

Develop a Research Proposal. Consider and critically evaluate a research paradigm and methodology suitable for your client group.

Overview

Throughout this assignment the researcher shall discuss a research proposal that explores an action research project. The research project intends to explore self-assessment and its implementation and impact upon learners within the primary school setting. The aims and purpose of the research project shall be further explored within the assignment. The researcher shall discuss the research paradigm and methodology the researcher should adopt. Furthermore, the researcher shall discuss the primary data collection methods. The researcher shall also discuss ethical considerations and how the data gathered could impact upon practice.

Introduction

Research questions usually arise from areas of interest that practitioners perceive as important (Efrat-Efron and Ravid, 2013). The overarching question of the research project would be 'Does the 'What Went Well and Even Better If' Assessment for Learning strategy encourage pupils to reflect upon their learning?'. The aforementioned strategy is a method of formative assessment and is designed to help pupils self-assess and reflect upon their learning. The strategy harmonises well with the general concepts of Assessment for Learning (Jones, 2017). Children decide upon a positive aspect of their learning throughout the lesson for the 'What Went Well' aspect. Then children decide upon a target to improve upon for the 'Even Better If' aspect. Pupils' responses to the strategy could be described as divergent (Sadler, 2013). The strategy is currently utilised at the primary school where the research project would be undertaken. The researcher is endeavouring to discover if the strategy is benefiting children, particularly in Key Stage Two. Primarily the objective of the research project is to understand whether pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their academic progress aided by an Assessment for Learning strategy.

Within the new curriculum there is a commitment to formative assessment (Welsh Government, 2017; Donaldson, 2015). The operational definition for Assessment for Learning for purpose of this assignment is a method of formative assessment. It has been suggested that if teachers utilise formative assessment as part of their pedagogy, children could learn at approximately double the

rate (Black and Wiliam, 2006). Thus, potentially hopefully encouraging growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) and developing the skill of reflectiveness.

Assessment for Learning- An Overview

Assessment for Learning can be categorised into four elements (Black and Wiliam, 2006). One of which is peer and self-assessment. The research project shall be focusing on the quality of self-assessment. Self-assessment occurs when children make judgements about their own learning and reflect upon what they learn (Grigg, 2015). The strategy being explored within the research project is primarily used to help children self-reflect upon their learning in a metacognitive manner. Self-assessment can be regarded as essential as children can achieve a learning intention if they can assess what they need to achieve it (Black and Wiliam, 2006). Some have argued that too much teaching time has been devoted to teacher-led instruction at the expense of encouraging reflection amongst pupils (Grigg, 2015; Black and Wiliam, 2006).

Historically, Assessment for Learning is a fairly recent concept that has been introduced to the education system (Grigg, 2015). The rationale of Assessment for Learning is that it helps pupils understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to achieve their targets (Grigg, 2015; Broadfoot et al., 2002; Black and Wiliam, 2006). Moreover, Assessment for Learning has been perceived as raising standards (Grigg, 2015; Black and Wiliam, 2006; Estyn, 2018). Pupil self-assessment has been ranked as one of the top factors in raising standards (Hattie, 2012).

Assessment for Learning can be viewed as a process (Black and Wiliam, 2006). Some may argue that a research project needs to be measurable, hence it could be difficult to measure something which is regarded as a process. On the contrary, others may suggest that self-assessment is a skill. The skill may only thrive if teachers help their students to develop it (Black, 2003). In contrast, some suggest that in order to become competent and confident in self-assessment, students need experience of doing it independently of their teachers and peers (Sadler, 2013). However, Burden and Williams (1997) suggested that it is important that teachers perceive themselves as mediators of learning, as mediators can empower students by modelling effective strategies for them to reflect on their own. Hereby, within the data collecting methods designed for practitioners, it could be beneficial to question whether practitioners have modelled the strategy for their class (Appendix One). Some may suggest teachers need to work together to successfully embed Assessment for Learning (Grigg, 2015).

Assessment for Learning can help create a sense of self-efficacy, confidence and independence (Cambridge Assessment International Education, unknown date). Consequently, these characteristics could be difficult to measure. Reflective thinking, it could be argued, is essential to children's development of learning autonomy (Black et al, 2007). Black and Wiliam (1998) discovered where children are encouraged and empowered to take more responsibility, they learn more effectively. Within the new curriculum and primary education as a whole, there is an aim to foster children's independence (Donaldson, 2015; Grigg, 2015). Assessment for Learning could help children to become owners of their own learning and more independent learners.

However, some may argue that it is difficult to understand fully if a child has progressed during a lesson and utilising formative assessment as a means to justify can have a negative impact (Didau, 2015). One of the types of metacognitive knowledge is declarative knowledge (Flavell, 1976). Pupils use declarative knowledge to judge if they have learnt the intended objectives. Some may suggest that in many schools it is detrimental to assume that children can make judgements based upon their own confidence that they have learned the intended objective (Wiliam, unknown date, cited in Didau, 2015).

Some children may not experience Assessment for Learning practices as teachers intend (Cowie, 2009, cited in Chapman-Chin et al., 2018). Hence, it is important to understand students' perspectives towards the pedagogical approach given its increasing presence across educational contexts (Klenowski, 2009, cited in Chapman-Chin et al., 2018). This predominantly being the researcher's personal reason for designing this research project. Children need to develop strategies to control their metacognitive ability (Grigg, 2015). Metacognition refers to children's control of their thinking, whether they are aware of how well they are learning and what they can do to improve (Flavell, 1976). Self-assessment Assessment for Learning strategies such as the one being explored, it could be argued, would aid this development.

Context, Plan, and Purpose

School based research could be viewed as an area that occupies between professional development, school improvement and evidence-based practice (Felzmann, 2009). The research project would be undertaken at a primary school in the South West Wales area. Primary schools can provide a reasonably sized, yet contained, sample from which research participants can be recruited (Austin,

2016). The unit of analysis would be the Key Stage Two cohort in the school. Prior to implementing the What Went Well and Even Better If strategy within the school, the senior leadership team utilised wider research to discover a suitable strategy. The team then proceeded to create a framework within the school's feedback and marking policy which outlined how to embed and effectively utilise the strategy. The policy would be closely scrutinised when creating the data collection methods. Hereby, it could be argued that this research project would mainly be based upon local knowledge.

At the core of action research methodology is the idea of a problem or issue focus (Smith and Wood, 2016). For context purposes, the researcher is intending to examine the suitability of the Assessment for Learning strategy. During a recent discussion with the school's challenge advisor, it was noted that the strategy may not be being used to its full potential. As a result, the school have now included Assessment for Learning and pupils' self-assessment within their School Development Plan. Attention to improving the use of formative assessment can improve learner's advancement (Gardner, 2012). Interpretivism attempts to solve and explain the current situation (Kemil Tekin and Kotaman, 2013). Hence, this research project endeavours to explore the points raised and hereby adopt an interpretivist paradigm approach. Educational researchers aim to extend knowledge and understanding in areas of educational activity, from all perspectives including those of learners and educators (BERA, 2018). An objective of the research project would be to discover pupils and staff opinions on the Assessment for Learning strategy.

The increasing growth of the teacher as researcher role may result in a role conflict and children being unaware that they are being asked to engage with research, as it is happening in the context of an activity set by a familiar teacher (Tyson, 2017). As the researcher is undertaking the research at their school, one would be considered an 'insider'. However, some may suggest that action research benefits from the researcher being familiar to the field and with the action research happening at the site where practice occurs (Casey, 2013). On the other hand, when participants are not familiar to the research it is imperative to be ethical and contextualise the enquiry so participants understand that their participation is voluntary and not linked to class assessment (Taber, 2013).

An effective research project would be systematic (Punch, 2016). Due to the timescale, this research project would be a cross-sectional study. It could be argued that a longitudinal study may have given the researcher more time to observe the impact of the Assessment for Learning strategy. The

researcher concluded that if the research project is to be completed to its full potential it should be carried out over a two month timescale, approximately the length of a school term. The researcher has developed a schedule to follow to ensure that the research project is carried out effectively (Appendix Two).

Assessment for Learning is highly prevalent in schools nowadays and it might be difficult to put biases aside and view it with sufficient clarity to assess how useful it may be (Didau, 2015). When carrying out the research, the researcher should endeavour to put any personal bias or opinions aside. Regardless of any empirical opinion or hypotheses, the researcher should endeavour to be open-minded and approach the research with honesty (EWC, 2019; BERA, 2018).

Before undertaking a research project it is essential to examine what research already exists about the research area (Austin, 2016; Koshy, 2010). It could be suggested that it is unlikely that a researcher will decide upon a topic that has never been discussed, but it is important to engage with the field of research (Sharp, 2012). On the contrary, empirical evidence would suggest that there is a great deal of research based upon Assessment for Learning. However, there is arguably limited research with an aim or research question similar to the researcher's.

Qualitative research could be viewed as multi-method involving an interpretative and naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). As aforementioned, the research project could be viewed as interpretivist. Whereby the data collection methods will require participants to socially construct their views. Also, another prominent aspect of an interpretivist approach is that the researcher would be analysing qualitative data gathered by qualitative data collection methods.

Methodology

Every researcher should adapt a framework or perspective (Burbules & Phillips, 2000). Action research has been described as something of an ongoing, proactive and evolutionary process (Sharp, 2012; Thomas, 2017). The research project would take an action research methodological design frame. Action research is research undertaken by practitioners for the purpose of helping them develop their practice (Thomas, 2017; Taber, 2013). Furthermore, it has been argued that action research can provide practitioners with a powerful strategy to actively lead school improvement (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Hopkins, 2014). Kurt Lewin (1946) is seemingly renowned as a

pioneer of 'action research' (Koshy, 2010). Action research could be described as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by practitioners in order to improve the rationality of their own practices and the context in which the practices are carried out (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). However, one concern is that action research offers sufficient evidence for making prompt decisions about current teaching rather than seeking to produce abstract knowledge that helps develop educational theory (Taber, 2013).

Some may debate whether this research project would have suited a ethnomethodology evaluation research design frame whereby the researcher examines the effectiveness of a programme of activity (Cohen et al., 2018). An in-depth examination of the Assessment for Learning strategy may have suited this design frame. However, the researcher deduced an action research approach would be more suitable, given the educational context.

The researcher has decided to utilise a reflective practice model (Appendix Three) based upon Brookfield's Lenses model (Brookfield, 2017). The researcher deduced this would be a most suitable model as the Four Lenses are personal experience, students' perspective, colleagues' experiences, and theoretical literature (Brookfield, 2017). Obtaining data from children can allow practitioners to view their perspectives on what we as practitioners do (Brookfield, 2017). Also, throughout the research project the researcher would be obtaining colleagues' perspectives and assessing theoretical literature to support findings.

Data Collecting Methods

After deciding upon the chosen methodology it is important to decide which research methods to utilise to obtain data (Cohen et al., 2018). When researching children's development, Piaget (1932) primarily utilised qualitative research, opting for methods of interviews and observations. Acknowledged as one of the pioneers who explored children's development, the researcher believed it would be suitable to use similar methods. The researcher would endeavour to collect qualitative data by using predominantly questionnaires and interviews. Qualitative research is a very useful approach within educational enquiry (Cohen et al., 2018). The data gathered from the questionnaires would be triangulated with data gathered from interviews in order to support or contradict opinions and base conclusions. Triangulation can allow researchers to perceive the same thing from different perspectives and thus confirm or challenge the findings of one method with

those of another (Harper et al., 2013; Taber, 2013). Thus strengthening credibility of findings (de Lacey, 2016). The constructing of data collecting methods that can only display one particular outcome may display researcher bias (Austin, 2016). Hereby, the researcher would endeavour to create the data collection methods in a balanced manner that displays no bias to only one potential outcome to mitigate this issue. The removal of any researcher bias would also ensure validity (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2006).

If a participant is not aware of some phrases, words or questions within data collection methods then the data collected could be insufficient (Sharp, 2012). The questionnaires provided to pupils should be designed utilising terminology appropriate for pupils of Key Stage Two age (Appendix Four). Questionnaires intended for children should take into consideration the cognitive stages of young people (Royse et al., 2017). The researcher would also have to consider the varying abilities of literacy levels. When designing a questionnaire for children, several factors such as age, ability and perseverance to articulate a valid and reliable response should be taken into account (Sharp, 2012). Creating a questionnaire with terminology beyond the children's understanding would potentially cause confusion and may cause children not want to persevere to provide valid responses. Thereby, leaving the children with no option but to answer the questionnaire to the best of their ability. However, if the terminology is designed at the appropriate level, children should be able to understand what is required of them to complete the questionnaire.

In order to mediate any issues, the researcher would self-administer the questionnaires and would be present during the completion process. This would provide children with opportunities to clarify any questions and the opportunity to potentially gather data from many respondents simultaneously (Cohen et al., 2018). Instructions should be provided on the questionnaire in order to guide participants (Cohen et al., 2018). However, the researcher has opted to verbally provide instructions. Internal consistency is arguably a feature of an effective research project (Punch, 2016). All members of staff at the school would have been briefed about the purpose of the research project. Some of the participants may have difficulty accessing and understanding the questionnaire. Completion of the questionnaire might be outside their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore it would be necessary for either the researcher or a member of staff to assist children when completing the questionnaire. However, this could lead to accusation of the children feeling pressurised to provide answers that they feel would please the researcher. Hereby, the

researcher wishes for all the willing participants pupils to complete the questionnaire to the best of their ability.

The primary objective of the questionnaire would be to discover opinions on Assessment for Learning and self-assessment. The researcher then decided upon subsidiary topics that could possibly enhance the outcome of the research project. The researcher would not wish to overload the participant with questions, instead, opting for more succinct questions that would enable the researcher to obtain hopefully sufficient data. The questionnaire would contain a combination of closed and open ended questions hereby making it semi-structured (Sharp, 2012; Cohen et al., 2018). One limitation of a questionnaire is that it provides participant's thoughts rather than actual behaviour (Taber, 2013). Another issue with questionnaires is that participants can respond with prestige bias (Thomas, 2017). Whereby participants want to provide inaccurate answers to present themselves in a favourable light. This might be difficult to detect for the researcher, but an issue to consider when analysing data.

Pupil voice has become more prominent in schools and asking pupils to express their views has become a focus for research (Taber, 2013). Interviews could be viewed as a way to explore how people understand concepts (Taber, 2013). Teacher-pupil interviews can be time consuming, however, focus groups can be more productive (Hopkins, 2014). Relating to the aim of the research project, Black et al. (2002) suggest to improve the quality of pupils' responses there was a need to extend 'wait time'. The researcher would ensure they allow sufficient time for the participant to reply. Focus groups can empower participants to speak out, and in their own words (Cohen et al., 2018). However, more reserved participants maybe overpowered by their fellow participants.

Children may answer more openly if they feel safe and respected (Harcourt, Perry and Waller, 2011). Prior to the focus group interviews commencing the researcher would explain the purpose of the research project. The researcher would then explain to the participants that they can withdraw at any time then ask participants to affirm their assent (Taber, 2013; BERA, 2018). It could be argued that it is difficult to decide upon a suitable group size for the focus groups (Cohen et al., 2018). The researcher decided upon approximately four to six children per group. The interviews would take a semi-structured approach following an interview schedule which the interview may or may not deviate from (Appendix Seven). Semi-structured interviews can allow the interviewer to rephrase questions, clarify answers or probe and seek interpretation (Cohen et al., 2018; Taber, 2013;

Thomas, 2017). Some may suggest that researchers could interpret a participants' response differently to how they intended (Cohen et al., 2018). However, during interviews there would be opportunities to clarify answers.

Some may argue that interviews can lead to subjective answers. When undertaking focus group interviews, the researcher would need to be aware of descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992). In order to transcribe the interview, the researcher shall use a school iPad to audio record the interview. Immediately after the interview concludes, the researcher shall listen to the recording and transcribe findings. The recording shall then be deleted immediately. The use of audio recording would avoid recall bias, where the researcher may chose to recall interviews and omit details (Cohen et al., 2018).

The researcher chose to utilise the selected data collecting methods as opposed to other methods such as observations. During observations, it could be argued that practitioners would endeavour to utilise more enhanced Assessment for Learning and this could bias the data collected. Further, a learning walk maybe able to support gathered data. Nonetheless, if practitioners are aware of the learning walk they may endeavour to utilise the Assessment for Learning strategy in their practice more sufficiently. This could lead to issues with reactivity, whereby participants understand their being observed and may behave in a way they believe the observer wishes to see (Shaugnessy et al., 2003). For these reasons, the researchers has opted not to use these research methods.

The data will be selected using single-stage sampling (Cohen et al., 2018). With regards to focus group interviews, the researcher would utilise simple random sampling. Whereby the researcher would use class lists to randomly select every fifth student to create focus groups. The researcher then intends to clarify with the class teacher whether they have created a representative sample of children. Which included an even gender mix, broad ability range, and additional learning needs. With access to school data the researcher should be able to clarify this factor also. However, including the class teachers will offer another perspective upon the representative sample.

Colleagues can suggest perspectives researchers may have not considered (Brookfield, 2017). It could be beneficial for the researcher to receive opinions from class teachers on how they utilise Assessment for Learning and how their pupils respond to it (Appendix Five). Some may suggest that participants maybe concerned about the consequences of the possibility of change as a result of

action research (Cohen et al., 2018). This could lead to participants providing answers that would bias results in order to adhere to their personal hypothesis. However, critical reflection raises chances of taking informed actions (Brookfield, 2017). Participants should be encouraged to answer as honestly as possible.

Pieces of work that students produce could be utilised as data (Taber, 2013). The researcher concluded that using examples of children's work to support their research might be beneficial. The work would be selected by simple random sample. The researcher may clarify with the class teacher that they have obtained a wide range of abilities to create a representative sample. Even though it could be argued that the children would be regarded as a homogeneous group as they all attend the same school, it would be expected that responses to the data collection methods would differ.

Ethical Considerations

Researchers should endeavour to act with honesty and integrity (Grigg, 2015; BERA, 2018). Action research could also be perceived as post-positivist. In post-positivist research the researcher should not be perceived as a superior authority who could manipulate participants (Kemil Tekin and Kotaman, 2013). When carrying out research within the primary school setting, the researcher would endeavour to adhere to an ethical approach (Sharp, 2012; BERA, 2018; EWC, 2019). The researcher has completed an Ethics Form that details all ethical considerations. The Ethics Form would be submitted for approval and until approval was granted, research would cease to commence.

With the increasing trend for schools to engage with research, schools sometimes obtain permission from parents when children begin school to cover basic types of research (Taber, 2013). However, this could vary within every school, therefore the researcher needs to understand what permissions may have already been provided. Prior to the research project commencing, an information sheet would have been provided to parents or guardians to provide their informed consent and explain the purpose of the research (Appendix Six). If informed consent had not been provided then the children would not be able to participate within the research project.

It could be suggested that children would regard adults as a figure of authority, whether familiar to them or not, and potentially the position as a researcher could heighten the child's perception of authority (Thomas, 2017). The researcher would endeavour to mediate this issue by ensuring that

the children feel at ease when completing the data collection methods and that there is a basis of trust between the researcher and participant formed (BERA, 2018).

Anonymity can help teachers obtain accurate information from students (Brookfield, 2017). In compliance with data protection, the data collection methods would remain anonymous. When processing data from the focus group interviews, pseudonyms would be utilised so that no participant could be identified. Another reason for choosing anonymity is that participants may feel more confident to provide honest answers (Cohen et al., 2018). On the contrary, due to anonymity some children may chose to provide answers that may effect the overall outcome of the research project.

Questionnaires, it could be argued, are relatively straightforward to analyse (Cohen et al., 2018). The completed paper based questionnaires would be stored systematically ordered by year groups. The questionnaires would be stored in a locked cupboard on the school premises. There would be no direct identifiers within the questionnaires. However, if a child wished to withdraw later on in the research project, they could observe the questionnaires from their year group and recover their questionnaire that they could potentially identify by their writing. This questionnaire would then be destroyed and not utilised within the research project.

When carrying out a research project with children it is integral to adhere to British Education Research Association Guidelines (BERA, 2018). Researchers should endeavour to inform participants what is involved in a research project (BERA, 2018; Churches and Dommett, 2016). The researcher would outline the purpose of the study in an information sheet for the participants to observe. Participants would also have the information sheet verbally explained to them.

One quality that drives effective research is organisation (Punch, 2016). One major practical implication is time consumption. Teachers are entitled to ten percent planning, preparation and assessment time (NASUWT, unknown date). Whether the research was to be carried out during this time could be detrimental upon the researcher's workload. However, the researcher could be allowed some managerial time to undertake the research. One ethical issue of action research is the increased workload on participants (Locke et al., 2013; Denscombe, 2014). Some practitioners might feel they are too busy to complete the questionnaire. Researchers should consider the impact of their research on the workloads of participants (BERA, 2018). Therefore, the researcher would

ask that sufficient time may be allowed during a staff meeting to complete the questionnaires. Also, another issue would be children having to miss vital learning time or break times to contribute to the research. Therefore, it could be necessary for the researcher to consult class teachers to query when it would be suitable for their children to complete the data collection methods. It could be argued that during assembly time maybe the most suitable time.

Another implication that could effect the viability of the research project is the financial aspect. For example, the cost of photocopying the data collecting methods. Schools could potentially budget for research projects. However, if the research project was to contribute to universal knowledge then schools maybe able to secure grants to undertake research. Alternatively, to mediate this issue, questionnaires could be designed online for the participants to undertake. On the contrary, practical considerations would then have to be taken into account such as laptop availability for participants to complete the online questionnaires.

The researcher could have opted to undertake an inferential analysis approach whereby a small sample of participants represents the wider picture. However, the researcher believed that it is right of all pupils to have their opportunity to express their own opinions (UNICEF, unknown date). All of the Key Stage Two cohort would be invited to participate within the research project. Children may be coerced to complete the data collecting methods, however children cannot be made to complete them. The choice whether to undertake the research method is entirely theirs (BERA, 2018).

Children participating in the research project shall be provided with a visual aid that would support their willingness to either participate or not within the research project. Children shall be provided with a laminated face, where one side displays green and the other red. If a child displays the green side it would demonstrate to the researcher their willingness to participate. If a child displays the red side, this would convey the child's wish to withdraw from the research project. The visual aid could be changed at any time during the research project.

Data Analysis and Dissemination

One of the main focuses of being a reflective practitioner includes having an active focus on utilising evidence to reach informed judgements (Pollard and Tann, 1987; Pollard, 2014). At the conclusion of the research project, the researcher would aim to answer the overarching question of

the research project. Hereby, potentially verifying or falsifying any theories. Utilising an active research approach would have hopefully enabled the researcher to gather qualitative data from selected data collection methods. This data may hopefully improve future practice not only for the researcher but their school as a whole.

When the gathered data contains qualitative data and words, researchers should seek to utilise those words in a descriptive manner (Thomas, 2017). Some could suggest that words are intrinsically less precise than numbers, and therefore more prone to subjective analysis, which could lead to arguably biased results (Hood, 2006). Qualitative research, it has been argued, is assessed as being biased by the researchers' personal experiences or opinions (de Lacey et al., 2016). Some may argue that the terms 'reliability' and 'validity' are contentious among qualitative researchers. Research integrity and robustness are important in qualitative research (BERA, 2018). The researcher may also during the research project, utilise interpretive phenomenological analysis whereby the researcher may seek connections between data and infer meanings (Davies and Hughes, 2014).

Action research is usually small scale and reasonably specific (Smith and Wood, 2016). The researcher would self-administer the questionnaire to all of the Key Stage Two cohort, if they are willing to participate. This would be approximately one hundred participants. When working with large number of participants some researchers may choose to select a random sample to reflect the wider picture (Taber, 2013). However, the researcher would consider all responses having allocated sufficient time to do so. The researcher would note similar responses whilst checking for completeness and accuracy (Cohen et al., 2018). It could be suggested that due to the open-ended manner of the questionnaire, responses may be divergent. The data collected from all research methods would be collated in an attempt to provide a collective answer to the overarching research question (Cohen et al., 2018).

Upon conclusion of the research project, the researcher would be accountable for the findings. The data gathered would be analysed and stored on a University of Wales Trinity Saint David One Drive account which is password protected (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2018). There is an ethical imperative to ensure research is rigorous and reported accurately and honestly (Taber, 2013; BERA, 2018). Furthermore, the data findings would be presented in the form of a report to the key stakeholders in the research project. The key stakeholders would include the headteacher, challenge advisor and senior leadership team. The participants would also be regarded as stakeholders as the

findings could impact on the school as a whole. Researchers are required to inform participants of the research outcome (BERA, 2018). Participants are entitled to receive feedback based upon the data they contributed to. Therefore, if participants query feedback they are entitled to receive it. As are the parents who provided their consent for their child to participate.

Action research can result in contextualised and generalisable data which would have limited utility outside of the immediate setting in which they have been developed (Smith and Wood, 2016; Taber, 2013). On the other hand, the research findings could be defined as emergent. The results could apply to the researcher's school but not necessarily other schools. However, when undertaking wider research, the researcher noticed there was limited research based upon the specific Assessment for Learning strategy that would have been explored during the research project. Hence, findings from this research could be beneficial to other educational researchers.

Conclusion

Researching student's perspectives can help practitioners understand what is working or not (Brookfield, 2017). It is this author's belief that if this research project was to be carried out effectively it could be most insightful. The outcome of the research project could conclude whether the Assessment for Learning strategy is being utilised and embraced effectively. Whereby children are demonstrating the ability to self-reflect, understanding where they are in their learning, and how to progress. Assessment for Learning has the potential of having a very positive impact upon children's learning if implemented effectively (Black and Wiliam, 2007).

Action research can help practitioners improve through reflection (Koshy, 2010). The paradigm the researcher has adopted is most suitable within the profession. The researcher believes the data collected as a result of the research project would be original. Particularly as empirical evidence may suggest there is limited similar research in the wider domain. Furthermore, as a result of undertaking this assignment the researcher believes they have developed the skills of effectively critically analysing data collecting methods to gather effective data to aid research. Within this research proposal, the researcher endeavoured to demonstrate their ability to critically reflect upon most aspects of research.

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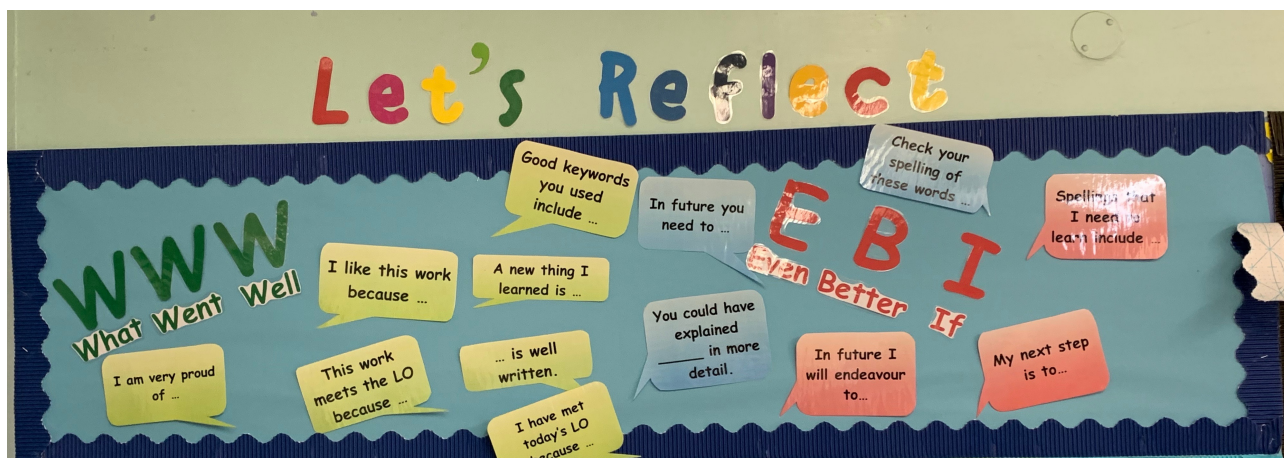
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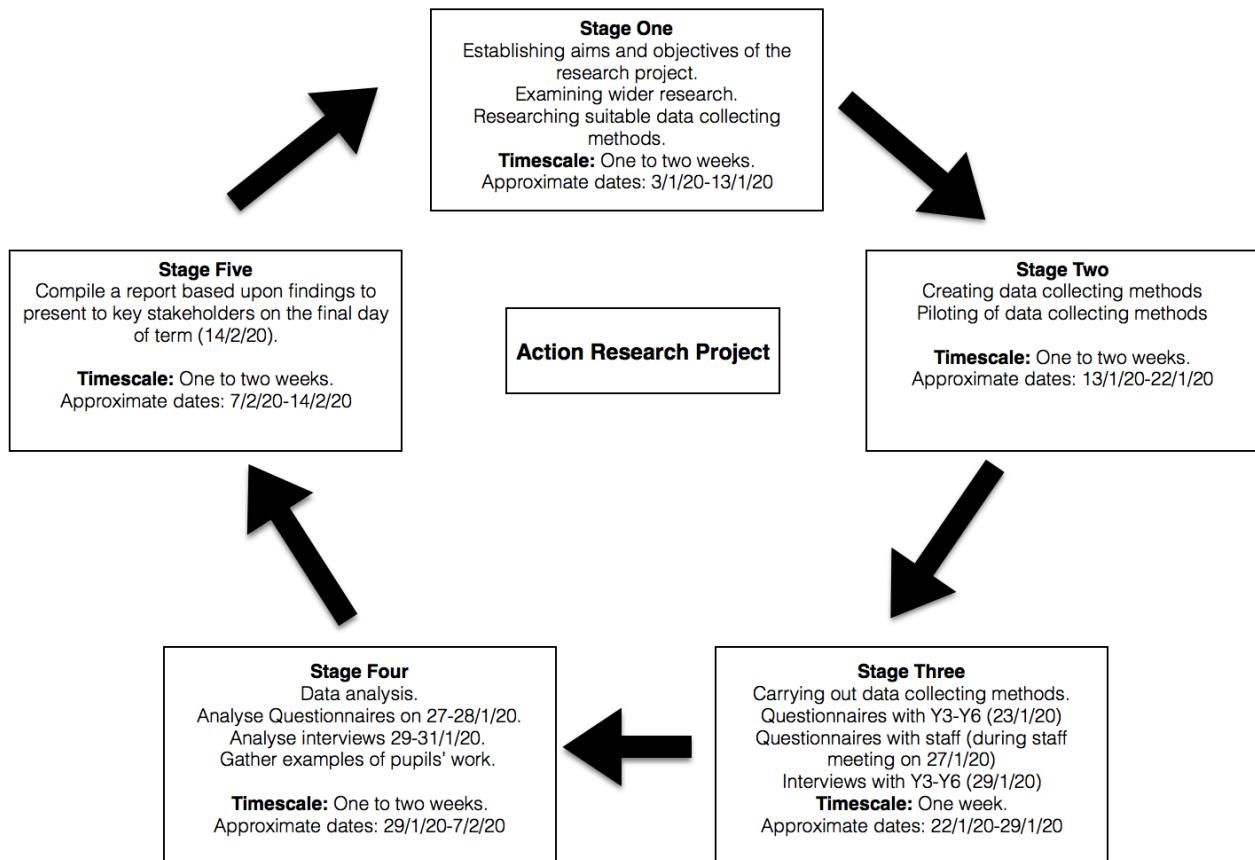
Appendix

Appendix One



An example of a classroom display, designed to help children understand how to self-reflect upon their learning utilising an Assessment for Learning strategy.

Appendix Two



The timescale the researcher has developed allowing sufficient time for each stage of the research project. Please note the dates are just an approximate example.

Appendix Three

<u>Students Perspective</u> • Data Collecting Methods- Questionnaires, focus group interviews and examples of pupils work. • Gain insight on how children utilise WWW/EBI and if they understand its purpose. • Understand if children find WWW/EBI beneficial. • Understand if children are encouraged by their class teachers to utilise the strategy.	<u>Colleagues' Experiences</u> • Data Collecting Methods- Questionnaires and examples of work/ lesson plans. • Gain insight on how colleagues utilise WWW/EBI within their classroom practice and if they understand its purpose. • Understand if practitioners find Assessment for Learning beneficial for their pupils. • Understand how their pupils respond to Assessment for Learning.
<u>Personal Experience</u> • Reflect upon empirical evidence. • Revise school's policy regarding Assessment for Learning. • Aim to mitigate research bias however bring in some personal experience to the research project.	<u>Theoretical Literature</u> • Observe literature based upon Assessment for Learning and its principles. • Examine suitable data collection methods through research.

An adaption of the Brookfield's Lenses Model (Brookfield, 2017) the researcher has created to utilise throughout the research project.

Appendix Four

Pupil Questionnaire on Assessment for Learning

What does 'WWW' mean?

What does 'EBI' mean?

How often does your teacher ask you to complete WWW/EBI?

After every piece of work ☐

After some pieces of work ☐

What do you think you should write for a 'WWW'?

Something that I am proud of ☐

Something that I could maybe do better ☐

What do you think you should write for a 'EBI'?

Something that I am proud of ☐

Something that I could maybe do better ☐

Do you think 'WWW' helps you to reflect upon your learning?

Does 'EBI' help you to think about what you could improve on?



Thank you very much for taking time to complete this
questionnaire!



An example of the questionnaires based upon Assessment for Learning to be administered to pupils.

Appendix Five

Teacher Questionnaire on Assessment for Learning

-Have you ever modelled WWW/EBI for your pupils?

-How often do you encourage children to utilise WWW/EBI?

After every piece of work ☐

After some pieces of work ☐

-How do you know that including Assessment for Learning in your class has made a positive impact?

-Are WWW/EBI prompts displayed in your classroom?

-How do your pupils generally respond to self-assessment?

-Any additional comments regarding Assessment for Learning?

Thank you very much for taking time to complete this questionnaire!

An example of the questionnaires based upon Assessment for Learning to be administered to staff during a staff meeting.

Appendix Six

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At our school, we are carrying out a research project to see how well our self-assessment strategy is impacting upon our pupils. Self-assessment is part of our everyday classroom practice and requires your child to think more about their learning and progress. Throughout this information sheet I hope I will cover any questions you may have about the research project. If not, please feel free to approach me or email me using my school email- XXXXXXXXXX.

Why is my child being invited to be involved in a research project?

We invite your child to take part in this research because we would like to receive their thoughts on matters that affect them. The research project is based on self-assessment and if they find it beneficial to reflect upon their learning. Also, we want to understand how they feel self-assessment helps them in their learning.

What will my child be expected to do as part of a research project?

Your child will be invited to answer a questionnaire. This will take approximately ten minutes and will not interrupt their learning time or break times. Your child may be invited to complete a group interview with fellow pupils. Their participation is entirely up to them and they can choose whether to begin or not, and are free to withdraw at any time.

What are the benefits for my child being involved in this research project?

The outcome of the research project maybe most beneficial. Although there are no direct benefits for your child, the information they provide may make for a more positive experience in class and help your child to become more independent learners.

What happens to the information collected from the research project?

Your child's involvement is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or withdraw from the research project at anytime. The information your child provides shall remain anonymous. Near the end of the research project, information gathered from your child will be put into a report which will be presented to members of staff at the school.

What happens if I later decide to withdraw my child from the research project?

You can withdraw your child at any time during the research project. Your child's responses will be anonymous. But if you do decide to withdraw your child, the responses they have provided will not be used and discarded.

Please sign and return the slip below if you give permission for your child to participate in the research project.

I do/do not give permission for my child _____ (your child's name) in Year _____ (year group) to participate in the research project.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

An example of an information sheet that would be provided to parents regarding the research project.

Appendix Seven

Interview Schedule

Brief introduction to participants. Outline the purpose, aims and objectives of the research project. Explain how their contribution is valuable to the outcome of the research project. Explain how they can withdraw at any time or chose not to begin the interview.

Clarification of terminology

- Can anybody tell me what 'self-assessment' means?
- What does WWW mean?
- What does EBI mean?

Reflection

- Do your class teachers ask you to utilise WWW/EBI often?
- Do you think it helps you in your learning?
- What do you think the purpose of WWW/EBI is?

Thank participants for their contribution.

The interview schedule the researcher may follow. As the interview would be semi-structured it is likely that the researcher would deviate from this and may phrase questions differently, with terminology more suitable for the participant's age. However, this schedule would aid the researcher to cover the main issues to achieve the aims and objectives of the research project.