THESIS

HOW EFFECTIVE IS PROVIDING SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS WITH A CHOICE OF ASSESSMENT TASKS LINKED TO MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES IN INCREASING STUDENTS’ CONFIDENCE IN ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES: AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Submitted by

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

This thesis is my own composition and is the result of my own research and work.

It contains no material that has been published elsewhere or taken in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree.

No other person’s work has been used without acknowledgment in the main text of this thesis.

All research procedures reported in this thesis have been given the approval of the Education Research Ethics Committee of Morling College Ltd.

Signed: Amanda Evans

Dated: 28th October 2016
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ABSTRACT

Assessment of and for learning can leave special needs students lacking confidence, feeling hopeless, purposeless and without vision for a fulfilling future life. This research investigates if providing special needs students with a choice of assessment tasks, linked to Multiple Intelligence strengths, helps to improve students’ confidence and learning performance. Thus this may inspire hope and a purpose for their future and enable them to appreciate their God-given gifts.

The research methodology used was action research with a class of ten Year 7 special needs students in a small independent Christian school in New South Wales. The research instruments included a survey that used a Likert Scale, a semi-structured interview with five of the students and a teacher observation checklist. The research was conducted over two cycles of two weeks each and students undertook two tasks from a choice of assessment tasks related to three of the Multiple Intelligence areas in which the students had shown strengths i.e. Visual/Spatial, Musical and Verbal/Linguistic. Assessment was based on a rubric given to the students at the outset and undertaken in the first cycle by the teacher and in the second cycle, using a class-developed rubric, by the students and the teacher.

Analysis of the results showed a positive improvement in confidence and motivation and overall attitudes to learning, providing students with hope for achieving the learning purpose in future assessments. However, although students’ grades did not always improve, students recognised that the learning itself was more important than the grade.
Recommendations from this study include undertaking of future cycles with the teacher providing more support with the development and use of the rubric for self-assessment. A broader research study could involve teachers within the same school implementing assessment tasks linked to Multiple Intelligences. Implementation of similar research in a larger mainstream setting where the cohort is not considered as having special needs could also be beneficial.
Table of Contents

THESIS ........................................................................................................................................... i
DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY ............................................................................................. ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................ iii
ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ iv
List of Tables ..................................................................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1
  1.1 Background .................................................................................................................................. 1
  1.2 Purpose ....................................................................................................................................... 3
  1.3 Statement of the problem and research question ...................................................................... 3
  1.4 Benefits of the study ................................................................................................................... 3
  1.5 Outline of the Thesis ................................................................................................................... 4

CHAPTER TWO- LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................... 6
  2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................... 6
  2.2 Challenges of Assessment and Learning. .................................................................................... 6
  2.3 Assessment and Multiple Intelligences ....................................................................................... 8
  2.4 Formative, Summative and Authentic Assessment .................................................................. 9
  2.5 Standards Based Assessment ..................................................................................................... 10
  2.6 Peer, Self-Assessment and Personal Best. ................................................................................ 11
  2.7 Assessment from a Christian perspective. ................................................................................ 12
  2.8 Inclusion and Differentiation. ..................................................................................................... 13
  2.9 Possible Futures in Assessment ................................................................................................ 14
  2.10 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 15

CHAPTER THREE- METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................. 17
  3.1 Research Design .......................................................................................................................... 17
  3.2 Research Participants .................................................................................................................. 17
  3.3 Research Instruments .................................................................................................................. 18
  3.4 Research Procedure ................................................................................................................... 19
  3.5 Data Collection and Analysis ..................................................................................................... 21
  3.6 Validity and Reliability ............................................................................................................... 21
  3.7 Research Ethics ............................................................................................................................ 22

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS AND ANALYSIS ................................................................................. 24
  4.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................... 24
  4.2 Cycle One .................................................................................................................................... 24
  4.2.1 Planning and Action: .............................................................................................................. 24
  4.2.3 Observation Stage .................................................................................................................. 25
  4.2.4 Reflections on Cycle One ...................................................................................................... 30
  4.3 Cycle Two .................................................................................................................................. 31
  4.3.1 Planning and Action Stages: ................................................................................................. 31
  4.3.3 Observation Stage: ............................................................................................................... 31
  4.3.4 Interviews ............................................................................................................................... 33
  4.3.5 Teacher Observation Checklist ........................................................................................... 37
  4.3.6 Reflections on Cycle Two ...................................................................................................... 38
List of Tables

Table 4.1 Cycle One Summary of Results of Survey - Attitudes to Assessment .......................25
Table 4.2 Cycle Two Summary of Results of Survey - Attitudes to Assessment .....................32
CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background
Assessment is an important area of the school curriculum in that it enables teachers to ‘get beside’ students to diagnose, evaluate and document the depth of their learning (Van Brummelen, 2009). Assessment should be an act of love in that it balances blessing and grace with justice and encouragement. Assessment should foster excellence, supporting students holistically, not merely for academic success. (Evans, 2015; Van Brummelen, 2009).

As a teacher at a small school catering for special needs students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, I want to provide a supportive learning environment whereby students’ God-given potential is nurtured and realised. Through my practice I try to uphold the broader St. Philips school motto, based on Jeremiah 29:11, of inspiring Hope, Purpose and Future, For the Whole of Their Lives (Evans, 2015, p.1).

The school assessment policy states that assessment for and of learning is integral to teaching and is more than an accountability tool (SPCEF, 2015, p.1). The vision for assessment is that every student achieves their God-given potential, and that assessment should help build the confidence, life purpose of students and enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment (SPCEF, 2015, p.1).

Whilst the assessment policy states that the aims for and of student learning are to teach for commitment, and future purpose, only competencies are tested (SPCEF, 2015, p.1).
Tomlinson states that ‘students often feel that assessment equals test equals grade equals judgment’ which is an association that ‘leads many discouraged students to give up rather than risk another failure’ (2014, cited in Vatterott, 2015, p.66). This sense of discouraged hopelessness, brought on by a competitive and judgmental grading system, is echoed in research carried out by Agosto, et al. (2015). Christian teachers should equip students to contribute positively to society through fostering trusting relationships (Putnam, 2000; SPCEF, 2015).

Local and international research shows that teachers need to be encouraging but honest about student abilities and achievement (Beckett & Volante, 2011; Liu, 2009). In my school the students have experienced difficulties in mainstream school settings, gaining low achievement on assessment tasks. They often believe they are not intelligent or valuable in any way. This lack of confidence manifests itself in ways such as anxiety, work avoidance, self-sabotaging, disruptive behaviours and in some cases, total school avoidance.

I believe that using standards based differentiated assessment strategies in a special school which measure against mainstream academic standards, can encourage students’ confidence in their abilities, providing students with hope and purpose for their future role in society. As students have a variety of intelligences according to Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory (McInerney, 2014), one way of providing differentiated assessment tasks is to provide students with a choice of assessment tasks that are linked to Multiple Intelligences.
1.2 Purpose
Thus the purpose of the study is to identify whether providing special needs students with a choice of assessment tasks, that align with their individual Multiple Intelligence strengths, will help to improve students’ confidence and learning performance.

1.3 Statement of the problem and research question
For nearly ten years I have taught at a small special needs, Christian school. Six years of which have been spent teaching the Year 7 class. The problem of how to engage and excite students in their own learning, to provide confident hope in their future place in society has been an ongoing issue. Assessment in particular can leave these students lacking confidence, feeling hopeless, purposeless and without a hope for a positive future for themselves, whereas the school’s motto is to inspire Hope, Purpose and Future, For the Whole of Their Lives.

This problem of negative experiences with assessment has led to the following research question: How effective is providing students with a choice of standards-based assessment tasks that are linked with Multiple Intelligences, in improving student attitudes related to confidence and motivation to achieve learning outcomes?

1.4 Benefits of the study
The study should enable students to have a positively transformed attitude and application to their own learning with an enjoyment of the learning process that should be reflected in improved assessment results. As a result, students should gain the confidence that inspires hope and purpose for learning in future assessment tasks.
Such an approach to assessment could benefit the whole school as well as other schools and communities through active student engagement in the choice of assessment task and use of a rubric for self-assessment. Schools populated by students who develop confidence and a positive desire to learn would be places reflective of a positive hope for future learning experiences. Thus the school can become a place that inspires purpose and hope for achievement in future learning through assessing students in ways that encourage and strengthen God’s individual gifting in each student.

Benefits to the educational community could come through a transformation of thinking and a more student-focused approach to assessment related to students’ strengths, valuing God’s gifting of individuals.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis
This Thesis is organised into six chapters, a reference list and appendices which include the instruments used. This chapter has provided an introduction to the study, its background, purpose and desired benefits.

Chapter Two contains a review of some of the literature relevant to the topic of assessment, both in the Australian context as well as internationally. In Chapter Three the methodology of the study is described, including the design, participants, research instruments used and how the research proceeded. The chapter then describes how the data was collected and analysed, as well as providing how issues of validity, reliability and ethical concerns were addressed. The fourth chapter introduces the data and describes the results of the data analysis. Chapter Five presents a discussion of the interpretation of the results in relation to
and in light of the literature. The conclusion and recommendations of the study are presented in Chapter Six.
CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction
The following review examines some of the literature related to assessment within
subtopics of Challenges of Assessment and Learning; Multiple Intelligences and Assessment
Choice; Formative, Summative and Authentic Assessment; Standards-Based Assessment;
Peer, Self-Assessment and Personal Best; Christian Perspectives of Assessment; and
Inclusion through Differentiation and Alternative Futures.

2.2 Challenges of Assessment and Learning.
Educational success has long been equated with high grades rather than whether or what
students have actually learned (Vatterott, 2015). The emphasis on grades has meant that
teacher feedback on how to achieve deeper learning is often ignored (Vatterott, 2015).
Whilst the school’s Assessment Policy states that feedback should enhance student learning
through informing students, their parents and the community about what and how students
are learning (as well as what they are yet to learn), Vatterott calls for students to be more
actively involved in their own assessment (Vatterott, 2015). This means that teachers
should not only adjust their traditional ways of thinking about assessment, but also the way
students think about the purposes of assessment. Whilst there may be some debate over a
teacher’s perceived loss of control, students need encouragement to take more control over
their own learning and assessment (Van Brummelen, 2009; Vatterott, 2015).

The New South Wales Board Of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES, NSW)
states that assessment for and of learning should be integrated into teaching and learning
activities and should involve student peer and self-assessment. Teacher feedback related to
learning activities and encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning is emphasised over ‘better grades’ (BOSTES, 2015). Despite this, schools are held accountable for their teaching performance through the annual, government set, National Assessment Program- Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for years three, five, seven and nine. For most students these tests produce the type of demotivating anxiety that feeds the belief that learning is an unpleasant process whereby they are negatively judged (Vatterott, 2015).

In questioning the validity of traditional assessment practice Vatterott (2015, pp.1-2) affirms that grading is one of the hardest decisions teachers must make. She states that students are handicapped by giving grades that do not reflect learning, yet that properly used, standards-based grading could restore integrity of the process (2015, p.2).

After presenting historical drivers of various educational grading systems, Vatterott calls for a re-examination of teaching, learning and assessment practices. If ‘…our definitions of what it means to teach and…learn are out-dated and simplistic’, education reform that encourages deep learning is needed, and assessment that reflects skills mastery rather remembering content’ (2015, p.24). Traditionally, assessment has three roles involving gatekeeping (controlling who gets through), which is done through ‘high-stakes testing’, accountability (to decide a school’s performance) and instructional diagnosis (finding out what students do and do not know and what to do about it) (Agosto et al., 2015; Nagy, 2000).

However, although Bourke and Loveridge (2014) include accountability as part of assessment, they also view assessment as supporting learning, and as a reporting means.
Black & Wiliam and James & Pedder assert that student learning should be the first and foremost purpose of assessment (cited in Gardner, 2012). Assessment against national standards should support and lead to deep learning as national standards influence teachers in what and how they teach and assess (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014). The way in which the teacher views assessment will influence whether students approach assessment as a game to manipulate or an opportunity to demonstrate real learning (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014; Van Brummelen, 2009, p.139; Vatterott, 2015).

Teachers are aware of these contradictions of purpose and feel that they are inadequately trained in strong measurement skills (Wise cited in Frey & Schmidt, 2007). There are many warnings about the inefficacy of politically driven, competitive, ‘high-stakes assessment’ and ‘teaching to the test’, as well as the intrinsic damage to student learning this can cause (Agosto et al., 2015; le Cordeur, 2014, Madeja, 2004; Vatterott, 2015). The solution lies in ongoing teacher training that provides teachers with the confidence, support and freedom to learn about and explore a range of evidence-based assessment approaches (Beckett & Volante, 2011; Leahy & William in Gardener, 2012).

2.3 Assessment and Multiple Intelligences
Howard Gardener’s theory of Multiple Intelligences relates to areas of intelligence strengths in individuals. The eight areas of ability that Gardner proposes are logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal and naturalist. A ninth type of intelligence, existentialist (describing intuitive skills and understanding about life and human purpose), is currently being investigated (McInerney, 2014). It is important to note that the theory states that all people have these intelligences in varying degrees.
Using the concept of Multiple Intelligences to design learning and assessment activities can provide teachers with a flexible tool to enhance student learning. Providing a choice of assessment tasks for students that cater for various intelligences, should work to strengthen learning outcomes and improve student attitudes to learning (Chapman & King, 2005; Diaz, 2004; Glen, 2010). Using the concept of Multiple Intelligences to inform assessment addresses the NSW BOSTES directives in relation to assessment for, as and of learning. One of the key goals of assessment being that students learn better rather than simply aim for a better mark (BOSTES, N.S.W., 2015). The BOSTES also encourages teachers to consider the impact that assessment can have on students. The Principles of Effective Assessment asserts that using a range of assessment strategies can enhance student engagement, motivation and self-esteem, and encourage more active involvement in their own learning (BOSTES, N.S.W., 2015).

2.4 Formative, Summative and Authentic Assessment. There is no definitive consistency amongst researchers, advocates and practitioners, as to what each of the terms, formative, summative and authentic assessment means in practice (Frey & Schmidt, 2007). Generally, formative assessment, often called ‘assessment for learning’, occurs during the process of learning. Vatterott calls this a dress rehearsal, with summative assessment being the actual performance (2015, p. 66). Through both of these assessment approaches students need to view feedback, rather than the actual grade, as the means and motivation for progress (2015, p.66 & 79). Butler states that ‘giving grades has been shown to have a negative effect on student learning when comments are ignored’ (1988, cited in Gardner, 2012).
Authentic assessment is often synonymous with performance assessment or in other words, how well a person does a job, in its aim to address real world problems through the production of something socially useful for evaluation (Mertler, 2003, cited in Frey & Schmidt, 2007). In order to be considered ‘good’, authentic assessment usually involves groups working on complex tasks that could apply to real world contexts (Frey & Schmidt, 2007). Thus, the value of success is measured against whether and how the finished piece (product, idea or theory) is useful in the ‘real world’, as opposed to the traditionally disconnected ‘un-real’ world of schools.

2.5 Standards-Based Assessment
Standards-based assessment is a form of assessment that grades students against a set of criteria which describe to students the levels of performance required to achieve certain grades. It is an approach to teaching and learning that focusses on student learning and having them show what they can do with what they know. Assessment tasks which require students to develop high-order thinking and which reflect deep understanding are required (Vatterott, 2015). For this to happen teachers need high expectations of students as individual learners i.e. knowing their students well and challenging them to stretch themselves as learners. Whilst teachers need to provide explicit assessment criteria, it is also expected that students are supported through the process of co-creating learning criteria in order to self-evaluate and develop intrinsic and self-directed learning skills (BOSTES, 2015).
Rather than being motivated extrinsically by points they can score, students are encouraged to think deeply about what they are learning and why. In a standards-focused approach, students can progressively improve their learning outcomes with the provision of practice, feedback, reflection and further application (Vatterott, 2015). This is guided by a set of task criteria which form a rubric for grading purposes. The BOSTES describes good standards-based assessment as those focussed on outcomes, where students can show their achievement levels against criteria that they are aware of before they start (2015).

2.6 Peer, Self-Assessment and Personal Best.
The most recent literature advocates standards-based formative assessment embedding peer and self-assessment, so that students take a more active role in their learning, making it meaningful (Beckett & Volante, 2011; Vatterott, 2014). Peer and self-assessment are formative learning strategies, designed to encourage students to deepen their learning by taking a greater responsibility for it (Earl & Katz, 2006; Spiller, 2012; Van Brummelen, 2009; Vatterott, 2015). Teaching students to set and reflect on performance criteria, the expected elements and evaluative standards of a task, is said to help them to identify and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses as well as to set their own learning goals (Deakin-Crick, Guoxing, Harlen, Lawson, Sebba, 2005). With teacher guidance, this knowledge arms students with a key to successful mastery of learning outcomes.

Teachers who provide students with solutions to learning problems, without guiding growth through effort, can feed a lack of hope and failure to master learning outcomes. Vatterott believes that when learning is reframed through self-assessment and analysing their mistakes, students learn optimism and develop a belief in their own ability to learn (2015).
The difficulties for teachers in implementing self-assessment practices lie mainly in systemic accountability structures, teacher-training focus and curriculum-driven time pressures (Beckett & Volante, 2011; Deakin-Crick et al., 2005). Research has shown that in a student-centred, student-empowered, classroom the more that students self-assess, after co-creating evaluation criteria with teacher support and direction, the smaller the differences between learners, including those with special needs, become (Deakin-Crick et al., 2005; Vatterott, 2015).

2.7 Assessment from a Christian perspective.
For a Christian school, assessment is ideally based on biblical principles with the aim that every student not only benefits from high quality teaching but achieves their God-given potential (SPCEF, 2015; Van Brummelen, 2009). Whilst there are no specific biblical instructions for assessment there are a set of excellence principles such as truth, justice, beauty and worthiness, which teachers should employ when assessing and reporting student learning (Van Brummelen, 2009, p.150). Van Brummelen asserts that assessing students mainly on cognitive achievement fails to do justice to a biblical view of excellence (2009). He clarifies this by saying that whilst we must strive for academic excellence, that is the learning of knowledge and skill, biblically this ‘takes a back seat to the pursuit of purity, integrity, compassion, justice, loveliness and nobleness’ (2009, p.150).

Van Brummelen (2009) instructs Christian teachers to see students as image-bearers of God whilst employing assessment that expects excellence. He believes that assessment should be an opportunity to encourage stewardship of students’ gifts, help them gain and
demonstrate knowledge and skills, celebrate achievement and support those who are more challenged (2009). When students are given clear reason for assessment in an environment where their value is not based on marks, they are more likely to trust and to take learning risks. Providing students with a supportive setting to master challenging tasks is intrinsically motivating, encouraging and inspires purposeful and deep learning (Van Brummelen, 2009).

2.8 Inclusion and Differentiation.
Differentiation is a process requiring planned, fair and flexible teaching, learning and assessment strategies that cater for student diversity. Where appropriate, teachers should differentiate through a variety of means such as; curriculum-compacting, providing key vocabulary, developing individual learning goals, including learning centres to facilitate guided or independent learning and providing a variety of stimulus materials in a range of mediums (BOSTES, 2015).

Whilst upholding legal antidiscrimination requirements of inclusion, by acknowledging the diversity of learners, the BOSTES demonstrates that this is a socially desirable practice. Inclusivity, which requires differentiation, is the sign of a civil, just and ordered society, where all are valued. This statement by BOSTES compares well with the Christian belief that as we all bear God’s image, and each person should be valued (Van Brummelen, 2009).

Biblically, differentiation means assessing excellence against potential. In illustration, using the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, Van Brummelen (2009) cites Edlin (1999) in describing Jesus’ approval of those who put effort into building on and growing the gifts they have. Van Brummelen goes on to warn that unless results are evaluated in terms of
students’ abilities, teachers discourage them from functioning in their call as stewardly image-bearers of God (2009, p. 151). Vatterott states that ‘when we acknowledge and respect differences in learners, we adjust our classroom routine to make success possible for all students’ (2015, p.79).

Vatterott (2015) argues that differentiation is embedded in the process of the standards-based learning. She states that within this approach, time allowances, as well as the methods of learning and demonstration of that learning are intrinsically varied. Vatterott further argues that students are empowered, through teacher feedback, to learn in their own way. However, as they self-assess, they individualise their work to create their own differentiations, and that the differences in learners subsequently become smaller (2015). Beckett and Volante (2011) highlight the difficulty that teachers have in implementing all aspects of such an intensive formative approach, particularly the self and peer assessment components.

2.9 Possible Futures in Assessment.
In working within the paradox of external accountability pressures and internal student needs, teachers strive to balance how to meet all requirements so that society as well as the student, are best served. An alternative being implemented in many schools in the United States (from primary to college levels) is that of not providing students with grades. According to Grinberg (2014), there are a growing number of schools in the United States that are ‘ditching letter grades for a window into the classroom’, in an effort to transform the way parents and society think about the goals of education. This is done to encourage focus on deeper learning rather than striving for a numerical or letter based value.
Letter grades can perpetuate four myths of what education is about. Those myths being that they are mathematically valid representations of learning, they motivate, show student learning against normed values and that they are appropriate because ‘that’s what their parents had’ (Dean, 2006). Van Brummelen (2009) believes that whilst we will not be able to completely overcome students’ perceptions that letter grades indicate their worth as persons, we must try to at least minimise that notion.

2.10 Conclusion
In summary, the literature review has demonstrated that grading students is one of the most challenging aspects of pedagogy that teachers must undertake. To do this with integrity, assessment must reflect what students have really learned and mastered through a process that is not enslaved by high-stakes testing systems. If assessment is to serve the triple purpose of learning, accountability and reporting, teachers need adequate training in this area. They need the confidence of support and the freedom to explore what will help their students in terms of learning and assessment.

The theory of Multiple Intelligences demonstrates that people are intelligent in many areas and to varying degrees. Formative assessment, for and as learning, and summative assessment of learning, are integral to the teaching and learning process. Many students experience assessment as a negative and stressful judgment of them as people rather than a deep learning opportunity. This literature review has shown that teachers need to provide inclusive, enriching assessments that encourage and strengthen students’ learning and their confidence in their ability to learn.
Using a choice of standards-based assessment tasks that are linked to different multiple intelligences is one way in which assessment that develops students’ confidence in their ability to learn can take place. From a Christian perspective assessment needs to reflect God’s love and value of students as individually gifted, regardless of the mark they get. Many schools and educational practitioners, in the United States in particular, are questioning the value of having a grading system altogether. They suggest that the paradox of external accountability pressures and internal student needs should be challenged. Some assert that not providing grades encourages focus on deeper learning rather than striving for a numerical or letter based value.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. It contains a description of the Research Design, the Participants, Research Instruments used as well as the Research Procedure.
CHAPTER THREE- METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design
The research design was an Action Research Project with a special needs year 7 History class. The nature of the problem, which related to improving student assessment practice and to challenge negative or stressful attitudes towards assessment, lent itself best to this approach as the aim was to examine and implement ongoing improvements within the school setting (Leedy & Ormond, 2013).

Action research is a dynamic and cyclical process that involves undertaking successive phases or cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection. It is a flexible model that requires a teacher to identify and research an issue or practice in need of change or improvement. There are four phases or stages in action research; planning, action, observation and reflection. Once the planning has been done, the action stage implements the planning. The observation stage refers to the collecting and analysing the data, often in collaboration with others. From there an evaluative reflection takes place in order to plan the next cycle (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2015).

3.2 Research Participants
The population of this study involved the students of an independent special needs Christian school in a metropolitan area. The sample consisted of a Year 7 class comprising ten students, nine males and one female. All students were invited to take part in answering the survey and five students, all males, were invited to take part in the interviews due to their willingness as well as their ability to communicate verbally and clearly.
3.3 Research Instruments

**Instrument 1:** Survey of students’ preferences for assessment tasks. Attitudes to Formative Assessment Survey (Appendix 1).

A survey with twelve closed questions and using a 1-5 Likert Scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree was provided at the end of each cycle in order to compare student attitudes and feelings about their performance in each assessment task. The survey was designed in consideration of limitations that Bell and Waters (2014) state relating to the weighting of statements and the choice of scale ranking. The survey and the scale choices were evenly balanced to gauge the ‘strength of feeling or attitude towards a given statement or series of statements’ (2014, p. 163), appropriate for a qualitative study as well as simple for students to understand. The survey is useful in that the wording is clear and contains no double questions.

**Instrument 2:** Interview. (Appendices 2 and 3).

To gain deeper insight, 10-minute semi-structured interviews with 12 open-ended questions based on the survey questions were developed for Cycle One. This was in order to give participants a voice to elaborate on their answers to the survey questions, which Creswell calls ‘participant’s meanings’ (2014, p. 186). The interviews took place in a familiar, natural setting where the participants were most comfortable. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Copies were provided to students for verification, then securely stored. For Cycle Two, additional questions were added in order to give students the opportunity to self-report feelings of hope and confidence that they had.
Instrument 3: Teacher Observation Checklist of students working on their assessment tasks (Appendix 4).

The following questions that related to the assessment tasks were developed:

- Is the student checking and ticking off the assessment criteria and rubric?
- Is or does the student discuss their ideas with teacher or each other?
- Is the student asking clarifying or directional questions of the teacher and each other?
- Is the student asking for others’ (peer and teacher) opinions about their work?
- Are they searching in relevant places for further information?
- What is the student’s demeanour (body language, vocal tone, facial expression) during the task?
- Is the student focussed and concentrating during the task?
- Is the student talking about or referring to the task outside of designated work hours?
- Is the student asking to work on the particular task?

The observational questions were designed to record participant’s behaviours in the field in an unstructured and semi-structured way (Creswell, 2014).

3.4 Research Procedure
The research was carried out with the History class for two cycles of two weeks each during Term Two in 2016. The History topic related to Ancient India. In each cycle students were able to choose a major assessment task from the same selection of assessment tasks, representative of three of the Multiple Intelligences in which the students have known strengths. These were spatial (2&3D visual representations), musical (song/musical
performance) and verbal/linguistic (play script, crossword, news report). The teacher provided a marking criteria rubric to guide students as to grading standards in Cycle One. This was used as the basis for an informal evaluative discussion with individual students, after they were surveyed, as to the standards they felt they had achieved. The teacher then used this rubric to allocate grades on this first task, independent of the students’ feedback. The main assessment task was completed in class time. Evaluation and reflection on the results informed the next cycle.

The topic taught in Cycle One was continued in Cycle Two. Students were able to choose a second main assessment task focussed on this topic. As in Cycle One, lessons focussed on providing students with the support to examine and fulfil task requirements in relation to the syllabus outcomes being assessed and the evaluation/rubric criteria. The second task was also completed in class time. However, for this assessment task the students were asked to work with the teacher to develop marking criteria and a standards-based rubric. They then used the rubric to self-assess their task in collaboration with the teacher. The teacher used this collaborative process to grade the students’ tasks.

The data gained in Cycle Two was compared with that gained in the first cycle in order to evaluate whether students found developing the rubric with their teacher and conducting a self-assessment was more effective in providing students with confidence in their learning.

The Teacher Observations were made throughout each cycle. Immediately after the completion of the main assessment task students completed the survey with twelve closed
questions. The same survey was administered at the end of each cycle in order to compare student attitudes and feelings about their performance in each assessment task.

To gain deeper insight, the 10-minute semi-structured interview was conducted with five of the students after the survey had taken place. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and copies provided to students for verification, then securely stored. Copies of transcripts were available for participants and their parents/carers.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis
Data was collated from the surveys administered to the students and recorded in two Word Document Tables (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The data from the survey at the end of Cycle One was compared with the data from the end of Cycle Two. Transcriptions were made of the interviews, and the comments collated and categorised into like-categories. The tick-box teacher observation sheets were reflected upon at the end of Cycle One and were compared at the end of the Cycle Two. At the end of each cycle the teacher reflected on questions such as: What worked? ...did not work? and Why?

3.6 Validity and Reliability
Validity refers to the procedures the researcher implements to ensure that the findings are accurate (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). For qualitative research Creswell recommends triangulation of data by examining for coherence between results, member checking to determine accuracy of findings. Among his recommendations are spending prolonged time in the field and presentation of bias (2015).
The validity and reliability processes for this research involved triangulation of data from all three instruments. Data from the survey, and the interview transcripts were compared first with each other then with the teacher observation records. This helped to ensure internal reliability, whilst replaying and checking interview transcripts with students worked to ensure validity.

Prolonged time in the field was embedded within the research as the study involved the researcher’s own class. This relationship with the participants increased the need for honest self-reflection on the researcher’s behalf. To counter possible bias, the researcher used peer debriefing with a colleague who was familiar with the students as well as the research question.

3.7 Research Ethics
Before the research of this study was conducted, the researcher completed an Ethics Proposal Application which was submitted to, and approved by, the Morling College Research Ethics Committee. This proposal included reference to a letter to parents and students explaining the research and the voluntary nature of participation as well as asking for signed student and parental approval. All participants and their parents agreed to taking part.

Participants, their parents and carers were informed and reminded throughout the study that participation was voluntary. The students remained in their familiar classroom environment and with their regular, familiar staff members. They were provided with customary support processes and feedback throughout the study.
Confidentiality was ensured by the use of a coded numerical system. E.g. Students M or F 1-10. Students were identified by a code and were referred to as such throughout the data collecting and analysis process. Data security was maintained by all hard copy data being stored in locked file on the school site. Computer files were password protected. Only the researcher and direct supervisor at the school have access to the password. On completion of the research, data remains in a locked filing cabinet and storage on school grounds for period of five years.

This chapter has explained the methodology for the study. The next chapter presents the results of data collected from each instrument in relation to the research question.
CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the results and analysis of the classroom action research study with Year 7 special needs students. The research question that guided the study was:

How effective is providing students with a choice of standards-based assessment tasks that are linked with Multiple Intelligences, in improving student attitudes related to confidence and motivation to achieve learning outcomes?

The study took place in the Year 7 History class over two cycles of two weeks each. The sample included ten students, one of which was a girl and nine were boys. These students took part in the surveys at the end of each cycle and five of these students were interviewed after completing the assessment task in each cycle.

4.2 Cycle One
4.2.1 Planning and Action: The topic taught over ten lessons in two weeks was Ancient India and included a choice of standards-based assessment tasks that related to one aspect of Ancient Indian culture and society. The assessment tasks linked to three of the Multiple Intelligences I.e. Visual-Spatial (2&3D visual representations, PowerPoints, Posters), Musical (song/musical performance) and Verbal/Linguistic (story, drama script, crossword, news report) which related to the strengths of the Year 7 students. The assessment tasks chosen by the students were information reports (2 students), posters (5 students), power point (2 students), and a historical fiction text (1 student). A guiding checklist (Appendix 5) and the relevant teacher-created marking criteria rubric (Appendix 6) were given to students to help
guide them as to the set grading standards in doing their tasks. The assessment task was completed in class time.

4.2.3 Observation Stage
The results of the survey, shown in Table 4.1 below, conducted with the ten students to ascertain their attitudes, related particularly to confidence and motivation for their chosen assessment task before the assessment tasks were marked. The teacher had provided verbal comments to each of the students both during and after the tasks.

Table 4.1 Cycle One Summary of Results of Survey- Attitudes to Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The assessment was useful in helping me to show what I know</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>5(50%)</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The assessment was useful in helping me to show what I can do</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>7(70%)</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I like this type of assessment</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>4(40%)</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The assessment helped me to feel successful</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>5(50%)</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I learned something about India through doing the assessment</td>
<td>6(60%)</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Doing this assessment encouraged me to improve my learning</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>5(50%)</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This assessment was engaging and interesting</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>4(40%)</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can use what I learned doing this assessment to help with future assessment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5(50%)</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I liked being able to assess my own work</td>
<td>4(40%)</td>
<td>5(50%)</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The assessment helped me to develop my skills</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>6(60%)</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I liked using a rubric in having my work assessed</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>3(30%)</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>4(40%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The teacher’s comments on the assessment tasks were encouraging and gave me more confidence in my ability</td>
<td>4(40%)</td>
<td>4(40%)</td>
<td>2(20%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Strongly agree (SA)  Agree (A)  Unsure (U)  Disagree (D)  Strongly disagree (SD)

Questions nine and eleven refer to informal discussions about achievement the teacher had with each student. Using the teacher-created rubric with the students the teacher listened
to students and gauged their perceptions of their grading level. She then graded formally using this rubric to inform her decisions. Question twelve relates to verbal comments the teacher made both during the assessment process and once tasks were completed.

The survey results showed that the majority of the students (70%) agreed or strongly agreed that the assessment was useful to show them what they know. However, 30% were unsure. In regards to the usefulness of the assessment in helping show them what they could do 90% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with one student being unsure. Half (50%) of the students indicated that they liked this type of assessment; two students were unsure and two students did not like this type of assessment. In terms of the assessment helping them to feel successful, 80% of the students agreed or strongly agreed whilst two students were unsure. Of the 90% of the students who agreed that they had learned something about India through doing the assessment, 60% strongly agreed.

Although 30% of students were unsure as to whether they felt the assessment encouraged them to improve 70% agreed or strongly agreed. Of the 70% of students who agreed that they found the assessment engaging, 30% strongly agreed, while 30% were unsure. Half (50%) of the students agreed they could use what they had learnt from doing this assessment in their future learning, 30% were unsure whilst 20% disagreed with the statement.

Of the 90% of students who agreed that they liked being able to assess their own work, 40% strongly agreed. Again, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the assessment helped to develop their skills. Less than half (40%) of the students agreed that they liked using a
rubric in having their work assessed whilst 40% disagreed and 20% were unsure. Finally, of the 80% of students who agreed that the teacher’s comments were encouraging, and gave confidence in their abilities, 40% strongly agreed whilst 20% were unsure about this.

**Interviews**

An interview with 12 questions (Appendix 2) was conducted with five students, all males, after the assessment tasks were completed but before marks were given. These students were coded as M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5. A summary of their responses is included below.

In response to the type of assessment and why they chose it, M1 and M5, chose a PowerPoint (PPT) Presentation, M1 because he was “good at technology” so he felt he would be “best at it”; M5 because he it would be the easiest; M2, chose initially to do a Power Point which morphed into an information report with images because he liked computers; M3 chose a fictional story as he felt he was “a bit creative” and wanted to try this out by writing the story, and M4 chose to make a poster because he had already done a poster on something similar.

All except M5 gave a positive response related to how they felt as they were told about the task. In relation to their feelings about doing the assessment again all except M 5 who “was really stressed”, were positive with M2 and M4 being “excited”.

M1 reported enjoying learning “by the computer”, and that he likes writing or drawing things so chose the PowerPoint. M2 also said he likes learning through researching on the computer but he also likes “hands-on designing and making things”. M3 said that he likes to
learn through “making, doing, watching and listening” and enjoyed the creative-writing aspect of the assessment as he chose the fictional story. M4, stated he “doesn’t like writing things down, from off the board”, so enjoyed making the poster as he likes learning through art. M5 said that he likes to watch things being done and doing physical things then “having a go and getting in and trying things” himself. He chose the Power Point.

All students responded in positive terms about how they felt they went in terms of what they had achieved with their assessment task. M1 hesitantly said that what he was trying to achieve was a “good mark” and didn’t use the teacher made rubric as it “seemed a bit much”. M2 said he felt he “went ok”. M3 simply stated that “yes I achieved”. M4 was also very pleased with his poster saying that he thought he went “really good with it”. M5 felt positive about what he had felt he had achieved. None of the students indicated that they would make any major changes to their work.

Most of the students said that they did not find the topic personally interesting. M1 said “no, I am not really interested in History at all”. M2 and M3 said they did find the topic interesting. M4 said that he “didn’t really give a ding-dong about Ancient Indian religion” until he did the poster. M5 said that he had no interest in Ancient India at all.

All of the students were confident that they now understood the topic of Ancient India well. M1 said that he now knew “all about the different spices and foods like curry and what is used in cooking”. M2 said that he definitely learned about Ancient India and that learning about the Taj Mahal (though this is not considered ‘ancient’) made him want to make a model for his next task. M3 said that maybe he did learn, “India type things”. M4 said that
he had learned a bit about the gods of Hinduism and the beliefs of people in Ancient India. M5 said that he learned that Ancient India was very different to other countries, and very different to Ancient Rome.

**Teacher Observation**

The Teacher Observation Checklists are in Appendix 8. It was noted that only two students were seen to be checking the teacher-created rubric and ticking off assessment criteria. Two students enthusiastically discussed their ideas with the teacher and other students. Four students asked clarifying questions about the assessment. Over half of the students actively sought peer and teacher opinion about their work. All students were observed independently researching the topic for their task, having a positive demeanour, being focussed and on task, talking about the task outside of designated hours for the subject and asking to work on the task outside of the designated hours for that subject. Students expressed verbal and visual disappointment when not permitted to work on their tasks when History was not timetabled.

The results each student achieved for this first task were graded as A-E where A indicates a high level of achievement of the learning outcomes and E a poor level of achievement. Overall the grades allocated to the class were two Cs, six Ds, and two Es. In relation to the interviewed students: two students (M2 and M3) received a C and three students (M1, M4, and M5) a D.
4.2.4 Reflections on Cycle One

The survey indicated that only half the students said that they could use what they learned doing this assessment to help with future assessment, so in Cycle Two the teacher planned to show students how assessment of learning outcomes through the rubric can help with future assessment. As only 40% of those surveyed liked using the rubric, which outlined the learning outcomes, to have their work assessed, and the teacher’s observations noted only two students using the rubric, the teacher planned to give more help to students in using a rubric, as well as working with students to develop their own rubric.

The interviewed students appeared confident that they had achieved the learning outcomes in that they felt they understood the topic of their chosen aspect of Ancient India well. However, their grades did not always reflect this confidence in their achievement. Their confidence was high as was their motivation to engage in the assessment tasks, but the quality of the work not at a high standard. It was as if they felt the sense of achievement was in completing the task. To encourage a higher standard of work in achieving the learning outcomes the teacher planned to give students even more explicit verbal feedback during the process in order to give students the opportunity to improve the quality of their work.

As less than half of the students took the opportunity to ask the teacher clarifying questions, the teacher planned in the next cycle to explain to students that asking questions and taking the teacher’s advice on improving their work should help them receive better results.
4.3 Cycle Two
4.3.1 Planning and Action Stages: The topic, to be continued over 10 lessons during two weeks, focused on Ancient India. During this topic it was planned that each student would complete another major assessment task drawing from the same assessment tasks as in Cycle One.

The teacher spoke about the results of the assessment task in Cycle One with students as a whole class as well as on an individual level with feedback on what they had done well and where they might improve. The purpose and use of a rubric as a guide to help direct learning was reiterated and the teacher guided the whole class in creating a rubric.

Students were also given a guided checklist, as with Cycle One, to help them stay on task during the assessment. Two students built a model of the Taj Mahal, two created power points, four chose to make posters, one created an online blog, one wrote a story.

4.3.3 Observation Stage: At the end of the Cycle the same survey used at the end of Cycle One was used (Appendix 1). The results of this survey are shown in Table 4.2 below.
Table 4.2 Cycle Two Summary of Results of Survey - Attitudes to Assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA (30%)</th>
<th>A (20%)</th>
<th>U (50%)</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The assessment was useful in helping me to show what I know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The assessment was useful in helping me to show what I can do</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I like this type of assessment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The assessment helped me to feel successful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I learned something about India through doing the assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Doing this assessment encouraged me to improve my learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This assessment was engaging and interesting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can use what I learned doing this assessment to help with future assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I liked being able to assess my own work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The assessment helped me to develop my skills</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I liked using a rubric in having my work assessed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The teacher’s comments on the assessment tasks were encouraging and gave me more confidence in my ability</td>
<td>8(80%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Strongly agree (SA) Agree (A) Unsure (U) Disagree (D) Strongly disagree (SD)

The survey results for this second cycle showed that half of the students (50%) agreed and half (50%) were unsure that the assessment was useful in helping them to show what they know. In regards to the usefulness of the assessment in helping them show what they could do, 90% of the students agreed, with 60% strongly agreeing and one student being unsure. The majority (80%) of the students indicated that they liked this type of assessment with one student indicating they were unsure and one who disagreed. In terms of the assessment helping them to feel successful, 90% of the students agreed and of these 70% strongly agreed whilst one student was unsure. Most of the students (70%) agreed that they had learned something about India through doing the assessment whilst 30% were unsure.
When asked whether doing the assessment encouraged them to improve their learning 90% agreed, with 30% of these strongly agreeing and one was unsure. The results showed that 90% of students agreed that they found the assessment engaging and interesting, with 70% of these strongly agreeing and one was unsure. The majority (90%) of the students agreed that they could use what they had learned from doing this assessment in their future learning, and of these 50% strongly agreed but one was unsure about this.

Most (80%) of students strongly agreed that they liked being able to assess their own work, whilst 20% were unsure. The majority (90%) strongly agreed that the assessment helped to develop their skills whilst one student was unsure. Most (80%) of the students agreed that they liked using the rubric in having their work assessed whilst 20% of the students were unsure about whether they liked using the rubric in having their work assessed. Finally, 80% of students strongly agreed that the teacher’s comments were encouraging and gave confidence in their abilities whilst one was unsure about this and one disagreed.

4.3.4 Interviews
Interviews were conducted with the same five students, M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5, as for Cycle One. This second interview contained the same questions as in the first cycle as well as a further 12 questions based on comparative experiences of the subject.

When asked why they chose this type of assessment M1 said it was because he was interested in spices and he likes “mixing a lot of spices with stuff”, saying that he has liked curry for his whole life and he chose to write a story. M2 stated that he liked using his
hands to make things and chose the model whilst M3 chose the poster because he thought it was the best thing for him to do as he “got some ideas when he was thinking about it, and looking at other people’s posters”. M4 chose to make a model and M5 said he chose to write a blog because he thought it would be fun and something different.

All students except M5, who said he could not remember how he felt, were excited about doing this second task and liked being able to choose their tasks. As they undertook the task all students said that they felt good about it, even though M5 said he “got a bit frustrated” and M4 said that “it was fun, but it was stressful because I wasn’t able to get it in ‘til the last day”.

In re-thinking about how they liked to learn M1 said he liked to learn things in “easy fashion, sometimes complicated, if I know about the thing”. He described ‘easy fashion’ as being things that he was used to doing, and being able to set it out really neatly, doing it in order. He described ‘complicated’ as trying to set it out as another person would. M2 said he liked to learn using his hands whilst M3 “loves learning so much”, and liked learning best “by lots of different methods (reading, watching, researching on the internet)”. M4 said he liked to learn “through things that are fun, things that I can experiment with and stuff like that”. M5 liked being able to be active and do things “like moving around and being outside and finding out more about it. By not just seeing and hearing but actually doing things”. All students, including M5 who was previously negative, expressed a feeling of confident success with their second tasks and that they had achieved what they were trying to do.
In self-evaluating M1 said there was nothing he would do differently with his task whilst M2 said that he would change the material he used so, rather than balloons, which popped, he would use papier mache. M3 said that he would put more pictures on his poster and much more information. M4 said that he would try to get it in on time. M5 said that he would write more in future, “because I didn’t get to my goal”.

While All students, except M5, said that they found this task personally interesting, all had learned something, either topic content or technological skills, from doing the task. Further, all students again felt that they understood the topic well.

When asked about their feelings on being graded, and what helps them feel successful three (M1, M2, M5) of the five students expressed varying degrees of nervousness. M3 said that he does not feel any stress at all, adding that he feels successful when he thinks of ideas and produces a larger quantity of work than he first thought or planned. M4 said he feels successful when he has completed a task and gets a good grade on it. M5 said that encouragement, from staff members and peers, helps him to feel successful, “if someone says I’m doing a good job I keep going”.

In gaining hope through assessments M1 said a definite ‘yes’. M2 and M4 were unsure. M4 described hope as “faith in what we do not see...you know, that we will be able to achieve the things that we have to achieve”. M3 said that he did have that feeling of hope, saying “when I’m succeeding and getting further on...that’s when I get that feeling that I can do it, and then there’s no stress whatsoever”. M5 said that he would not use the word hope in relation to assessment tasks and did not know why.
The response to the question about liking self-assessment was mixed. M1 and M2 said they liked doing self assessments but did not know why. M3 said that grading was a bit hard because he usually gets a bit nervous because he expects a poor result, “I’m not gonna get this, I’m gonna get an ‘E’”. M4 said that it is “sort of a bit strange assessing yourself because I don’t really like to do that sort of stuff because I don’t wanna be like ‘ohh yeah I did a good job because it’s mine’ and that sort of stuff”. He likes other people’s input. M5 said he “liked being able to self-assess...because it takes a bit of pressure off knowing that I’m assessing myself, not just others are judging what I’m doing, I’m able to judge my own work”.

All but one of the students said they felt the choice of tasks was adequate, and none could think of any they would add to the selection. Further, all students but one could describe what they had learned about themselves as learners through doing the task. Four of the five students said they would use learning from this task in future tasks.

All five students expressed an increase in confidence through doing this task. The majority of students agreed that what they had learned was more important than the grade they received. M4 said that both matter but that the mark is important “because that’s the only thing my mum and dad really seem to care about”. M5 said “The mark is not as important. It’s more knowing that I am able to do that sort of thing”.
Students’ grades on the assessment task in cycle two were similar to the grades they received in cycle one, they did not greatly improve. M1, M3, M4 and M5 received a D and M2 a C. Overall, the grades for the class included one C, seven Ds and two Es.

4.3.5 Teacher Observation Checklist
The results of the teacher’s observations are recorded in Appendix 6

All students were observed to be checking the class-created rubric and ticking off assessment criteria. Eight students were seen and heard enthusiastically discussing their ideas with the teacher and other students, some on several occasions, whilst two students were not observed doing this. Seven students asked clarifying questions about the assessment, one of these doing so on more than one occasion. Seven students sought peer and/or teacher opinion about their work in progress whilst three did not seek outside opinion.

In searching for information about their chosen task nine students were observed working independently or sought teacher support to carry this out. All 10 students had observably and consistent positive demeanour (body language, vocal tone, facial expression) during the task and all were consistently and often observed as being focussed and concentrating during the task when this is needed.

Eight students were heard to be referring to the task outside of designated hours for that subject. Seven students asked to work on the particular task outside of the designated time for that subject.
4.3.6 Reflections on Cycle Two
The Cycle Two survey indicated that less students than in Cycle One agreed that the assessment was useful in helping them show what they knew. Whilst 90% (9) students still agreed that the task was useful in helping them show what they can do, there was an increase of those who strongly agreed, six students compared with four students in Cycle One. The survey and interview data indicates that more students appeared to like this type of assessment in Cycle Two and that it helped them to feel successful. The number of students indicating that they liked using the rubric doubled from four to eight in Cycle Two. It is to be noted that this Cycle used the student created rubric under teacher guidance.

The interviews demonstrated that none of the students had difficulty in choosing an activity so the teacher was not needed to support in this area. The majority of students interviewed were more clear about what they had learned than they were during Cycle One. In a future cycle the teacher could provide a more open forum for students to hear each other’s self-reflections in order to stimulate their own thoughts and ideas about how they may improve their work.

The extra questions raised during the interview in this cycle provided students with the opportunity to to expand on their feelings and ideas about assessment. The majority of the student’s reflections on what they had learned about themselves as learners were clearer than in Cycle One.

All five students interviewed experienced an increase in confidence through doing this task. Although four students believed that the grade was not as important as what they had
learned through the assessment, M4 believed his parents cared more about the grade. In a future cycle the teacher could enable a class discussion about grades and learning focussing on where their value as a person comes from.

There was a noticeable improvement in students using the rubric with enthusiastic discussion and clarifying questions being asked of the teacher and peers. In a future cycle the teacher could use a similar student created rubric to check if a similar positive response was given.

This chapter has presented the results and an analysis of the results of the two cycles of action research. The next chapter discusses the results of the data analysis.
CHAPTER FIVE-DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the results recorded in Chapter Four with reference to the relevant literature and in answer to the research question: How effective is providing students with a choice of standards-based assessment tasks that are linked with Multiple Intelligences, in improving student attitudes related to confidence and motivation to achieve learning outcomes? This chapter will follow a similar pattern to the Results Chapter by discussing and comparing the results related to each of the two Cycles of research.

5.2 Cycle One
At the close of Cycle One after assessment tasks had been completed but before they were marked, the students in the History class responded to the survey (Appendix 1) about their attitude to the assessment task they had chosen and five boys were interviewed to add depth to the findings of the survey.

The survey results showed that the majority of the students (70%) found the assessment was useful in helping them appreciate what they know and all except one student, who was unsure, believed that the assessment was useful in helping them realise what they could do. Half of the students indicated that they liked this type of assessment and four of the five students interviewed indicated a positive response overall to the assessment and liked being able to choose the assessment task. Further, all except one of the five students interviewed, either felt excited or good about doing the assessment but one felt stressed.
This overall positive attitude particularly related to their confidence and motivation to the choice of assignment which allowed students to use their Multiple Intelligence strengths are similar to the observations made by Chapman and King (2005) who state that providing a choice of assessment tasks catering for Multiple Intelligences should work to improve student attitudes to learning. Van Brummelen (2009) also affirms that providing diverse assessment approaches that build on students’ strengths not only builds in success and confidence, but that it is the Christian teacher’s biblical duty to do so.

The student who felt negatively about the task appeared to relate this to the grade and fear of judgement rather than his attitude to learning. Many students experience this fear of judgement that the grade brings (Bourke and Loveridge, 2014; Van Brummelen, 2009; Vatterott, 2015). Vatterott (2015) states that grades are misleading as predictors of academic success and actual learning and from the low grades that the students gained at the end of cycle one this appeared to be the case.

Most (80%) of the students agreed that having a choice of assignment helped them to have confidence to be successful. In addition, all five students interviewed were confident with what they felt they had achieved through doing the assignment. This confidence and overall positive attitude to the assignment is reflective of the BOSTES ‘Principles of Effective Assessment’ which asserts that using a range of assessment strategies can enhance student engagement, motivation and self-esteem, and encourage more active involvement in their own learning (2015). It was apparent that most students in the class were engaged and
motivated and enjoyed the feeling of success and confidence gained through the learning process that the choice of assessment provided.

The survey indicated that all except one student, who was unsure, had learned something about India through doing the assessment. In regard to improving their learning most students (70%) agreed that the assessment encouraged them to improve their learning and they found the assessment engaging, with half of the students agreeing they could use what they had learned from this assessment in their future learning. Vatterott (2015) states that the students’ interaction with the content ignites enthusiasm and motivation for their own learning and when students are given choice, relevance and personalisation they engage and are more keen to learn (2015, p.49).

The majority of the class liked being able to assess their own work, which was done informally with the teacher, as well as agreeing that the assessment helped to develop their skills. In addition, the survey indicated that most (80%) of the students agreed that the teacher’s verbal comments on their assignments were encouraging.

However, there was a mixed response to using a rubric to help in assessing their assignment with one of the boys interviewed stating it “seemed a bit much”. It would appear that this student’s response may have been indicative of others in the class feeling overwhelmed by the rubric who were also in need of more support as this was the first time the students had used a rubric.
Van Brummelen (2009) considers that self-assessment enables students to participate actively in their learning, but they need help in order to do this effectively. In order to provide additional support in self-assessing using a rubric in the second cycle the teacher included the class in developing the rubric. Research demonstrates the more students self-assess, the deeper their learning will become and the smaller the gap between learners, even those with special needs (Deakin-Crick, Guoxing, Harlen, Lawson, Sebba 2005; Vatterott, 2015). Van Brummelen (2009) concludes that providing students with a supportive setting to succeed with tasks motivates intrinsically and encourages deep learning.

The students interviewed had different reasons for choosing the type of assessment tasks but on the whole their reasons related to being able to succeed at the task with the exception of the fourth student who was “a bit creative” and wanted to try this out by writing the story. These students also indicated that they would use a similar way to present their assessment another time which showed that despite their grade they had enjoyed the process and had chosen a presentation which related to their interests and strengths. Such findings are echoed by Diaz who states that when provided with with a variety of creative, imaginative learning options students at a community college “became mini-experts and co-facilitators of learning as they gave 'performances of understanding' of the academic content studied” (2004, p49). Diaz (2009) also found that using rubrics in assessment complemented the learning and reflective processes for students as well as teachers.
Although most of the students interviewed did not find the topic personally interesting, it appears that having the opportunity to choose to present their work according to their strengths and interests excited and motivated them. This type of provision is advocated by a number of researchers, who found using Multiple Intelligences to give students choice of assessment could increase grades as well as a students’ feeling of success (Daniels, 2008; Glenn, 2010; Hoerr, 1997; Reiff 1997).

The teacher/researcher’s observations showed that students had a very positive attitude towards the assessment task through their positive demeanour, being focussed and on task, talking about the task outside of designated hours for the subject and asking to work on the task outside of the designated hours for that subject. Students also expressed verbal and visual disappointment when not permitted to work on their tasks when History was not timetabled.

This finding which related to students’ motivation and engagement is similar to the finding of Burrows (2010) who after completing a research study on the behavioural effects and academic achievement of student engagement, reported that students who are behaviourally, emotionally and cognitively engaged perform better and were better behaved. Further, studies involving learner-centred instruction and Multiple Intelligence Theory, found that when teachers understood their students and included a range of Multiple Intelligence based assessment tasks for ESL students, behaviour problems were minimised and motivation increase (Barbulet, 2014; Marjorie, 2004).
However, Van Brummelen (2009) and Richardson and Arker (2010) attribute student engagement more to the classroom culture and relationships cultivated by the teacher. When the teacher recognises the individual value of each student and fosters rapport and positive relationships a ‘pattern of motivation and improved behaviours and academic performance results’ (2010). Van Brummelen (2009) found that the best way to gain positive behaviours in challenging students was not creating more engaging lessons but fostering caring and respectful relationships. The teacher/researcher, through providing students with the assessment rubric and her willingness to answer questions and provide encouraging comments to the students related to their assessment tasks contributed to a positive relationship with the students.

5.3 Cycle Two
At the close of Cycle Two after assessment tasks had been completed but before they were marked, the students in the History class responded to the survey (Appendix 1) about their attitude to the assessment task they had chosen and the same five boys were interviewed to add depth to the findings of the survey.

This was done in order to provide an opportunity for them to reflect on their learning without the pressure or discouragement that the grades may add. Grades were discussed after this. As Van Brummelen states students who try hard but receive low grades may give up, but if the teacher provides clear expectations, using both formal and informal assessment to help them improve, students tend to accept results and use this to further their learning (2009, p. 139). Vatterott also believes that when teachers cultivate a culture of growth mindset students are freed from the fear of failure and using feedback instead of
grades builds positivity and optimism which affects their personal beliefs about their abilities to learn (2015, pp.33-34).

The survey results and the interviews in Cycle Two showed a positive increase in the students’ sense of achievement and confidence with most students (60%) strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing that the assessment helped them show what they can do, liked this type of assessment (80%), felt it helped them to feel successful (90%) and found the assessment engaging (90%). The percentage of students who were encouraged to improve their learning (90%), develop in skill (90%) and who liked using the class developed rubric (80%) also increased in Cycle Two. These results are also reflected in the increased engagement across all fields noted in the teacher observations checklist.

In the Cycle Two interviews, all five students reported a ‘great’ or ‘definite’ increase in confidence through doing the task, with all attributing this feeling to a sense of accomplishment in their learning. All five interviewees said they liked being able to choose their own tasks with two elaborating that they chose to their strengths and gained a sense of enjoyment from being able to express their individuality. This lead to four of the five students stating that they had experienced a sense of hope in future successes in their educational outcomes and confidence through doing the task. These responses demonstrate the effectiveness of providing students with a choice of standards based assessment tasks that are linked with Multiple Intelligences, in improving students’ attitudes related to confidence and motivation to achieve learning outcomes?
Van Brummelen attributes such attitudes of hope and confidence in learning to the nurturing of students’ individual gifts, calling this a ‘wellspring of motivation’ (2009, p.211). He states that the best motivation for students is to master tasks in a supportive setting. By this he means that whilst it is the teacher who sets the assessment format, effective learning through intrinsic motivation is gained through modelling, inducing curiosity, encouragement, and experiencing success through reasonable effort.

Vatterott (2015) further states that grades are misleading as predictors of academic success and actual learning. She says that students develop perseverance based on the expectation (and hope) of success. Further, that this emboldening leads to positive changes in self-belief as well as ability to learn (2015, p33). Vatterott’s assertion is also reflected in the findings in Cycle Two with the data showing increased participation in positive learning behaviours that the teacher/researcher observed and recorded in the teacher observation checklist. Although some students indicated they may not have been personally interested in learning about Ancient India, they enjoyed the feeling of success and confidence in their abilities or strengths gained through the learning process, even though they were unaware of what grade they had actually earned.

When students learned of their grades they were not surprised by their low scores. They had individually been through the class-created rubric with the teacher and discussed what standard they felt they had achieved. When self-assessing, nine of the ten students were realistic on their level of achievement, with only one student exaggerating his to an A grade. When he did not receive this grade and was shown the reasons why, he accepted the results without appearing discouraged. The teacher then used a combination of the students’ self-
assessed grade and her own judgement to record each student’s grade. Ultimately, the
students did not appear to care about the grade they received, with four of the five who
were interviewed stating this. Using the class-created rubric in this way helped the students
to reflect on their learning and to think about how they might further improve on future
tasks.

This chapter has discussed the results with reference to the literature. The next and final
chapter provides the conclusion, limitations and recommendations from the study.
CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction
This research study investigated the effectiveness in providing students with a choice of standards-based assessment tasks, that are linked with Multiple Intelligences, in improving student attitudes related to confidence and motivation to achieve learning outcomes.

The action research project covered two cycles of two weeks each with a year 7 Special Education class. Data was analysed from three separate instruments, including surveys completed by the students during each cycle, interviews with a subsample of the students and teacher observations.

6.2 Summary of Results
Over the course of this study, changes in students’ attitudes and levels of types of engagement related to achieving learning outcomes were noted. In Cycle Two the students’ responses showed overall an improvement in the level of positive attitudes about their work and the sense of hope and purpose their learning provided. Students were observed to be engaged in behaviours that demonstrated a proactive involvement in their tasks including attitudes of confidence and motivation. The provision of differentiated assessment approaches linked with Multiple Intelligences, worked to improve student attitudes to learning in this study as well as build students’ strengths, sense of success and confidence.

The findings of this study demonstrate consistency with the conclusions of Chapman and King (2005), and Van Brummelen (2009).

Thus the results of this study over the course of the two cycles showed that the students’ engagement in and attitude to their tasks became more positive. The improvement in
confidence and motivation was shown particularly in Cycle Two with more students asking clarifying questions and inviting both teacher and peer opinion of their work in progress. In addition, all except one of the students were observed using and referring to the class-created rubric and ticking off their progress as they went.

Further, the Cycle Two survey indicated that more students felt successful, enjoyed of the choice of assessment, and felt encouraged in improving their learning. There was an improvement in the number of students expressing enjoyment of their learning, feeling able to transfer this learning to other areas and liking using the rubric. This sense of personal encouragement was shown by students becoming more encouraging of one another which engendered an overall positive feeling to the class.

6.3 Limitations
The Action Research study has several limitations. Firstly, it is subjective as the researcher is also the teacher of the class and there is the possibility of ambiguity and imprecision as the participant observer (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, cited in Bell and Waters, 2014, p.213).

Secondly, as this study was completed by the researcher within her own classroom context it is not immediately generalizable to other classroom contexts. Further, sample size and composition is also a limiting issue which affect the generalizability of the study. This class consisted of nine males and one female, so as well as being a small sample there is also the possibility of gender bias within the student responses. The female student was surveyed but was not interviewed due the the nature of her disability and verbal communication issues. Bassey (as cited in Bell and Waters, 2014) says that relatability is more important
than generalizability in qualitative case studies, whilst Creswell (2014) states that the hallmark of good qualitative research is particularity rather than generalizability. Meaning that although the information gained is specific to this particular setting, other teachers may be able to relate to it and implement a similar practice. The researcher/teacher tried to minimise these limitations through cross referencing of data from each instrument used during both cycles as advocated by Creswell (2014).

6.4 Recommendations for Further Study
It is recommended that future cycles be undertaken and where possible include a more balanced selection of participant gender as this group was 90% male. This may be done by combining with the Year 8 class, which currently has two female students, to assess a Stage 4 cohort. Interviewing students before as well as after the tasks might also provide further insight to their initial thoughts and attitude towards assessment and provide a comparative base for future cycles.

A broader research study could involve classes within the same school and with other teachers implementing assessment tasks linked to Multiple Intelligences. Additionally, implementation of similar research in a class in a larger mainstream setting where the cohort is not considered as having special needs could be beneficial.

6.5 Conclusion
Based on the research question: How effective is providing students with a choice of standards-based assessment tasks that are linked with Multiple Intelligences, in improving student attitudes related to confidence and motivation to achieve learning outcomes?
This Action Research study has shown the effectiveness of providing special education students with a selection of assessment types linked to Multiple Intelligences to improve confidence and motivation in achieving learning outcomes. The findings showed a positive improvement in confidence and motivation and overall student attitudes to learning which provided students with a sense of learning purpose and hope for improving their learning in future assessment tasks. In addition, students indicated that although being graded used to be stressful and important that they now felt that the learning itself was more important than simply the grade.
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Appendix 1

Instrument 1: Attitudes to Formative Assessment Survey
For each statement circle the number closest to your opinion

1=Strongly agree (SA)  2=Agree (A)  3=Unsure (U)  4=Disagree (D)  5=Strongly disagree (SD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The assessment was useful in helping me to show what I know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assessment was useful in helping me to show what I can do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like this type of assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assessment helped me to feel successful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned something about India through doing the assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing this assessment encouraged me to improve my learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This assessment was engaging and interesting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use what I learned doing this assessment to help with future learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked being able to assess my own work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assessment helped me to develop my skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked using a rubric to assess my own work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher’s comments on the assessment tasks were encouraging and gave me more confidence in my ability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

**Instrument 2: Cycle One Interview Questions**

1. What was the assessment you did?
2. Why did you choose this type of assessment?
3. How did you feel as you were told about the task? (May need prompting with emotional vocabulary. Nervous, excited...try not to influence response).
4. Do you like this type of assessment?
5. How did you feel while you were doing it? (May need prompting with emotional vocabulary. Nervous, excited...try not to influence response).
6. How do you like to learn? (doing, reading, talking, making, thinking)
7. What type of assessment/learning do you enjoy?
8. How do you feel you went with this assessment? Did you achieve the what was hoped for?
9. Is there anything you would do differently in future?
10. Did the task appeal to your personal interest?
11. Did you learn anything from doing the task?
12. How well do you think you understand the topic through doing the assessment task?
Appendix 3

Cycle Two Extra Interview Questions-in addition to Cycle One questions.

1. What assessments did you do for Ancient India?

2. What kind of feeling do you get when you know you are being assessed, or graded on a task? (may need prompting here)

3. What helps you to feel successful when you are doing assessments?

4. How did you feel about the Ancient India tasks?

5. Would you use the word ‘hope’ in relation to assessment tasks in general?

6. What about the Ancient India tasks?

7. Why/Why not, do you think?

8. Do you think there were enough selection of choices provided?

9. What kind of task would you add to the choices?

10. What have you learned about yourself, as a learner, through doing the tasks? (may need prompting here).

11. What will you use from doing these tasks, to apply to assessments in other subjects?

12. Is there anything you would like to say about assessment and grading in general?
Appendix 4

**Instrument 3: Teacher Observation Checklist**

Students who are engaged confidently in the assessment task would be observed to be engaged in the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Behaviour</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Ja</th>
<th>Jo</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checking and ticking off the assessment criteria and rubric.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiastically discussing their ideas with teacher or each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking clarifying or directional questions of the teacher and each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking for others’ (peer and teacher) opinions about their work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching (independently or with some teacher direction) in relevant places for further information?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have an observably positive demeanour (body language, vocal tone, facial expression) during the task.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be focussed and concentrating during the task when this is needed.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about or referring to the task outside of designated hours for that subject.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking to work on the particular task outside of the designated time for that subject</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

Cycles One and Two - Assessment Task with Student Checkbox.

Purpose: The purpose of this assessment is to provide you with a creative way to express your learning about Ancient India this term.

Outcomes being assessed:
HT4-2 Describes major periods of historical time and sequences events, people and societies from the past.
HT4-6 Uses evidence from sources to support historical narratives and explanations.
HT4-10 Selects and uses appropriate oral, written visual and digital forms to communicate about the past.

There will be two assessment cycles and you have two weeks for each assignment. For each cycle you to choose one of the following options and will be graded according to the criteria attached. You will be guided through the criteria so you are clear about what you need to do.

Hints:
- Do your best and strive for excellence.
- Ask for advice and assistance from staff.
- Take on board the advice-make use of it.
- Use a range of sources for your information (books, websites, textbook, audio-visual).
- Create a bibliography (where you got your information) as you go. This saves having to try to remember afterwards.
- Have fun with your learning

Each task should be the equivalent of approximately 500 words.

Spatial: 2D, 3D or 4D representation.
Power point presentation: you will create and present a 10-slide power point presentation about an aspect of life in Ancient India. You may choose to focus on an event, a particular person or that society and culture in general. Your spoken words will contribute to your words count.

Poster: You will make a poster displaying an aspect of life in Ancient India. You may choose to focus on an event, a particular person or that society and culture in general.

Video: You will create Vlog, video report or docu-drama about an aspect of life in Ancient India. You may choose to focus on an event, a particular person or that society and culture in general.

Musical: a song or performance.
You are to write and perform a song about an aspect of life in Ancient India. You may choose to focus on an event, a particular person or that society and culture in general. You must record this as well as perform live. You may ask for help from the music teacher but the work must be yours.

Verbal/Linguistic: Playscript, Crossword, Newspaper report or Internet Blog.
You are to use your creative skills to write a fictional or non-fictional piece about an aspect of life in Ancient India. You may choose to focus on an event, a particular person or that society and culture in general. You may use staff as your scribe, but the words must be yours. You are to type up your finished product and present it in a polished fashion, having edited your work (checked for spelling, grammar and punctuation accuracy).
Keep yourself on track with the following checkboxes. Tick when complete.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Tick when done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have chosen my task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have spoken to the teacher about my task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have put thought into it and planned my task on paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have researched and kept a bibliography of where I found my information and ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have worked on my task and asked for help when needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have checked my spelling, grammar and punctuation in a final edit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have completed and presented my task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 6

### Teacher-Created Grading Rubric

You will be graded according to the following criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Excelling</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>More to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HT 4-2 Described major periods of historical time and sequences events, people and societies from the past.</td>
<td>Independent, highly descriptive and/or imaginative information about the time, events and/or other aspects of Ancient Indian society</td>
<td>Provided well written, clear and imaginative description of the time period, people and/or other aspects of Ancient Indian society</td>
<td>Clearly describes the time period, events, people and/or other aspects of Ancient Indian society</td>
<td>Basic description of one or more aspects of life in Ancient India. Required some support</td>
<td>Provided little or no description of aspects of life in Ancient Indian culture. Could not do this independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT4-6 Used evidence from sources to support historical narratives and explanations (bibliography).</td>
<td>Thorough ad correctly formatted bibliography. Used a broad range (more than four sources) that support your information</td>
<td>Thorough and correctly formatted bibliography. Used at least four sources that support your information</td>
<td>Three sources provided in correct bibliographic format</td>
<td>One to two sources used and recorded. Formatting may need some work. Needed some assistance</td>
<td>No bibliography provided or one source incorrectly formatted. Could not do this independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT4-10 Selected and used appropriate oral, written visual and digital forms to communicate about the past.</td>
<td>Independently selected and expertly used oral, written, visual forms to communicate about Ancient India</td>
<td>Has used very well and independently, oral, written, visual forms to communicate about Ancient India</td>
<td>Has competently used oral, written visual forms to communicate about Ancient India</td>
<td>Has used oral, written, visual forms at a basic level to communicate about Ancient India. Needed some assistance</td>
<td>Has used oral, written, visual forms at a low level to communicate about Ancient India. Could not do this independently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 7

#### Class-Created Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Excelling</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Almost</th>
<th>More to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describes/shows a major period of tie, events, people and society of Ancient</td>
<td>A lot of descriptive detail. Excellent design and very creative. Lots of</td>
<td>Very good amount of descriptive detail and creativity. Worked mostly</td>
<td>Good amount of descriptive detail shown on the topic.</td>
<td>An 'ok' amount of description. Needing a fair bit of help and direction.</td>
<td>Very little description. Not able to work independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>detail.</td>
<td>independently.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used evidence from sources to support your narratives and explanations</td>
<td>Used more than four sources and wrote the bibliography correctly</td>
<td>Used at least four sources. Formatted correctly.</td>
<td>Used three sources and formatted correctly with some teacher direction.</td>
<td>Used one or two sources. Maybe formatting needs work.</td>
<td>One or no bibliography. Incorrect formatting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected and used appropriate oral (spoken), written, visual and digital</td>
<td>Used sophisticated language and/or visual imagery. Independently</td>
<td>Used some sophisticated language and/or visual imagery. Worked</td>
<td>Has competently (been able to) used language and/or visual imagery. Only</td>
<td>Has used basic language. A fair amount of spelling and grammar mistakes (not</td>
<td>Communication unsophisticated. Many spelling and grammar mistakes. Very brief. Cold not work independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forms (ways) to communicate about the past</td>
<td>independently selected and expertly communicated.</td>
<td>independently. Very few spelling or grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>a few spelling/grammar mistakes. Worked fairly independently.</td>
<td>able to self edit yet). Fairly brief.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8

Teacher Observations Filled Checklist- Cycle One.

Students who are engaged confidently in the assessment task would be observed to be demonstrating the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Behaviour</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>M6</th>
<th>M7</th>
<th>M8</th>
<th>M5</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checking and ticking off the assessment criteria and rubric.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastically discussing their ideas with teacher or each other.</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking clarifying or directional questions of the teacher and each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for others’ (peer and teacher) opinions about their work.</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching (independently or with some teacher direction) in relevant places for further information?</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have an observably positive demeanour (body language, vocal tone, facial expression) during the task.</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be focussed and concentrating during the task when this is needed.</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about or referring to the task outside of designated hours for that subject</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking to work on the particular task outside of the designated time for that subject</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
<td>✔ ✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Observation Filled Checklist-Cycle Two

Students who are engaged confidently in the assessment task would be observed to be demonstrating the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observed Behaviour</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>M6</th>
<th>M7</th>
<th>M8</th>
<th>M5</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Checking and ticking off the assessment criteria and rubric.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastically discussing their ideas with teacher or each other.</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking clarifying or directional questions of the teacher and each other.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for others’ (peer and teacher) opinions about their work.</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching (independently or with some teacher direction) in relevant places for further information?</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have an observably positive demeanour (body language, vocal tone, facial expression) during the task.</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be focused and concentrating during the task when this is needed.</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about or referring to the task outside of designated hours for that subject.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking to work on the particular task outside of the designated time for that subject.</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>