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A recipe for success? Pupils' perspectives on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

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Abstract

A large amount of literature exists on Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies; Learning Intentions (LIs) and Success Criteria (SC) are strategies that fall under the banner of AfL and are widely accepted, along with AfL practices more broadly, to improve learning. Despite this, there is a paucity of research on primary pupils' perspectives on LIs and SC. This research proposal aims to explore primary pupils' views (Year 4, aged 8-9 years) on LIs and SC, specifically their understanding of their purpose and how useful they perceive them to be. The proposed small-scale case study adopts a mixed-methods approach involving a questionnaire to obtain quantitative data, followed by a semi-structured group interview to obtain qualitative data and to examine the results of the questionnaire.

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Note

In 2020-2021 the COVID-19 crisis disrupted the second assignment for Primary PGCEs meaning that they were unable to undertake research in classrooms. As a result the assignment was changed to make it a research proposal instead. Therefore, the articles included from the Primary PGCEs do not include results and discussions, but do provide detailed proposals for researching pupil perspectives about different aspects to school and learning.

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Introduction

Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies, often synonymised with formative assessment, involve practices that move away from traditional views of assessment as a summation of learning to those that highlight to the learner and teacher where the student is in their learning, where they are going and the best way to get there (Assessment Reform Group, 2002). Learning Intentions (LIs) and Success Criteria (SC) are common practices that form the 'where they are going' part of this definition. It is widely accepted that AfL practices improve learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and lay the foundation for additional AfL strategies such as feedback and self-assessment to take place (Clarke, 2001). Indeed, some consider them to be "at the heart of formative assessment" (Hattie, 2012, p. 47).

Despite this and the large amount of literature that exists on AfL strategies, there is a paucity of research on primary pupils' perspectives on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria even with their observed prevalence in daily classroom life and teacher planning.

I am eager therefore as a practitioner to explore primary pupils' views and pose the following research questions which have been adapted from a study by Crichton and McDaid (2016) which considered learners' and teachers' views on LIs and SC within a secondary setting. The two research questions (RQs) posed are:

RQ1. What are pupils' understanding of the purpose of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria?

RQ2. How useful do pupils find Learning Intentions and Success Criteria?

Please note, the initial research proposal form was approved by the Faculty of Education, Cambridge. Subsequent alterations to the proposal form owing to COVID-19 restrictions were then necessary.

Literature Review

Pupils' perspectives

Seeking students' perceptions and listening to their experiences of learning is advocated strongly within the literature (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Alexander, 2010). Researching pupils' perspectives can "contribute to the improvement of classroom teaching and learning" (Rudduck, 2006, p.139) and involves children actively in decisions which affect them (Alexander, 2010). Children have not always been considered as "courteous and constructive critics" (Rudduck, 2006, p.140) with education policy makers slow to capitalise on understanding the very people the education system should benefit (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). Indeed, it was not until the establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations General Assembly, 1989), specifically the rights of children to express their views on matters affecting them, that a definite shift was observed to considering children's views on their school experiences (Burke & Grosvenor, 2003). Researching pupil perspectives offers pupils a change in role from "being an object of research attention to one of active participation" (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, p.22) and is a position that is advocated in this study.

This study will address two features of Assessment for Learning (AfL), often synonymised with formative assessment strategies, namely the sharing of Learning Intentions (LIs) and sharing of Success Criteria (SC) in the classroom. To effectively discuss the roles of LIs and SC, it is important to set them in the context of AfL. To situate the reader, a brief definition of LIs and SC will be offered here with more detail provided later in this literature review. LIs are effectively "the goal of any lesson" (Hattie, 2012, p.47) whilst SC make explicit and transparent the criteria that teachers are using to judge a pupil's work (Clarke, 2001; Hattie, 2008).

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

"Learning involves a lasting change in pupils' capabilities or understanding" (DfE, 2020, p.12) with assessment being used as a tool to probe this understanding. Traditional views of assessment align with the summative view which can be thought of as assessment *of* learning (Gipps, 1994) that places value on summing up a pupil's learning to date. Under the banner of AfL, teaching is adapted following assessment and aims to make learning visible to the learner. AfL can be considered as a learning and teaching process that promotes (rather than simply measures) a pupil's learning.

Assessment becomes formative when the evidence that is elicited is used to adapt future teaching (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003; Black & Wiliam, 2009). AfL has been formally defined as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (Assessment Reform Group, 2002, p.3).

An influential study by Black and Wiliams (1998) provided evidence that the use of formative assessment strategies positively impacted student achievement. They concluded that "formative assessment does improve learning" (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p.61) after interventions based on what are now more often referred to as AfL practices (James et al., 2007) produced effect sizes of between 0.4 and 0.7 which is larger than for most interventions. Indeed, more recent research undertaken by the Department for Education (2007) concluded, within a secondary school setting, that AfL "improves pupil progress over the short and medium term and impacts on standards in the longer term" (p.7). AfL principally aims to make assessment part of the learning process whilst the learner is still engaged in it. William and Thompson (2007) highlight three key areas which can embed assessment within the learning process by focusing on practical features within the classroom presented as the heading row of Table 1.

	Where the learner is going	Where the learner is right now	How to get there
Teacher	1 Clarifying learning intentions and criteria for success	2 Engineering effective classroom discussions and other learning tasks that elicit evidence of student understanding	3 Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understanding and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success	4 Activating students as instructional resources for one another	
Learner	Understanding learning intentions and criteria for success	5 Activating students as the owners of their own learning	

Table 1: Aspects of formative assessment

redrawn from Wiliam & Thompson (2007, p.15)

With Table 1 viewed as the main aims of AfL, the following five strategies (numbered 1 to 5 in Table 1) are the practical features of AfL in the classroom: Sharing success criteria with learners; Classroom questioning; Comment-only marking; Peer and self-assessment; and Formative use of summative tests (Wiliam, 2000, Black et al., 2003; Wiliam, 2007).

It can be seen that 'clarifying learning intentions and criteria for success' (Wiliam & Thompson, 2007) is identified as key strategy under the banner of AfL. These are particularly associated as an aim and activity in order to highlight to the learner 'where they are going' with their learning (Hattie, 2012). The sharing of LIs has been described as the "first active element of formative assessment in the classroom" (Clarke, 2001, p.19) that not only informs a learner about 'where they are going' but that lays the foundation for further formative assessment processes such as self-assessment and feedback relative to the LI and SC (Clarke, 2001). This adds weight to the idea that in order for a pupil to self-regulate their learning, they must be able to articulate the LIs and SC (Hattie, 2012). Indeed, for effective learning to take place, there must be a shared understanding and commitment to learning goals and the criteria for which these are assessed (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

Collectively, LIs and SC can be thought of as framing "the challenge and purpose of each lesson" (Hattie, 2008, p.61); this view is largely agreed amongst researchers (Clarke, 2001; Clarke, Timperley & Hattie, 2003). Although inextricably linked, as will be explained later, they are distinct approaches and therefore each will be defined separately in the following section.

Defining Learning Intentions

There are several different terms used in the literature to describe Learning Intentions, in addition to the variation in terminology employed across different schools, such as Learning Objectives, Learning Aims, Learning Points and Learning Outcomes. The most common term in the literature used to describe "the goal of any lesson" (Hattie, 2012, p.47) is the Learning Intention (LI) and therefore this term will be adopted throughout this study. LIs can be related to skills, attitudes, knowledge, or values learnt with a unit or lesson, should be appropriate for all pupils regardless of the level they are working at (Clarke, Timperley & Hattie, 2003) and form the foundation for self-assessment, peer-assessment, and assessment by teachers (Hattie, 2008).

Under the umbrella of AfL strategies, their importance is viewed by some as paramount; "Learning Intentions describe what it is that we want students to learn and their clarity is at the heart of formative assessment" (Hattie, 2012, p.47). LIs can be considered as the 'where are we going' part of the Assessment Reform Group (2002) definition of AfL (Hattie, 2012).

LIs serve not only as an AfL strategy but enable the gap between a student's current and new understanding to be addressed by facilitating an additional AfL practice: feedback. When considering

strategies that emphasise goal setting, and when making the link that LIs are essentially the "goal of any lesson", goal-setting feeds back to the student the gap between where they currently are and where they are going (Sadler, 1989; Locke & Latham, 1990; Assessment Reform Group, 2002) and enables adjustments to be made relative to the goal thus demonstrating the formative nature of LIs (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Hattie's (2008) meta-analysis on 604 studies involving goal setting, reported an effect size of 0.56 on student achievement which is considered a significant intervention; anything above 0.4 is judged to achieve "real-world differences" (Hattie, 2008, p.17). With such a significant effect on student achievement, it is surprising that there is little research considering pupils' perspectives in this area.

Defining Success Criteria

The purpose of Success Criteria (SC) can be thought of as being aligned with the 'how are we getting there?' part of the Assessment Reform Group (2002) definition of AfL (Hattie, 2012). SC are inextricably linked to LIs; where the LI is the overall goal of the lesson or unit, the purpose of SC is to make transparent the criteria that teachers are using to judge a pupil's work (Clarke, 2001; Hattie, 2008) and to assess progress made (Assessment Reform Group, 2002). SC have also been defined in terms of their relation to end points; that is, "how do we know when we arrive?" (Hattie, 2012, p.50) and therefore without SC, the LI cannot provide enough detail about what successful learning will look like. Success Criteria, like Learning Intentions, should be stated specifically allowing the pupil to have a clear understanding of what the teacher will want to see (Hattie, 2008).

Whilst the LI tells pupils the goal for the lesson, knowing how to attain the goal is considered by some to be of equal importance. Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006) completed a meta-analysis of 63 studies to test the idea that knowing how to attain a goal, what they termed the 'Implementation

Intention') or we could surmise in a classroom setting, having clear SC, would help students to better attain goals. They found the effect size to be $d = 0.65$, thus demonstrating the link between setting the LI (establishing the goal) and ensuring clear SC (the 'Implementation Intention'). This highlights to practitioners the importance of making students not only aware of the SC for the lesson/unit but enabling students to have a clear understanding of the criteria upon which judgements will be made about their learning.

Whilst few studies exist that focus specifically on LIs and SC and their relation to student learning or achievement, Hattie's (2008) study brought attention, in part, to the effect on student achievement of strategies that emphasise LIs and SC reported as a common measure (effect size). One of the strategies explored by Hattie (2008) that emphasised SC was 'worked examples' (Crissman, 2006) in which the SC are demonstrated through providing the steps to a solution. A meta-analysis on studies emphasising worked examples were found to have a relatively large effect on student achievement reported as an effect size of d = 0.57. An effect size of 0.4 and above is considered the 'hinge point' and worth having as an intervention (Hattie, 2008). This highlights one of the many ways that SC can be introduced into the classroom and adds weight to the need to gain pupils' perspectives in this area given the variety of methods used to present LIs and SC in the classroom.

A paucity of research on pupils' perspectives

Although AfL as a broad term has been extensively researched and adopted in many classrooms and the sharing of LIs and SC considered an effective and essential part of AfL (Assessment Reform Group, 2002), there is a distinct paucity of research looking at pupil perspectives on LIs and SC. Indeed, only one such study was found that specifically looked at learner (and teacher) views on the perceptions and usefulness of LIs and SC and hence the pupil perspectives elicited from it will be explored in detail here.

Crichton and McDaid (2016) conducted a small-scale study consisting of semi-structured group interviews with a total of 20 students aged 11-18 from two Scottish secondary schools. The aim was to identify learners' understanding of the purpose of LIs and SC and how useful they perceived them to be. They also wished to explore whether there was any difference in understanding based on the age of the pupil defined as Junior and Senior Phase. Their findings showed that learners generally understood why LIs and SC were used and were able provide definitions of them such as "what we're going to try to learn; what you should be able to do at the end of the class" (Crichton & McDaid, 2016, p.197). Many pupils reported that although LIs and SC were used in their lessons, there was little discussion about them between the teacher and learner and they were not routinely referred to in class; "it's just something you write down – it doesn't really mean anything" (p.197). This is contrary to the view that pupils should feel a sense of involvement in their learning through the shared understanding and commitment to the LIs and SC (Assessment Reform Group, 2002). In addition, older pupils considered the copying of LIs into exercise books as an aid to exam revision. Hence, in

part, they viewed what is generally considered a formative assessment strategy as a means to supporting summative assessment. It would be interesting to see if primary learners also view Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in this way.

Although this study does demonstrate consideration of pupils' perspectives into LIs and SC, its transferability to a primary setting is potentially limited due to the small number of participants, a single data collection method being employed and learners being of secondary age. It does however raise an important point about how LIs and SC are utilised within the classroom. In this study, pupils broadly perceived LIs and SC as providing little benefit and of being used in a tokenistic way reporting that they were "just something you write down" (Crichton & McDaid, 2016, p.197). It is imperative that if students are to be aware of 'where they are going' with their learning, LIs and SC need to be openly shared with pupils and importantly, pupils given the opportunity to articulate them in a manner that demonstrates understanding (Hattie, 2012). This again emphasises the importance of gaining pupil perspectives in this area which this study proposes within a primary setting.

The clarity and explicitness of what is to be learned ensures successful formative classroom practice (DfE, 2007; Stobart, 2008); without teachers being sufficiently clear on what they want their students to learn (the LI) and what the outcome of this looks like (the SC), "they are hardly likely to develop good assessment of that learning" (Hattie, 2012, p.47). Indeed, the importance of making explicit what is to be learned was highlighted by Clarke's (2001) study in which she interviewed 72 primary children in classes where LIs were only shared verbally. Most children were unable to identify that LIs were even being shared with them. When the LIs were subsequently displayed visually, in addition to being shared verbally for an eight-week period, and the same children re-interviewed, all children across a range of abilities were able to talk about the LI with some saying that it "helped them focus on the aspect in hand and not get distracted by other things" (Clarke, 2001, p.25).

The clarity of the Learning Intention and Success Criteria is a key theme that runs throughout the research in this area; indeed, a key message from the AfL 8 Schools Project (DfE, 2007) was that "pupils' progress is accelerated when they are clear about the success criteria" (DfE, 2007, p.11) adding weight to the need to ensure that pupils know what success looks like in the lesson. It is noteworthy that pupils were better able to self-regulate when they had a clear idea of what was to be learned and the criteria used to judge successful work. The researchers caution that within the schools studied, the learning objectives were often "driving the teaching but not driving the learning" (DfE,

2007, p.21) which supports the findings of Crichton and McDaid (2016) in that pupils in this study broadly viewed LIs as something of little benefit to them when used in a tokenistic way. This again highlights the need for pupils to be given the opportunity to articulate the LIs and SC; researching pupils' perspectives can only help to further embed this crucial step. It is worth noting that this study was conducted in secondary schools and therefore generalisability to primary school pupils might not be possible, however, this further emphasises the need for more studies conducted with younger learners.

Criticisms of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

AfL is not without its critics; indeed Stobart (2008) cautions against paying too much attention to the process of "learning to learn, that what is to be learned is neglected" (p.153). It is also worth noting the objection, regarding explicit LIs, that if these are too tightly specified, then the learning will become "an exercise in compliance" (Stobart, 2008, p.155) and could lead to "criteria compliance" (Torrance, 2005, p.10). Objectives and criteria that are too restrictive, could lead to unexpected outcomes being ignored (James et al., 2007). In fact, the very definition of AfL as provided by the Assessment Reform Group (2002) has been brought into question: "the phrases 'where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there' have very often been interpreted to mean 'at what level is the student, what is next in the sequence and which learning objectives need to be targeted?" (James et al., 2007, p.5) which appears to conflict with assessment designed to occur whilst the learner is still engaged in the learning.

Whilst it is acknowledged that LIs and SC are useful in directing student learning (Assessment Reform Group, 2002), indeed making learning explicit is a fundamental part of AfL, a need for balance is emphasised in the literature. Torrance (2005) raises the point that if students are simply coached to meet the objectives, then the validity of their learning can be called into question as the pupils have simply succeeded in meeting the criteria (Torrance, 2005). A preferable approach offered by some is to view LIs and SC as a "horizon of possibilities rather than a single end point" (James et al., 2007, p.9). Another criticism levelled by Hattie (2012) at SC when used inappropriately, is that they are viewed simply as a means to an end; he argues that they should relate not only to task completion but as a means to actively engage students' enjoyment in the challenge of learning (Hattie, 2012).

With this in mind, this study aims to address the paucity in research considering pupils' perspectives on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in order to ensure that children are engaged and enjoying the challenge of learning supported by these AfL practices. Further investigation is needed about children's perspectives in this area and so this study will utilise the "constructive critics" (Rudduck, 2006, p.140) at the heart of our education system.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations will be considered throughout the implementation of this research project. In accordance with the BERA (2018) guidelines, which endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the "best interest and rights of the child should be the primary consideration" (BERA, 2018, p.15) when carrying out research that involves children.

To ensure this study is conducted ethically, the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) guidelines will be adhered to; with regard to the pupils involved in the study, time will be given to explain the purposes of the study in order to ensure that "all potential participants understand, as well as they can, what is involved in the study" (BERA, 2018, p.9) and their "voluntary informed consent" (BERA, 2018, p.9) is obtained before pursuing any further. To ensure that participants can make voluntary informed consent, I will verbally explain the aims and approaches used in the study prior to completion of the questionnaire, at the point of selecting the children for interview, and at the start of the group interviews. In addition, there is a written statement of the aims of the study on the questionnaire (Appendix 1) and on the interview schedule of questions (Appendix 2) which would be given in advance to those pupils selected to be interviewed. Regarding the group interview, children will be informed in advance that this will be audio recorded, transcribed and the original audio recording deleted. I will also inform children that data collected will be kept confidential, anonymised and destroyed at the end of the academic year.

Regarding anonymity, all references to children or the name of the school will be either removed or pseudonymised in the write up as this is "considered the norm for the conduct of research" (BERA, 2018, p.27). Permission will need to be obtained from the pupils' school to conduct the research which would involve sending them the research proposal form outlining the aim of the study and intended methods in addition to approval being sought from the pupils' class teacher.

In accordance with BERA (2018) guidelines, the participating children will be verbally informed of their right to withdraw participation at any stage of the study. Due to the participants in this study being children, as well as ensuring that they are able to give their voluntary informed consent to the study (BERA, 2018), consent would need to be obtained from their parents/carers as they "act in guardianship" (BERA, 2018, p.15). A parent/carer consent form was drafted should the study school require active consent that summarises the main aims of the study, how their child would be involved (namely, completing a questionnaire and potentially being selected to participate in a group interview) and assurance given that any data would be anonymised and destroyed by the end of the academic year.

Research Design

This is a small-scale case study using mixed methods. A case study is considered "a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (Robson, 2002, p.178); this study fulfils this criteria and is therefore judged to be a case study as defined within the literature.

A mixed-methods approach, using both a questionnaire and semi-structured group interviews, is proposed as involving both quantitative and qualitative aspects allow for a better understanding of the research in question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009; Creswell, 2005; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Whilst questionnaires typically provide numerical data and are often relatively straightforward to analyse (Wilson & McLean, 1994), interviews are "goal- or task-oriented talk to gather information" (Wang & Yan, 2012, p.231) that give participants the opportunity to explain and expand on points.

Specifically, this study will utilise a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design through which two distinct phases are planned into the research; quantitative data is collected first and then qualitative data gathered to supplement and explain the quantitative data (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003; Creswell, 2005; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This approach allows first for a general understanding of the research questions to be gained by the researcher; the second qualitative stage allows the researcher to explore in greater depth the participants' views and to explain the statistical results generated from the quantitative data (Creswell, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

This study will involve a pupil questionnaire and semi-structured small-group interviews; this mixed-methods approach "provides a more complete picture by combining information from complementary kinds of data or sources" (Denscombe, 2008, p.272).

Participants

The original research was planned to be conducted with a class of mixed-gender Year 4 pupils (aged 8-9 years) in a UK primary school. It is proposed that the questionnaire be completed by the entire class where parental consent is received. In this case, this would have been 27 pupils completing the questionnaire. Six children are proposed for the two group interviews (each interview group consisting of three children and the researcher).

In order to select the children to interview, purposive sampling will be utilised (maximum variation sampling) which involves researchers selecting the cases they want to be included in the sample in order "to enable comparisons to be made" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.156) between individuals likely to hold different views as identified via the questionnaire in order to provide rich qualitative data. The selection would be made based on pupils' responses to the questionnaire which would be conducted pre-interview as per the sequential explanatory design approach noted above. Three children would be selected that had given positive answers within the questionnaire, for example, finding Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to be useful for their learning and showing an understanding of LIs and SC aligned with the literature. The other three children would be selected based on predominantly negative or a combination of positive and negative responses, for example, finding LIs and SC to not be useful in supporting their learning or showing an atypical understanding of LIs and SC, termed "deviant cases" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.156) which would be useful to explore further within an interview. These children would then be split evenly between the two groups for interview. Purposive sampling gives the researcher the freedom to include children whom the researcher, in collaboration with the class teacher, knows will feel comfortable in and contribute to an interview, as well as exploring interesting cases identified from the questionnaire data.

Future researchers may wish to consider increasing the number of participants that complete the questionnaire in order to enhance reliability; a sample size of 30 is considered by most "to be the minimum number of cases if researchers plan to use some form of statistical analysis on their data" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.144). This could be achieved by conducting the research across

an entire year group although this would need to be balanced with the increased administrative burden of seeking parental consent from more pupils.

Questionnaire

I devised my own questionnaire (Appendix 1) following the design sequence suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) whereby factual questions are introduced first, in this case, the name of the child, followed by closed questions, in this case presented using a Likert scale and semantic differential; lastly, open-ended questions are presented that require a response on perception, for example. The questions have been loosely based on the areas for questioning from Crichton and McDaid's (2016) study, which were obtained upon request, that explored secondary learners' and teachers' views on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.

Two variations of a rating scale are employed in the questionnaire: the Likert scale and a semantic differential in order to build in a rating scale that included the adjectives 'useful' and 'useless' so to provide data to support the second research question: how useful do pupils find Learning Intentions and Success Criteria? I have also included an open-ended question which is considered appropriate for small scale research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The open-ended question is supported with a sentence stem to "provide some support for the respondents, so that they know the kind of reply being sought" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.392). The semantic differential questions were considered appropriate for an evaluative context, which exploring perceptions of usefulness is considered within the literature to be (Osgood, Suci & Tannembaum, 1957).

The questionnaire will be delivered in my presence as this could be helpful, given the age of the participants, in addressing any uncertainties that they may have and to check that questions have been completed correctly (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This will also allow me to verbally reiterate at the start that there are no right or wrong answers to the questionnaire and that it is not a test. This is also restated in writing at the top of the questionnaire (Appendix 1).

Interviews – semi-structured group interviews

Children have been considered as "the best sources of information about themselves" (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999, p.177) and therefore interviewing is considered an appropriate technique to supplement and extend the predominantly quantitative information gained from the questionnaire.

Semi-structured group interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) are proposed as the means to gain qualitative data and to explore in more detail participants' questionnaire responses. The interviews are planned to occur after pupils have completed the questionnaire and I have analysed their responses in order to select the six children for the two group interviews as outlined above. I am assured that a group interview is appropriate for the age of the child as this approach has been deemed to be a "viable and useful technique" (Lewis, 1992, p.414) with primary-aged children; group interviews encourage children to interact with the group rather than just the adult asking the questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) and are considered less intimidating than individual interviews (Greig & Taylor, 1999). I will need to be aware of the possible downsides of group interviews as summarised by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) such as the potential for pupils to be unwilling to contradict their peers if they hold opposing views, the potential for certain children to dominate the conversation and the interview being viewed as a test. With due regard to these possible limitations, I will remind children at the start of the interview that it is not a test (this is also reinforced in writing at the top of the interview schedule) and that just like in the classroom, it is expected that everyone is given the opportunity to speak and to share their opinions. I will also reiterate that the project is centred on pupils' perspectives and I therefore have a genuine interest in hearing what they think, especially if it differs from someone else in the group as this makes for exciting research!

The semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 2) is loosely based on the areas for questioning from Crichton and McDaid's (2016) study and "employs a blend of closed and open-ended questions often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions" (Adams, 2015, p.493). Employing open-ended questions avoids single answer type responses (Greig & Taylor, 1999; Wright & Powell, 2006) and are typically more accurate than closed question responses (Wright & Powell, 2006).

The semi-structured interview format is considered necessary where "you need to ask probing, open-ended questions and want to know the independent thoughts of each individual in the group" (Adams, 2015, p.494) and therefore I am assured that this is the correct format for this study. Setting structured questions will allow the same questions to be asked to both groups thus "increasing comparability of responses" (Patton, 1980, p.206) whilst still giving the children the freedom to diverge from the question. Children will be interviewed in two groups of three children which I am assured from the literature is an appropriate number; the optimum number of children suggested for a group interview does differ amongst researchers but hovers around three to six children with Barnes and Todd (1977) recommending three to four children hence splitting the children into two groups. Children selected

to be a participant for interview will be provided with the interview schedule in advance as this allows time for them to consider their answers and is considered good practice (Burton, Brundrett & Jones, 2014).

Proposed data analysis

It may be useful for the reader at this stage to reiterate the two research questions to be explored in this study:

RQ1. What are pupils' understanding of the purpose of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria?

RQ2. How useful do pupils find Learning Intentions and Success Criteria?

Both the questionnaire data and interview data are designed to support the researcher in answering both research questions.

Questionnaire analysis

Regarding data analysis from the questionnaire (Appendix 1), a code number will be assigned to each answer in the survey question (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011), which for the Likert scale questions (questions 1 and 2) would be as follows:

Strongly agree = 5 Agree = 4 Neither agree nor disagree = 3 Disagree = 2 Strongly disagree = 1

In this way, the results could be quantified using a program such as Microsoft Excel. It is proposed that the two Likert Scale questions (questions 1 and 2) could contribute to both research questions RQ1 and RQ2 as the questions concern perceived utility (RQ2) of LIs and SC in relation to their understanding of LIs and SC (RQ1) as typically presented in the literature.

Question 3 (Figure 1, below) and question 4, utilise a semantic differential style of questioning, which would also be analysed by assigning a code to each answer in the survey question, which is already built into the questionnaire, for example:

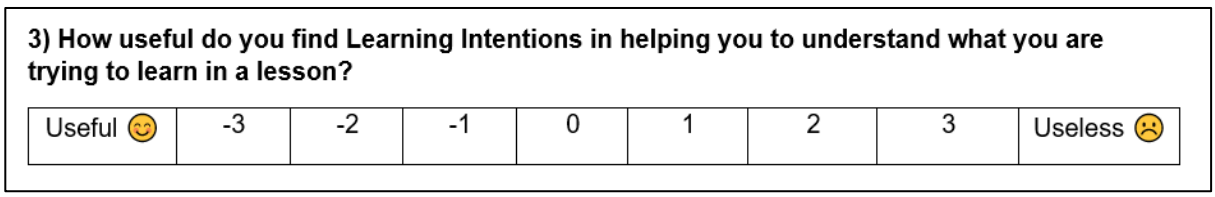

Figure 1: Presentation of Questionnaire Question 3 (Appendix 1)

It is proposed that questions 3 and 4 will contribute to RQ2 which concerns pupils' perceived usefulness of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria in supporting their learning.

Questions 5 and 6 utilise an open-ended question format. It is proposed that these open-ended questions contribute to answering RQ1 concerning pupils' understanding of the purpose of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. Thematic analysis would be undertaken to identify any themes emerging from this qualitative data such as "counting frequencies of occurrence (of ideas, themes, pieces of data, words)" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.427). In addition, holistic analysis of this qualitative data will allow for purposive sampling to take place; individuals will be selected for interview that have contrasting points of view or hold perspectives deemed to be worthy of further exploration in an interview.

Interview analysis

Although an interview schedule has been drawn up (Appendix 2), analysis of the questionnaire data will somewhat determine any additional questions that are asked in the interview. As a result of purposive sampling, children's questionnaires will inevitably be referred to, with reference to the open-ended section of the questionnaire (questions 5 and 6) and expanded upon in the interview. The interview schedule therefore provides the minimum questions to be asked with additional questions being formed as an outcome of the qualitative data, for example 'in your questionnaire you said x, y, and z. Could you tell me a little more about that now?' The semi-structured nature of the interview proposed in this study allows for this possibility.

The two group interviews will be audio-recorded to allow transcription to take place for both group interviews. Responses will be coded thematically to note and quantify the themes emerging but also to explore the explanations given by "structuring narratives to describe the interview contents" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.427) as I am keen to avoid reducing the interview into purely quantitative data.

Implications for my professional development

Undertaking the research for this prospective study has given me a huge insight into the benefits of seeking pupils' perceptions on matters that impact their learning; it has been considered that children are generally willing "to have a go at an activity even when they don't quite understand the why or how" (Cameron, 2001, p.1). Despite this, as a future teacher I will seek to give my pupils a clear

understanding of the 'why' and the 'how' regarding their learning and to gain my students' opinions frequently in order to be afforded the benefits that this brings to the "the improvement of classroom teaching and learning" (Rudduck, 2006, p.139). The most pertinent points to emerge from the literature review that I will take forward into my own teaching practice are:

- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria need to be clear and explicit to be effective (Hattie, 2012);
- Students must be given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of them (Assessment Reform Group, 2002; Hattie, 2012);
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria should be incorporated verbally and in written format in the classroom (Clarke, 2001);
- Unexpected outcomes should be expected. These should not be ignored because of prescriptive and overly explicit criteria (James et al., 2007);
- Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are perceived to provide little benefit to students if they are applied in a tokenistic way (Crichton & McDaid, 2016). Giving students the opportunity to articulate the LI and SC in their own words is a way to avoid the unintentional tokenism that might occur in the busyness of a school day.

I look forward to putting into practice all that I have learnt regarding pupils' perspectives and ensuring the effective application of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria within the classroom. Future researchers may wish to consider utilising this proposed study or extending it by exploring if the perspectives of pupils change based on gender, age or attainment.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Your name: _____

I am interested in finding out what you think about Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. In order for me do this, I would like you to complete the questionnaire below to find out what you think. Please answer each question as honestly as possible. It is not a test – there are no right or wrong answers. If you have any questions at all, please ask. Thank you! Miss Snow.

Please circle <u>one answer</u> that best represents how you feel about the statement.

1) Learning Intentions help me to understand what I am trying to learn in a lesson:

Strongly agree 😊	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree ☹

2) Success Criteria help me to understand what successful learning looks like in a lesson:

Strongly agree 😊	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree ☹

Please circle <u>one number</u> on the scale below that best represents how you feel about the statement:

3) How useful do you find Learning Intentions in helping you to understand what you are trying to learn in a lesson?

Useful 😊	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Useless ☹

4) How useful do you find Success Criteria in helping you to understand what successful learning looks like in a lesson?

Useful 😊	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	Useless ☹

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5) What do you think the purpose of having Learning Intentions in your lessons are?

I think that the purpose of Learning Intentions are _____
_____
_____

6) What do you think the purpose of having Success Criteria in your lessons are?

I think that the purpose of Success Criteria are _____
_____
_____

Appendix 2

Semi-structured interview schedule

I am interested in finding out what children think about Learning Intentions and Success Criteria. Thank you for helping me to do this by completing the questionnaire.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in a small group interview with some of your classmates. This will help me to understand the reasons for the answers you gave in your questionnaire and to ask you some more questions.

Questions

1) What do you think the purpose of having Learning Intentions are?
2) What do you think the purpose of having Success Criteria is?
3) How do you think Learning Intentions and Success Criteria might be different from each other?
4) Tell me about how you use the Learning Intention and Success Criteria throughout the lesson.
5) What is your opinion on how useful Learning Intentions and Success Criteria are useful in helping you to learn?
6) Do Learning Intentions and Success Criteria help you to take responsibility for your learning? If so, how? If not, why not?
7) After you have written the Learning Intention in your workbook, do you look back and again in the lesson? If so, why? If not, why not?