raises concerns about accessibility. Learners highlighted that individuals with colour blindness may struggle to differentiate between the RAG colours, which can impact their ability to self-assess effectively. This concern is supported by the literature, where Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) argue that self-assessment practices, including RAG scoring, are only effective when all students can engage with the criteria clearly. To address this, the literature suggests incorporating alternative methods, such as symbols or patterns, to ensure inclusivity and avoid disadvantaging learners with colour blindness (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020).

Appendices 4-13 display responses to each question within the Staff Questionnaire. Only 3 out of 6 members of the Year 6 teaching staff, who received the Microsoft Forms Questionnaire via email, responded to my questionnaire, which limits the generalisability of the findings and may not fully represent the diverse perspectives of the entire teaching team regarding the effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG scoring as a method of self-

assessment. However, of these 3 members of staff, 100% responded as “Very Familiar” with Pre and Post RAG scoring as a method of self-assessment and acknowledge their use of the strategy during “Every Lesson” that they teach.

Two out of three respondents indicated that Pre and Post RAG scoring is "very effective" in helping pupils reflect on their learning, while one respondent rated it as "somewhat effective." This, as previously discussed, aligns with the literature review, which suggests that self-assessment practices like RAG scoring foster metacognitive skills by encouraging students to reflect on their progress (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020). Black and Wiliam (1998) also highlight that formative assessment methods, such as Pre and Post RAG scoring, are most beneficial when students engage in reflective learning, promoting a deeper understanding of their learning journey. However, the mixed responses from staff may suggest that the effectiveness of RAG scoring could vary depending on its implementation or the individual needs of students.

All respondents (100%) affirmed that they believe Pre and Post RAG scoring aids progression across the Curriculum for Wales. This unanimous agreement aligns with the literature, particularly the Curriculum for Wales (2020), which emphasises the development of ambitious and capable learners.

When asked about the challenges of employing Pre and Post RAG scoring, respondents highlighted that pupils do not always assess their learning accurately. This concern is supported by the literature, where Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) caution that self-assessment is only effective when students fully understand the criteria for success. The risk of inaccurate self-assessment can undermine the effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG scoring, as students may either overestimate or underestimate their understanding, a finding also noted by Dunning et al. (2004). This issue is reflected in the interview transcript, where some learners (e.g., L2) expressed difficulty in determining the correct RAG colour when their understanding of a task felt unclear, highlighting the potential for inconsistent self-assessment. Such challenges suggest that while RAG scoring can encourage reflection, its accuracy and effectiveness are contingent on students' ability to correctly gauge their own learning, which may require further guidance and clarification from teachers.

Staff responses to the question "How do you currently use Pre and Post RAG scoring to inform your teaching?" indicate that RAG scoring is a valuable tool for personalising learning and tailoring lesson planning. One respondent stated, "personalisation of support and intervention," highlighting how RAG scoring helps staff to identify individual learning needs and provide targeted support. Another respondent noted, "identifying knowledge gaps and areas of strength enables staff to tailor lesson planning to maximise pupil progression," further emphasizing how the data from RAG scores allows for more focused lesson planning and intervention. This reflects the findings of Black and Wiliam (1998), who argue that formative assessment, including self-assessment methods like RAG scoring, is crucial for identifying individual learning gaps and tailoring instruction to meet diverse student needs. Additionally, Hattie and Timperley (2007) stress that effective formative assessment not only helps

students understand their learning but also provides teachers with actionable insights to improve their instructional practices. By using RAG scoring to inform teaching, educators can ensure that learning is personalized, which aligns with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales (2020), which seeks to support the progression of each learner based on their unique strengths and challenges.

When asked about potential improvements to enhance the effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG scoring, respondents highlighted two key areas: the need for clearer criteria regarding the RAG colours and making RAG scoring more accessible for colourblind learners. One staff member suggested that clearer clarification of the criteria for each RAG colour would help ensure students assess their learning more accurately. This concern aligns with Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick's (2006) assertion that self-assessment is only effective when learners fully understand the criteria they are using. In the transcript, learners such as L2 expressed uncertainty about selecting the correct colour when their understanding was unclear, saying, "I find it difficult to know where I am at and what colour to pick." This suggests that improved clarity in the criteria could address such confusion.

Additionally, the respondents noted the importance of making RAG scoring accessible for colourblind learners. This was also raised in the transcript, where L5 pointed out that "people who are colourblind could still use it because sometimes they can't see the difference between the colours," a sentiment echoed by L3, who suggested, "maybe like tick boxes." This concern reflects the broader issue of inclusivity in assessment methods, as highlighted by Andrade and Brookhart (2020), who argue that effective self-assessment tools should accommodate all learners' needs, including those with visual impairments. By addressing these challenges, such as providing clear, differentiated criteria and alternative methods for colourblind students, RAG scoring could become a more inclusive and effective tool for all learners, supporting equitable opportunities for self-reflection and progression.

### Conclusion and Recommendations 336

In this section, I have drawn conclusions from both the literature review and my research findings, focusing on three key points: the effectiveness of Pre and Post RAG scoring in enhancing self-reflection, the challenges related to inaccurate self-assessment, and the need for improvements in accessibility for all learners. The literature emphasizes the positive impact of self-assessment on pupil progression when implemented effectively (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Andrade & Brookhart, 2020), which is supported by the strong affirmation from teaching staff in my research that Pre and Post RAG scoring aids progression across the Curriculum for Wales. However, both the literature and my findings highlight the challenges learners face when assessing their work accurately, with inconsistent self-assessments being a potential barrier to its effectiveness (Dunning et al., 2004). Additionally, the concern raised by both staff and students about the accessibility of RAG scoring for colourblind learners underscores the importance of inclusive practices in formative assessment (Andrade & Brookhart, 2020).

Regarding methodology, the study demonstrated both strengths and limitations. One strength was the use of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, which allowed for triangulation of data from multiple sources (teaching staff and pupils), enhancing the reliability of the findings. However, the limited response rate from staff (3 out of 6 respondents) impacted the generalisability of the results, and the self-reported nature of the data may have introduced bias. Furthermore, while the data provided valuable insights, the small sample size limits the ability to draw broad conclusions.

Through undertaking this study, I have refined my research skills, particularly in gathering and analysing qualitative data. My understanding of Assessment for Learning (AfL) has deepened, particularly regarding the complexities of self-assessment and its impact on learner progression. Professionally, I plan to incorporate more effective AfL strategies in my teaching practice, particularly in future PTE3 and PLP placements, ensuring clearer criteria for self-assessment and making adjustments to cater to diverse learner needs, such as considering alternatives to traditional RAG scoring for colourblind learners, allowing me to meet the demands of the QTS standards.

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