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The Impact of Formative Assessment on Teachers' Practices

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Abstract ;

Formative assessment plays a crucial role in the educational process by enabling teachers to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, thus allowing them to adjust their teaching approaches accordingly. This study investigates the impact of formative assessment on teachers' practices, focusing on how they utilize assessment data to modify their teaching methods and the factors influencing their use of such data. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study collected both open and closed-ended questionnaire responses from 35 teachers (17 males and 18 females) from various secondary schools in District 2, North Setif, a city in East Algeria. The research revealed that teachers observed increased student involvement, reduced assessment-related stress, and a better

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understanding of educational goals. These findings suggest that formative assessment encourages teachers to adopt more participatory and learner-centered instructional strategies, enhancing the overall educational experience for students.	✓ *teaching approaches, exploration, impact*

1. Introduction

Since 2003, Algeria has undergone significant changes in its curriculum to enhance the quality of education. Authorities designed reforms to align with the Competency-Based Education principles and standards introduced by Perrenoud in 2002, not just on knowledge but also on values, skills, attitudes, critical thinking, and comprehension (Mokhtar & Ouahmiche, 2018). This approach uses assessment data to offer learners actionable feedback for their learning journey.

Educational institutions have adopted Assessment for Learning (AFL) as an alternative to Assessment of Learning (AOL) (Black and William, 1998; Black et al., 2003; Stiggins, 2005, 2008). The traditional approach, which treated teaching and assessment as distinct activities, has been replaced by a culture centred on evaluation. This new culture aims to enhance learning through formal and informal assessments, incorporating monitoring and scaffolding (Nesma, 2024).

Formative assessments provide learners with valuable information to help them advance towards achieving competency and readiness for independent practice (Forscher, et al., (2019). Scholars and researchers have studied formative assessment effects on outcomes and course efficiency to ensure its reliability, validity, and equity. While earlier research mainly examined how formative assessment affects learning outcomes, a gap that necessitates further exploration of its influence on teacher practices emerges.

Therefore, the current study investigates how formative assessment influences teaching practices in the EFL classroom, particularly in Algeria. By addressing these concerns, scholars and practitioners can develop more effective and inclusive formative assessment strategies that accurately represent language abilities. Hence, the research questions of this study are:

Q1: What are classroom practices in the implementation of formative assessment?

Q:2 How does formative assessment impact teaching practices?

To answer these questions, the researcher aims to explore how formative assessment influences practice, identify the factors that contribute to the effective use of formative assessment in teaching and explore the challenges and limitations of using formative assessment in teaching.

The findings of this research hold significant importance in improving educational methodologies and achievements. Exploring this subject is crucial for providing valuable perspectives on teaching approaches, individualized instruction, and organizational control within an educational sphere; hence, recognizing obstacles and pinpointing successful avenues for educator training.

In conclusion, this research helps advance comprehension of efficient pedagogical techniques and contributes to educational regulations and professional growth strategies.

2. Literature Review

Formative assessment encompasses a broad spectrum of classroom practices (Bennett, 2011). It involves teachers and students engaging in activities to collect information and adjust teaching and learning methods based on feedback (Black & William, 1998, p. 140). Rather than focusing solely on student achievements, formative assessment identifies learning gaps, supports new learning, predicts future teaching actions (Bennett & Gitomer, 2009), and encourages students to self-regulate their learning (Andrade & Heritage, 2018).

Formative assessment is beneficial in tracking progress, guiding instructional adjustments, and promoting engaging classroom activities (Dixon & Haigh, 2009; Sezen-Barrie & Kelly, 2017; Brink & Bartz, 2017). However, teachers lacking a clear understanding of formative assessment might limit its application in classrooms.

Numerous studies have emphasized educational background, professional training, skills, self-confidence, school environment, internal school support, working conditions, and student characteristics as crucial role factors affecting the instructors' willingness to implement formative assessment (Crichton & McDaid, 2016; Brink & Bartz, 2017; Ahmedi, 2019; DeLuca et al., 2019; Lyon et al., 2019). Over the years, a focus on integrating formative assessment methods into teaching and learning has grown.

William and Thompson (2008) developed a five key strategies framework of assessment practices

1. to state and share learning objectives and success criteria;
2. to facilitate productive classroom discussions, questions, and learning activities;
3. to provide feedback that advances learners;
4. to involve students as peer learning resources
5. to empower students to take care of their learning (William & Thompson, 2008, p. 64) as cited in (Yan & Pastore, 2022).

According to Veugen, Gulikers, and Brok (2024), when applying formative assessment in the classroom, teachers are responsible for designing and implementing strategies that actively engage students in the assessment process (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Carless & Winstone, 2020). Educators must plan a learning environment conducive to formative assessment before the lesson and ensure that the setting allows such assessment during teaching (Heitink et al., 2016). This proactive approach aids teachers to gather information , to track learning progress and adapt their teaching methods accordingly (William, 2014).

Moreover, teachers should adjust the learning environment during instruction to effectively meet learners' needs, ensuring the success of formative assessment in enhancing learning (William & Leahy, 2015). To meet various objectives, such as promoting learning, teachers must meticulously plan and execute the formative assessment process following five aligned phases (Gulikers & Baartman, 2017; Veugen et al., 2021). They need to understand the learning objectives, identify the data to collect regarding student learning, and determine how to use this to improve the learning process (OECD, 2005; William, 2014; William & Leahy, 2015). Additionally, teachers should be capable of interpreting real-time information on student learning

to adjust teaching strategies and achieve the desired outcomes (Gulikers & Baartman, 2017; Heitink et al., 2016).

Overall, formative assessment significantly impacts teaching methodologies by providing continuous feedback that shapes instructional tactics, enhances differentiation, and fosters reflective teaching (Black & William, 1998). It also allows teachers to make data-driven decisions, to offer targeted support and encourage high-achieving students (Heritage, 2010). By delivering timely feedback and involving students in the learning process, formative assessments promote a student-centred approach and enhance classroom management by anticipating and addressing learning challenges (Sadler, 1989). Consequently, educators can adjust their strategies more effectively to meet diverse student needs, creating a more efficient learning environment (William, 2011).

3. Methods

Teachers implement assessment practices based on their knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, personalities and formative assessment. They acknowledged its direct impact on students and their learning outcomes and its significant influence on teachers and their instructional methods. Incorporating formative assessment practices leads to a shift from traditional methods focused solely on final evaluations. This change encourages teachers to continually monitor and assess progress during instruction, enabling them to identify challenging areas and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. By providing specific feedback, formative assessment helps teachers enhance comprehension and foster a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, it promotes a collaborative learning environment where students actively participate in their educational journey, fostering a sense of responsibility and motivation. This study explores the level of formative assessment literacy among teachers and how it affects their teaching practices.

3.1.Sample of research

Random sampling involves choosing a representative subset from a broader population (Creswell, 2014). Each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected, ensuring an unbiased selection process and minimizing sampling errors (Thompson, 2012). By analyzing the sample data, researchers can conclude the entire population, enhancing the reliability and generalizability of their research findings (Babbie, 2010).

The sample comprises 35 secondary school teachers selected randomly from 7 schools in the northern Setif District 2 area, Algeria. These schools include Fatima Zahra (Ouled Brahem), Mohamed Ben Touati (Gaoua), Bouaoud Ahmed (Fermatou), Mohamed Kerouni (Setif Center), Kessali Moussa (300), Ibn Khaldoun (Bizar), and Malek Bennabi (El Hidhab). The researcher opted for these secondary schools because teachers got the same training inspector. During the sampling process, the researcher considered age and years of experience, aiming for a diverse sample of experienced, intermediate, and novice teachers, including adjunct, contract, and permanent teachers. Among the participants, 18 (51.4%) were female, while 17 were male (48.6%).

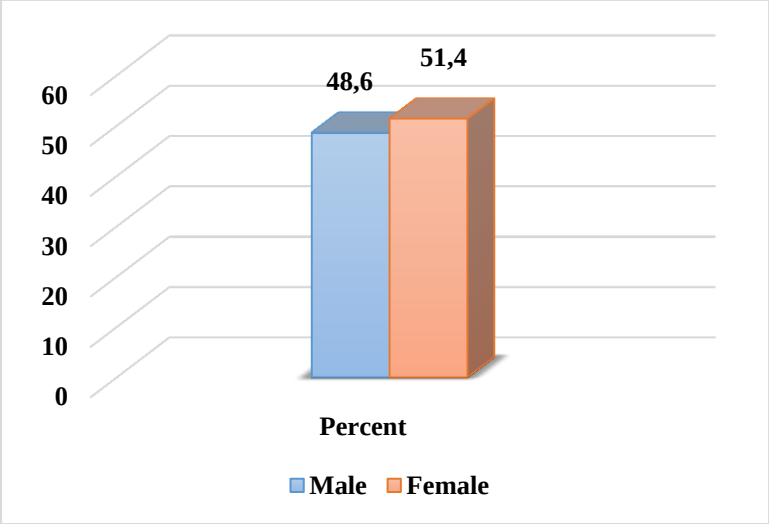
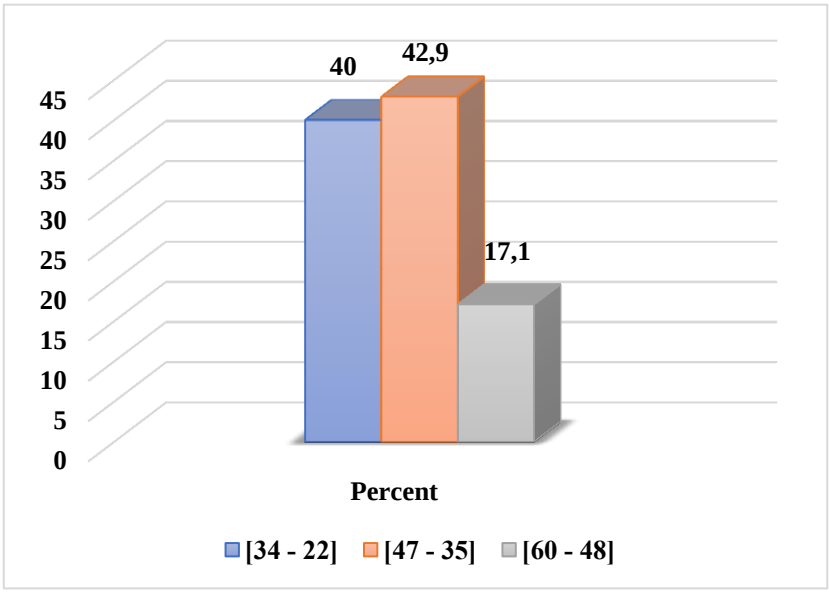


Figure1: Population Sampling

Figure 1 illustrates the sampling population involved in the study. Teachers were chosen with diverse qualifications, varied teaching experiences, different age groups, and genders. These variations allowed for a wide range of perspectives to be gathered on competency-based formative assessment while presenting the primary themes in the analysis and discussion.

Figure 1: Sample's Age



As Figure 2 indicates, out of all the participants, 14 (40%) were aged between 22 and 34 years, 15 (42.9%) were between 35 and 47 years, and 6 (17.1%) were between 48 and 60 years.

As shown in Table 1, the years of teaching experience among the teachers vary from one individual to another; 14 (40%) had less than 5 years of experience, while 21 (60%) had more than 5 years of experience.

Teachers years of experience	
2 Years of Experience	7 Teachers
3 Years of Experience	3 Teachers
4 Years of Experience	4 Teachers
5 Years of Experience	1 Teacher

8 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
10 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
11 Years of Experience	2 Teachers
12 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
13 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
14 Years of Experience	2 Teachers
15 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
16 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
18 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
20 Years of Experience	4 Teachers
26 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
30 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
31 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
34 Years of Experience	1 Teacher
37 Years of Experience	1 Teacher

Table 1: Teachers' years of Experience

As for the teachers' educational background, 17 (48.6%) held a Licence(BA) degree, and 18 (51.4%) had a Master degree as demonstrated in Figure 3.

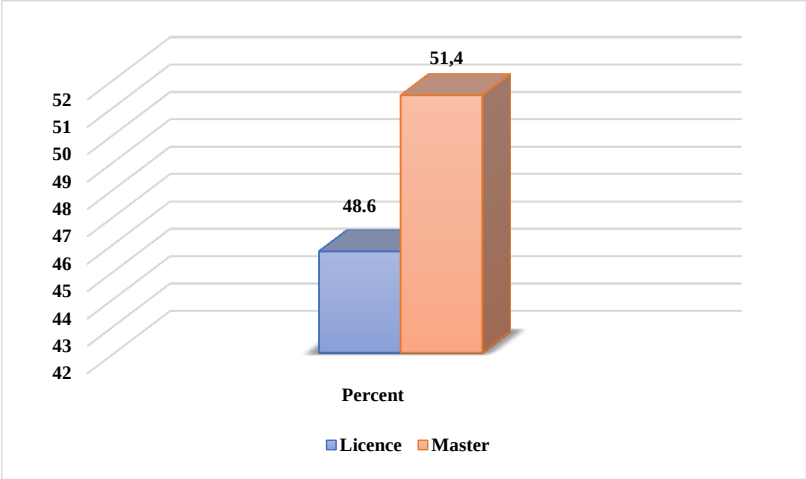


Figure 2: Participants Degree

3.2.Instrument and Data Collection

The researcher employed a questionnaire combining closed and open-ended questions to collect descriptive and comparative data which aim at delineating the practices of secondary school educators in implementing classroom formative assessment .

The researcher divides the survey into two sections: the first segment consists of multiple-choice questions concerning teachers' knowledge, perceptions, practices, and challenges encountered during formative assessment implementation, while the second part comprises open-ended

questions primarily focusing on the difficulties and subjectivity associated with formative assessment.

Using SPSS 20, the researcher calculates the questionnaire's validity and reliability using teachers' responses in the questionnaire to compute the internal validity of the research instrument through the calculation of the Pearson Correlation coefficient. The obtained coefficient of 0.76 was statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level, indicating a high validity coefficient for the tool illustrated in Table 2.

	Correlation	signifiance
internal validity of the Tool	**0.765**	**0.05***

Significant at the p =0.05 level

Table 2: The Questionnaire's Internal Validity

Regarding the reliability coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha was employed for calculation. As displayed in Table 3, the reliability coefficient was notably high at 0.75, signifying a very high coefficient suitable for the study's objectives.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**
0.753	**08**

Table3:The Questionnaire's Reliability

4.Results and Discussion

The administered questionnaire comprised eight closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions: this section will cover the analysis and interpretation of all the questions.

Question 1: What is your level of experience with formative assessment?

	Frequency	Percent
Novice (little or no experience)	**3**	**8.6**
Intermediate (some experience)	**23**	**65.7**
Advanced (significant experience)	**9**	**25.7**
Total	**35**	**100**

Table 4: Analysis of Question One

Based on the analysis presented in Table 4, most teachers (65.7%), have an intermediate level of experience in formative assessment to indicate that they have some familiarity and knowledge,

but may not be considered experts or highly experienced, which makes them aware of all the techniques and methods of formative assessment implementation. The second largest group (25.7%) falls under the advanced category, suggesting they possess significant experience and expertise in formative assessment. Lastly, a relatively small percentage (8.6%) of teachers have little or no experience, and are relatively new or unfamiliar with.

Question 2: What types of formative assessment strategies do you currently use?

	Frequency	Percent
Quizzes	**27**	**34.6**
Exit tickets	**2**	**2.6**
Class discussions	**29**	**37.2**
Formative writing assignments	**20**	**25.6**
Total	**78**	**100**

Table 5: Analysis of Question Two

Table 5 shows that most teachers (37.2%) prefer class discussions as their principal teaching method. This indicates a preference for interactive and collaborative learning environments where students can engage with one another and the teacher to discuss and explore the subject matter. Quizzes are the second most preferred method (34.6%), showing that teachers value assessing understanding and providing feedback. According to teachers, formative writing assignments (25.6%) are also beneficial, as they allow students to apply their knowledge and demonstrate understanding through written work and permit teachers to examine students' strengths and weaknesses thoroughly. Exit tickets (2.6%) are the least preferred, suggesting as less effective in the learning process or teachers' unfamiliarity with them.

Question 3: What do you think are the most important benefits of using formative assessment in the classroom?

	Frequency	Percent
Improved student's engagement	**23**	**25.3**
Increased student's motivation	**23**	**25.3**
Better understanding of student learning needs	**28**	**30.8**
More effective lesson planning	**17**	**18.7**
Total	**91**	**100**

Table 6: Analysis of Question Three

Table 6 reveals that most respondents (30.8%) believe technology use in the classroom leads to a better understanding of students' learning needs. Technology provides teachers with valuable means to assess and monitor their students' progress, identify areas where they may need additional support, and tailor their teaching strategies accordingly. The second most perceived benefit is improved student engagement (18.7%), indicating that technology can capture students' attention, enhance their motivation, and make their learning process more interactive and enjoyable. Increased student motivation (18.7%) is also a positive outcome, as technology can provide students with opportunities for self-paced learning, exploration, and collaboration, fostering a greater desire to learn. In contrast, more effective lesson planning (18.7%) received the lowest percentage, suggesting that teachers may not perceive technology as significantly contributing to the efficiency or effectiveness of their lesson planning process. The outcomes align with a separate investigation by Sharma & Kumar (2021) indicating that educators viewed technology as advantageous in improving students' engagement, motivation, and educational achievements.

Question 4: What challenges have you faced when implementing formative assessment?

	Frequency	Percent
Lack of time	**24**	**35.8**
Difficulty in interpreting data	**10**	**14.9**
Resistance from students	**16**	**23.9**
Limited resources	**17**	**25.4**
Total	**67**	**100**

Table 7: Analysis of Question Four

Table 7 shows that the primary obstacle to implementing formative assessment in the classroom, as perceived by most respondents (35.8%), is the lack of time that teachers may encounter ,challenges in incorporating formative assessment practices into their teaching routines due to various factors such as heavy workloads, limited class time, or competing priorities. The next significant challenge, identified by 25.4% of respondents, is the lack of essential materials, tools, or professional development opportunities required for effective formative assessment implementation. Other respondents (23.9%) acknowledged that students' resistance was a hurdle, implying that some students may hesitate to participate in formative assessment activities. Conversely, only 14.9% of respondents find interpreting data challenging, indicating that teachers are confident in their ability to analyse and use data from formative assessments to improve their teaching practices. This research provides backing for the discoveries of J. Chen and Y. Chen (2022) who highlighted that educators recognized formative assessment as valuable. However, they faced challenges in its implementation due to time constraints, limited resources, and students' resistance.

Question 5: How do you currently use the results to inform your instruction?

	Frequency	Percent
Adjust lesson plans	**23**	**28.4**
Provide additional support to students	**26**	**32.1**
Change instructional strategies	**20**	**24.7**
Use data to set goals for student learning	**12**	**14.8**
Total	**81**	**100**

Table 8: Analysis of Question Five

The data analysis in Table 8 indicates that most respondents (32.1%) believe that providing extra support to students is the most effective way to address formative assessment data. This suggests that teachers prioritize struggling students or those requiring additional assistance. Adjusting lesson plans (28.4%) is also considered a crucial response, showing that teachers are willing to modify their teaching approaches based on formative assessment results. Changing instructional strategies (24.7%) is another effective method that teachers identified, allowing them to adjust their teaching techniques to suit students' learning requirements. Conversely, using data to establish students' learning goals (14.8%) received less support, indicating that teachers may not find this approach relevant in their teaching practice.

Question 6: How do you involve students in the process of formative assessment?

	Frequency	Percent
Student-led conferences	**7**	**10.3**
Student self-assessment	**23**	**33.8**
Peer assessment	**24**	**35.3**
Student feedback on assessment strategies	**14**	**20.6**
Total	**68**	**100**

Table 9: Analysis of Question Six

Table 9 suggests that peer assessment is the preferred strategy for involving students in the assessment process, as chosen by most respondents (35.3%), highlighted that teachers value the opportunity for students to offer feedback to their peers, and fostering a collaborative learning atmosphere. The second most favoured strategy is student self-assessment (33.8%), demonstrating

that teachers acknowledge the importance of students reflecting on their studies and developing metacognitive skills. Students' feedback on assessment strategies (20.6%) is also beneficial, providing teachers with insights into students' perceptions of the assessment process and enabling necessary improvements.

In contrast, student-led conferences (10.3%) received the lowest preference, indicating that teachers may not find this approach feasible in their teaching context. M. Brown and P. Jones (2020) identified that educators prioritize peer assessment and student self-assessment as approaches for engaging students in the assessment procedure.

Question 7: What are the most effective ways to communicate with parents and guardians about student progress using formative assessment data?

	Frequency	Percent
Parent-teacher conferences	**27**	**56.3**
Progress reports	**13**	**27.1**
Email updates	**3**	**6.3**
Phone calls	**3**	**6.3**
None of these	**2**	**4.2**
Total	**48**	**100**

Table 10: Analysis of Question Seven

Table 10 analysis uncovers that 56.3% of the participants prefer parent-teacher conferences for communicating students' progress, highlighting teachers' appreciation for face-to-face interactions. These meetings allow detailed discussions on students' strengths, challenges, and progress. Progress reports (27.1%) are also valued, offering regular updates on academic performance. Email updates (6.3%) and phone calls (6.3%) are less favoured, possibly due to time constraints or the need for more detailed conversations. The least preferred choice, "None of these" (4.2%), indicates the belief that some form of communication with parents is vital for effective school research partnerships, as stated by J. Smith and K. Johnson (2019), which demonstrated that educators favoured parent-teacher conferences and progress reports as means of informing parents about students' progress.

Question 8: How do you currently use technology to support formative assessment?

	Frequency	Percent
Online quizzes and assessments	**15**	**34.9**
Digital tools for data analysis	**11**	**25.6**
Online resources for student learning	**17**	**39.5**

Total	**43**	**100**

Table 11: Analysis of Question Eight

The examination in Table 11 indicates that 39.5% of respondents view online resources for student learning as the most effective technology used to support learning. Instructors appreciate the wide range of educational materials online, which can enhance classroom instruction and enable self-paced learning. Online quizzes and assessments (34.9%) are the second most effective, showing the importance of using technology for assessment and feedback. On the other hand, digital tools for data analysis (25.6%) received the lowest percentage, suggesting that teachers may find them useless or need more training to use them effectively. The outcomes align with A. Lee and B. Park's study in 2018 that documented that educators considered online resources and assessments as beneficial applications of technology to bolster student learning.

Question 9: Have you observed any differences in engagement, motivation, or learning resulting from formative assessment?

Most teachers replied affirmatively, with six agreeing that the primary change lies in increased student engagement and their inclination to ask questions. Two teachers mentioned that students now identified learning objectives, resulting in fewer instances of confusion. One teacher shared, Of course, I have. Now, I can see the good results after applying so many formative assessments to my learners. I can see how much they have improved in learning the target language, the lessons and the key concepts

Another teacher remarked, "Decrease the amount of anxiety towards assessment in general… no one thinks about marks but feedback and looking for further progress". One teacher added, "I have noticed changes in quizzes, peer reviews, and discussions, which keep students actively involved in the learning process. This increased interaction helps maintain their interest and focus. The consistent use of formative assessments creates a more dynamic and supportive learning environment which contributes to positive changes".

Teachers collectively acknowledged that formative assessment aids in pinpointing students' weaknesses, thereby improving through constructive feedback. However, two teachers disagreed, stating they did not notice changes in students' engagement, motivation, or learning outcomes after using formative assessment.

Question 10: Have you encountered any challenges or barriers in implementing formative assessment, and how have you addressed them?

Three teachers responded that they did not face challenges in implementing formative assessment, while others confirmed encountering some obstacles. Some of the constraints mentioned include student resistance, shortage of time and resources, a tendency for formative to turn into summative assessment, uncertainty in implementing formative assessment, low learner proficiency hindering the implementation, and limited knowledge of formative assessment, lack of training about formative assessment. One teacher mentioned, a lack of resources, and mostly a lack of time to implement them and how to correct students' input delivery. Students also do not like them. A few students like homework and tests, even ungraded ones." Another teacher shared,

"One of the challenges I faced during formative assessment is personalities and individual differences in learners. Sometimes, you find a very motivated learner who is energetic and active; on the other hand, you find a very calm, introverted, passive learner who is not motivated. I found myself putting in much effort to adapt to learners and, most importantly, not to neglect any of them.

The other teacher concurred stating, despite identified benefits of formative assessment to teaching and learning, its implementation in the classroom remains a significant challenge for teachers. Time constraints, heavy workload, overcrowded curriculum, large class sizes and lessons, were reported hindrances.

Question 11: How have you ensured assessment data is justly used, transparent and unbiased?

Two Teachers denied paying attention to bias and stated they did not interpret the data. Other teachers ensured fairness by setting clear objectives, planning assessment tools, using familiar contexts for all students, involving expert teachers in reviewing tools and promoting equity regardless of students' backgrounds. The other approach mentioned by teachers was establishing clear learning objectives and assessment criteria, providing consistent feedback, using formative assessment methods, and regularly verifying data to address bias patterns.

Some teachers focused on the importance of ensuring fair and unbiased assessment practices, suggesting careful planning of assessments to access key learning goals in a balanced manner. For instance, if learning goals include understanding a historical period and evaluating decisions made during that time, the test should consist of questions on understanding and evaluation skills. Involving people with diverse perspectives in reviewing assessment tools can help ensure clarity, alignment with intended objectives, and fairness across all student backgrounds.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study unveiled that teachers typically possess an intermediate level of expertise in formative assessment, with a preference for class discussions and quizzes as the primary methods for learning and assessment. Instructors view technology as advantageous in improving learning assessment, especially in grasping requirements. However, time constraints, scarce resources, and resistance impede its successful execution. Educators encounter difficulties concerning the time and resources necessary for effective implementation. They found that delivering extra assistance to students and adapting lesson plans are highlighted in response to formative assessment data. Involving students in the assessment, and using peer and student self-assessment proved influential. Parent-teacher conferences are the most preferred mode of informing them about their progress. Resources and assessments are also beneficial online technology applications that improve learning.

Most teachers noted positive transformations in engagement and motivation, decreased anxiety related to assessment, and enhanced comprehension of learning goals. Some educators struggled to ensure impartiality and fairness and avoid biases by resorting to various tactics- establishing clear learning goals and assessment criteria, offering consistent feedback, employing a range of

assessment techniques, and incorporating diverse viewpoints in evaluating assessment instruments.

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