

A critical examination as to what extent self assessment of unseen translation enhances pupil's performance in a year 13 Latin class in a girl's grammar school.

A critical examination as to what extent self assessment of unseen translation of Latin enhances pupil's performance in a year 13 class in a girl's grammar school.

Aims

Self-assessment has been defined as 'the involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply to their work and making judgments about the extent to which they met these criteria and standards' (Boud, 1986).

The aim of my research is to see what extent self assessment enhances a pupil's performance in unseen translation of Latin. I decided to look specifically at self-assessment as it is not always used as frequently as other forms of assessment in every day school lessons. This same conclusion was also indicated by Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall and Wiliam who state that "evidence of surveys of teacher practice shows that formative assessment is not at present a strong feature of classroom work" (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003). One specific form of formative assessment is the use of self-assessment. I realize that this statement may not apply to all schools but in regards to the schools which I have had experience in, they support this statement above.

Therefore my research is to see to what extent self-assessment of unseen translation of Latin enhances pupil's performance in a year 13 class in a girl's grammar school. I will think about whether higher achieving students mark their work below the standard it

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actually is and also whether this type of assessment improves pupils' grades. It will also be interesting to note the reactions of the pupils to self-assessment, and whether they enjoy it.

McDonald and Boud state that "Training students in self-assessment can contribute greatly to their learning outcomes as formally assessed by conventional tests" (McDonald & Boud 2003).

My research will be carried out on a Year 13 Latin class in an all girl's school as this is where I am currently on placement and I feel that that age group would give mature and honest responses. The research will be based on unseen translations due to the fact that they are easy to fit into a sixty minute lesson. Every girl will be in the same position as no one will have seen that passage of Latin before, giving me fairer results.

The School

The school which I have based my research on is situated in Buckinghamshire. It is an all girls, non fee paying selective grammar school from Years 7 to 13. Currently they have 1054 girls aged 11-18, including 300 in the Sixth Form. Children are admitted to the secondary schools in the county at 11+ after sitting a series of tests administered by the Local Authority. Grammar schools in Buckinghamshire take approximately the top

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30% of the ability range. If a school is oversubscribed, preference is given to pupils living within the school's catchment area.

The school has a GCSE pass rate of 99% A*-C grades and over 84% of girls achieving grades A and B at A level. These results are common for Grammar schools in the Buckinghamshire area and support the Ofsted inspection which states:

"The excellent quality of teaching, combined with the students' outstanding attitudes, ensures that students' levels of attainment improve significantly whilst they are at the school."(OFSTED Inspection report, 2001). It is a highly academic school with bright pupils who are probably really eager to learn.

Classics in the school

The department consists of two Classics teachers, both who teach Latin and Classical Civilisation. There is also an additional member of staff who teaches English but who helps out with lower school Latin.

Classics is in a very healthy state in the school. All pupils in Year 8 have to study Latin for one hour per week. The school offers GCSE Latin and Classical Civilisation, and both Latin and Classical Civilisation are also available at A-level. A-level Classical Civilisation is particularly popular at the school and is currently being studied by around 40 pupils at AS and A2.

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The class

The Year 13 A-level Latin set consists of 4 pupils, all of whom are female and none of whom have special educational needs. All of the pupils achieved an A* in GCSE Latin. Below is a summary of each pupil gathered whilst observing their lessons before carrying out my research.

Pupil E

Pupil E is a bright pupil who has decided to take a gap year before continuing with education. She fully intends on going to University and is predicted an A grade at A-level. Some of her translation work is too idiomatic and may lead to her losing unnecessary marks in the examination. She contributes in class when encouraged to do so.

Pupil H

Pupil H is also an extremely able Latinist. She has an offer to read Classics at Cambridge University, and should easily achieve an A* grade. She appears to be hardworking, keen and diligent. She has a sound grasp of Latin vocabulary but is probably the least vocal in the group and only offers answers if called upon. Pupil H appears the most enthusiastic Latinist in the class and appears to enjoy analysis of

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linguistic material in particular. Her translations are meticulous and the errors she makes are usually trivial.

Pupil I

Pupil I has an offer to read English at Durham University, and so will not be continuing with Latin any further but she is predicted to achieve an A grade at A level. Her presentation needs addressing and she often gets confused over difficult grammar and vocabulary. She seems to lack confidence in her ability and is always checking with me/my mentor if her translation is correct. Pupil I tends to confuse similar looking words and my Mentor realizes this is a big problem and needs to be addressed.

Pupil R

Pupil R is a conscientious student and the most vocal in the class, often saying the things which the others want to but do not feel confident enough to say. She has an offer to read Classics at Bristol University and is predicted an A grade. Pupil R is a very confident student in class, answering most questions and also raising queries and alternative translations. Pupil R seems to enjoy the logical structure of the Latin language and generally works happily and diligently.

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The course

The four pupils are studying the A-level Latin OCR syllabus. The course consists of two papers, one verse and one prose, which each consists of two sections. Section A is the set text, and Section B is the unseen translation/comprehension. It is this latter section I am using in my research. The OCR states that "this unit builds on the linguistic competence developed at AS GCE level, but requires understanding of more complex linguistic structures and a greater sensitivity to literary idiom, developed through wider reading of texts over the full length of the Advanced GCE course" (OCR, 2011). It is a demanding paper for many pupils since it requires them to utilize a range of skills and subject knowledge to achieve high marks in the examination. Pupils are required to apply their knowledge of Latin vocabulary and complex grammatical structures so that their translation illustrates both an understanding of the literal Latin meaning and how to express this into good English. They are not allowed to use a dictionary so all vocabulary must be learnt.

Studying the Latin language "can be seen as a significant contributor to the school's work in the human and social area of experience" (DES, 1988) hence the reason for studying such a course. The government realise the inherent worth of such a subject and want schools to produce good, well-rounded citizens.

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Literature review

The aim of this section is to give an overview of what self-assessment is and also give a brief synopsis on various other studies carried out on self-assessment.

There is much debate on the use of assessment in schools and the effectiveness of different types of assessment. The starting point of my assignment was the realisation that research studies worldwide provide hard evidence that development of formative assessment raises students' learning. One such example is the study carried out by Black and Wiliam who emphasise the importance of formative assessment to help improve children's learning.

According to Black and Wiliam "actively involving pupils in their own learning" (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and "considering the need for pupils to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve" (Black & Wiliam, 1998) can lead to an improvement in the level of pupils' learning with regard to assessment. I therefore decided to concentrate on self-assessment as this seemed the best way to get pupil's actively involved in their own learning and assess where they need to improve.

The use of both formative and summative assessment was also highlighted in the Education Reform Act in 1988 but the main focus was, and still is on formal, time

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limited, external tests. It seems that the strong summative assessment ethos of the classroom "inhibits the formative use of assessment" (Harlen, 2007) and in particular self-assessment.

However self-assessment is coming to be regarded as an accepted and significant part of courses at university as it relates to one of the central goals of a university education, "enabling students to become effective and responsible learners who can continue their education without the intervention of teachers or courses" (Boud, 1995). Boud also states that "it is a necessary skill for lifelong learning" (Boud, 1995) and students who develop the skills of self-assessment are more likely to "expect to take full responsibility for their actions and judgements" (Boud, 1995). Therefore the skills gained from self-assessment are important for all students at high school, whether or not they choose to go to university.

Self-assessment for all

The core of the activity of formative assessment lies in the sequence of two actions.

The first is the perception by the learner of a gap between a desired goal and his or her present state (of knowledge, and/or understanding, and/or skill). This can be achieved using self-assessment. A learner will assess what they know, compared to

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what they should know and realize this gap. Alternatively, a teacher can interpret the gap and communicate it to the learner. Whichever method is used "it would be a mistake to regard the student as the passive recipient of a call to action" (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The second action is the action taken by the learner to close that gap in order to attain the desired goal, perhaps a learning activity. This is how learners can be more involved in the assessment process and feel a sense of achievement once they work out what needs to be improved to gain those higher marks. This is where research has stemmed from.

In recent years much emphasis has been put on the differences in learning of individuals. Individual learning preferences and dispositions have long been apparent to educators, and this knowledge has already found expression in more diversified teaching methods and strategies (Jones, 2010). For this reason teachers tend to vary between structured and less structured activities in the classroom, and between individual work and group or pair work.

This awareness of how different children learn in different ways has encouraged various teaching styles to develop, many being much more interactive with the students, making sure every child's needs are addressed. For example, some who learn in a more visual way need to have pictures and text displayed as the teacher goes through an exercise, whereas others need the text to be spoken so they can hear it. Making students aware

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of their learning styles and of the strategies they employ is one way of providing them with some guidelines and criteria which can make their learning more meaningful to them and which give them some direction when they reflect about their learning (Jones, 2010). All children of all abilities can be involved and by highlighting their learning styles, children are able to use this information to improve their learning.

However, the assessment process in schools currently is very focused on external examinations, through solely independent, written, timed examinations which benefit high achievers who get the high grades. This system isolates students who achieve in different ways, who do not get the higher grades in their examinations, regardless of them being aware of how they best learn. This leads to a lack of motivation for these students and it seems unfair that they have been "alienated by the assessment processes which they have experienced, and that the essentially interactive basis of all learning is not reflected in the almost entirely one-sided nature of assessment" (Boud, 1995).

Boud also states that involving students in the assessment process, particularly through self-assessment, can help to counteract the alien influences (Boud, 1995). They become part of the process, and have a much more active role. Boud comments that "By reflecting on their learning they gain a greater appreciation on the influences on it and on the nature of their particular experience" (Boud, 1995). The student's self

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knowledge and self-understanding increase. Black and Wiliam (1998) agree with this theory as they state that there is "a need for students to understand the learning goals, to understand the assessment criteria, and to have the opportunity to reflect on their work". Thus, although there is no evidence above to say that self-assessment enhances performance in external examinations, we can say that it should enhance a pupil's learning.

Consequently Boud, along with McDonald, realised that little work had been done in relation to student's achievements in external examinations. Their research addressed this gap through reporting on a study undertaken to examine the effects of formal self-assessment training on student performance in external examinations. Their study consisted of an experimental group comprising 256 participants, who received formal training in self-assessment skills for the entire three terms of the academic year. A control group was selected from matched classes not receiving such training. The teachers were taught in a group using modules designed by the researcher. These were then used in the classroom with the students. Each student was assessed to determine those skills gained from the training programme and students prepared individualised self-assessment schedules. The researchers carried out several visits giving advice and also talking to parents and teachers. A central aim was to make sure

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that students were "able to make real-life connections and recognise the value of what they were learning" (McDonald & Boud, 2003).

The results, as stated by McDonald and Boud were that "a significant difference favoring those trained in self-assessment was found overall" (McDonald & Boud, 2003). Therefore self assessment can contribute to students' learning outcomes as formally assessed by conventional tests. However, there were aspects of this research would could have affected the results. For example the interference by the researcher, giving advice and encouragement could have created a more positive environment than that of the control class, leading to better examination performances. Another issue is that the teachers of the experimental group may have been more motivated and committed than those teaching the control group. McDonald and Boud state that this may be because they felt that they were doing something 'new' and innovative (McDonald & Boud, 2003) thus providing a better learning environment. However, the results still seem to show a positive outcome through using self-assessment.

Self – evaluation

According to Black and Wiliam "self-evaluation is an intrinsic aspect of reflection on one's own learning" (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Several qualitative studies report on innovations designed to foster such self-reflection. In Black and Wiliam's analysis of

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these reports, a study by Merrett and Merrett (1992) was commented upon. This experiment aimed to help students to realise, through feedback on their self-assessment, the lack of correspondence between their self-perception of their work and the judgments of others. As the experiment progressed, the quality and depth of the students' self-assessments were enhanced (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Therefore by reflecting on how they had assessed their own work, they not only saw mistakes they had made for themselves but also saw how their own opinion differed from others who looked at their work and this enabled them to improve their self-assessment .

Black and Wiliam also talk about a larger scale innovation in a book by Ross et al. (1993). The aim was to change assessment of achievement in the visual arts by bringing students into the assessment process as reflective practitioners. This was done mainly through the development of 'assessment conversations' in which students were encouraged to reflect on their work and to articulate their reflections. Black and Wiliam state that "the authors are enthusiastic in their accounts of the success of their work, and believe that the students involved showed that they are capable of rich and sophisticated responses to and understandings of their own work ... in collaboration with their conversation partner" (Black & Wiliam, 1998). However one limitation was that it required teachers to abandon traditional assessment practices. Nevertheless if people

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became aware of the benefits through this method, more teachers would be willing to implement them.

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Method

The aim of this section is to provide an outline and explanation of the research strategies used.

“Student effort is increased when small groups of two or three students meet regularly for as long as an hour to review their test results and to help one another overcome the difficulties identified by means of the test”(Black & Wiliam, 1998). For this reason I chose my Year 13 Latin class which consists of four pupils. I also believe that they would provide me with mature and original comments as they are a class of high-ability.

Once I had decided on my class and specifically on concentrating on self assessment I had to decide how I was going to implement such a research study.

Many of the studies I found carried out lengthy experiments, some covering a few years. Obviously this was not an appropriate time-scale for me to use as I had a matter of weeks to carry out the experiment. Therefore I devised my own method. I thought it best to keep it simple and repetitive as it has been said that the relationship between repetition and learning “can be described figuratively by speaking of the series as being more or less deeply engraved in some mental substratum [and that] as the number of repetitions increases, the series is engraved more and more deeply and indelibly” (Clark, Lansford, & Dallenbach, 1960). Therefore I decided to repeat the exercise three

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times. Any more than three and the pupils boredom would set in and the results would be influenced by this.

A common feature found with some of the self-assessment studies was that the teachers in each experiment were trained in self –assessment methods. For example in a study carried out by Fernandes and Fontana, the teachers were put on a twenty week part time course and the methods they learnt were then put into practice with their students (Black et al., 2003). Due to my time-constraints and lack of funding this was completely unfeasible for me to carry out. Therefore I devised a method where input from me would not be necessary, as I do not have sufficient training in self-assessment to give appropriate advice. Thus the experiment I carried out was much more student led which is the whole purpose of my experiment, so the students take responsibility for their learning.

The experiment was started on the week commencing 21st March. The first unseen was given to the pupil's at the start of that week as homework. (See Appendix 1). The homework was to simply translate the passage of verse, 'A terrible storm', Ovid, *Tristia* 1.2.15-32. I chose Ovid as he is the author named on the OCR syllabus for the second half of the paper for Latin verse which is called unprepared translation and comprehension. Therefore translating the Ovid unseens not only formed part of my research but it was also good practice for their exam. I chose Ovid over the Prose

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author Caesar, because the Caesar passages were slightly longer in length and the purpose was not to see how much they could do in an hour but the focus was on marking their own work, so I chose the slightly shorter and more manageable unseens.

The reason for choosing that exact passage was simply because that was the next unseen in the book the class was using to practice from. The next unseens were chosen for the same reason as they followed on. Passage number two was 'An Unwelcome Lover', Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1.497-515 (See Appendix 2) given to the pupil's a week after passage number one, so the week commencing 28th March. Finally passage number three was 'Hopeless love', Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3.463-8 (See Appendix 3), given to pupils the following week, commencing 4th April. I felt that this gave the pupils a good gap between passages so they had time to do home works for other subjects, but was not so far apart that they would forget what they had been doing and what targets they had set.

Each of these passages was carried out as part of their weekly homework, and the lesson where I next saw them was when we carried out each of the self-assessments (one each week for three weeks). In each of these lessons I gave them a mark scheme (See Appendix 4-6) (devised using the OCR mark scheme) and the English translation of the passage (see Appendix 7-9). The mark scheme was very informative and told them how the passage had been broken up into seven sections, and that each section

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was worth four marks. The description of what should have been done to get each mark was underneath, for example, in order to get full marks a pupil must have expressed in their answer "All or almost all of the meaning conveyed, with one minor error allowed". An example of a minor error and a major error were given underneath so they had good guidelines to follow when marking their own work.

The hour lesson was then used for them, using the mark scheme and translation, to mark each section out of four. As they were marking I asked them to talk to their partner (whoever they sat next to) about their thinking processes as they were marking, and I recorded my observations in the form of a transcript.

Finally I ended the research by giving each pupil a questionnaire to fill out which asked them on their opinions on the experiment and whether they found it useful.

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Methodology

In this section I will describe why I chose the various data collection methods outlined in my method section above.

In order to record my observations, I decided to write a transcript of everything which was said by every pupil in each lesson. This gave me an insight on their thoughts and feelings when they were marking each section, as I instructed them to say to their partner everything they were thinking. It was these thinking processes which they spoke aloud that would act as my qualitative data.

I chose to produce transcripts as they can provide a good flavour for the reader of how the informants responded and also, as stated by Bassey "they can be used as a piece of evidence supporting the argument that is being constructed in the report by the researcher" (Bassey, 1999). Bassey also comments that "there is a possibility that the quote could be taken out of context" (Basset, 1999). However he recommends that giving as much information about the background of the informant and about the situation as possible, should allow the intended meaning to come across which is what I did.

When observing and writing the transcript I tried to interfere as little as possible, only giving instructions when to move on to the next section, as Cohen states that there is "a

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tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions” (Cohen, 2000). Therefore I did not want to allow room for any bias and so this method prevented any prompting from me, for the responses I wanted.

In regards to quantitative data, I thought it would be useful to have data which could be measured, and therefore a more identifiable outcome could be seen. Several self-assessment studies compare the teacher's marks with the student's marks, after the process had taken place. A study carried out by Stefani (1994) seemed to identify some interesting issues. In her study, students completed some laboratory work and were given 7 days to hand in their reports. All the reports were assessed by the tutor, but these marks were not initially given back to the students. The reports to be self-assessed were handed back to the students who were then given 7 days to assess their own work before handing in the report to receive the tutor assessment.

Stefani addressed several issues in her study, one being whether there was “perceived tendencies of high achieving students to underestimate their performance and low achieving students to overestimate their performance” (Stefani, 1994) when marking their own work. Therefore she compared student marks with those of their teacher, to see if the high-achieving students were underestimating their performance and vice versa. The results showed that when the student marks were categorized into quartiles

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based on the scores obtained from the teacher marks, the group in the lowest quartile provided self marks which were on average 1.3 marks lower than the marks awarded by the tutor. Students in the highest quartile provided self marks which were on average 2.7 marks below the tutor mark. These figures support the notion that students receiving lower marks from the tutors award themselves higher marks, and could be interpreted to confirm that higher achievers may mark themselves down (Stefani, 1994). These results were also found in another study cited in Lew et al on a study carried out by Cassidy. Cassidy compared student-provided marks with those of teachers. In light of this type of self-assessment, research usually looks into the validity of the grades by comparing the accuracy of the grade given by the learner with that given by the teacher. Lew, Alwis and Schmidt state that "Teachers and students differed significantly in their judgment; a significantly positive but fairly low correlation of .25 existed between tutor and student-estimated marks. In addition, there was a higher tendency for students to underestimate (56%) than to overestimate (40%) their assignment marks (Lew, Alwis, & Schmidt, 2010)

This thought-provoking experiment gave me a way to produce quantitative data (comparing their marks with my marks) and also another aspect to look at whilst carrying out my research, and therefore I decided that I would also take note of the differences between my marks and the students' marks.

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Although Stefani's method has similarities to my method, it is on a much larger time-scale. Due to time constraints I marked all the unseens after the whole experiment had taken place, as I did not have enough time to collect in their papers, mark them and then give them back to them before each lesson. I also needed to be present when they marked their passages, unlike in Stefani's experiment, as I wanted to hear the thought processes that were going on as the marking was taking place.

One final data collection method which I decided to use was a questionnaire. I wanted to devise an interview where students could give as much detail about how they felt about the experiment, and one in which they did not feel restricted by a choice of answers.

One study where an interview was carried out was the experiment mentioned previously in the Literature Review implemented by McDonald and Boud. Although I realised it was not possible to conduct such a lengthy study, there were aspects from their methodology which I thought I could use. For example McDonald and Boud interviewed students taking part in their self-assessment study and analysed their responses.

Students stated that they thought the programme was relevant and they said they did not feel it was an extra burden for them in their final examination year. McDonald and Boud also found that "not only was it relevant for preparation for external examinations, but that it had wider impacts on their perceptions of their careers and the learning they

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were undertaking" (McDonald & Boud, 2003). I wanted to obtain data such as this, but I knew that with my time restraints I could not carry out four individual interviews.

Therefore I decided to present them with a questionnaire at the end of the experiment, with questions I would have asked in an interview situation. This would be much more efficient, and all responses could be easily noted down on the questionnaire papers.

I decided to use some open ended questions to allow pupils to expand on their answers and give me as much detail as possible. I rejected the idea of using scaled questions like many of the case studies I saw used, as I believe that they can affect the answers a pupil gives and are not flexible enough to produce accurate results. Cohen states that "interviewers and interviewees alike bring their own, often unconscious experiential and biographical baggage with them into the interview situation" (Cohen, 2000). I thought this may be reduced if they were allowed to express themselves more freely in writing, rather than being prompted by the interviewer (me).

I also decided to include self-reflective questions so I could assess how they felt the experiment went and whether their opinion of themselves changed during/after the experiment. I decided to use this type of questioning alongside questions about how effective they found the research as during my literature review I came across a study done by Merrett and Merrett as mentioned earlier. They found that there was a lack of

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correspondence between the learners' self-perception of their work and the judgments of others (Merrett & Merrett, 1992) and so I decided to look into this issue in my research.

An advantage of the questionnaire over an informal interview as stated by Cohen is that with interviews "different information [is] collected from different people with different questions. [It is] less systematic and comprehensive if certain questions don't arise 'naturally'. Data organization and analysis can be quite difficult" (Cohen, 2000).

Therefore, with my time constraints I thought that an easier way to organise and collect the data, and provide accurate results, would be by using the questionnaire.

My final item I decided to incorporate into my method was to encourage the pupil's to set themselves a target after each self-assessment exercise which would help them to improve. Lew et al. state that the "processes of self-regulated learning enable the learner to monitor, direct and regulate his actions towards goals of information acquisition, expanding expertise and self-improvement" (Lew et al., 2010). This idea of directing actions towards goals and self-improvement are all encompassed with the use of targets. Lew et al. also state that "One of the critical self-regulatory skills that students need is the ability to self-assess" (Lew et al., 2010). The process of setting their own target, not only makes them assess their own work and see where mistakes

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were made but also look deeper and look at what they need to do to improve. It encourages them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

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Findings and Analysis

Every pupil responded well to the self-assessment research. In the classroom, I concluded that every pupil's quality of learning was improved by implementing the self-assessment exercises, even though this may not have been shown by the quantitative data produced. Pupils' interest and concentration levels were greatly improved over the three weeks so that learning became highly active and teaching very enjoyable. This is supported by some comments which I noted down.

Pupil I "My brain hurts after all that."

Pupil E: "Same, I was concentrating so hard. There is so much to think about!"

The pupils welcomed the change in teaching and learning styles that self-assessment offered them. Furthermore, pupils enjoyed the analytical process of assessing their own translations and discussing with each other how they came up with their conclusions.

Pupil R: "I think the sentence *roger anne rogem* is particularly tricky.

Pupil E: "and *inopem me copia fecit*"

Pause

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Pupil E: "I gave myself 3 because I lost marks for *roger rogem*. I put "if it is asked will I demand it? And I put "my resources make me lack" where it should have been "my abundance has made me poor".

This process of peer-discussion offered pupils an extremely effective means by which to improve their unseen translations since they were both teaching each other and learning from each other in the process. Therefore although they were assessing their own work, it was helpful for them to hear how others were marking their work too.

Pupil H said "Oh, I didn't think of it like that" whilst talking it over with Pupil R.

I concluded that pupils also responded well to the research because they perceived that I was taking a personal interest in their learning.

This was suggested on the questionnaires I gave them as all said they found it useful, and several comments suggested the extra care over translation really helped.

Pupil E: "It was useful to be consistently required to do a translation and towards the end encouraged me to work harder"

Pupil I: "I found it far more useful than other methods of learning"

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Table showing the pupils' self assessment marks (marks are out of 16, four sections worth four marks each) (See Appendix 10-17 for a sample of pupil's work)

Name	Pupil E	Pupil H	Pupil I	Pupil R
Passage 1	9	12	7	Absent
Passage 2	11	14	10	14
Passage 3	11	12	6	11

Judging by the marks, passage two gained the highest marks for all four pupils.

Although this could be down to the fact that they were getting used to the method of self-assessing and it was having a positive effect on their marks, my first thought was that it was simply an easier passage. This was later confirmed by my observations.

Pupil I: "This one is so much easier than the first one"

Pupil E: "Yeah, definitely".

Pupil I: "I actually recognize most of the vocab"

Pupil E: *Laughs*

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This conversation occurred whilst passage two was being looked at. Therefore I decided to see if there was any correlation to other studies' results by looking just at the marks for passage 1 and passage 3. Pupil E improved by 2 marks, Pupil H stayed the same and pupil I went down by 1 mark. Pupil R was absent for passage number 1 and so no comparison can be made. Therefore judging by just looking at the pupil's marks, no conclusive evidence can be gained as there was no general pattern.

The research did not go entirely to plan. Firstly Pupil R was away, which was unfortunate and there was no alternative time to carry out the experiment. Therefore Pupil R had to start the research the week after, with passage two, which was not ideal. I was worried that this might have a negative effect on her confidence, as she had missed out on passage one. However she scored 14 for herself in passage two so her confidence was not affected.

During passage one, the pupils seemed to be rather quiet and were not voicing their thoughts as they worked through the first stanza.

Pupil I: "I've done awfully in the first section! You're gonna think I'm really stupid"

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This shows that Pupil I lacked confidence to talk though her answer and what mark she had given herself as she was embarrassed by how "awfully" she had done.

However, I pointed out that it is not the marks that matter but the process of how she reached that mark. This seemed to calm her down and she became much more confident as the passage went on.

Another reason for the quiet nature of the girls in the first passage may have been because, due to Pupil R's absence, they all had to work as a group of three rather than having two pairs. They may have felt more exposed and so were less willing to talk. However, they all seemed to contribute more and be more vocal as the passage went on. Consequently by stanza three and four I was finding it hard to write down everything they said.

Therefore I have attributed their quiet start down to nerves and anxiety about doing something quite different. "Students (except for self-assessment and peer-assessment contexts) have limited opportunity to develop expertise in constructing evaluative statements, and thus to consolidate and clarify their own judgments". (Sadler, 1998). Sadler's comment agrees with my findings on how the pupil's reaction was quite uneasy at the start due to the fact they had not really had an opportunity to do something like this before and clarify their own judgments.

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During the first lines of the first passage I tried to encourage them by intervening with questions prompting them for more detail. I also initiated when they should move on to the next passage, so as I took notes on what they said, all comments related to the same passage.

This method took quite a long time and we ended up only covering the first four stanzas in the lesson. I felt that the exercise would have been too monotonous if we had done the whole passage and the comments I obtained were sufficient without doing the whole thing. Therefore to keep results accurate I carried out the same process for the other two passages and only let students mark the first four stanzas.

Whilst looking over the transcripts from the three lessons, it became apparent to me that at the start, they were very keen to ask my advice on whether something was right.

Pupil H: "Is it a major error if you miss out the *que* at the start?"

Pupil E "Can you give yourself half marks?"

Pupil H: "If you had 3 minor errors what would you give it? Because most of the meaning is conveyed, but the rest isn't seriously flawed."

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All these quotations are from Transcript One, when we were going over the first passage. This shows that they had a lack of confidence to get on with it themselves and they wanted reassurance. According to Gillibrand, “several studies have reported that girls as a group consistently underrate their academic ability, especially in relation to boys, and report a lower general confidence in their potential to undertake professional careers” (Gillibrand, 1999). My findings support this statement and more evidence found in the questionnaire responses will be discussed later.

A table to show the comparison of pupil self - assessment marks with my marks

Name	Passage 1 – Pupil Mark	Passage 1 – My mark	Passage 2 – Pupil Mark	Passage 2 – My mark	Passage 3 – Pupil Mark	Passage 3 – My mark
Pupil E	9	12	11	13	11	13
Pupil H	12	13	14	15	12	13
Pupil I	7	9	10	12	6	8
Pupil R	-	-	14	15	11	13

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A summary of how my marks compared:

Pupil E Passage 1 = 3 marks more

 Passage 2 = 2 marks more

 Passage 3 = 2 marks more

Pupil H Passage 1 = 1 mark more

 Passage 2 = 1 marks more

 Passage 3 = 1 mark more

Pupil I Passage 1 = 2 marks more

 Passage 2 = 2 marks more

 Passage 3 = 2 marks more

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Pupil R Passage 1 = Absent

Passage 2 = 1 mark more

Passage 3 = 2 marks more

As the results show, in every passage for every pupil my marks were higher. The largest difference was for Pupil E in passage 1, where I awarded her an extra three marks to what she had awarded herself. The larger differences for all pupils (excluding Pupil R) seemed to occur in passage 1 (Pupil H and Pupil I had the same differences for each passage). This must be attributed to a lack of confidence and practice at marking their own work at the beginning which I expected to happen.

My results support the results found in other studies. Stefani states that "students receiving lower marks from the tutors award themselves higher marks, and higher achievers may mark themselves down" (Stefani, 1994). She also found that "students in the highest quartile provided self marks which were on average 2.7 marks below the tutor mark (Stefani, 1994). Although she compared student marks with those of their teacher, to see if the high-achieving students were underestimating their performance and the low-achieving were overestimating their performance. My results still support the notion that high-achievers underestimate their performance, as all the pupil's in the class are high achievers.

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My results also support the findings of Lew et al. who found that "there was a higher tendency for students to underestimate (56%) than to overestimate (40%) their assignment marks" (Lew et al., 2010).

My results also support the general comment by Merrett and Merrett who state that "there was a lack of correspondence between the learners' self-perception of their work and the judgments of others" (Merrett & Merrett, 1992). This can be seen when looking at their marks compared to mine. Some of the pupil's were quite shocked at what was an acceptable answer to be awarded four marks and so their self-perception of their work was often different to how I saw their work.

Pupil H: "I gave myself a 3 because I said "our bodies were able to leave each other."

Me: "That is right, it is plural but Ovid is using it as a literary technique to signal 2 bodies."

Pupil H: "Oh, well 4 now then, if that's right"

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It was also interesting to observe that the pupils enjoyed seeing how others marked their work, and learnt more effectively how to mark theirs by seeing the mistakes others made.

Questionnaire data (See Appendix 18-21 for pupil's responses)

My interview questionnaire which I called a feedback sheet, I gave to all pupils in the third lesson, after the experiment had finished. They filled them out there and then. I asked them to answer truthfully and honestly, and I assured them that if they wanted to express negative opinions about the research then they could do so, as Sadler says "Feedback in the classroom should operate from teacher to pupils and from pupils to teacher" (Sadler, 1989).

The responses I received were mixed, however one answer was unanimously agreed upon. All pupils responded that they found the experiment useful.

Questionnaire: "Did you find it useful?"

Pupil E: "Yes, it gave me a better understanding of how a translation is marked/marks are gained and so made me aware of the need to improve my knowledge of vocabulary and grammar."

Pupil H: "Yes, it's good to have a wider understanding of the process."

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Pupil I: "Yes indeed"

Pupil R: "Yes, mark scheme was more lenient than I thought."

It became more apparent as I analysed the questionnaire responses that a prevalent theme was that the pupil's liked using the mark scheme and seeing how marks were gained. Every pupil, either in conversation in class, or on the questionnaire response mentioned something in relation to the mark scheme. For example, Pupil I commented in class "It is useful because you can see what you did wrong". Therefore, these findings support this statement by Black and Wiliam "there is a need for students to understand the learning goals, to understand the assessment criteria, and to have the opportunity to reflect on their work" (Black & Wiliam, 1998) which is what I allowed them to do in this research.

Individual progress

Pupil E

Pupil E commented that the self assessment exercises had "increased my awareness of my sloppiness as a translator and tendency to cut corners". Pupil E was keen to ask questions at the start "Can you get half marks?" and seemed cautious at awarding

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herself marks according to the descriptions on the mark scheme "I suppose half the meaning is conveyed". However by the end she was more confident in assessing where her marks had been lost "I lost marks for *roger anne rogem*, line 3". Her ability to assess exactly where she went wrong and award marks is the skill I was trying to implement. Her target setting seemed to have a positive effect, as at the start, her target was to improve her grammar. A very vague target. However, by the end her target was much more specific, and was to learn her noun endings better as she continually mixed up subjects and objects, especially groups three, four and five.

Pupil H

Pupil H is the most able pupil in the class. She commented on the questionnaire that "it was useful to have a wider understanding of the process", which is similar to what the other pupils said, however she also commented "I was a bit more lenient towards the later translations (because originally I was too harsh) I think". This is evident that pupil's of high ability tend to underestimate their work, and do not give themselves enough credit. They feel that rewarding themselves would look arrogant in front of their friends.

She also said in one class during a discussion on how useful they found it that "I'm lazy and like to look at the mark given to me". I think this must be quite a common reaction

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to self-assessment, as the teacher is no longer "spoon-feeding" the students. They are taking responsibility for their own learning.

Pupil H found that her main flaw was verb tenses, so she now has a target to work on those.

Pupil I

Pupil I lacks the most confidence in the group. Her response to the question "Has your self-efficacy changed (increased or decreased) by marking your own work?" was "My confidence in my abilities has decreased". She found that marking her own work highlighted her weaknesses more than when a teacher marks it, and this has made her worry for her exam. However, on a positive note, she found the research very useful as she has realized her vocabulary knowledge is very weak and her weekly targets were often related to vocabulary. She said "Vocab is my weak spot, because I can't work out the meaning so I put nonsense down". She now realises if she tackles that area she will greatly improve her grades. Therefore even though there was no evidence to suggest her grades were improving, if this experiment could be carried out longer I predict that her marks would improve.

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Pupil R

Pupil R had some very interesting responses to the mark scheme. She commented in the questionnaire that "the mark scheme was more lenient than I thought". She previously had said when marking her work that "the mark allocation for 4-3 and 1-0 are fine. 2 would work but need something between 2 and 3 in order to moderate better". She believed that an extra stage was needed in the mark scheme between marks two and three as she thought that there was a huge difference between the descriptions "Most of the meaning conveyed, with one serious or two minor errors allowed" and "half the meaning conveyed, the rest seriously flawed". Comments like this suggest that she was uncomfortable with making that distinction for her work. It would be interesting to see whether with a little more practice, she would still think the same, and still describe the mark scheme as "vague".

However by carrying out this experiment she saw her areas of weakness and was able to set herself good targets for each unseen. For example she noted "I translated fluttering as cautious. A vocab error".

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Conclusion

My results for my research on what extent self - assessment of unseen translation enhances pupil's performance in a year 13 Latin class in a girl's grammar school supports findings by Black and Wiliam who state that "there is a need for students to understand the learning goals, to understand the assessment criteria, and to have the opportunity to reflect on their work" (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Although my results do not show an improvement throughout the experiment from one unseen translation to the next, I feel that if the experiment was carried out over a longer period of time, positive results would be produced. However my results also supported findings of Lew et al., as well as several other researchers discussed in the previous section.

Nevertheless there are some significant limitations to my research. Firstly my research only took place over three weeks with just 4 female pupils. I was also only examining the unseen translation component of the pupils' course. I cannot therefore reasonably conclude that this experiment constitutes a comprehensive study into the effects of self-assessment. My research only illustrates the outcomes of a self-assessment experiment over a small period of time, with a small class and into one component of one subject of the pupils' A-level courses.

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If someone else were to carry out similar research, they would need to employ my methodology on a much larger scale. It should be carried out in mixed schools, comprehensive schools, and schools in different areas of the country to produce the best possible sets of data. It should also be carried out over a longer period of time to avoid absences (such as in my experiment) making conclusions difficult to make. It also leaves less chance to fluke results and any anomalies would stand out in a much larger set of data. Results drawn from this could then be used and relied upon.

The fact that the school I carried out my research in was all girls, possibly also affected the results I got, as some people suggest that girls tend to think differently to boys, and boys may approach the same task in a different way. "It is demonstrated that boys' culture is less study oriented than girls' culture and that this difference can be held responsible for the gender differences in achievement, at least in general schools" (Mieke, 2004). This statement emphasizes the need for broader research to be carried out, as my research was on one class, one type of school, and on one gender.

Another improvement which could be made to my research methodology would be the use of individual interviews. This is what I would have ideally done, if time had allowed it, as I feel interviews on a one on one basis would produce more detailed results from the participants, rather than filling in a questionnaire, even though collecting and managing the data from an interview would be a bit more challenging.

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Finally, although my results did not entirely reach a definite conclusion, the pupil's enjoyed their change of routine in their normal teaching and learning, and the self-assessment exercises enabled pupils to address specific areas in their unseen work which required improvement. This was achieved because self-assessment gave pupils the opportunity to discover what their own individual linguistic strengths and weaknesses were so that they were able to both become more responsible for the progress of their own learning and improve more quickly. "The role of self-assessment in the development of professional competence has been recognized and one of the characteristics of effective learners is that they have a realistic sense of their own strengths and weaknesses" (Stefani, 1994).

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