| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reforming Formative Assessment Techniques: How Successful Are They from EFL Teachers' Perspectives

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| ABSTRACT

The formative assessment (FA) in the Foundation Program (FP) accounts for 30% of the students' total grades. The FP's formative assessment practices have been shaped by various factors, including Dhofar University's (DU) assessment policy, its educational philosophy, the FP's curriculum design, and student-related factors such as engagement and motivation. Since many FP students come from a schooling system that prioritizes grades over feedback, FA has been used as a tool to motivate complacent learners. A byproduct of this technique has been the introduction of an intensive testing cycle, often disguised as formative assessments. This research investigates the perspectives of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers on the new formative assessment approach introduced among the three levels of the FP English course at the Centre for Preparatory Studies (CPS), DU in the Sultanate of Oman. This approach serves as a significant indicator of learning. Additionally, the research addresses the limitations of previous FA practices at CPS. Data was collected in a 3-phase data collection cycle through a pre-session task (n=13 teachers + 50 students), a hands-on focus group session (n=8) to explore qualitative data regarding actual application of the new technique, and a questionnaire (n=29) to obtain quantitative data for further investigation of teachers' perceptions and evaluation to cross check with implementation. This makes the present study a mixed methods analysis in an exploratory sequential design. Pre Reformed Formative Assessment Techniques (RFAT) confirmed that there were notable defects in the FA practices due to a more summative orientation. Feedback was given on the quizzes that contributed to the final grades instead of on the learning process itself. Although teacher's perceptions of RFAT were largely positive, their implementation was hindered due to two main factors, lack of conceptual knowledge of formative assessment and the misconception that RFAT is restrictive and depriving of autonomy. This research highlights stress-free assessment systems with formative observation feedback in EFL contexts. It emphasizes mentoring and advising students to enhance performance, aligning with their needs. By enabling teachers to track students' performance and reducing student anxiety, it also offers innovative, practical strategies for effective teaching and learning.

1. Introduction

In education, assessment practices continuously play a critical role in monitoring and evaluating "how well" and "how much" of the curricular goals are achieved. Over the years, considerable attention has been given to formative assessment, both academically and educationally. In 1998, Black and Wiliam saw improvements in students' learning and performance through rigorous formative assessment techniques. This eventually led to the framing of the Interactive Assessment Model (IM)

producing a substantial increase in student performance (Zhang et al., 2024). Since then, formative assessment has gained global recognition, encouraging various disciplines to embrace this engaging and highly effective learning-oriented assessment approach.

Assessment is a key tool for understanding where someone stands in terms of their abilities and development. The main goal of assessment is to evaluate an individual or group's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities. It can take many forms, such as tests, surveys, observations, or even informal check-ins, depending on the context. The main objective is to collect relevant data that can be used to measure progress, inform decisions about how to improve, guide future learning or training, or give feedback for personal or professional growth. (Pramesti, 2024)

Formative assessment (FA) is widely recognized for its value to enhance learning, yet FA in English language classrooms remains inconsistent – especially in parts of the globe where summative assessment takes higher priority. Assessment is the measurement used in education to determine learning. Typically, two major categories within assessment are recognized by educators: formative and summative. Often these categories are referred to assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Black and William (1998) explained this assessment for learning as "activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (p. 10). This means formative assessment is used to inform teachers how to guide their students toward learning and to show students what the areas they need to learn. Summative feedback, on the other hand, is more of a measurement the learning that has occurred. According to Mogboh and Okoye (2019), "summative assessments evaluate pupils' learning, knowledge, proficiency or success at the conclusion of an instructional period. These formalized assessments usually take place "at key inflection points and/or endpoints within the overall scheme of the course" (Mogboh and Okoye, 2019). This means that summative assessment informs both teachers and students of what learning outcomes have been achieved or not achieved.

Assessment happens at many levels, i.e. institution-level, program-level, and classroom-level. Institutions and programs generally have assessment policies and schemes to standardize the assessment types and weights. For example, summative assessments such as midterm and final exams may carry 50-70% of the final grade, while 30-50% may come from continuous assessments like assignments, quizzes or projects. Mogboh and Okoye (2019) assert that this continuous, that is to say formative assessment, is used "to explore how evaluation practices can be used to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching and learning with the objective of improving student outcomes". The benefits of FA are clear; however, it seems that within university settings continuous assessment remains murky. Feedback is such a crucial part of ongoing assessments as it gives the input students can use to advance their learning step-by-step. It is possible that low stakes, or ungraded, FAs support students' authenticity and lower stress levels that allow students to focus on their learning as opposed to their performance (Bultu, Gorgun and Yildirim-Erbasli, 2023).

According to Al-Wassia et al. (2015), focusing on students' test outcomes deviates from the goal of preparing learners to meet performance goals at the expense of learning goals. Often within the Gulf region, teachers and students give more attention and higher value to high stakes assessment and may disregard FAs as having the ability to shape learning. The benefits of FA are clear; however, based on the researchers' knowledge, few studies have explored how language teachers within GCC perceive reforms in FA practices within university programs.

1.1. Context of the problem

Assessment is traditionally regarded as the culmination of a period of teaching and learning, with a final summative assessment serving as a decisive factor in determining the achievement of learning outcomes and advancing to the next level. However, as different pedagogies and schools of thought have emerged and evolved in education, assessment methods have also adapted to complement these changes. The role of assessment has shifted from summative assessment being the sole key determinant of learning to the inclusion of other forms of assessment, such as formative assessment, which now serve as significant indicators of learning.

This research aims to investigate teachers' perspectives on the new formative assessment approach introduced in the General Foundation Program English course at the Centre for Preparatory Studies (CPS), Dhofar University (DU) in the Sultanate of Oman.

To set the context, General Foundation Programs in higher education institutions in Oman serve as gateways for students to enter university programs and pursue higher studies in their chosen majors. The General Foundation Programs primarily focus on four major areas of learning: English, Math, IT, and study skills, to prepare students for further academic pursuits. The General Foundation Programs are guided by the Oman Academic Standards document, a framework provided by the Oman Authority for

Academic Accreditation, which outlines specific guidelines for curriculum design, learning outcomes, teaching and learning, assessment practices, exit standards, and quality assurance.

The Oman Academic Standards include an extensive section on assessment practices, recommending a comprehensive approach that combines continuous and summative assessments. The Oman Academic Standards suggests using a variety of formative and summative assessment methods (OAAAQA, 2008). In compliance with these standards, DU Foundation Program has made efforts to implement a balanced assessment approach that integrates various assessment formats. Among these, formative assessment plays a key role in evaluating students' progress.

Although formative assessment is an integral part of assessments in most educational settings, it has often been a 'terra incognita' for many educators due to a lack of understanding of its purpose. There is a tendency to conflate formative assessment with summative assessment, leading to summative assessments dominating the evaluation process and being mistakenly viewed as formative assessments (Kaur, 2023).

Formative Assessment in the CPS Foundation Program (FP) accounts for 30% of the students' total grades. The FP's formative assessment practices have been shaped by various factors, including the university's assessment policy, its educational philosophy, the FP's curriculum design, and student-related factors such as engagement and motivation. Since many FP students come from a schooling system that prioritizes grades over feedback, formative assessment has been used as a tool to motivate complacent learners. A byproduct of this technique has been the introduction of an intensive testing cycle, often disguised as formative assessments.

FAs in the FP consisted of weekly unit quizzes for each skill, totalling 24 quizzes, along with a summative quiz, a midterm, and a final exam. This resulted in an overwhelming amount of testing. The intensity of this testing created a stressful learning environment for both teachers and students, and deviated from the true purpose of formative assessment, which is to guide the students' learning process.

The input gathered from both teachers and students, as shown in the table below, during informal focus group discussions, revealed that the formative assessment process at the FP had become a strenuous task. Teachers were required to make elaborate preparations, including creating and printing quizzes, administering them under exam-like conditions, and marking approximately 24 quizzes for each level. Although feedback was provided to students, it was often minimal, primarily highlighting errors and issues, rather than offering constructive guidance for improvement. Similarly, during a Class Representative (CR) meeting, nearly 50 CRs from various sections shared their concerns about the high levels of stress caused by the intensive nature of the assessments. **Inventory**

Used Technique	Teachers	Students
Informal focus group discussions with teachers	7	-
Questionnaire	13	-
Informal focus group discussions with students	-	CRs = 50

Following the group discussions, an eleven-question questionnaire was developed and shared with English teachers to gain even more insight into their perspectives on the most current formative assessment practices. Thirteen teachers responded to the questionnaire. 53.9% of teachers agreed that the current FA practices were clear to teachers and 76.9% agreed that the practices are also clear to students. Teachers indicated that they understood when and how to carry out the assessments within their classes, and through their responses to open ended questions, they explained they did so through a variety of methods giving examples such as quizzes, online activities and speaking tasks. However, 92.4% of teachers agreed that the FA practices aligned more with a summative approach and 69.3% indicated that an environment of over-testing was created. When asked to share the feedback typically given to students, teachers' responses ranged from oral and written to highlighting mistakes and advising students on how to correct their errors. Some teachers also shared that they used self-assessment and peer feedback, while others mentioned using marks based on rubrics. When prompted to note the challenges they face with conducting FA using the current practices, teachers expressed that the FA practices were more of a burden of marking and giving grades than a method of assessing for learning.

To address this issue, the FP initiated a reform of its formative assessment procedures, with a focus on continuous assessment and feedback. A streamlined approach was adopted, enabling teachers to consistently observe students and systematically record their observations using an observation record form. This form would then be used to provide targeted feedback, aimed at enhancing student learning.

This research will examine the effectiveness of this technique by scrutinizing the perceptions of all stakeholders involved in this venture: the teachers, students, and the FP administration.

1.2. Research questions
The present study seeks to address the following question: How do CPS teachers perceive and evaluate the reformed formative assessment techniques (RFAT)?

This question can be branched out into the following sub-questions:

1. What are CPS teachers' perceptions of the pedagogical value and effectiveness of the RFAT?
2. What challenges do CPS teachers encounter when adapting to the RFAT?

2. Literature Review
Formative assessment is an indispensable part of any holistic assessment as it is crucial in guiding students to attain the intended learning outcomes (Karim, 2015; Almuntasheri, 2016; Asare, 2020). Despite this, studies reveal that many teachers lack a clear understanding of how formative assessment can improve teaching and learning results (Sach, 2012; Karim, 2015; Alotabi, 2014). Karim (2015) highlights the importance of teachers comprehending and implementing effective classroom assessment practices. Teachers' practices in applying formative assessment play an influential role in their perception towards formative assessment. According to Almuntasheri (2016), the ability of teachers to use various formative assessment strategies positively influences their attitude towards formative assessment.

A qualitative study was carried out by Almuntasheri (2016) carried out in order to enhance teachers' understanding of formative assessment techniques within the context of science-based inquiry teaching in Saudi Arabia. The research involved observing 12 teachers, with a detailed analysis of one teacher's formative assessment practices. The study employed a formative assessment framework based on assessment conversations, which was adapted for examining teachers' assessment methods. This framework followed a four-step cycle: the teacher poses questions, the student responds, the teacher acknowledges the response and then uses the information to guide further inquiry. The results showed that although teachers regularly asked questions and received answers, they rarely encouraged students to express their ideas or engage in discussions about their thought processes. The study highlights the need to integrate formative assessment strategies in science inquiry teaching, as these strategies can enhance professional development, promote student engagement, and create opportunities for student-driven inquiry in science classrooms.

Formative assessment is an assessment for learning conducted simultaneously with learning. In the teaching-learning environment, Yorke (2011) argues that teachers can capitalize on formative assessment as a powerful technique to enhance the learning process. One key element of formative assessment is the feedback coming from both sides. Here students can play a dual role in assessment practice; taking the responsibility for both generating and effectuating beneficial feedback (Noori et al., 2017).

In Iraq, Karim explored the importance of teachers' perceptions and beliefs about formative assessment in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, focusing on 25 Kurdish ESL teachers. The study found that ESL participants expressed concerns that due to top-down managerial approaches and the educational system, teachers do not have a significant role in the assessment process. However, the results highlighted that teachers' beliefs and their essential role in assessment should not be overlooked. Irrespective of geographical locations, implementation of formative assessment was problematic mainly because of the inability of teachers to understand the true purpose of formative assessment as reported in In Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Ghana. The three research Abu Musa and Islam (2020) from Bangladesh, Heeralal & Dessie, (2016) from Ethiopia and Asare, (2020) from Ghana investigated the challenges teachers face when applying formative assessment. Their findings revealed that the main obstacle in the implementation of formative assessment is teachers' lack of knowledge about the concept of formative assessment and its usage although formative assessment approach received mixed responses from teachers.

Another qualitative study conducted by Widiastuti et al. (2020) investigated the effect of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding formative assessment in English as a Foreign Language. The findings revealed that high level of CPD participation had a positive impact on the beliefs of the teachers, however the same effect was not evident in their formative assessment practices.

Another interesting descriptive study by Schildkamp et al. (2020) on formative assessment tried to identify the prerequisites for robust formative assessment practices showed that factors including: knowledge and skills (e.g., data literacy), psychological factors (e.g., social pressure), and social factors (e.g., collaboration) which are not necessarily related to professional development training, influenced the use of formative assessment. The prerequisites identified can inform professional development initiatives regarding formative assessment, as well as teacher education programs. A related study by Alsubaiai (2021) highlighted that in addition to the internal factors such as teachers' attitudes, various factors like overcrowded classrooms and teacher profiles can impede the effective use of formative assessment strategies.

Formative assessment has recently been promoted as a key element in evaluation methods, yet the perspectives of students on how it influences language learning progress in certain countries are often overlooked. Naka (2023) highlighted that while formative assessment has gained prominence as a crucial element in evaluation methodologies, the perspectives of students regarding its impact on language learning improvement are often overlooked in some countries. To address this gap, she explored the experiences of pre-service teachers with formative assessment and the tools used for its implementation. The assessment process was aligned with learning outcomes, focusing on what students should know by the end of the course. Through various activities and tasks aimed at answering these learning outcome questions, the teacher assessed students' knowledge and skills in the English language course. Naka's study aimed to examine the influence of formative assessment on improving learning and identifying the assessment tools used. The study analyzed students' perceptions and their approaches to utilizing formative assessment. The findings indicated that formative assessment was considered an effective method for enhancing learning quality, enabling students to achieve their goal of passing exams with high grades. The research involved 85 students, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS platform, while qualitative data from focus group discussions were presented through descriptive analysis, including direct quotations. The questionnaire results revealed students' views on formative assessment, and the focus group data supported the validity of these perceptions. The study concluded that English as a Foreign Language teachers (EFL), despite the challenges of continuous preparation, can better meet students' individual needs by recognizing their differences.

Formative assessment has gained increasing attention in educational reform since Black and Wiliam's (1998) influential review article. In China, the Ministry of Education has promoted formative assessment in its curriculum standards for over two decades. However, its implementation in classrooms has been hindered by a lack of assessment literacy among teachers. In response, Gu (2023) designed and implemented a 12-week professional development program aimed at improving classroom-based formative assessment literacy among five secondary school EFL teachers in China. The program was structured as collaborative action research, where the researcher joined the teachers to form a community of practice for ongoing professional development. Gu's study focused on one teacher's development in assessment literacy for formative assessment. Data, including classroom video recordings and interviews, were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 12. Baseline data revealed that the teacher initially lacked the knowledge and beliefs necessary for formative assessment. She had no clear teaching, learning, or assessment goals and failed to communicate any targets to her students. Additionally, the teacher's assessment practices did not align with the goals of improving students' core competencies, as outlined in the senior secondary English language curriculum. By the end of the program, the teacher's knowledge, beliefs, and practices regarding formative assessment had significantly improved. Specifically, her goal setting for teaching, learning, and assessment became intentionally aligned with the development of students' core competencies. More formative assessment cycles helped students close learning gaps and achieve their learning objectives. These findings provide strong support for the feasibility of developing formative assessment literacy among teachers through a continuing professional development framework.

The rise of globalization and the recognition of English as a lingua franca have fueled the global expansion of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. Formative assessment plays a key role in supporting English language teaching and learning within classroom settings. Zhang & Saad (2024) carried out a systematic review to critically examine recent research on formative assessment in K-12 EFL education, highlighting its significant impact on improving teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. It specifically focused on three main areas: the beliefs, perceptions, and literacy of teachers and students regarding formative assessment; the effectiveness of various assessment practices on student performance; and the contextual challenges in applying these strategies. A thorough analysis of both qualitative and quantitative studies showed that teacher and student attitudes

greatly affected the success of formative assessment. Innovative approaches, such as technology-based and peer assessments, hold promise for improving learner outcomes. However, the educational system and cultural contexts posed ongoing challenges to the effective implementation of formative assessment in EFL classrooms. These findings emphasize the need for professional development for educators and increased awareness among students about the benefits of formative assessment. This study underscores the importance of aligning flexible assessment practices with diverse educational contexts and advocated for a stronger connection between theoretical and practical approaches in EFL education. Furthermore, their review offers valuable insights into formative assessment strategies for EFL learning, and provides guidance for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in language education.

In the study by Hoang et al. (2024), the evolving perspectives and practices of lecturers concerning classroom assessment were explored, particularly in relation to the integration of reflective teaching methods. Insights from 15 (EFL) lecturers revealed several emerging trends, including a noticeable shift towards constructivist assessment approaches and a growing emphasis on formative assessment over summative assessment strategies. Lecturers demonstrated improved reflective practices in assessment design, with many reporting a better alignment between learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. There was a greater appreciation for diverse learning pathways, and lecturers showed increased responsiveness to student feedback in adapting assessment strategies. The study also highlighted trends such as the use of technological tools for enhanced assessment, a rise in interdisciplinary collaboration in assessment design, greater empathy for student challenges, and strong support for collaborative assessments. The findings emphasize the significant impact of reflective teaching on assessment strategies. Future research is recommended to involve a larger participant group and further explore the direct effects on student outcomes.

3. Research Design
3.1. Materials and methods
a. Quasi-experimental design
The current study utilized quasi-experimental research in an exploratory, mixed-methods design, with data collected across three phases.

b. Participants of the study
The participants in the study consisted of 30 CPS English Language teachers, all of whom were teaching in the three levels of the English courses in the Foundation program. These teachers were selected as a sample representing the target population.

c. Data collection instrument
This study follows a mixed-methods approach using an exploratory sequential design (Creswell, 2017) and commenced in December 2024. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data, incorporating a questionnaire and a focus group session. The research was conducted in three phases, integrating both types of data throughout the process.

In the first phase, during the pre-session task, 50 students (from the Foundation Program CRs) and a sample of 13 participants from the target population took part in informal focus group discussions regarding the current practices of formative assessment techniques in the Foundation Program.

For the second phase, a questionnaire was designed and was electronically distributed to 30 English language teachers in the Foundation Program who use RFAT. The data collected was used to gather insights into teachers' perceptions, their evaluation of the RFAT, and the challenges they faced in adapting to RFAT. We received 29 complete responses, achieving a 96.7% completion rate.

The questionnaire consisted of seven sections. The results of the 29 participants are presented in the data analysis section.

- **Section 1 (4 questions):** Collected background information about the respondents.

- **Section 2 (5 questions):** Assessed participants' understanding of the 4-domain criteria.

- **Section 3 (4 questions):** Investigated the extent to which teachers integrate the 4-domain criteria into their teaching.

- **Section 4 (5 questions):** Examined the effectiveness of the 4-domain criteria.

- **Section 5 (5 questions):** Explored teachers' feedback on their students' responses to the 4-domain criteria.

- **Section 6 (4 questions):** Identified the challenges and limitations teachers faced while implementing the new RFAT.

- **Section 7 (5 questions):** Collected teachers' overall opinions on the 4-domain criteria.

Finally, the third phase involved focus group sessions on which the collected data was used as a reference to enhance the understanding of teachers' perceptions, their evaluation of RFAT, the challenges they faced in adapting to RFAT, and any suggestions they had for improvement. A total of 10 teachers were invited, but only 8 participated, with 4 in each of the two groups. Participants were divided into two groups based on varied teaching backgrounds and nationalities. They were asked five questions about their practices in implementing RFAT. The sessions were recorded with their permission, and transcripts were prepared immediately after the discussions. This phase provided valuable qualitative data.

d. Validity

Both the research questionnaire and focus group discussions were validated by a panel of EFL specialists in relation to the main and sub-questions. Based on the feedback received, some modifications were made to the questionnaire, and a fifth question was added to the focus group discussion questions.

3.2. RFAT procedures

RFAT were designed to address the shortcomings of previous formative assessment practices in CPS. This new system replaced the intensive testing approach with a more balanced structure.

The study followed several steps:

Step 1: Gathering feedback

First, feedback was collected from both students and teachers regarding the current practices, focusing on the weaknesses and challenges they encountered.

Step 2: Designing the reform

Next, RFAT were designed to overcome the shortcomings identified in the feedback. An observation record form was drafted and subjected to face validity testing by 10 language experts.

Step 3: Teacher training

Teachers participated in a training session led by the researchers to learn how to use the new techniques, with a particular focus on the observation record form.

Step 4: Implementing individualized feedback

To enhance individualized student feedback, the final version of the observation record form was introduced. Teachers used this form during in-class activities to note each student's strengths, weaknesses, group dynamics, and participation. After two weeks of observation, teachers provided targeted feedback and guidance. This feedback outlined where the students stood and suggested steps for improvement. It was delivered via the Moodle platform using standardized rubrics, which ensured consistency, saved time, and made it easier for teachers to provide feedback. Notably, feedback was given before formative quizzes, allowing students to identify their weaknesses and act upon the teachers' suggestions as they prepared for the quizzes.

Since Listening & Speaking classes and Reading & Writing classes are taught by separate teachers, two distinct observation record forms were introduced. These forms were designed to help teachers systematically document students' progress over time.

Each form includes specific skill segments derived from the Learning Outcomes (LO) matrix across three levels, as well as the assessment rubrics:

- Listening
  - Understanding key vocabulary
  - Listening comprehension
- Speaking

- Pronunciation
- Fluency
- Organization of ideas
  ○ Reading
    - Basic comprehension
    - Understanding key vocabulary
    - Critical thinking
  ○ Writing
    - Basic sentence forms
    - Developing ideas
    - Organizing paragraphs/essays

In addition to academic skills, the observation record form also includes a section for soft skills, such as:

- Bringing supplies
- Attitude
- Class participation

Teachers document real-time observations during class, noting both strengths and areas for improvement. After two weeks of observations, teachers assess student performance using a standard rubric aligned with the same skill components. The rubric follows a four-level performance scale, with clear criteria and progression guidance:

- Needs More Practice (Emerging)
- Improving (Developing)
- Meets Expectations (Proficient)
- Going Above Expectations (Mastery)

Each level includes a "Next Steps" section, providing students with targeted advice on how to improve their performance. This guidance specifies recommended resources where necessary and where students can access them. The use of accessible, student-friendly language on the rubric scale and descriptors helps students relate to the feedback, understand their progress, and stay motivated to improve.

The rubric ensures consistency in assessment while also offering students actionable feedback to support their learning. The essence of this process is to align with formative assessment in its true sense and to distinguish formative assessment from summative assessment.

Step 5: Reduced quizzes with retake opportunities

As a result of RFAT, students took only 8 quizzes in two rounds, with an opportunity for a retake to demonstrate their progress rather than taking 24 quizzes. The first formative quiz and retake marked the conclusion of one phase of formative assessment, leading up to the midterm exam, a summative assessment. This cycle repeated in the second phase, culminating in the final exams.

Step 6: Teacher evaluation

Finally, teachers responded to a validated questionnaire designed for the study to assess their perceptions and evaluations of the RFAT. The results of the questionnaire are presented in the analysis section.

4. Analysis And Discussion
Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 30.0.0).

4.1. Phase 1: pre-session task results
The pre-session task was administered prior to the data collection process involving the questionnaire. A total of 13 English language teachers participated by responding to the online questionnaire. Table 1 below presents the feedback obtained from these 13 teachers, who are involved in teaching the three levels of English in the Foundation Program (See table 1).

Table (1)

Teacher Perspectives on Current Formative Assessment Practices in English Foundation Program

No.	Question	Responses				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		No. of respondents / weight				
1	The current formative assessment practices are clear to teachers.	3= 23.1%	4= 30.8%	2= 15.4%	2= 15.4%	2 = 15.4%
2	The current formative assessment practices are clear to students.	2= 15.4%	8 = 61.5%	2= 15.4%	1= 7.7%	0
3	The current formative assessment practices provide valuable insights that guide my teaching decisions.	2= 15.4%	6= 46.2%	3= 23.1%	2= 15.4%	0
4	The current formative assessment practices help direct students' learning through feedback.	3= 23.1%	2= 15.4%	6= 46.2%	2= 15.4%	0
5	The current formative assessment practices are more aligned with a summative approach.	6= 46.2%	6= 46.2%	0	1= 7.7%	0
6	The current formative assessment practices create an environment of over-testing.	6= 46.2%	3= 23.1%	0	0	4= 30.8%
7	The current formative assessment practices give opportunities to improve students' language learning as well as study skills.	2= 15.4%	2= 15.4%	8= 61.5%	1= 7.7%	0

Question 8. In the current formative assessment practices, what types of assessment do you typically use in your classes?
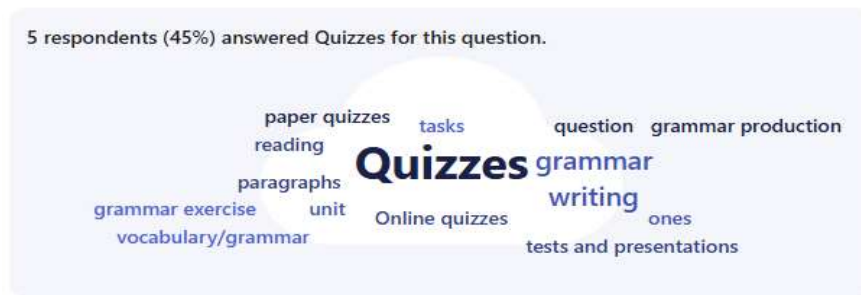

Figure 1: Pre-session task Q8

Question 9. In the current formative assessment practices, what types of feedback do you typically give to your students?
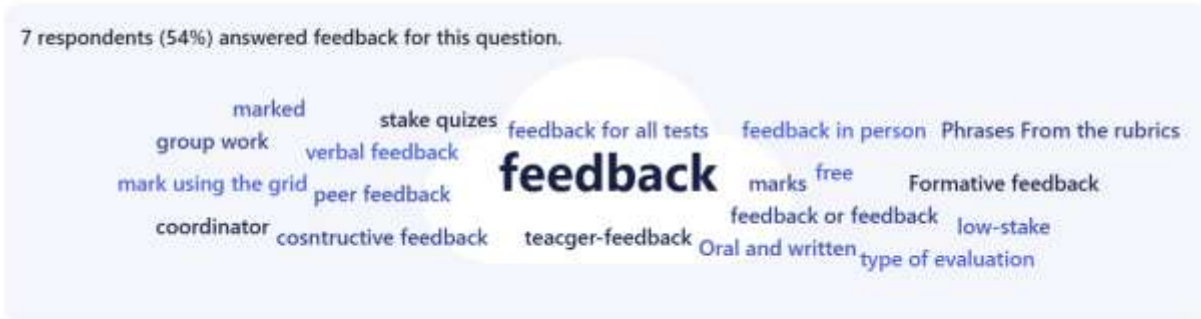
7 respondents (54%) answered feedback for this question.

marked
group work   stake quizes   feedback for all tests   feedback in person   Phrases From the rubrics
mark using the grid   verbal feedback   **feedback**   marks   free   Formative feedback
peer feedback
coordinator   cosntructive feedback   teacger-feedback   feedback or feedback   low-stake
Oral and written   type of evaluation

Figure 2: Pre-session task Q9

Question 10. In the current formative assessment practices, what challenges do you face?

5 respondents (38%) answered students for this question.

time-effective   FAs for each level   FAs per term   FAs per semester   feedback in class
marking   **times**   **students**   **feedback**   students to make use
unit
lot of teachers   FAs   FA   no time   **teachers**   not all students
right feedback   oral feedback   different times

Figure 3: Pre-session task Q10

Question 11. Is there any other feedback you would like to provide on our current assessment practices?

3 respondents (30%) answered FA for this question.

student's performance   assessment and rubrics   learning environment
constantly designing   focusing   marks   **FA**   ways   Teachers
learners   student   current rubrics
FA can be a game   teaching   assessment methods   long   workshop on assessment
iterative processes   assessment and rubrics   knowledge of each unit   evaluations are less subjective

Figure 4: Pre-session task Q11

The variation in scores and feedback indicates diverse concerns among teachers regarding FA practices in CPS.

4.2. Phase 2: data analysis of the questionnaire

In this part of the analysis, we examine the responses of 29 participants who provided feedback on the RFAT implementation in the English Foundation Program. The questionnaire consisted of seven sections. First, section 1 aimed to collect background information about the respondents' teaching profile and their use of formative assessment at CPS, Dhofar University. Second, section 2 sought to assess participants' understanding of the 4-domain criteria used for student feedback. Section 3 aimed to investigate the extent to which teachers integrate the 4-domain criteria into their teaching. Section 4 examined the effectiveness of the 4-domain criteria. Section 5 was designed to explore teachers' impression of students' responses to the 4-domain criteria. While section 6 identified the challenges and limitations teachers faced while implementing the RFAT. Finally, section 7 gathered teachers' overall opinions on the 4-domain criteria.

This seven-section framework comprehensively encompasses the demographic characteristics of the participants, as well as their insights and perceptions regarding the four domain criteria, offering an integrated perspective on the entire formative assessment process within the Foundation Program at CPS.

Section 1: Demographic data

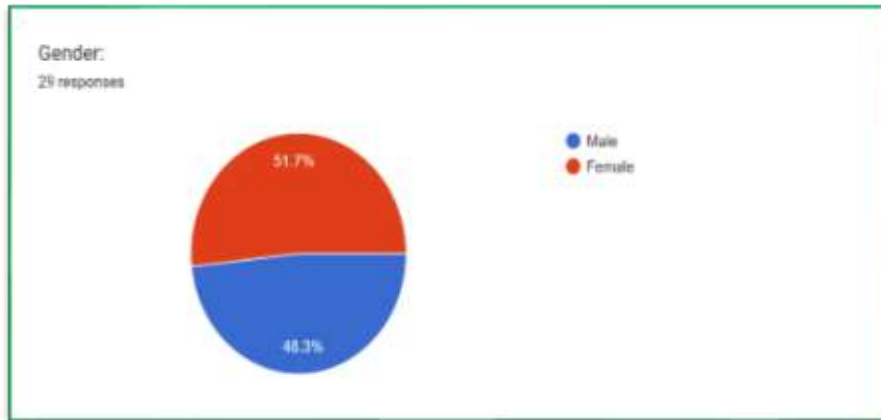**Question 1:** The data in Figure 5 illustrates the composition of the respondents (n=29) based on their gender. More than half of the respondents were females.

Figure 5: Section 1 Q1

Question 2 aimed to examine the respondents' experience in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at tertiary level (Figure 6). Over half of the respondents (55.2%) reported having more than 10 years of experience in this field. Additionally, 27.6% of respondents indicated 8 to 10 years of experience, while 3.4% reported 5 to 7 years, and 10.3% noted 2 to 4 years of experience. A small percentage (3.4%) revealed they have less than 2 years of EFL experience at the tertiary level.
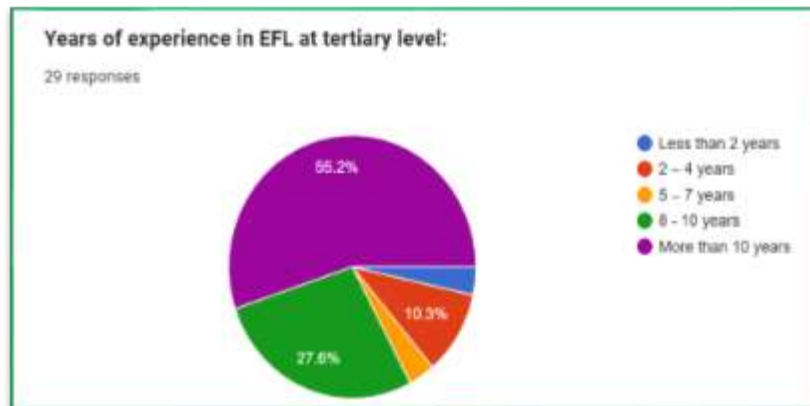
Figure 6: Section 1 Q2

Question 3 sought to determine the English proficiency levels of the students taught by teachers in the Foundation Program of CPS (Figure 7). A significant majority (72.4%) of the respondents reported teaching intermediate-level students. Meanwhile, 20.7% indicated that they are teaching beginner-level students, and only 6.9% of respondents noted teaching advanced-level students.
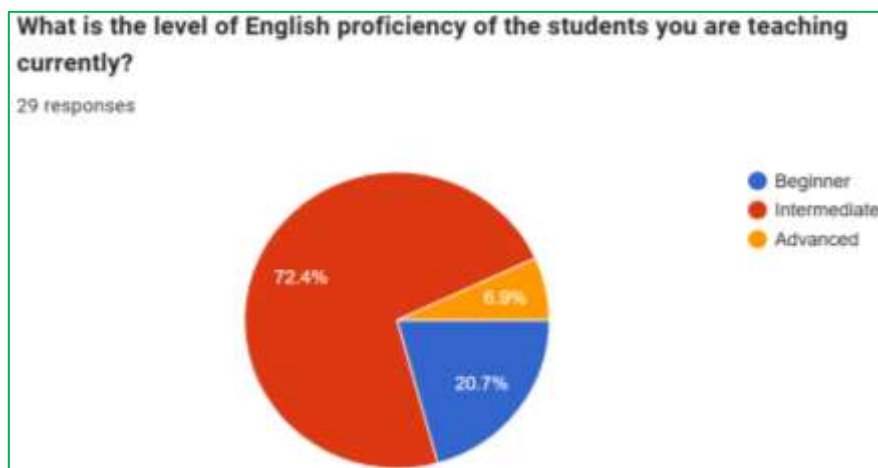
Figure 7: Section 1 Q3

Question 4 aimed to identify whether teachers regularly integrate formative assessment into their teaching practices (Figure 8). The results revealed that an overwhelming majority (96.6%) of the respondents consistently use formative assessment, while only 3.4% reported occasionally using formative assessment.
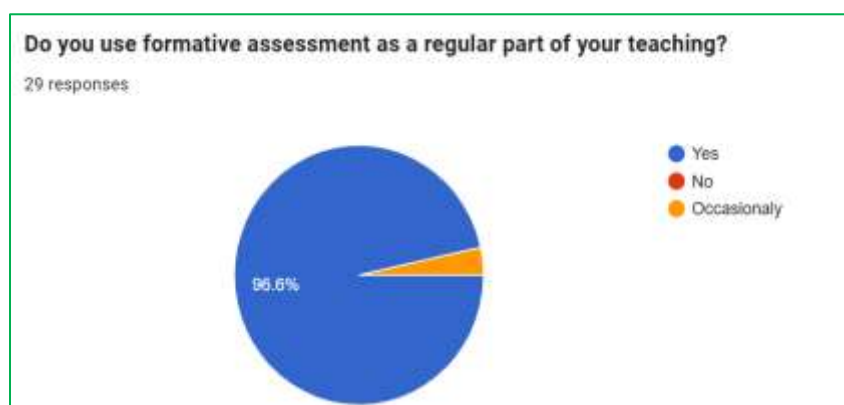

Figure 8: Section 1 Q4

Table 2 represents a summary of the demographic profile.

Table (2)

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=29)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	15	51.7%
	Male	14	48.3%
Teaching Experience	More than 10 years	17	58.6%
	8-10 years	7	24.1%
	5-7 years	1	3.4%
	2-4 years	3	10.3%

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
	Less than 2 years	1	3.4%
Teaching Level	Intermediate	20	69.0%
	Beginner	7	24.1%
	Advanced	2	6.9%

Section 2: Teachers' understanding of 4-domain criteria

Question 1 specifically assessed their ability to apply the criteria effectively. A substantial majority, 96.6% of respondents, confirmed their understanding of the criteria (Figure 9).
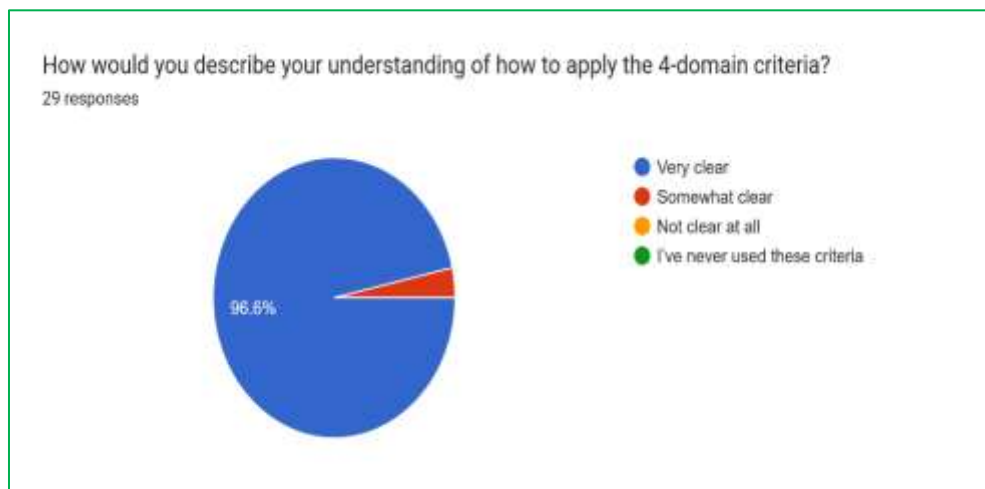
Figure 9: Section 2 Q1

Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 tried to evaluate teachers' familiarity with each domain of the 4-domain criteria for assessing student performance (Figures 10, 11, 12, and 13). For Domain 1 Needs Improvement, an impressive 93.1% of participants indicated full familiarity with this domain (Figure 10). Similarly, 96.6% of participants reported full familiarity with Domain 2 Making Progress (Figure 11). Regarding Domain 3 Meets Expectations and Domain 4 Exceeds Expectations, 86.2% of participants indicated full familiarity with each domain (Figures 12 and 13, respectively).
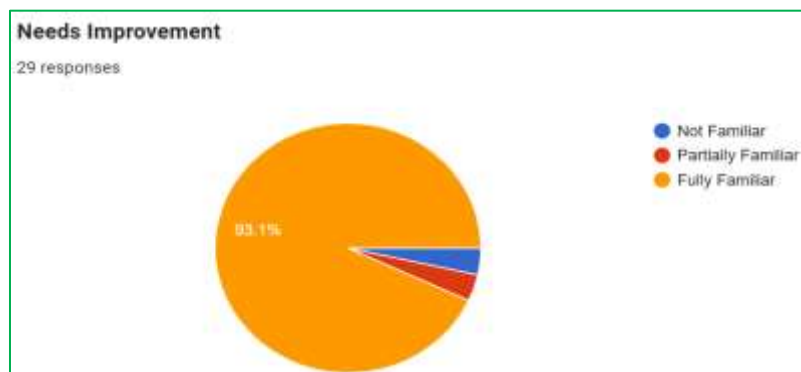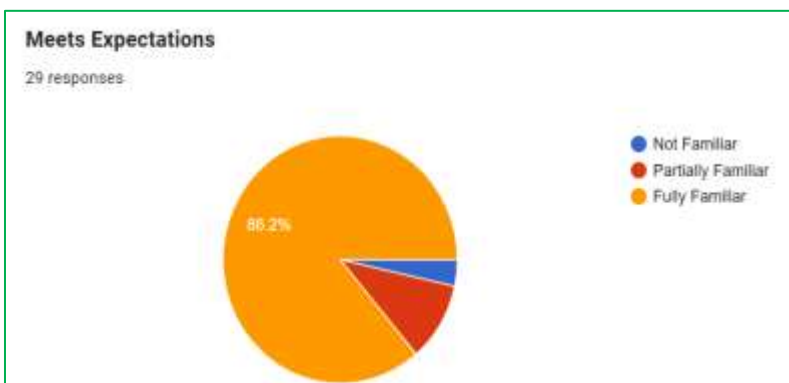

Figure 10: Section 2 Q2
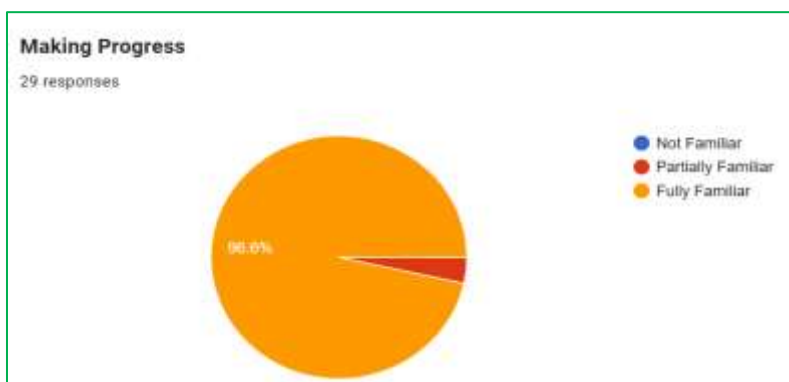
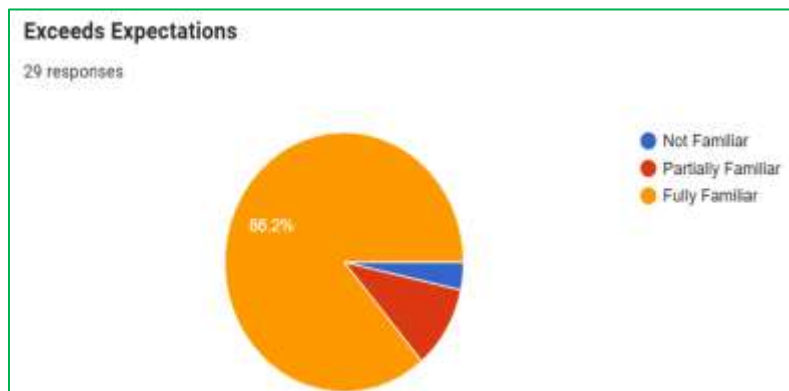Figure 11: Section 2 Q3

Figure 12: Section 2 Q4

Figure 13 Section 2 Q5

Table 3 summarizes results of teachers' understanding and familiarity with the 4-domain criteria.

Table (3)

Understanding and Familiarity with the 4-Domain Criteria

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Use of 4-Domain Criteria in teaching practices	Yes	28	96.6%
	Occasionally	1	3.4%

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	No	0	0.0%
Clarity of 4-Domain Criteria	Very clear	27	93.1%
	Somewhat clear	2	6.9%
	Not clear	0	0.0%
Familiarity with "Needs Improvement" domain	Fully Familiar	24	82.8%
	Partially Familiar	3	10.3%
	Not Familiar	2	6.9%
Familiarity with "Making Progress" domain	Fully Familiar	27	93.1%
	Partially Familiar	1	3.4%
	Not Familiar	1	3.4%
Familiarity with "Meets Expectations" domain	Fully Familiar	25	86.2%
	Partially Familiar	2	6.9%
	Not Familiar	2	6.9%
Familiarity with "Exceeds Expectations" domain	Fully Familiar	26	89.7%
	Partially Familiar	2	6.9%
	Not Familiar	1	3.4%

Section 3: Teachers integrating the 4-domain criteria into their teaching practices

Question 1 attempted to evaluate the extent to which teachers felt the criteria aligned with their overall teaching goals and approaches (Figure 14). Nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) confirmed that the criteria align very well, while 44.8% of respondents reported that the criteria align somewhat well. Together, these figures demonstrate that 93.1% of respondents confirmed the criteria's alignment with their teaching goals and approaches.
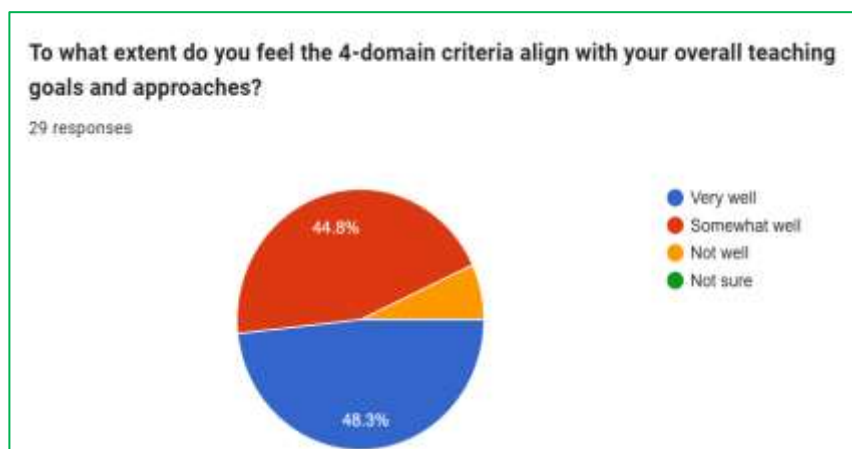
Figure 14: Section 3 Q1

Question 2 investigated how often teachers integrate feedback based on these 4-domain criteria into their classroom activities (Figure 15). The results revealed that 69% of respondents frequently incorporated the criteria into their teaching activities, while 13.8% consistently incorporated it, and 17.2% occasionally used it. Collectively, this indicates that 100% of respondents integrate the criteria to varying extents.
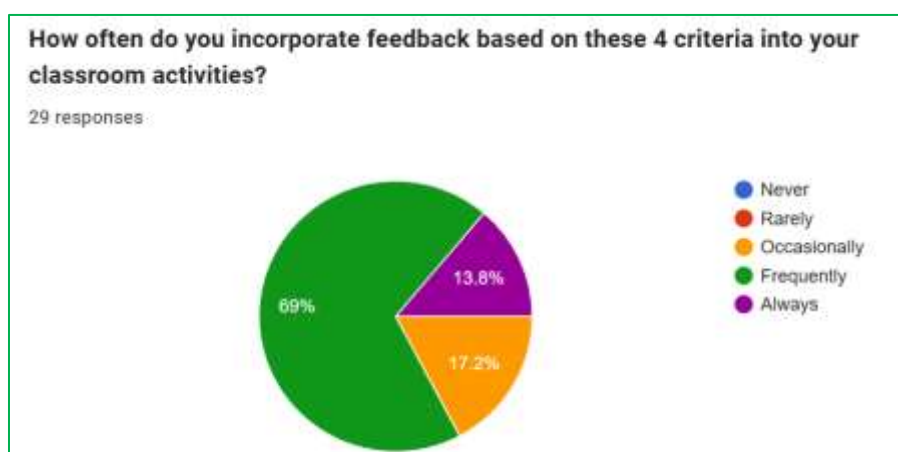

Figure 15: Section 3 Q2

Question 3 sought to determine whether teachers adjust their teaching methods when using the 4-domain criteria based on the feedback provided to students (Figure 16). The results showed that 51.7% of respondents sometimes made adjustments, while 44.8% consistently made adjustments. Only one participant indicated that he did not make any adjustments. Therefore, the findings highlight that nearly all teachers adapted their teaching methods to some extent.
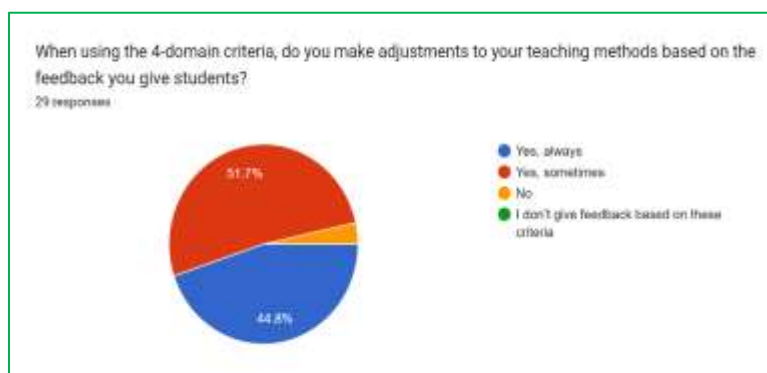

Figure 16: Section 3 Q3

The last question in this section explored how often teachers use the 4-domain criteria to assess students' performance (Figure 17). The findings reveal that 55.2% of respondents frequently used the criteria, 24.1% occasionally applied it, and 20.7% consistently incorporated it. Collectively, the results demonstrated that all respondents utilized the criteria in varying degrees.
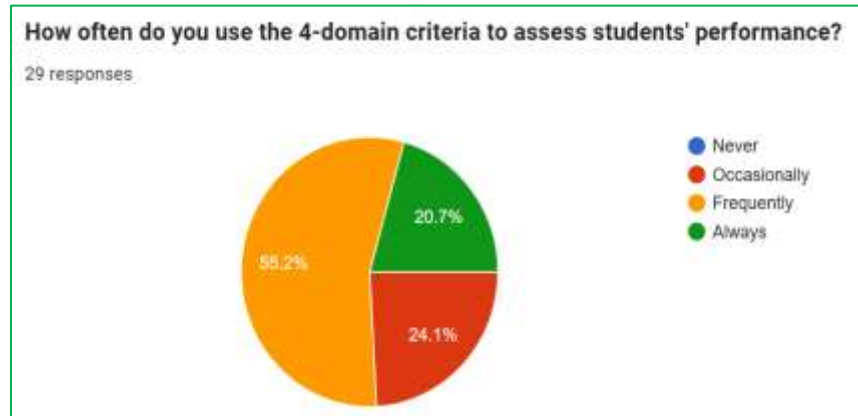

Figure 17: Section 3 Q4

Table 4 represents a summary of the implementations of the 4-domain criteria.

Table (4)

Implementation of the 4-Domain Criteria

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Integration of criteria into teaching practices	Very well	14	48.3%
	Somewhat well	13	44.8%
	Not well	2	6.9%
Frequency of using criteria for assessment	Always	3	10.3%
	Frequently	21	72.4%
	Occasionally	5	17.2%
	Never	0	0.0%
Discuss criteria explicitly with students	Yes, always	10	34.5%
	Yes, sometimes	14	48.3%
	No	5	17.2%
Document student progress using criteria	Always	4	13.8%
	Frequently	19	65.5%
	Occasionally	6	20.7%
	Never	0	0.0%

Analysis of sections 2 and 3 revealed high levels of conceptual understanding of the RFAT. An overwhelming majority (93.1%) of respondents found the 4-Domain Criteria "very clear," with similarly high levels of familiarity across all domains: "Making Progress" (93.1% fully familiar), "Exceeds Expectations" (89.7%), "Meets Expectations" (86.2%), and "Needs Improvement" (82.8%). Nearly all respondents (96.6%) reported using the criteria in their teaching practice.

Despite strong conceptual understanding, implementation presented greater variability. Fewer than half (48.3%) of teachers reported integrating the criteria "very well" into their teaching, with 44.8% indicating "somewhat well" integration. Only 10.3% "always" used the criteria for assessment, though 72.4% used them "frequently." A notable implementation gap emerged in teacher-student communication, with just 34.5% of teachers "always" discussing the criteria with students. Documentation practices showed similar patterns, with 65.5% "frequently" documenting student progress but only 13.8% "always "doing so.

Section 4: Effectiveness of the 4-domain criteria

Question 1 specifically focused on assessing teachers' perceptions of the criteria's suitability for all language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Figure 18). A majority of respondents (72.4%) asserted that the criteria are fully suitable for all language skills, while 27.6% partially asserted the same. In conclusion, the findings suggest that, overall, the criteria are deemed suitable for all language skills.
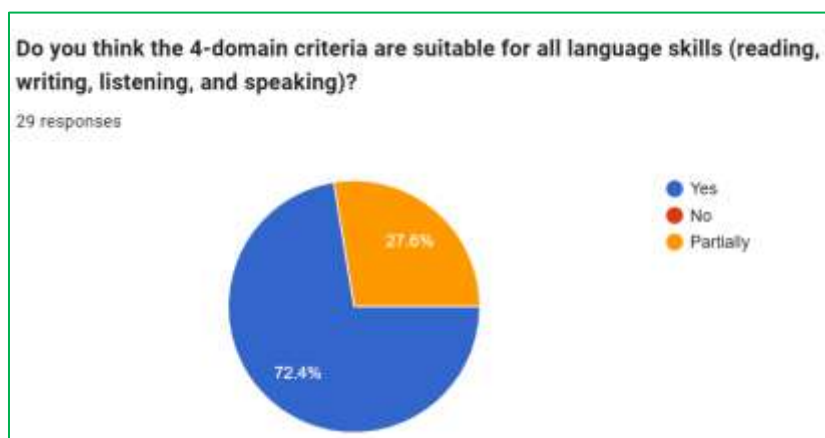

Figure 18: Section 4 Q1

Question 2 aimed at evaluating the extent to which teachers believe the 4-domain criteria accurately reflect their students' progress (Figure 19). The results indicated that 58.6% of respondents agreed to a large extent, while 37.9% agreed to a moderate extent. Overall, these findings demonstrate that all respondents, to varying degrees, agree that the criteria effectively reflect their students' progress.
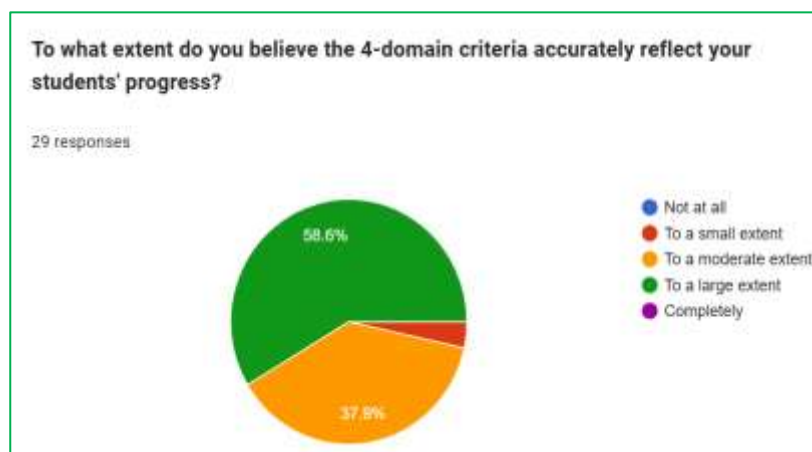

Figure 19: Section 4 Q2

Question 3 focused on evaluating how effective teachers believe the 4-domain criteria are in identifying areas where students need improvement (Figure 20). The results revealed that 58.6% of respondents considered the criteria to be somewhat effective, while 31% confirmed it fully effective. However, 6.9% of participants indicated that the criteria were not effective, and 3.4% were unsure.
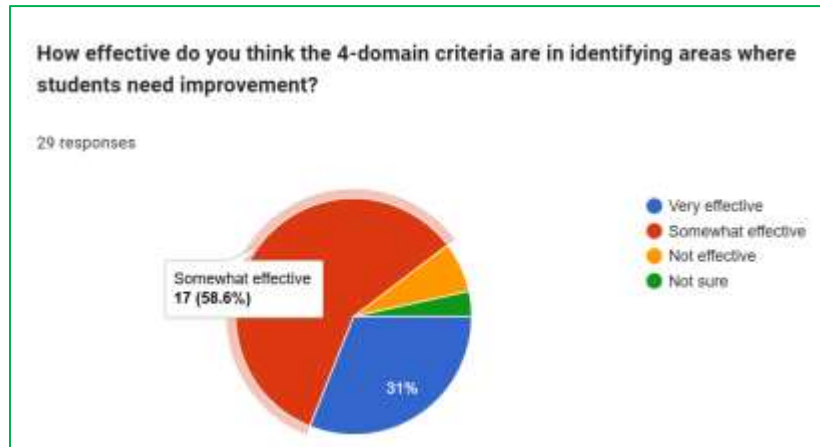

Figure 20: Section 4 Q3

Question 4 examined whether teachers believe the 4-domain criteria provide sufficient differentiation between students' performance levels (Figure 20). The results indicated that 48.3% of respondents sometimes found the criteria effective, while 37.9% consistently believed it provided sufficient differentiation. Additionally, 10.3% were unsure, and 3.4% indicated that the criteria do not provide adequate differentiation. Altogether, the majority of respondents (86.2%) believe the criteria provide sufficient differentiation, though to varying degrees.
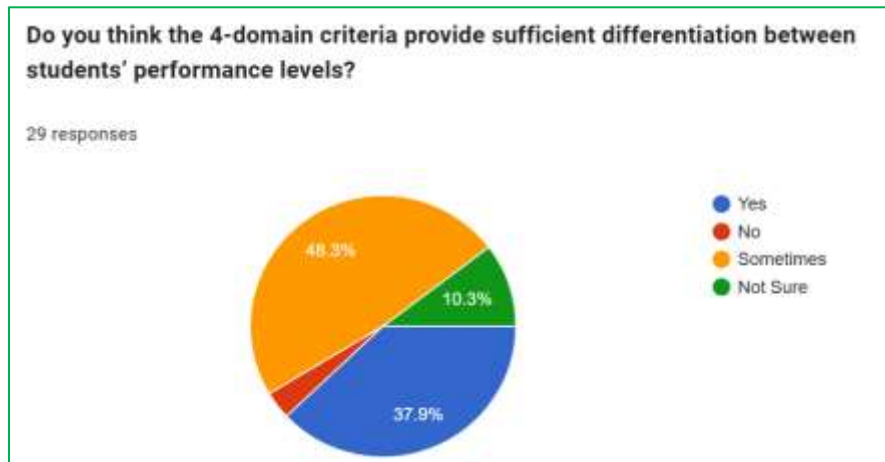

Figure 21: Section 4 Q4

Table 5 shows the effectiveness of the 4-domain criteria.

Table (5)

Perceived Effectiveness of the 4-Domain Criteria

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Criteria help student learning	Yes	23	79.3%
	Partially	6	20.7%

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	No	0	0.0%
Extent of learning improvement	To a large extent	14	48.3%
	To a moderate extent	9	31.0%
	To a small extent	1	3.4%
	Not at all	0	0.0%
	Not sure	5	17.2%
Student performance improvement	Yes	10	34.5%
	Sometimes	12	41.4%
	No	1	3.4%
	Not Sure	6	20.7%
Effectiveness for learning improvement	Very effective	8	27.6%
	Somewhat effective	12	41.4%
	Not effective	3	10.3%
	Not sure	6	20.7%

Section 5: Student responses to the 4-domain criteria

Question 1 focused on teachers' observations regarding how their students reacted to the feedback provided based on these criteria (Figure 22). According to the findings, 55.2% of students displayed neutral reactions, while 31% exhibited mixed reactions. A positive response was observed in 10.3% of students, who were motivated to improve, whereas one teacher reported that their students' reactions were not positive.
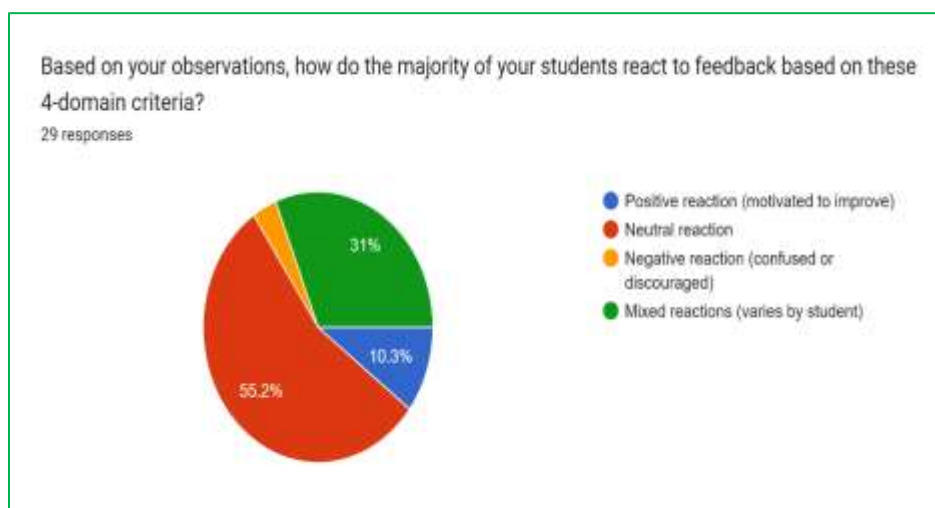

Figure 22: Section 5 Q1

Question 2 explored teachers' perspectives on whether their students value the feedback provided by the 4-domain criteria more than other forms of feedback (Figure 23). Results revealed that 41.4% of teachers mentioned that their students did not seem to care about this specific feedback. Meanwhile, 27.6% added that their students valued it similarly to the other forms, 17.2% were unsure, and only 13.8% indicated that their students valued it more.
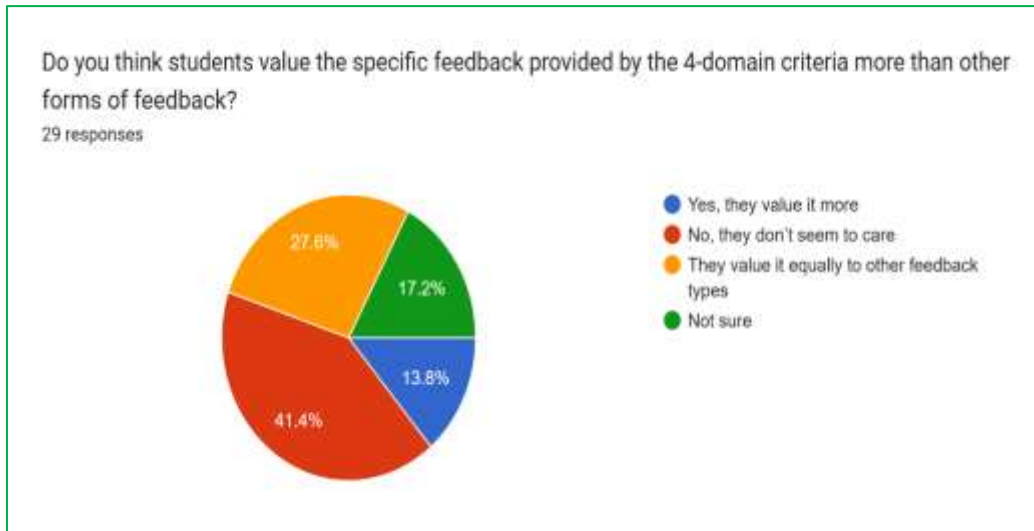

Figure 23: Section 5 Q2

Question 3 explored teachers' opinions on whether the criteria helped motivate their students to develop their English language skills (Figure 24). Findings showed that 58.6% of respondents indicated that the criteria helped their students sometimes, while 17.2% mentioned that it did not. Similarly, 17.2 % indicated that it was helpful, and 6.9% were not sure. Altogether, approximately 75.8% of teachers showed a positive view of the criteria's effect in supporting students' development.
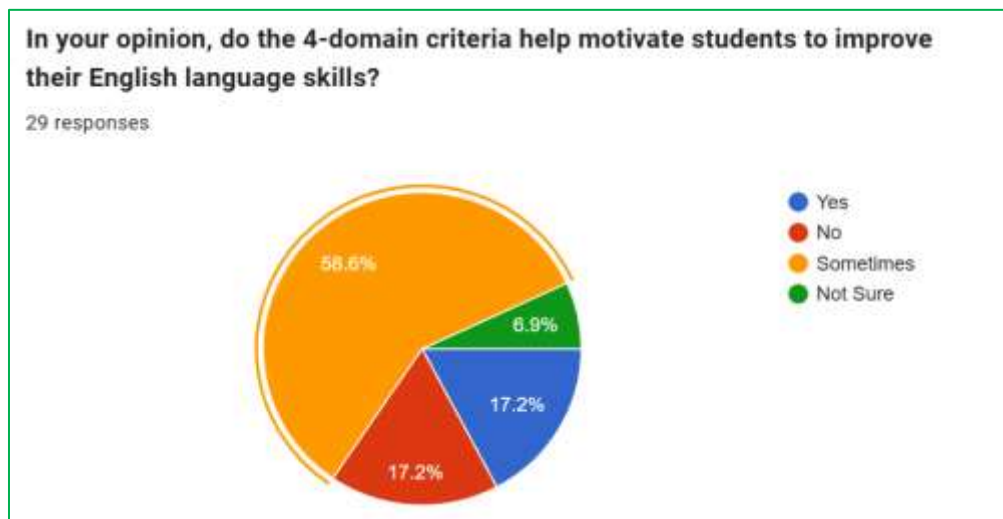

Figure 24: Section 5 Q3

Question 4 examined teachers' beliefs regarding whether the 4-domain criteria provided clear guidance for students to understand areas of improvement (Figure 25). Findings reported that 44.8% of respondents asserted that the criteria provided clear guidance, while 34.5% mentioned that it provided guidance sometimes. However, 13.8% indicated that it did not, and the remaining respondents were unsure.
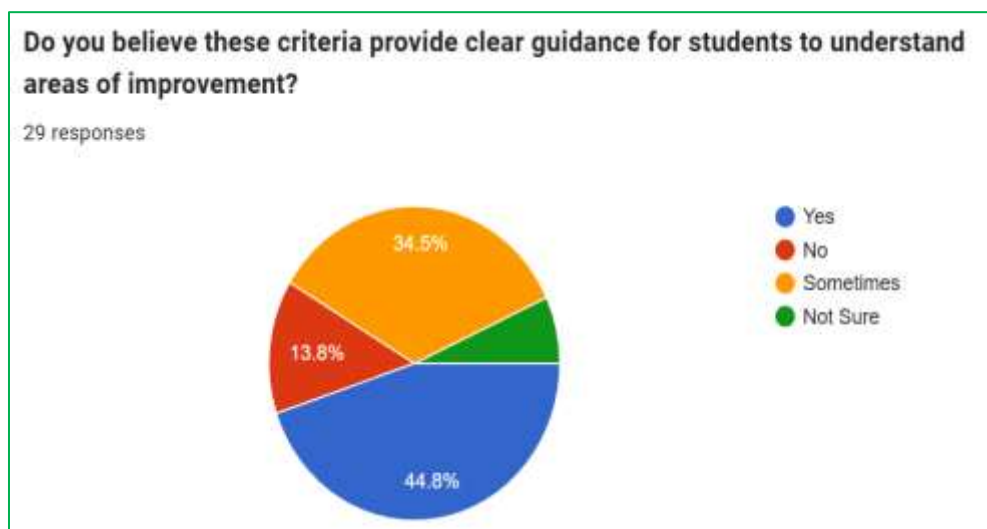
Figure 25: Section 5 Q4

Question 5 tried to check whether students were able to differentiate between two domains of the criteria (Figure 26). Results showed that 48.3% of teachers indicated that students were often able to differentiate, while 44.8% reported that their students rarely managed to do so. Moreover, 6.9% confirmed that students were consistently able to make a distinction.

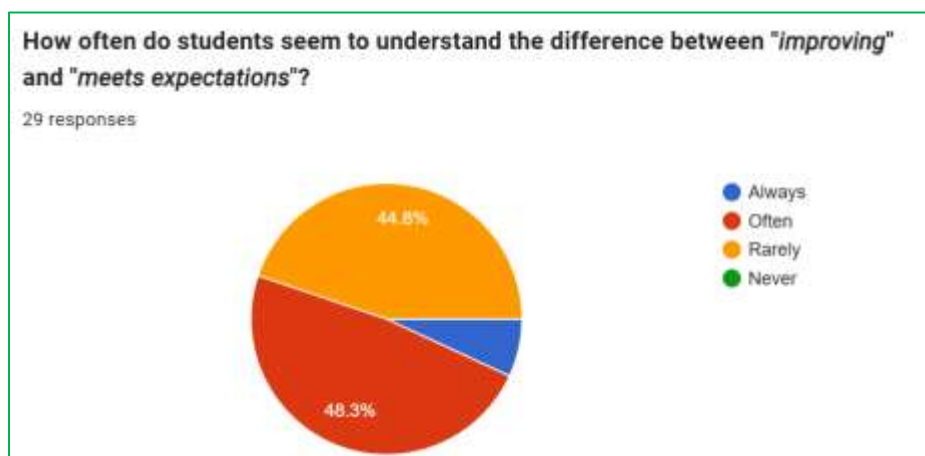Figure 26: Section 5 Q5

Table 6 represents teachers' feedback on students' responses to the 4-domain criteria.

Table (6)

Teachers' feedback on Students Responses to the 4-Domain Criteria

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Observable changes in student behavior	Yes	12	41.4%
	Sometimes	10	34.5%
	No	4	13.8%
	Not Sure	3	10.3%

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Student reactions to feedback	Positive reaction	3	10.3%
	Neutral reaction	14	48.3%
	Mixed reactions	8	27.6%
	Negative reaction	1	3.4%
	Not sure	3	10.3%
Student valuation of feedback	Value it more	5	17.2%
	Value it equally	7	24.1%
	Don't seem to care	12	41.4%
	Not sure	5	17.2%
Increase in student engagement	Yes	9	31.0%
	Sometimes	14	48.3%
	No	4	13.8%
	Not Sure	2	6.9%
Observed learning improvement	Yes	16	55.2%
	Sometimes	9	31.0%
	No	2	6.9%
	Not Sure	2	6.9%
Student engagement with feedback	Always	2	6.9%
	Often	10	34.5%
	Sometimes	6	20.7%
	Rarely	11	37.9%

Analysis of both sections 4 and 5 showed that teachers generally recognized the pedagogical value of the RFAT, with 79.3% believing the criteria help student learning. Nearly half (48.3%) reported learning improvement "to a large extent," and 31.0% noted improvement "to a moderate extent." Regarding effectiveness ratings, 27.6% considered the system "very effective" and 41.4% "somewhat effective" for improving learning.

Student response to the assessment approach emerged as a significant concern. Only 10.3% of teachers observed positive student reactions to feedback, while 41.4% reported neutral reactions and 27.6% noted mixed responses. Student engagement with feedback appeared limited, with 41.4% of teachers indicating students "don't seem to care" about the provided feedback. Only 17.2% reported that students valued RFAT feedback more than other types, and 37.9% observed that students "rarely" engaged with the feedback.

Section 6: Challenges and the limitations teachers faced while implementing the RFAT

Question 1 focused on collecting teachers' feedback regarding the difficulty of adapting the new criteria to different assessment types (Figure 27). Findings indicated that 48% of respondents stated that it was not challenging, 27.6% reported it was somewhat challenging, while 24.1% indicated that it was challenging.
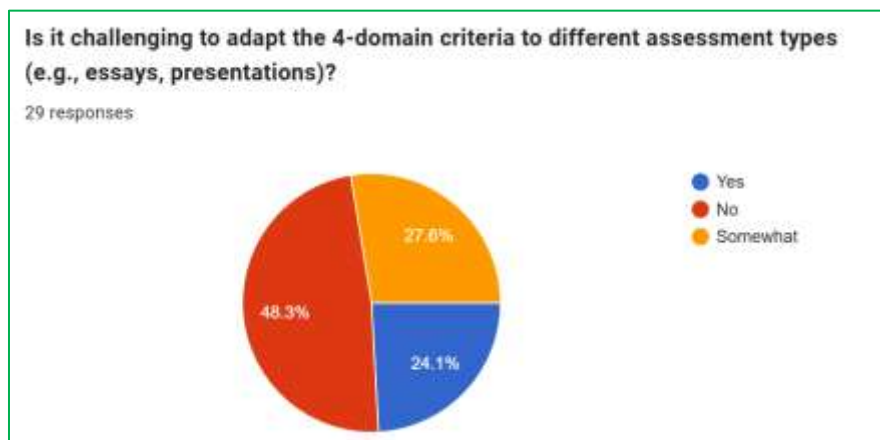

Figure 27: Section 6 Q1

Question 2 identified the challenges teachers encountered when applying the criteria (Figure 28). Results revealed that 65.5% of teachers highlighted time constraints as the main challenge. Moreover, 51.7% of teachers cited both lack of clarity for students and difficulty in consistent implementation as significant challenges. Additionally, 31% reported that students' inability to understand the criteria was another challenge. Finally, 3.4% of teachers mentioned varied issues, such as some students did not care about the feedback, the need for adjustment to certain criteria domains to increase engagement or reported that there were no challenges at all.
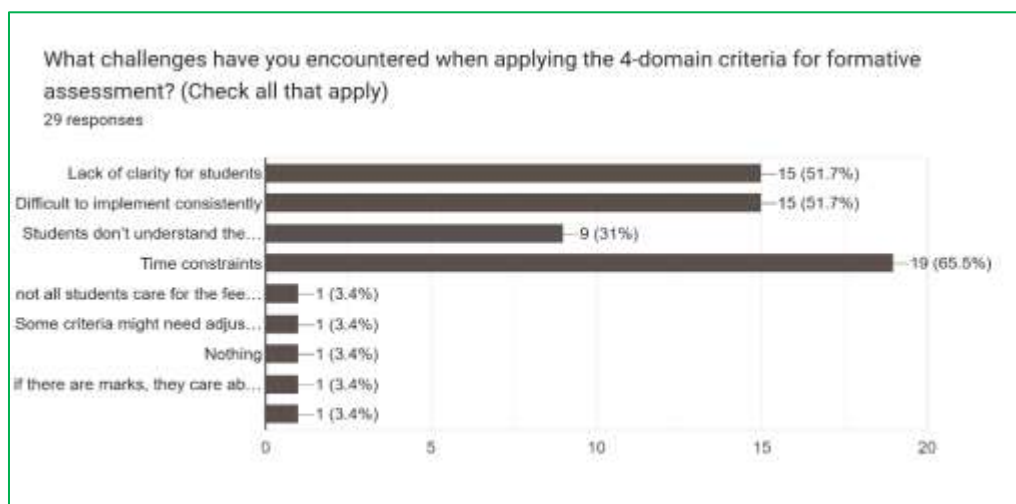

Figure 28: Section 6 Q2

Question 3 investigated teachers' need and willingness for additional training on the new criteria (Figure 29). The findings stated that 62.1% of teachers asserted that they don't require extra training, while 31% indicated they might need it. Additionally, 6.9 % expressed a clear need for more training.
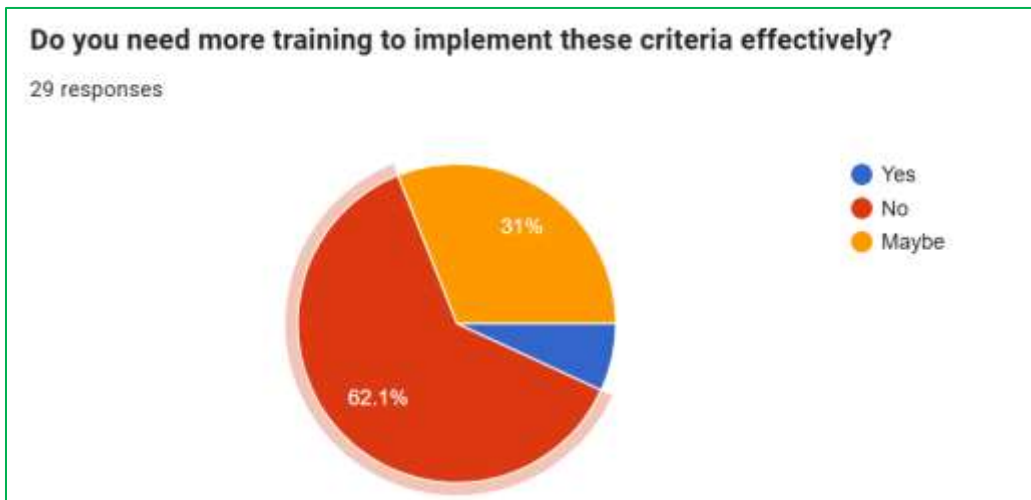
Figure 29: Section 6 Q3

Question 4 collected teachers' suggestions for better implementation of the criteria in their classes (Figure 30). The results showed that responses carried equal weight 3.1%, with teachers offering a variety of suggestions, which included:

- Allotting more time to implement
- Explaining the criteria to students and training them more on its value will improve the use of the 4-domain criteria. I also think using the criteria for a longer period will improve implementation as this was only the 1st term we used feedback this way.
- Introducing and explaining it to the students at the beginning of the term
- Make it personalized / don't use the four domains
- Providing sample assessments, like model FAs, can also help teachers apply them effectively.
- There should be an awareness session at the start of each term for all students in Arabic language to familiarize them with the idea and process of 4-Domain Criteria.
- To improve implementation, Emerging students need additional support, structured guidance, and personalized learning strategies to build foundational skills.
- Students should be learned the 4-domain criteria at the beginning of each term. It should be written and put on the board inside classrooms so that each time they receive feedback they understand its meaning. Moreover, the criteria should be used in the daily teaching even while teaching and learning processes not only to be kept only for FAs. Thus, student can acquire the habit as a classroom routine.
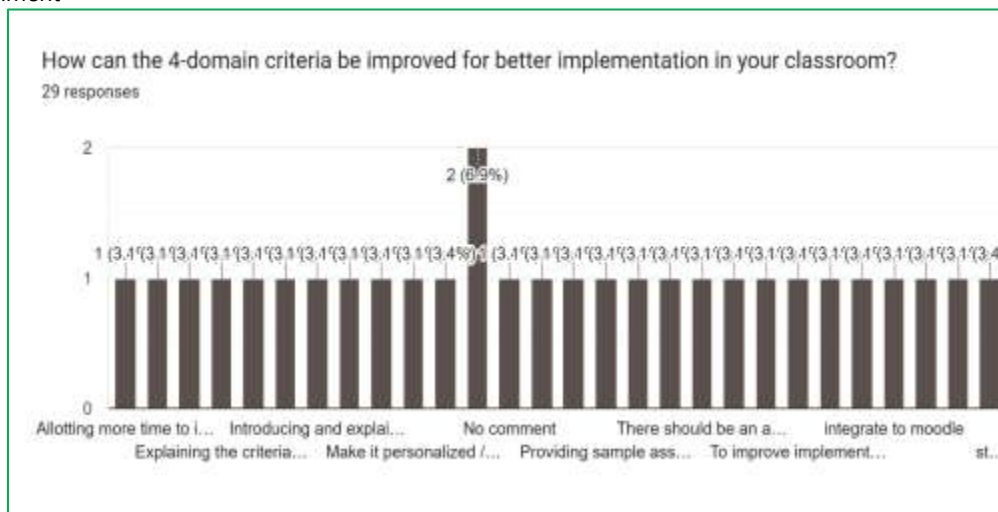- Integrate to Moodle
- No comment

Figure 30: Section 6 Q4

The data identified several significant implementation barriers. More than half (55.2%) of teachers reported they could not systematically apply the criteria without challenges. The most prevalent obstacles were time constraints (reported by 75.9% of teachers), lack of clarity for students (51.7%), difficulties with consistent implementation (51.7%), and students not understanding the criteria (31.0%).

Table 7 summarizes the challenges teachers faced while implementation.

Table (7)

Implementation Challenges

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Systematic application without challenges	Yes	5	17.2%
	Somewhat	8	27.6%
	No	16	55.2%
Primary challenges identified	Time constraints	22	75.9%
	Lack of clarity for students	15	51.7%
	Difficult to implement consistently	15	51.7%
	Students don't understand criteria	9	31.0%

Section 7 sought to identify teachers' overall opinions on the 4-domain criteria. **Question 1** examined teachers' perspectives on whether the new criteria is a valuable addition to their teaching practices (Figure 31). The results revealed that 55.2% of respondents affirmed the value of the criteria, in addition, 20.7% believed that it might be valuable. While 13.8% rejected the assumption, and 10.3% were unable to decide.

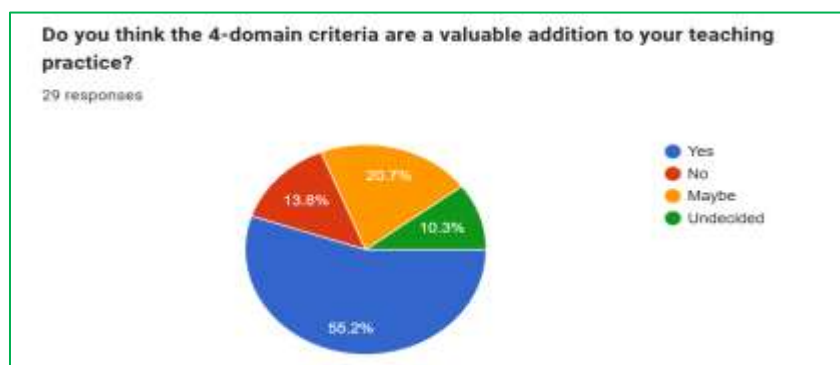Figure 31: Section 7 Q1

Question 2 aimed at identifying teachers' overall satisfaction with the new criteria as a tool for formative assessment in their classrooms (Figure 32). The findings showed that 41.4% of respondents were satisfied while 34.5% of the respondents remained neutral. Furthermore, 10.3% reported being very satisfied, and an equal percentage, 10.3% expressed being very dissatisfied.
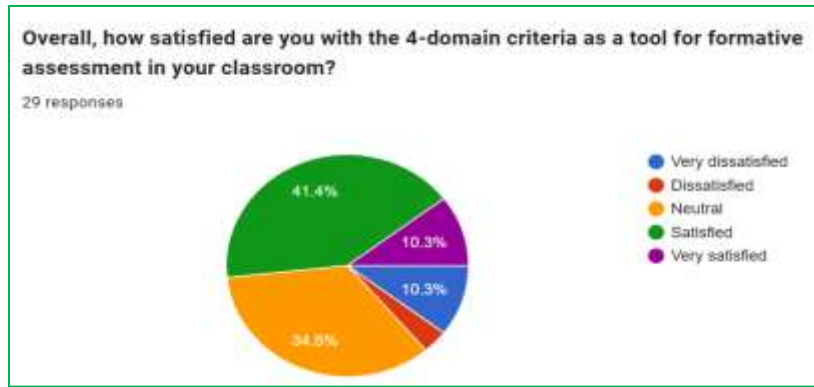
Figure 32: Section 7 Q2

Question 3 evaluated teachers' opinions on how this new formative assessment technique compared to other formative assessment methods (Figure 33). The results revealed that 44.8% of respondents reported that it was equally effective, while 24.1% of the respondents mentioned it was less effective. Conversely, 20.7% reported that it was more effective, and 10.3% were unsure.
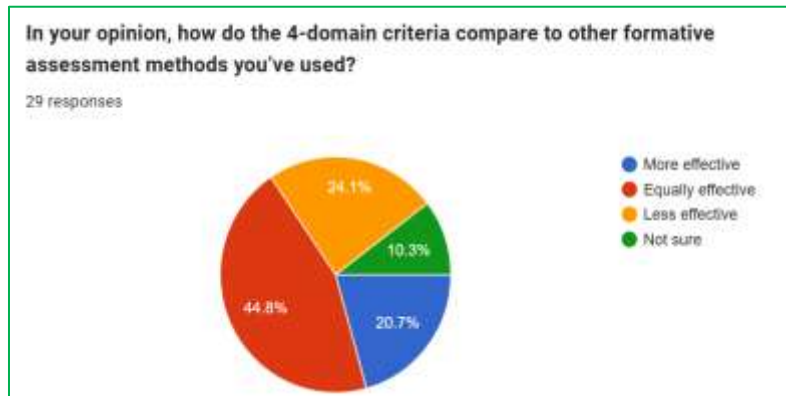

Figure 33: Section 7 Q3

Question 4 examined teachers' willingness to recommend this new formative assessment technique to other EFL Teachers (Figure 34). The results showed that 44.8% of respondents confirmed they would recommend it, while 41.4% mentioned they might consider doing so. While 13.8% reported that they would not recommend it.
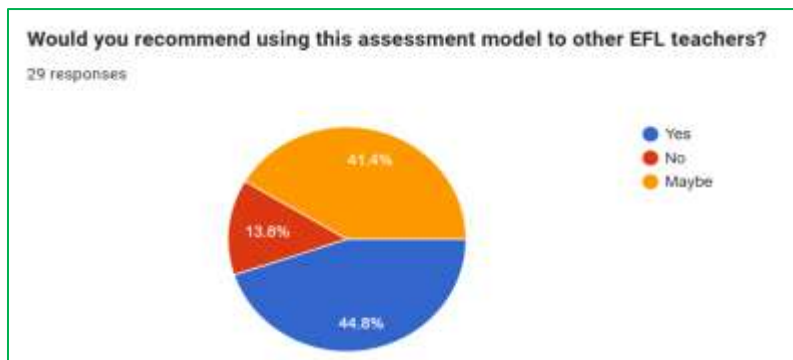

Figure 34: Section 7 Q4

Table 8 represents the overall assessment of the 4-domain criteria.

Table (8)

Overall Assessment of the 4-Domain Criteria

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfaction with criteria	Very satisfied	3	10.3%
	Satisfied	9	31.0%
	Neutral	10	34.5%
	Dissatisfied	4	13.8%
	Undecided	3	10.3%
Effectiveness compared to previous methods	More effective	9	31.0%
	Equally effective	9	31.0%
	Less effective	6	20.7%
	Not sure	5	17.2%
Would recommend criteria	Yes	16	55.2%
	Maybe	10	34.5%
	No	3	10.3%

Question 5 gathered teachers' ratings, on a scale of 1 to 10, regarding the reforms made in CPS English Formative Assessment Techniques to adopt the 4-domain criteria in the observation record form and FA feedback rubric (Figure 35). The findings revealed that 27.6% of respondents gave a rating of 7, while17.2% gave a rating of and the same percentage rated it 10. Furthermore, 13.8% assigned a rating of 8, 10.3 gave a rating of 4, and 3.4% provided a rating of 9 and 1. Collaboratively, 86.3% of respondents provided a favorable rating for the RFAT.
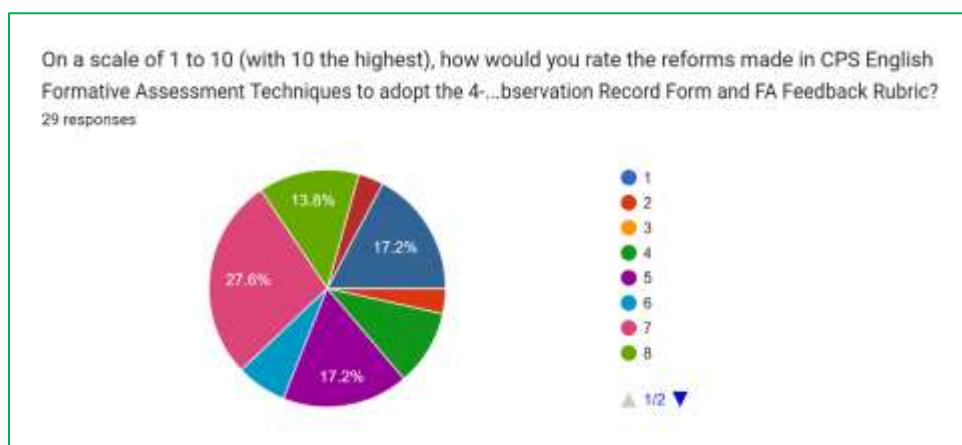

Figure 35: Section 7 Q5

Teacher satisfaction with RFAT showed moderate approval, with 41.4% expressing satisfaction (10.3% "very satisfied," 31.0% "satisfied") and 34.5% maintaining a neutral position. Comparative effectiveness assessments were evenly distributed: 31.0%

viewed RFAT as more effective than previous methods, 31.0% equally effective, 20.7% less effective, and 17.2% were unsure. The average overall rating was 6.8 out of 10, with 55.2% of teachers indicating they would recommend the criteria to colleagues.

When analyzing the relationship between implementation quality and perceived effectiveness, a clear correlation emerged: 62% of teachers who reported integrating the criteria "very well" rated the system as "very effective," compared to only 12% of those reporting "somewhat well" integration. Similarly, 80% of teachers reporting frequent student engagement with feedback expressed satisfaction with the criteria, versus just 15% of those reporting rare engagement.

Table 9 reveals the overall distribution rating.

Table (9)

Overall Rating Distribution

Rating (Scale 1-10)	Frequency	Percentage
10	5	17.2%
9	1	3.4%
8	3	10.3%
7	8	27.6%
6	2	6.9%
5	5	17.2%
4	4	13.8%
2	1	3.4%
Average Rating	6.8	-

4.2.1. Data analysis key insights
Understanding vs. Implementation Gap

There is a notable disparity between teachers' theoretical understanding of RFAT and their ability to implement RFAT effectively:
- 93.1% of teachers find the 4-Domain Criteria "Very clear"
- Only 48.3% report integrating these criteria "Very well" into their teaching
This suggests that while the conceptual framework is well-understood, practical application presents significant challenges.

Student Engagement Concerns

One of the most concerning findings relates to student engagement with the feedback process:
- 41.4% of teachers report students "don't seem to care" about the feedback
- Only 17.2% indicate that students value RFAT feedback more than other feedback types
- 24.1% report students value the feedback equally to other types
- 17.2% are unsure about student valuation
This highlights a critical issue in that the feedback provided through RFAT is not effectively engaging many students in the learning process.

Implementation Challenges

Several key obstacles to effective implementation were identified:
- Time constraints emerged as the predominant challenge (75.9% of teachers)
- Lack of clarity for students (51.7%)

- Difficulty implementing consistently (51.7%)
- Students not understanding the criteria (31.0%)

These challenges suggest that administrative burdens and communication issues are significant barriers to RFAT success.

Effectiveness Assessment

Teachers' assessment of RFAT's effectiveness shows generally positive yet mixed perceptions:

- 79.3% believe RFAT has a moderate to large positive effect on student learning
- Only 27.6% rate it as "Very effective" for improving learning
- 41.4% rate it as "Somewhat effective"

When comparing RFAT to previous assessment methods:

- 31.0% view it as "More effective"
- 31.0% view it as "Equally effective"
- 20.7% view it as "Less effective"
- 17.2% are "Not sure"

This even distribution indicates no clear consensus on whether RFAT represents an improvement.

Overall Satisfaction

Teacher satisfaction shows moderate approval with room for improvement:

- 41.4% express satisfaction (10.3% "Very satisfied," 31.0% "Satisfied")
- 34.5% remain "Neutral"
- 13.8% report dissatisfaction
- 10.3% are "Undecided"

The average rating is 6.8 out of 10, with most teachers rating RFAT a 7, indicating moderate satisfaction with clear opportunities for enhancement.

4.3. Phase 3 data analysis of the focus group results

The two sessions conducted for focus group discussions, comprising of teachers responsible for regularly assessing students' performance using the RFAT, provided valuable qualitative data. The researchers presented five questions about teachers' perception, evaluation and challenges they have faced while implementing the new reformed formative assessment technique. Eight participants were organized into groups and invited to discuss the questions provided. Each group consisted of participants having different teaching backgrounds and teaching experiences as well as having different nationalities. Each group responded to the questions and offered reasons to support their opinions. The gathered responses yielded valuable insights into the assessors' perception of the pedagogical value and effectiveness of the reformed formative assessment techniques. Additionally, the discussions presented remarkable insights on the challenges teachers encountered when adapting to the RFAT and revealed their recommendations for improvement.

Most teachers responded positively to the reformed formative assessment approach, recognizing its benefits in tracking student progress more systematically and addressing specific learning needs. "*Previously, we never had the chance to observe students with their improvement, or they are exceeding, or they're up to the marker they need improvement. Certain observations were not there, but now, teachers absorb what is happening to each one of them, so the assessment for learning is really happening in this way.*" They appreciate that it shifts the focus from grades to real formative assessment practices, promoting self-awareness and self-reflection among students "*My view is a positive step towards more student-centered learning and also enhances the internal autonomy by providing tiny actionable feedback and instead of just visualizing students with scores*". Additionally, teachers found that it helps them monitor student behavior and attitude more effectively. However, some teachers expressed concerns. A few felt that more frequent testing was necessary instead of the reduced number of formative assessments. Others worried that the system might not achieve its intended effects if not implemented properly or if teachers lacked a clear understanding of its rationale and purpose. One teacher highlighted the need for further training, as the new system had not been communicated effectively to teachers. Additionally, some suggested refining the process to provide more individualized feedback rather than relying on general, structured responses. A key concern was student engagement with feedback. While some students demonstrated understanding and used the feedback to improve, it seemed to a teacher in the focus group that nearly 50% either struggled to comprehend it or showed little interest. Additionally, concerns were raised about limited understanding of the system's purpose, and the perception that it inflates grades. Some teachers also felt that RFAT did not significantly change their teaching methods, primarily due to insufficient training.

During the focus group discussions, teachers highlighted several strengths and benefits of using RFAT in their classrooms. They noted that RFAT encourages students' self-reflection and awareness of areas for improvement, fostering a sense of responsibility by prompting students to bring necessary supplies and come prepared for lessons "*sometimes students come to the class and think that just being there is enough to pass a level so when we give the quality feedback, it's actually a wakeup call for them*". Additionally, the clear expectations set by RFAT motivated students to put more effort into their writing and listening skills. Teachers also noted improvements in student responsibility and motivation due to clearer expectations. Teachers also found that the system allowed them to monitor and support individual students more effectively, providing targeted guidance where needed. The structured four-scale rubric helped categorize student performance, making it easier for both students and teachers to identify strengths and areas for growth. Furthermore, RFAT contributed to reducing student anxiety by consolidating multiple quizzes into fewer assessments "*I think it has taken away on the stress of everyday, not weekly assessments and giving the grades and other things*"; however, while the overall frequency of anxiety decreased, its intensity increased due to the higher stakes associated with fewer tests. One teacher mentioned that "*The rubric makes it clear to students where they stand and what they need to improve on.*" Another teacher added that "*Some students now seem more engaged since they understand what is expected.*"

Despite the positive aspects of RFAT, teachers encountered several challenges in its implementation. One of the most significant difficulties was the increased time required for observing and providing detailed feedback, which added to their workload, one of them said "*It takes much longer to provide feedback now, and with large classes, it's overwhelming.*" Another teacher added "*I now spend more time on feedback than before, which is good but also exhausting.*" Another speaker added that "*Entering all this feedback and uploading that was a bit strenuous on the part of the teachers.*"

Additionally, many students struggled to adapt to the new system and interpret the rubric consistently, leading to confusion and inconsistencies in assessment outcomes, "*Some students still don't understand what the rubric categories mean.*" Teachers also expressed concerns about the potential for subjective interpretation of the rubric criteria, which could impact fairness. Another issue was the perception that RFAT might inflate student grades, creating a misunderstanding that the system simply awards easy marks rather than encouraging genuine learning. High paper consumption due to multiple assessment attempts was also noted as a drawback, and some teachers observed that students were less engaged during their second assessment attempts, often viewing them as opportunities to boost grades rather than as meaningful learning experiences, "*a lot of paper waste, we printed all quizzes again.*" To address these challenges, teachers suggested involving students in the assessment design process and rubric creation, as well as incorporating more peer evaluation to enhance engagement and accountability.

The transition from traditional assessments to a more formative, process-oriented approach was recognized as beneficial, particularly in shifting the focus toward qualitative feedback rather than solely numerical grades, a teacher said, "*It has changed how I assess students—I'm focusing more on their progress than just their final answers.*" Teachers found that delivering feedback via Moodle was advantageous, as it allowed students to review feedback at their own pace and use translation tools if necessary. However, not all teachers felt that the reform significantly changed their teaching practices, as many required additional training in formative assessment techniques. Some also expressed concerns about reduced autonomy in their classrooms due to standardized assessments, preferring the flexibility to create custom quizzes tailored to their students' needs.

Teachers described students' reactions and engagement with RFAT as mixed. While some students showed increased motivation by seeking additional practice to improve their scores "*I've seen some students improve because they understand where they need to work harder.*" Others resisted the system or misunderstood its purpose, viewing it as an opportunity for easy marks rather than a tool for skill development. Some students expressed a preference for traditional percentage-based grades "*Others feel like it's too complicated and just want a percentage grade*", over qualitative feedback, underscoring the need for better orientation to help them understand that the system prioritizes learning growth rather than merely earning grades.

To enhance student engagement, teachers suggested refining the rubric for greater clarity, streamlining assessment integration, and improving student orientation: "*Maybe we can simplify the language used in the rubric so students can understand it better.*" Additionally, proposals were made to introduce self-assessment methods and divide assessments into macro and micro components to reduce grading workload "*Actually, like I mentioned before, rubric is a mixed rubric, so it needs to be divided into, I think all of you know about the macro and micro skills. So, you need to divide and revise the rubric.*"

Further recommendations focused on refining the implementation of RFAT to ensure it remains effective and practical. Teachers proposed adopting a dynamic assessment approach where targeted interventions could support struggling students and delaying the display of numerical grades—if policy permits—to encourage students to focus on feedback rather than scores.

They also emphasized the importance of providing specific and actionable feedback rather than generic comments "*Yeah, making it more specific and actionable.*" Opinions varied regarding the use of identical tests for first and second attempts, with some teachers valuing them for tracking progress, while others felt they simply allowed students to earn higher grades without deeper learning. Increasing assessment frequency was also suggested as a way to distribute pressure more evenly across the term.

In conclusion, while the reformed formative assessment system has introduced several positive changes, there remain areas for improvement. Teachers require further training in formative assessment techniques. "*We need training on how to apply these assessments consistently*", students need better orientation to fully grasp the purpose of RFAT, and assessment processes should be streamlined for greater efficiency and clarity. By addressing these challenges, RFAT can better serve both teachers and students, ensuring that formative assessment truly supports learning rather than being perceived solely as a grading mechanism.

Table 10 represents a thematic analysis of RFAT focus group discussions.

Table (10)

Thematic Analysis of RFAT Focus Group Discussions

Theme	Focus Group A Perspectives	Focus Group B Perspectives	Connection to Research Questions
Reduction in Assessment Frequency and Anxiety	"It has taken away on the stress of everyday, not weekly assessments and giving the grades and other things." "Students don't feel the stress and anxiety of being tested on a weekly basis."	"By limiting the amount of tests and making it very clear there's going to be a test before the midterm, one after the midterm, for example, the students know what's expected of them."	**RQ1:** Positive pedagogical value; reduces assessment anxiety and creates a more conducive learning environment.
Holistic Assessment Approach	"A proper way of assessing students that reform system that we are using how the reform system has many good things, which is exactly following the philosophy of a real forming assessment."	"It is good that it considers students holistically. It is not just for the sake of doing one topic and going to the next one."	**RQ1:** RFAT aligns with formative assessment philosophy by enabling comprehensive student evaluation.
Second Chance Opportunities	"One main advantage found, especially for absence students, it was really a good thing that they could repeat there and my assessment."	"I like the idea that students can be given a second chance to learn and to get a higher grade."	**RQ1:** Valued feature that provides additional learning opportunities.
Student Engagement with Feedback	"Sometimes students come to the class and think that just being there is enough to pass a level so when we give the quality feedback, it's actually a wake up call for them."	"I can say, maybe 50% of the student don't read the feedback." "Many of them saw it as a honestly. They told me that it is good that CPS has changed as a free marks."	**RQ1:** Divergent perspectives on effectiveness; concerns about authentic engagement with feedback.
Focus on Marks vs. Learning	"It helps students scaffold and tried to bridge the gaps found without the that feel of grades."	"The way that it was implemented in our department, the way that it was communicated from leadership, made it become a very marks-based thing." "Instead of the focus being on letting	**RQ1:** Tension between intended purpose (learning) and implementation reality (grade improvement).

Theme	Focus Group A Perspectives	Focus Group B Perspectives	Connection to Research Questions
		students know where they were on the four domain criteria, the focus was instead on, does this student need to retake this quiz or not?"	
Implementation Clarity and Communication	"This has a proper way of assessing students that reform system that we are using." "The rule break that we have used is easy to use and serious can understand easier language is very simple."	"Sending something before we start would have probably helped the teachers know what to focus on, maybe a little bit more guidance." "Teachers need to understand much more what assessment for learning looks like."	**RQ2:** Challenge in clearly communicating purpose and implementation approach.
Teacher Autonomy and Flexibility	"In the past, feedback could be given of anything in terms of usually to the low achieving students like what behavior they have, they have to modify, but now it's more refined and focused."	"This, in ways, took the power out of the teacher's hands in the classroom, right where we had less agency in our own teaching environment." "The old system gave teachers more control and flexibility to assess students in different ways."	**RQ2:** Tension between standardization and teacher autonomy.
Administrative and Time Burdens	"That form with time consuming to upload grades. Some teachers really found it difficult to learn it like you know they were stressed."	"Entering all these feedback uploading that was a bit strenuous on the part of the teachers."	**RQ2:** Technical and administrative challenges create implementation barriers.
Student Understanding of Formative Assessment	"To go to level 3 on the last level, it's not what they learn in the book. It's their skill how much they have improved… they should be made aware that learning is important, not grade."	"Rubric is a mixed rubric, so it needs to be divided into, I think all of you know about the macro and micro skills." "The rubric that teachers have must be different from what the students have, because we use lots of meta language that is useless for students."	**RQ2:** Challenge in developing student understanding of assessment purpose.
Personalization of Feedback	"We could vary the tasks, for example, for example if I find a lot of students reading for details or reading for me for example, the still behind so I can assign more tasks for them."	"For, Amin, you can, we can have the same rubric, but for, Amen, you can check mark grammar for x, you can check mark the academic vocabulary." "It must provide criteria to make it specific for each student. Just practice more grammar is not effective feedback. "	**RQ1/RQ2:** Need for more personalized feedback to improve effectiveness; challenge in providing specific feedback within current framework.
Intervention Between Assessments	Not significantly addressed	"Here we have something missing. We just do the first one, okay, we start next unit and we do the second one, which completely ruins the usability of the second one. We don't give them any treatment in between."	**RQ1/RQ2:** Identified gap in implementation that affects pedagogical effectiveness.

Theme	Focus Group A Perspectives	Focus Group B Perspectives	Connection to Research Questions
Structured Observation Benefits	"It could help me a lot to know tailoring my instruction based on students' needs." "It's a good opportunity for teachers to get acquainted with the students, sometimes, some teachers might spend at the whole term and they don't know the name of that student."	"It really helped me out of us like make sure that if somebody with an attitude is sometimes we tend to just to know. Think of one up to 3 things but now it's better to see it gives an opportunity to call that person to just tell this and you get feedback to the person."	**RQ1:** Positive impact on targeted teaching and comprehensive student awareness.

4.4. Results in terms of the research questions

4.4.1. Main question

To answer the main research questions, an analysis of both questionnaire responses and focus group discussions was carried out and revealed that CPS teachers hold moderately positive but notably nuanced perceptions of RFAT. The average overall rating was 6.8 out of 10, indicating cautious approval rather than strong endorsement. While 41.3% of teachers expressed satisfaction with the system (10.3% very satisfied, 31.0% satisfied), a significant proportion (34.5%) remained neutral, and 24.1% were either dissatisfied or undecided.

Teachers' evaluation of RFAT effectiveness compared to previous assessment methods was evenly divided: 31.0% viewed it as more effective, 31.0% as equally effective, 20.7% as less effective, and 17.2% were unsure. This balanced distribution aligns with the mixed perspectives observed in focus group discussions, where Focus Group A participants expressed predominantly positive evaluations while Focus Group B participants voiced more critical assessments.

Overall, teachers recognize RFAT's theoretical alignment with formative assessment principles but identify a significant gap between conceptual design and practical implementation. As one focus group participant articulated: "I think the reforms are positive and aim the program in the right direction. I think we need to try this approach for several terms to understand its impact."

4.4.2. Sub-question 1

To identify what CPS teachers' perceptions of the pedagogical value and effectiveness of the RFAT are, a data analysis was conducted and showed that teachers consistently recognized several valuable pedagogical aspects of RFAT across both questionnaire responses and focus group discussions:

1. ***Reduced Assessment Frequency and Anxiety:*** The questionnaire showed 93.1% of teachers found the 4-Domain Criteria clear, while focus group participants specifically valued how RFAT "has taken away on the stress of everyday, not weekly assessments." This reduction in test frequency was seen as creating a less stressful learning environment.
2. ***Holistic Assessment Approach:*** 79.3% of questionnaire respondents believed the criteria help student learning. Focus Group A participants described RFAT as "a proper way of assessing students" that follows "the philosophy of a real [formative] assessment," while a Focus Group B participant valued that it "considers students holistically."
3. ***Second Chance Opportunities:*** Both focus groups highlighted the value of providing students with additional opportunities. One participant noted it was "really a good thing that they could repeat the assessment," particularly for absent students.
4. ***Enhanced Teacher Awareness:*** 41.4% of questionnaire respondents observed changes in student behavior and focus group participants noted that RFAT makes teachers "more conscious" of all students' performance, preventing teachers from missing any students.

While teachers recognized RFAT's value, effectiveness perceptions were more varied:

1. ***Mixed Effectiveness Ratings***: Only 27.6% of teachers rated RFAT as "very effective" for improving learning, with 41.4% rating it "somewhat effective" and 31.0% either "not effective" or "not sure." This aligns with focus group discussions where participants expressed concerns about implementation effectiveness.

2. ***Student Engagement Limitations***: A critical effectiveness concern was limited student engagement with feedback. The questionnaire revealed that 41.4% of teachers reported students "don't seem to care" about feedback, and 37.9% indicated students "rarely" engage with feedback. A focus group participant noted, "maybe 50% of the students don't read the feedback."
3. ***Purpose Implementation Gap***: Both data sources revealed tensions between intended purpose and implementation reality. Focus Group B participants particularly emphasized that RFAT became "a very marks-based thing" rather than focusing on learning improvement. As one teacher noted, "the focus was instead on, does this student need to retake this quiz or not?"
4. ***Learning vs. Memorization Concerns***: Focus group discussions highlighted concerns about authentic learning, with one participant observing that students were "memorizing A B C D and they put A B C D and they are getting full marks. They are not mastering anything."

4.4.3   Sub-question 2

To understand the challenges that CPS teachers encountered when adapting to the RFAT, both questionnaire data and focus group discussions were examined identifying several significant implementation challenges:

1. ***Time and Administrative Constraints***: Time constraints emerged as the predominant challenge, reported by 75.9% of questionnaire respondents. Focus group participants elaborated on this, describing the process of uploading feedback to Moodle as "time consuming" and "strenuous." One noted that "some teachers really found it difficult to learn it like you know they were stressed."
2. ***Student Comprehension Issues***: 51.7% of questionnaire respondents cited "lack of clarity for students" as a challenge, and 31.0% specifically noted "students don't understand criteria." Focus group participants suggested solutions including providing "posters and info with both Arabic and English" and organizing "an awareness session at the start of each term for all students in Arabic language."
3. ***Consistent Implementation Difficulties***: 51.7% of questionnaire respondents reported difficulty implementing RFAT consistently. Only 17.2% reported they could systematically apply the criteria without challenges. Focus group discussions revealed that implementation varied considerably between teachers, with some focusing primarily on marks while others emphasized learning improvement.
4. ***Balance of Standardization vs. Flexibility***: Focus Group B particularly emphasized challenges in maintaining teacher autonomy, with one participant stating RFAT "took the power out of the teacher's hands in the classroom, right where we had less agency in our own teaching environment." This concern did not feature prominently in questionnaire responses but emerged as a significant theme in focus group discussions.
5. ***Feedback Specificity Limitations***: Both data sources highlighted challenges in providing specific, actionable feedback. One teacher critiqued that the approach is "very general and generic... it must provide criteria to make it specific for each student. Just practicing more grammar is not effective feedback."
6. ***Missing Intervention Structure***: Focus Group B participants identified a crucial gap in RFAT implementation: "We have something missing. We just do the first one, okay, we start the next unit, and we do the second one, which completely ruins the usability of the second one. We don't give them any treatment in between." This challenge was not directly addressed in the questionnaire but emerged as a critical limitation in focus group discussions.

Table 11 represents a summary of key findings by research question.

Table (11)

Summary of Key Findings by Research Question

Research Question	Key Findings
RQ1: What are CPS teachers' perceptions of the pedagogical value and effectiveness of the RFAT?	1. **Positive Value Perceptions**: Teachers across both focus groups recognized several valuable aspects of RFAT, including reduced assessment anxiety, holistic assessment approach, second chance opportunities, and improved teacher awareness of student performance.
	2. **Effectiveness Concerns**: Effectiveness perceptions varied significantly, with Focus Group B expressing stronger concerns about implementation focus on grades rather than learning, limited student engagement with feedback, and absence of structured

Research Question	Key Findings
	intervention between assessments.
	3. **Purpose-Implementation Gap**: Teachers identified a discrepancy between the intended formative purpose and the implementation reality, where the system sometimes functioned more as a grade improvement opportunity than a learning development tool.
RQ2: What challenges do CPS teachers encounter when adapting to the RFAT?	1. **Administrative Burdens**: Both groups identified technical and administrative challenges, particularly regarding Moodle integration and documentation requirements.
	2. **Communication Clarity**: Teachers noted challenges in clearly communicating the purpose and process to both colleagues and students, with some indicating insufficient guidance on implementation.
	3. **Student Engagement**: Limited student understanding and engagement with feedback emerged as a significant challenge across both groups.
	4. **Balance of Standardization vs. Flexibility**: Focus Group B particularly emphasized challenges in maintaining teacher autonomy while implementing standardized assessment.
	5. **Feedback Specificity**: Both groups identified challenges in providing sufficiently personalized, specific feedback within the current framework.

4.5   Pre – RFAT

The findings from the pre-session questionnaire highlight key concerns regarding the formative assessment practices in place before the implementation of RFAT. A significant proportion of teachers (46.2%) expressed uncertainty about whether their FA methods effectively supported student learning through feedback, while 15.4% actively disagreed. These responses indicate a lack of confidence in the extent to which FA was being used as a tool for learning rather than simply as an assessment mechanism. Given that feedback is central to formative assessment, these findings suggest that prior FA practices may not have been optimally structured to facilitate student improvement.

A particularly striking revelation is that the majority of teachers perceived their FA practices as predominantly summative. With 46.2% strongly agreeing and another 46.2% agreeing that their FA was more summative in nature, the data suggests that assessment had primarily been used to evaluate student performance rather than guide learning. Additionally, a similar percentage acknowledged an over testing environment, reinforcing the notion that assessment practices leaned toward measuring achievement rather than fostering ongoing learning through feedback. However, just over a quarter of teachers did not share this perception, indicating that experiences with FA varied among some educators. This variation may be attributed to differences in how teachers implemented assessment strategies or the level of autonomy they had in shaping their FA practices.

The responses to Question 9 provide further insight into how feedback functioned within this assessment-heavy environment. Teachers commonly viewed quizzes as feedback tools, and their responses revealed that feedback was primarily tied to rubric-based comments, verbal feedback, test results, and marks. This suggests that feedback was largely performance-focused, with an emphasis on scores rather than formative insights that could help students develop their skills. More importantly, it reveals a gap in how FA was being utilized—rather than providing guidance throughout the learning process, feedback was predominantly linked to assessment outcomes.

This reliance on test-based feedback suggests a narrow approach to formative assessment, missing opportunities to offer process-oriented guidance when students are actively engaged in learning. Effective FA should ideally provide students with actionable feedback that helps them refine their understanding and skills over time. However, if feedback is primarily tied to quizzes and formal assessments, students may not receive the type of ongoing, real-time input necessary for meaningful learning.

Overall, these findings support the research's objective of investigating whether the FA practices in place had deficiencies that hindered their effectiveness. The evidence suggests that FA was often summative in nature, over-reliant on testing, and limited in its ability to provide feedback that actively guided student learning. This raises important questions about how FA is conceptualized and implemented and underscores the need for assessment practices that emphasize learning rather than mere evaluation. Addressing these issues required a shift in assessment culture, moving toward RFAT that integrated more frequent, low-stakes feedback opportunities outside of formal testing scenarios.

4.6 Post – RFAT

The results of the questionnaire suggest that the RFAT framework was largely understood and applied in practice. All respondents used the four domain criteria to some extent, with most teachers acknowledging their relevance to language skills and their ability to reflect student progress. Furthermore, the majority agreed that the RFAT criteria effectively differentiated between students' performance levels. However, responses were mixed regarding the framework's effectiveness in identifying specific areas where students needed improvement, indicating some uncertainty about its formative effect. The transition from the previous practice to the new system required time for adjustment and adaptation before achieving full acceptance.

A notable concern was the limited enthusiasm for RFAT's impact on student motivation, pointing to a possible gap in how students perceive and engage with feedback. This suggests that while the framework is seen as beneficial for assessment, its ability to encourage student buy-in and active learning may need further development.

Support for RFAT's role in providing learning guidance was evenly split, with 50% of teachers agreeing and the other half communicating reservations. Reported challenges included time constraints, student comprehension of the system, and general indifference to feedback. Additionally, nearly 40% of teachers requested further training, highlighting a need for professional development to enhance implementation.

The findings from the focus group discussion further support the results of the questionnaire. Most teachers responded favourably to the new RFAT system, acknowledging its value and significance. However, some still preferred the older testing system, reflecting their habitual reliance on summative assessments and their struggle to accept that not all assessments should solely measure the amount of learning—some should track learning progress and support formative development. Additionally, teachers emphasized administrative burdens, specifically noting difficulties with Moodle integration and documentation requirements. Focus group participants additionally highlighted concerns about maintaining RFAT's formative purpose, with some reporting the implementation became more focused on grades than learning.

Teachers expressed a need for more training, as well as for students to be gradually introduced to this new assessment approach. A key concern among teachers was the perceived generalization of the RFAT system; they preferred a more personalized, one-on-one approach to formative assessment. Many felt that RFAT, in its current form, restricted their ability to provide informal, day-to-day feedback as part of the teaching process. This highlights the need for additional orientation to dispel misconceptions and promote a deeper understanding of the system.

Another major challenge was student perception. Teachers noted that students tend to equate assessment solely with grades and struggle to see the value in assessments that do not carry significant grading weight. Thus, students also require orientation to shift their mindset toward formative assessment and feedback as tools for learning rather than just performance measurement.

Teachers expressed a desire for greater flexibility in implementing RFAT, stating that while the focus on feedback aligns with formative assessment principles, it does not necessarily save time compared to the previous grading-based system. Instead of grading, time is now spent on providing detailed feedback, which, although essential, requires as much effort as traditional marking. However, this is a positive indicator, as formative assessment should ideally focus more on feedback than numerical scores, reinforcing its role in guiding learning rather than merely measuring it.

One significant observation was that a few teachers perceived the opportunity for students to retake quizzes after feedback as an administrative effort to help students improve their grades. They also believed that students viewed retakes as an easy way to

earn higher scores. However, this is a misconception, as the purpose of the retake opportunity is to create a learning experience, aligning with the spirit of assessment for learning rather than merely assessment of learning. Teachers' perceptions that they must follow a prescribed system of formative assessment, while not embracing their autonomy to make decisions that serve the students in their classrooms is concerning.

Some teachers suggested that students could be better introduced to RFAT through visual displays and structured training, while others advocated for a more personalized feedback approach rather than the current structured system. Additionally, teachers themselves felt they needed further orientation to effectively implement RFAT. One teacher made an interesting suggestion to incorporate dynamic assessment by determining the level of assistance each student needs, working within their 'zone of proximal development' and monitoring how they respond to instructional intervention. This is an area that requires extensive exploration and study to evaluate its effectiveness. Despite these challenges, just over half of the teachers viewed RFAT as a valuable addition to their teaching practices. A similar proportion expressed satisfaction with using it as a formative assessment tool and would recommend it to other EFL teachers. Most teachers rated RFAT positively for its reformative approach, indicating general acceptance but with room for refinement.

Overall, the findings suggest that while RFAT is well-received, certain areas require further attention. The mixed responses regarding its diagnostic effectiveness, impact on student motivation, and ability to guide learning indicate a need for refinement in its implementation. Addressing these concerns—through additional training, student orientation, and possible modifications to the feedback structure—could enhance RFAT's overall effectiveness as a formative assessment tool.

5. Conclusion

The previous formative process was designed as structured preparation for summative assessments, with teacher guidance at every stage. In essence, this new system shifted the role of formative assessment from grading to guiding students toward improvement, fostering a more supportive and developmental approach to learning.

In summary, the transition to RFAT is a positive move toward aligning with the true purpose of formative assessment. While there are areas of inadequacy and aspects that need refinement to achieve the desired outcomes, the process should be seen as an evolving one. As teachers' personalities and perceptions vary, so does their ability to adapt to new systems. A range of responses have been observed, from full acceptance to more reserved acknowledgment, and even total opposition. This is not viewed as a rejection or failure of the system but as a natural response that often occurs before the benefits can be fully realized. Addressing teachers' concerns and meeting their training needs is essential. Similarly, students should be well-informed and prepared to receive formative assessments, ensuring the process works towards the intended goal.

While dynamic assessment was suggested by a teacher, it may not be a feasible solution in this context due to several challenges. It requires a high level of teacher involvement and one-on-one interaction, which may not be practical in large classrooms with time constraints. Additionally, it demands continuous and adaptive feedback, which can be difficult to implement within standardized curricula that emphasize summative assessments. Teachers may also require specialized training to apply dynamic assessment effectively, and students—accustomed to traditional grading systems—might struggle to adapt to an approach that prioritizes learning potential over final scores. Given these limitations, while dynamic assessment offers theoretical benefits, its practical implementation in our current educational setting remains uncertain.

The questionnaire responses are in line with the key findings from the qualitative analysis of focus group data. Teachers recognize RFAT's potential value but experience significant implementation challenges, particularly related to time constraints, technical processes, and student engagement.

Based on teacher feedback, the following recommendations emerge:

- Teachers require extensive training from the outset to fully understand (the core concept and value of formative assessment), the process and develop a genuine acceptance of the new system, rather than feeling compelled to implement it. This calls for organized training sessions at the beginning of the term, with periodic refreshers to ensure continued engagement and understanding.

- Students need enhanced orientation offered in structured manner about the purpose and process of formative assessment, potentially in Arabic. They require significant orientation and conditioning to grasp the importance of formative assessments. They must first learn how to interpret feedback effectively and act on it to maximize the benefits. Additionally, it is crucial to address misconceptions, such as the belief that retakes are an opportunity to simply earn higher scores, rather than being viewed as a valuable learning opportunity.

- Encouraging peer feedback and as suggested, involving students in using the rubric to provide feedback will help in a more stress free and democratic formative assessment. This could lighten the teacher's workload as well.

- Simplifying the technical processes and streamlining documentation and feedback processes can improve how feedback is integrated into Moodle.

- While the overall assessment structure may be standardized, teachers have opportunities within this framework to provide individualized feedback in the space provided in the feedback form and also on Moodle in the comments box. Teachers can offer additional comments here or suggestions tailored to specific students during one-on-one interactions or in private comments on their assignments or using this space provided. To maximize this potential, teachers require more specific training on how to effectively utilize this space for personalized, customized feedback.

- The possibilities of integrating dynamic assessment into RFAT could be explored, and further opportunities for its integration can be considered for future implementation.

- Implementing a clear, structured intervention phase between first and second quiz attempts can ensure meaningful learning progress. To address concerns that the quiz retake opportunities of receptive skills in RFAT become grade-oriented and thereby limit opportunities for formation, it is recommended that both reading and listening quizzes can be modified by presenting varied questions which can encourage students to generalize their learning and adapt to different situations.

- Lastly, there should be a stronger mechanism for tracking students' progress after feedback, as this link is currently seen as a weak spot in the system. Strengthening this aspect will provide a clearer picture of students' growth and the impact of the assessment process.

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