

Teachers' Perspectives towards the Implementation of Assessment for Learning at University Level

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Abstract:

Assessment for learning (AFL) is an approach to teaching and learning that creates feedback to improve students' performance. Students become more involved in the learning process and gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard. The present study is a quantitative study that aims to investigate university EFL teachers' perspectives of assessment for learning approach and identify

the challenges teachers face when implementing AfL. Also, three research questions are addressed: (1) To what extent do English language teachers use assessment for learning in their classes? (2) What are the teachers' perspectives on Assessment for Learning in developing EFL learning? And (3) What challenges do EFL teachers face when implementing AFL?

To answer the research questions, the study used a 25-item questionnaire (Modified of Colby, D. C. 2010). The questionnaire was distributed to 102 EFL teachers at three public universities in Erbil: Salahaddin (55 teachers), Soran (34 teachers) and Koya Universities (13 teachers).

The data was analyzed using SPSS Software. Despite some varied challenges and difficulties EFL teachers face in implementing the AfL approach in the classes, generally, the results show that university teachers have a positive perspective toward implementing AfL as a teaching and learning approach. It is recommended that it is necessary to arrange and implement teacher-training sessions and workshops to improve teacher' grasp of the current AFL approach.

Keywords: Assessment for Learning, EFL Teachers, Perspectives, AfL Implementation.

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1. Introduction:

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is an innovation in Kurdistan's higher education, particularly at the university level; teachers should consider this approach in their classes as a recent approach. However, with these reforms and changes in teaching, there has never been research into the implementation of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in teaching classrooms and the effects that arise with it in Kurdistan's education.

Educators have established that formative assessment plays various roles in the educational process, and it should be used effectively. Recently, educators preferred the term assessment for learning, (AfL) as an approach; for instance, the term was coined by Gipps, C., (2011) to describe a shift from traditional evaluation methods such as "testing if the content had been obtained" to a more holistic assessment of "the shape and quality of learners' thinking and teaching" (p. 26).

While many publications have used the terms "Formative Assessment" and "Assessment for Learning" interchangeably or as different terms for the same idea, Black and Wiliam et al. (2003) distinguished the two: "Assessment for learning is any assessment which their primary goals are to promote students' learning. It also differs from an assessment that is primarily used for accountability, rating, or certifying competency. An assessment activity can assist learning if it gives information instructors and students can use as feedback. When the evidence can use to alter the instructional content to suit learning goals, the evaluation becomes a "formative assessment." (P. 10).

However, it is clear that among all other approaches for learning, the focus has been on assessment for learning as an approach to learning rather than as a tool for evaluating or testing students. According to Stiggins, R. J. (2002), the core premise of AfL is that assessment is used to improve student learning. In recent years, the change from teacher-centered to communicative student-autonomy teaching approaches and methods has demanded a shift from traditional assessment methods to the AfL Approach, which is more student-centered, in recent years (Grablin, L. A., 2007, p. 2).

Black and Wiliam (2005) defined AfL as "all those acts performed by instructors, and/or their students, to influence teaching and learning activities in which students are engaged. Whereas Broadfoot, P. M., et al. (2002) describe AfL as "the process of collecting and evaluating evidence for use by learners and instructors in assessing where learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how effectively to get there" (pp. 2–3). This implies that AfL is a broader word than assessment to represent the whole ongoing process of classroom teaching. It is a different approach than the traditional assessment that EFL teachers are used to implementing in the class.

Moreover, it is clear that AfL as an essential approach, it has a crucial value in use in teaching language like any other subject, especially in EFL classes, where it includes those types of tasks and activities that EFL teachers use in classes and this approach provides learners with information as feedback to assist them in improving their learning (Yan Zi et al., 2021). AfL focuses on both teachers' and students' understanding during the learning process. Effective teachers can provide learning opportunities when their students' competence is developed and strengthened (Heritage and Wylie, 2013).

The implementation of any approach consists of a collection of principles, strategies, methodologies, planned and intentional activities to construct a successful classroom and achieving a set of goals, as well as a philosophy of education in teaching and learning through the design of a curriculum and its policy. It is essential to implement AfL in a competent teaching class by English instructors. It also needs a set of strategies and professional EFL teachers. Creative and effective teachers can reflect on the use of AfL in their lessons as a natural part of teaching the intended course (Gardner, 2012). additionally, Black & William (1998a) also

stated that AfL improves learning outcomes and productivity and promotes more approachable learning through enhancing active knowledge and self-efficacy. However, putting it into practice may be essential, and the implementation of AfL depends on several strategies.

1.1 Assessment for Learning and its implementation strategies

According to the previous studies, learners can acquire language skills more efficiently. At the same time, they understand how to use specific strategies and techniques for learning a language, which can define the essential means to obtain the role of learners in a successful foreign language (Sadler, D. R., 1989).

While applying AfL strategies in EFL classrooms, teachers play a modeling role for their learners to notice the process steps they need to follow and use them to apply the approach. According to Wiliam, D. and Thompson, M., (2017) there are three main stages in learning and teaching to create a stronger theoretical foundation for AfL. These three key processes in learning are: "Where the learner is going, Where the learner is right now, and How to get there."

According to (Black, P. and Wiliam, D., 1998b; Heritage, M., 2013) there are five AfL strategies that teachers can categorize in these three key processes in learning via implementing AfL strategies in their lessons.

The first strategy is clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success; in this strategy, the teacher starts by presenting students with a vision of the learning destination. EFL teachers then collaborate with students to familiarize them with the learning objectives, Objectives and the expected learning outcomes and goals they are working toward. In this approach, teachers teach what they assess. As a result, AFL involves not just in assessment but also EFL teachers' need to establish a purpose. The planned purpose and goals of a lesson that lay out the syllabuses to be taught in an interactive atmosphere; they are called content purpose, language purpose, and social purpose (Frey and Fisher, 2011).

While implementing the second strategy, which is engineering effective classroom discussions and other learning tasks that elicit evidence of student understanding; a teacher can organize the classroom with many activities such as; discussions, activities, and learning assignments that uncover evidence of learning. According to Wiliam, D. (2011), the most crucial function is to determine what students know and where they are in their learning. Therefore, EFL teachers rarely arrange this in considerable detail. "This procedure must be planned since what students learn may not be what the professor anticipated. This mismatch is unavoidable due to the unexpected nature of education; which teachers must accept" John, P. D. (2006). As a result, EFL teachers need to figure out what their students know before thinking about whether they have comprehended something. However, EFL teachers should make an effort to come up with questions that give insight into students' thinking since such questions are significant in increasing the quality of students' learning.

The third strategy of AfL is Providing feedback that moves learners forward. Teachers can provide feedback that pushes students to the next stage. The most important aspect of the AfL approach is that instructors provide learners with positive feedback on their strengths and weaknesses to help them improve their skills and progress to the next steps. Bourgeois, L. (2016) stated that feedback's value is defined by its quality and how it is received or used by learners.

The fourth strategy of AfL is Activating students as instructional resources for one another; for this purpose, teachers can involve students in the classroom activities. Active student participation is essential in AfL since students must learn for themselves. According to Thomas et al. (2011), teachers should collaborate with their students during the evaluation process and take Complete control of their authority over the students, giving them the confidence and strength to overcome their weaknesses. Scholars recommended self-assessment as a good strategy for students to develop greater autonomy concerning their learning and promote their

metacognition and collaborative learning skills. Brown and Harris (2014) defined self-assessment as a diagnostic and evaluative act performed by the student on their work and academic abilities (p. 368). Peer assessment is regarded as particularly valuable in providing additional formative feedback in AfL. Butler, D. L., & Winne, P. H. (1995) claimed that when observations regarding their work come from a classmate rather than a teacher, students are more understanding of such comments. The primary justification for using peer assessment is pedagogical, i.e., an increase in many dimensions of learning, which is another factor that has a significant impact on the success of AfL.

The fifth AfL strategy is Activating students as the owners of their learning. Therefore, teachers support students to reflect on their learning and provide them with opportunities. Increased communication opportunities can increase students' confidence in their work and make them more aware of the criteria used to evaluate them (Saito and Fujita, 2004). Students learn a portfolio to self-reflect and manage their knowledge. Students keep a weekly reflective notebook, and students make note of their self-directed language work outside the classroom. These are mostly just a few examples of tasks teachers may use to implement this strategy (Black & Wiliam, 2010).

1.2 Teacher's Providing Feedback within an AfL Approach

The best feedback can help teachers and students determine the most crucial aspects of the teaching process (e.g., identifying strong and weak points, suggesting a method to address a problem). According to Hounsell et al. (2008), students can generate varied interpretations of the learning intent from their instructors; Therefore, teachers must be explicit and detailed when guiding expectations. Learner development continues to improve as a result of strong AfL practices.

As an example, extensive written remedial advice may not be effective in providing feedback on student writing language use as an example, as such unfocused comments can easily confuse and frustrate students. Hyland (2010) claims that EFL teachers should focus on the most significant areas that require attention when responding to written errors, rather than overloading student texts with red ink by underlining and/or correcting every single error, whether in written or oral comments.

Whether consciously or subconsciously, oral or written feedback, the feedback provided should be given positively and lead to action to support or grow an individual's performance or behavior. Feedback can significantly influence student achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). According to previous research, feedback is one of the most effective treatments available to instructors (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) pointed out that feedback is a multi-faceted concept with three separate components: feed up, feedback, and feedforward. Teachers must utilize all three to create a feedback system completely.

To sum up, AfL strategies are built on a continuous process involving both the teacher and the students and based on external and internal stimulus feedback. The approach includes three types of evaluation: self-assessment as "internal feedback," peer-assessment, and teacher-assessment as "external feedback." In order to enact AfL as a successful approach, each of these assessment strategies must be established. However, clarifying goals and criteria, engaging classroom discussion and questions to elicit evidence of learning, giving quality teacher feedback, peer-assessment, and self-assessment are the most fundamental AfL strategies.

1.3 The Challenges of Implementation of AfL

The foundation of AfL is for teachers and students to shift their perspectives from traditional assessment to AfL is a new step. However, it involves a rethinking of teachers' and students' roles and identities and their duties and obstacles in implementing AfL. Many studies have proven that reform is a challenging and complex process, as transformation experiences over the previous several years have been established (e.g., DeLuca,

C. et al., 2012; Panadero, E., 2016). When AfL was applied in the classroom for the first time, teachers and students faced numerous challenges. However, AfL has several challenges that EFL teachers also face in implementing this approach, such as:

Misconceptions in the term of "assessment" are frequently misunderstood since they are commonly used to refer to summative testing. Despite attempts by studies to clarify the relationship between Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL), one of the most significant impediments to AfL integration is the belief that AfL and AoL are separate processes (Bennett, R. E., 2011).

Additionally, fear of change is another challenge in every new system. Teachers and students may be concerned that their modifications in their classroom practice will be beneficial. They may feel obliged to deny any signs of stress or failure. As Black, P., et al, (2004) claimed, while instructors are continuously exposed to new perspectives, making AfL a whole part of their work would undoubtedly need "hard work, patience, and trust".

Another challenge for EFL teachers is class culture. Teachers may believe that they do not have time to participate in activities that do not appear to be directly related to final test marks. In addition to class culture, Brown et al. (2017) conducted a study where they found significant differences in assessment practices and beliefs held by Hong Kong teachers compared to teachers in New Zealand and Australia in a cross-cultural survey. They noted that broader cultural norms that focus on examinations are part of Hong Kong school culture and impede assessment reforms emphasizing AfL.

Another challenge for EFL teachers is a lack of training in new methods and technological applications for the AfL. Education institutions frequently lack the necessary training in AfL strategies, technology, and procedures for their teachers. Professional development must be ongoing and connected to each EFL teacher's professional practice. "EFL teachers require assistance in putting principles into action. Teacher learning providers enable teachers to modify their behaviors and enhance their teaching. They should give a more holistic view of students' English language abilities than the isolated images supplied by tests" (Bao, C., et al, 2021)

Finally, Wiliam (2018) stated that the successful use of AfL would increase achievement the consistency of implementation might also impact EFL instructors' AfL approach. Suppose AfL becomes a superficial activity (for example, a student is repeating a teacher assessing comment into a grid at the end of the unit with no opportunity for the student to use the feedback and no modification to future instruction). In that case, it is unlikely to impact success positively.

1.4 Literature Review

Recently, there has been a great interest in the Assessment for Learning approach component. Several studies have dealt with this subject. The researcher looked at relevant studies to find more about teachers' perspectives on AfL. These studies were chosen as examples to determine teachers' viewpoints towards AfL implementation in teaching and learning.

Song, Y. (2012) conducted a study on Assessment for learning in a Chinese university context: "a Mixed-methods case study on English as a foreign language speaking ability". The study investigates the effectiveness of AfL in improving oral English skills and explores students' and teachers' perceptions of AfL. The findings indicate that AfL can assist higher-proficiency students in improving their oral English language learning abilities.

Additionally, Pat- El, R. J., et al. (2013) conducted another study that designed and validated a self-report AfL survey for both teachers and students. Monitoring and scaffolding are the two subscales of the AFL questionnaire. The survey was verified using EQS confirmatory factor analysis. The results of this study also show that AfL could be helpful in selecting for teaching classroom as a modern approach and can be beneficial for both teachers and students.

Another Research was conducted by Öz, H. (2014) among Turkish Teachers who practice Assessment for Learning in the EFL Classroom. The researcher formulated a 28-item questionnaire and provided it to 120 EFL teachers. The study's purpose was to explore Turkish teachers' perspectives on basic assessment techniques in EFL classrooms and their AfL practices, and then determine its impact depending on the factors. According to the findings, teachers primarily employed traditional evaluation techniques rather than AfL. Even though the teachers reported high levels of perceived AfL monitoring and scaffolding strategies, their assessments of their Learners varied.

Sardareh, S. A., et al., (2014) conducted research entitled: "ESL Teachers' Questioning Technique in an Assessment for Learning Context: Promising or Problematic? ". The study investigated how ESL teachers used AfL to practice classroom questioning and discourse and how they provided language learners with constructive feedback. According to the study findings, teachers can interact with students and engage them in the teaching process by having continuing discussions with them in order to create a collaborative learning environment in the classroom. When teachers did not use AfL strategies in the classroom, the majority of their questions were not conducive to reflective thinking.

Gan, Liu, and Yang (2017) researched ed on "Assessment for Learning in the Chinese Context: Prospective EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Their Relations to Learning Approach". The study aims to see how prospective EFL instructors think about assessment for learning (AfL) strategies. The study assessed 692 prospective EFL instructors' responses to a self-reported instrument involving assessment for learning practices. The findings reveal a substantial correlation between EFL instructors' perception of AfL and their tendency towards an achieving or deep learning strategy. The research indicates that a superficial learning approach is positively connected to AfL experience, implying that the more AfL characteristics used in a Chinese university environment can help students' progress.

Lastly, Wu, X. M., et al. (2021) conducted a recent study on using Assessment for Learning: Multi-case Studies of Three Chinese University English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) Teachers Engaging Students in Learning and Assessment. The study aims to increase student participation, which is a significant problem in learning and teaching because of its beneficial implications on students' learning outcomes. The study indicated that educator attempts to provide learners with the knowledge and skills they need to assess, encourage instructors to discuss learning goals with students, and assist teachers in creating a trusting climate in their classrooms.

2. Methodology

2.1 Method

A descriptive quantitative approach was followed to analysis data obtained from a questionnaire.

2.2 The participants of the study

The participants in the current study were purposely selected. The sample size of the questionnaire has been chosen according to the total number of EFL teachers at three public universities, namely: Soran, Salahaddin, and Koya Universities. However, all EFL teachers at these three universities were supposed to participate in

the questionnaire. The number of EFL teachers who willingly participated in the study is 102 EFL teachers from eight different colleges and faculties. 55 EFL teachers participated in Salahaddin University (College of Education: 12 teachers, College of Basic Education: 23 EFL teachers, College of Languages: 18 EFL teachers and College of Education-Shaqlawa: 2 EFL teachers. Respectively, 13 EFL teachers participated at Koya University (faculty of Education: 9 EFL teachers and faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences: 4 EFL teachers); As for Soran University, 34 EFL teachers have participated. (Faculty of Arts: 24 EFL teachers and faculty of Education: 10 EFL teachers).

2.3 Instrument

The study used a questionnaire of 25 items (Modified of Colby, D. C. 2010) to collect teachers' perspectives towards implementing Assessment for Learning. The questionnaire is divided into three parts: part 1: AfL classroom Strategies (from 1-10 items), Part 2: Giving Feedback (From item number 11-15) and part 3: Challenges teachers face in the implementation of AfL in the Classroom (From item number 16-25). The questionnaire adopts close-ended questions using five Likert scale. The scales are rated and coded statistically as: 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2- Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree. Accordingly, the mean between (1) and (5) is (3). In this case, three is neutral. Thus, a mean of more than three is considered positively supported, and a mean of less than three is considered negatively acknowledged. So, the options range from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

2.4 Validity

Validation is an essential part of performing research. For this purpose, a panel of eleven experts was chosen as jury members based on their relevant experience and expertise to assess the instruments' validity. The questionnaire items were emailed to them, and the researcher talked with several specialists in person to address the items. All comments and recommendations were considered, and so the final version was designed. (See appendix A, p. 22).

2.5 Reliability

Reliability is another important criterion that can be found in any instrument adopted in the study. For this purpose, the questionnaire was pilot tested on 30 EFL teachers at three universities, for this purpose. The pilot test necessitates a specific duration of time. The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers in two different times. The first occurrence took place on April 2, 2022, while the second occurred on April 22, 2022.

Cronbach alpha is one of the most extensively used metrics for measuring internal reliability in general. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was determined to analyse the internal consistency of the questionnaire, and the Cronbach's alpha value for the teachers' questionnaire was calculated as .709, showing adequate reliability as acceptance of these instruments.

Table (1) The Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Teachers' questionnaire – reliability analysis			
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	N of EFL Teachers	N of EFL teachers who responded Items
.709	25	30	30

Although the questionnaire's items were retested to Pearson - correlation in addition to Cronbach's Alpha, and **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). To see the re-test results of Pearson-correlation (See Appendix. B, p.23).

3. Data Analysis and Findings

The questionnaire's statistical analysis results indicated university EFL teachers' perspectives on the implementation of Assessment for Learning in EFL classroom. The frequency, mean, and standard deviation of each item were shown to the university EFL teachers in the study. The items were then calculated and analyzed based on the results.

3.1 Part 1: AfL classroom strategies

The first domain of the questionnaire is AfL strategies. According to the obtained data, there are different perspectives among EFL teachers on implementing AfL strategies as the follows:

Table (2) AfL classroom strategies

Part 1-AfL classroom strategies														
Items	Valid N	Missing	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation
			Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)		
Item1	102	0	54	52.9	45	44.1	3	2.9	0	0	0	0	4.50	.558
Item4	102	0	40	39.2	54	52.9	7	6.9	0	0	1	1.0	4.29	.683
Item10	102	0	38	37.3	48	47.1	15	14.7	0	0	1	1.0	4.20	.758
Item5	102	0	36	35.3	50	49.0	15	14.7	1	1.0	0	0	4.19	.714
Item3	102	0	31	30.4	58	56.9	58	56.9	0	0	0	0	4.18	.636
Item6	102	0	31	30.4	45	44.1	21	20.6	5	4.9	0	0	4.00	.844
Item7	102	0	30	29.4	43	42.2	24	23.5	5	4.9	0	0	3.96	.855
Item2	102	0	26	25.5	52	51.0	17	16.7	6	5.9	1	1.0	3.94	.865
Item9	102	0	22	21.6	55	53.9	21	20.6	4	3.9	0	0	3.93	.761
Item8	102	0	18	17.6	55	53.9	21	20.6	5	4.9	3	2.9	3.78	.897
Total	102	0	326	31.96	505	49.51	202	19.81	26	2.55	6	0.59	4.097	0.7571

Regarding item 1 about providing students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target. (52.9%) of EFL teachers say they "Strongly Agree" with the AfL strategy, and (44.1%) chose "Agree," while only (2.9%) chose "Neutral." In contrast, none of the EFL participants chose "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree," The mean score is (4.50), whereas the standard deviation for this item is (.558). According to the findings, the majority of teachers strongly support providing students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning goal.

As for Item 2, (25.5%) responded "Strongly agree", (51.0%) responded "Agree", (16.7%) responded "Neutral", (5.9%) responded "Disagree", and only (1.0%) responded "Strongly Disagree" This item's weighted mean is (3.94), with a standard deviation of (.865). The findings show that most teachers agree and believe that one of the essential teaching strategies is to design lessons to focus on one learning aim or quality at a time.

According to the findings of item 3, (30.4%) of EFL teachers claim they "strongly agree" and say they (56.9%) "agree" with teaching students to self-assess and set goals. Meanwhile, none of the teachers say they "disagree," and "strongly disagree." This item's weighted mean is (4.18), and the standard deviation is (.636). This demonstrates that most EFL teachers agree with teaching students to self-assess and set goals.

Concerning the teachers' use of open-ended questions to get students writing/talking as part of the ongoing class teaching process in item 4, (52.9 %) say "Agree" (39.2 %) say "Strongly Agree," and (6.9 %) say "Neutral". In comparison, only (1.0 %) say "Strongly disagree" and none of them say "Disagree." This item is positively accepted, with a mean score of (4.29) and a standard deviation of (.683). According to the findings, most teachers regard themselves as asking open-ended questions that get them writing/talking.

Regarding item 5 of asking students to reflect on the lesson and write down what they've learned, (49.0 %) of teachers were "Agree". Furthermore, (35.3 %) of them answered: "Strongly Agree". Nevertheless, (14.7 %) answered "Neutral," (1.0 %) said "Disagree", and none of them said "Strongly Disagree". On the other hand, the mean score of the responses is (4.19), and the standard deviation is (.714). This implies that teachers agree that asking students to reflect on the lesson and write down what they've learned is an effective strategy to implement in the classroom.

According to the data analysis of item 6, (44.1 %) of EFL teachers "Agree", (30.4 %) "Strongly Agree", and (20.6 %) "Neutral". In comparison, only (4.9 %) of EFL teachers "disagree" and none of them "strongly disagree". This item has a weighted mean of (4.00) and a standard deviation of (.844). As a result, it can be stated that most EFL teachers agree to use various AfL strategies of teaching, such as asking students to summarize or paraphrase significant concepts and lessons.

The results of item number 7 show that (42.2 %) of EFL teachers "agree" and (29.4 %) "strongly agree" with the claim. In contrast to their views, (23.5 %) of some teachers confirm "Neutral", while (4.9 %) of teachers are "Disagree," and none of them "Strongly Disagree". This item's mean score is (3.96), with a standard deviation of (.855). As a result, it is shown that one of the AfL strategies that EFL teachers implement in their classes is asking a single focused question with a specific goal that can be answered in a minute or two.

Concerning item number 8, (53.9%) EFL teachers ticked "agree" about Students are asked to reply individually to a short, pencil-and-paper assessment of the skills and knowledge covered in class, and (17.6 %) said they "Strongly agree". In comparison, (20.6 %) said they were "Neutral". In contrast, (4.9 %) of respondents stated they "disagree" and (2.9 %) said they "strongly disagree." This item's mean score is (3.78), with a standard deviation of (.897). This signifies that the item has been positively acknowledged. According to the findings, certain EFL teachers think that they were appropriately provided with this modern and recent AfL teaching strategy.

Moreover, the result of item number 9 shows that almost (53.9 %) of the participants revealed "Agree". Also, (21.6 %) Of participants "strongly agree." Meanwhile, (20.6%) Said, or ticked "Neutral" and only (3.9%) verified "Disagree". None of the EFL teachers say "strongly disagree". However, the mean score of the item is (3.93), with a standard deviation of (.761). This item is also positively accepted and implies that EFL teachers implement Peer assessment in their classes.

The result of item number 10 shows that (47.1 %) of the participants "Agree", (37.3 %) "Strongly agree" and (14.7%) say "Neutral," while only (1.0 %) say "Strongly Disagree" with none of the EFL teachers confirm "Disagree." The item has a mean score of (4.20) and a standard deviation of (.758). This item was similarly well received, meaning that most teachers agree with student-centered implementation as one method and strategy that AfL promotes for use by teachers in their classes.

The overall results of the items of the first part of the questionnaire indicate that, the teachers are generally satisfied with the implementation of AfL strategies from their university, and the majority of EFL teachers followed the AfL strategies in their classes. They are aware of AfL strategies.

AfL strategies and activities and to what extent they use it as a recent approach. The items are positively accepted with a mean score of (4.097) The mean is positively supported, which can be said that the majority of the EFL teachers stated they agreed to use AfL strategies in classes.

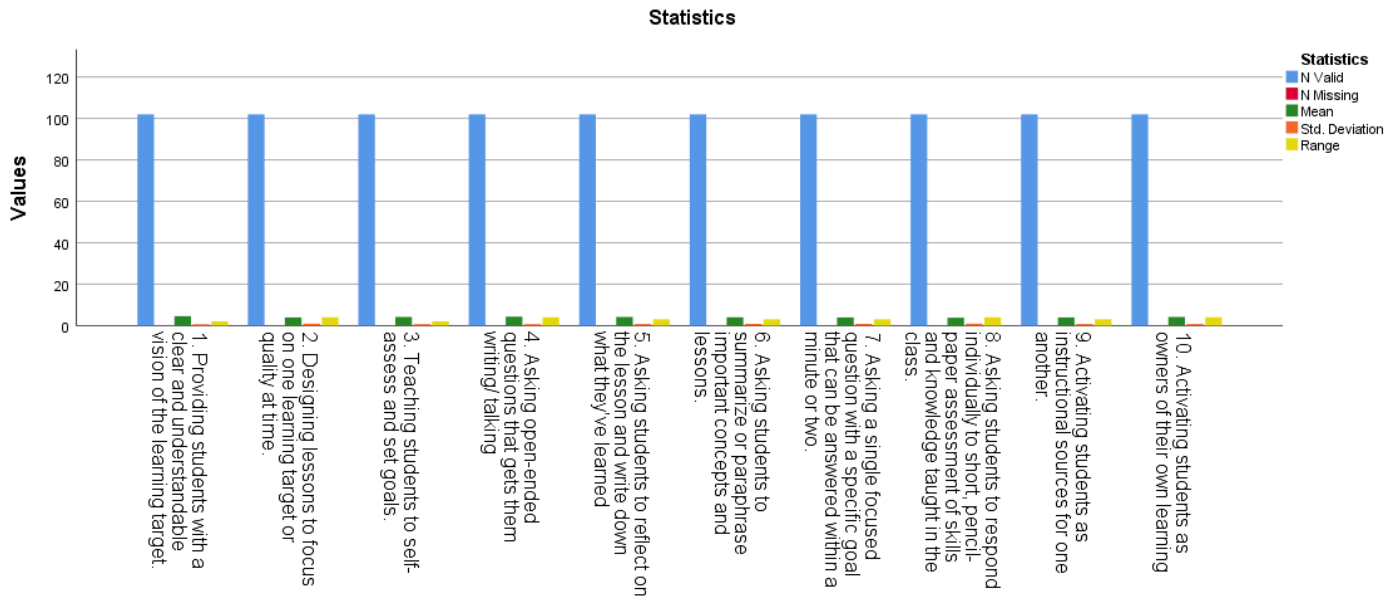


Figure (1) Descriptive Statistics of Part 1: AfL classroom strategies

3.2 Part 2: Giving Feedback

The second domain of the questionnaire is Giving feedback. According to the obtained data, there are also different perspectives among EFL teachers on implementing AfL strategies as the follows:

Table (3) Giving Feedback

Part 2: Giving Feedback														
Items	Valid N	Missing	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	St. Deviation
			Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)		
Item15	102	0	40	39.2	39	38.2	18	17.6	3	2.9	2	2.0	4.10	.928
Item11	102	0	31	30.4	54	52.9	12	11.8	4	3.9	1	1.0	4.08	.817
Item13	102	0	26	25.5	56	54.9	16	15.7	3	2.9	1	1.0	4.01	.790
Item14	102	0	30	29.4	36	35.3	29	28.4	5	4.9	2	2.0	3.85	.969
Item12	102	0	21	20.6	32	31.4	29	28.4	17	16.7	3	2.9	3.50	1.088
Total	102	0	148	29.02	217	42.54	104	20.38	32	6.26	9	1.78	3.908	0.9184

Item 11 is used to know about EFL teachers' attitudes toward offering time to students to reflect on their work in the course. The result has shown that (52.9%) of participants "agree" Furthermore, (30.4 %) "strongly Agree," implying that it is required. In addition, (11.8 %) say "Neutral." In contrast, (3.9 %) say they "Disagree," while only (1.0 %) say they "Strongly Disagree." The mean is (4.08), with a standard deviation of (.817), indicating that this item is positively accepted. The findings show that the most EFL

teachers agree that allowing students to reflect on their performance throughout the course is an excellent way to improve teaching in the classroom.

The result of item number 12 shows that (20.6%) of the teachers supported the idea and stated "Strongly Agree" Also, (31.4%) of them "Agree" and (28.4%) of teachers stated, "Neutral" while (16.7%) of the teachers were "Disagree" and only (2.9%) stated "Strongly Disagree". The mean score of this item is (3.50), which is positively acknowledged with a standard deviation of (1.088). So, it can be said that the majority of teachers agree with the necessity of providing a Comment-only marking: only writing comments on learners' work and not giving marks or scores as a kind of feedback.

The results of item 13 indicated that (25.5%) of the EFL teachers revealed "Strongly Agree" as necessary to give students time to make corrections. Furthermore, (54.9%) supported this activity by stating "Agree." Also, over (15.7%) of teachers noted "Neutral", and (2.9%) said "disagree". Only (1.0%) of teachers say they "strongly disagree". The mean score of this item is (4.01) with a standard deviation of (.790), which is positively accepted. The results indicate that the EFL teachers use wait-time as one of the AfL activities for giving feedback.

According to the results of item14, most teachers strongly support the need to "Don't erase corrections" to provide feedback. Teachers say they "strongly agree" (29.4 %) and "agree" (35.3 %). Meanwhile, (28.4 %) of instructors declare themselves "Neutral." In addition, (4.9 %) of the respondents confirmed their "disagree." Only (2.0 %) of those polled say they "strongly agree." The item's mean score is (3.85), with a standard deviation of (.969). According to the findings, the majority of teachers support the idea of improving students' weaknesses.

The results of item 15 show that (39.2%) of teachers choose "Strongly Agree", and (38.2%) said "Agree". Additionally, (17.6%) chose "Neutral". In comparison (2.9%) of teachers choose "Disagree", and (2.0%) said "Strongly Disagree" .The mean score for this item is (4.10), which is acknowledged its standard deviation is (.928), indicating that many teachers consider one of their tasks to be adding positive features when students' work is appropriate, i.e., writing positive comments on their work.

To sum up, the results obtained from EFL teachers' giving feedback showed that the items were well received. According to most EFL teachers, the findings show that providing students the opportunity to reflect on their performance throughout the course is a beneficial method to improve teaching in the classroom. As a result, EFL teachers believe that comment-only marking is necessary, which entails merely putting comments on students' work and not assigning grades or scores as feedback. The main general mean score of this part, which is about giving feedback, is (3.908). It showed that most EFL teachers use AfL strategies and the results of the items are supported to implement in the EFL universities classes.

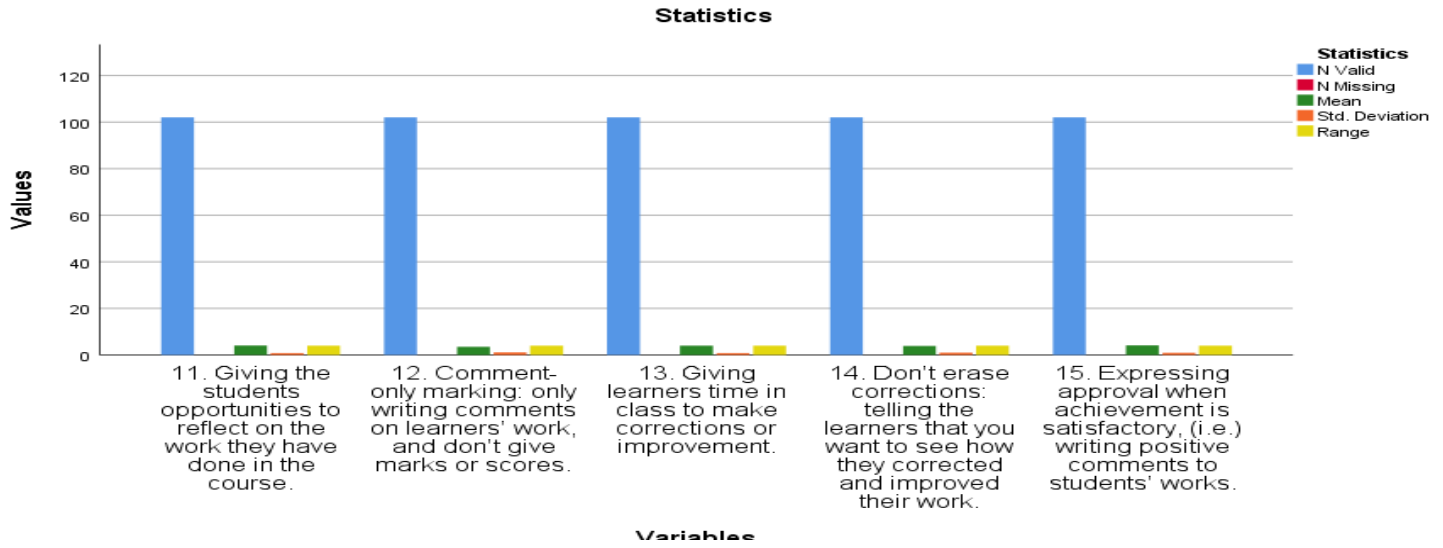


Figure (2) Descriptive Statistics of Part 2: Giving Feedback

3.3 Part 3: Challenges teachers face when implementing AfL in the Classroom

The final domain of the questionnaire is the challenges teachers face when implementing AfL in the classroom. Based on the obtained data, EFL teachers expressed their perspectives as follows:

Table (4) Part 3: Challenges Teachers Face When Implementing AfL in the Classroom

Part 3: Challenges Teachers Face When Implementing AfL in the Classroom														
Items	Valid N	Missing	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Std. Deviation
			Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)	Freq	(%)		
Item19	102	0	47	46.1	36	35.3	17	16.7	2	2.0	0	0	4.25	.805
Item20	102	0	30	29.4	44	43.1	24	23.5	2	2.0	2	2.0	3.96	.889
Item18	102	0	20	19.6	44	43.1	30	29.4	6	5.9	2	2.0	3.73	.914
Item16	102	0	21	20.6	43	42.2	28	27.5	8	7.8	2	2.0	3.72	.948
Item17	102	0	17	16.7	44	43.1	29	28.4	11	10.8	1	1.0	3.64	.920
Item22	102	0	11	10.8	45	44.1	35	34.3	7	6.9	4	3.9	3.51	.920
Item21	102	0	12	11.8	39	38.2	44	43.1	3	2.9	4	3.9	3.51	.887
Item23	102	0	18	17.6	55	53.9	21	20.6	5	4.9	3	2.9	3.03	1.057
Item24	102	0	22	21.6	55	53.9	21	20.6	4	3.9	0	0	2.97	1.103
Item25	102	0	38	37.3	48	47.1	15	14.7	0	0	1	1.0	2.94	1.296
Total	102	0	236	23.15	453	44.4	264	25.88	48	4.71	19	1.87	3.526	0.9739

In response to item 16, (20.6 %) of EFL teachers chose "Strongly Agree," (42.2 %) said "Agree", and (27.5 %) of them chose "Neutral." Meanwhile, (7.8%) of them "Disagree," and only (2.0 %) of them chose "Strongly Disagree". The mean score for this item is (3.72) With a standard deviation of (.948). According to the findings, the majority of teachers believe that a lack of appropriate models for professional development on assessment is a crucial barrier to boosting AfL adoption in classrooms.

Regarding item 17 about a lack of time, traditional means of assessment are more time-efficient and have more value in classroom management and real-world practice. However, (16.7%) of teachers think that it is "Strongly agree" demanding. In addition, (43.1%) say "Agree," and (28.4%) say "Neutral." Meanwhile, (10.8%) of teachers stated "Disagree," and only (1.0%) stated "Strongly Disagree". The item is positively accepted with a mean score of (3.64) and a standard deviation of (.920). According to the EFL teachers' opinions based on their expectations, the findings demonstrate that classroom management requires more time.

Concerning item 18, the results show that (19.6 %) of teachers confirmed "Strongly Agree", while "Agree" is stated by (43.1 %). In addition, (29.4%) said they are "neutral." Meanwhile, (5.9%) say they "disagree," and (2.0 %) say they "strongly disagree." This item has a mean score of (3.73), which is considered positive with (.914). As a result, most EFL teachers said that it is challenging to impart knowledge to students of various capacities. There is a gap between the theory they studied and the actual practice of teaching according to the environment of their colleges\ faculties.

In item 19, (46.1%) of teachers ticked "strongly agree" that class size has an impact on teachers' assessment strategies. Additionally, (35.3%) of them "agree," while (16.7 %) said "neutral." In contrast, only (2.0 %) of teachers "disagree" and none of the teachers express "strongly disagree". The item has a mean of (4.25) and a standard deviation of (.805), which is positively acknowledged.

Concerning item 20, (29.4%) of EFL teachers "strongly agree", as demonstrated. Furthermore, (43.1%) of them say "agree", while (23.5%) of teachers identify as "neutral". In comparison (2.0 %) "disagree," and (2.0%) "strongly agree". According to the results, the mean of this item is (3.96), with a standard deviation of (.889). it indicates that the item has been received positively.

To see if teachers' use of AfL is influenced by their perceptions of AfL rather than positive experiences with it in item 21. (11.8 %) of teachers believe they "strongly agree," while (38.2 %) believe they "agree". In addition, (43.1%) say they are "neutral." Meanwhile, (2.9%) say they "disagree," while (3.9 %) say they "strongly disagree." This item has a mean score of (3.51), and a standard deviation of (.887), which is considered positive. As a result, it also implies it is positive for experienced teachers, and they believe it is advantageous.

To examine if teachers' opinions of AfL are based on self and peer assessment through item 22, (10.8%) of teachers say they "strongly agree," and (44.1%) say they "agree." Furthermore, (34.3%) of respondents identify as "neutral" while (6.9%) of them "disagree" and (3.9 %) "strongly disagree." This item received a positive mean score of (3.51) and a standard deviation of (.920). As a result, the majority of EFL teachers believe that AfL is highly dependent on self and peer assessment.

In response to item 23, which claims to inquire if AfL initiatives frequently ignore teachers' experience and expertise, (17.6 %) of teachers say they "strongly agree," support to them there was also (53.9 %) believe they "agree." Furthermore, (20.6 %) identify as "neutral." Meanwhile, (4.9%) say they "disagree," with (2.9 %) stating that they "strongly disagree." The mean score for this item is (3.03) with a standard deviation of (1.057), which is considered neutral. As a result, the majority of EFL teachers believe that AfL primarily focuses on teachers' experience and expertise.

Concerning whether AfL techniques are used regardless of whether there will be any opportunity to utilize the results in item 24, the majority of teachers, (21.6 %), "strongly agree." Furthermore, (53.9 %) say they "agree." While (20.6%) of the respondents stated "neutral." Furthermore, (3.9 %) say they "disagree," while none of

them say "strongly disagree." This item has a weighted mean of (2.97) and a standard deviation of (1.103). The results show that AfL techniques are adopted regardless of whether the outcome can be implemented.

Item 25 is the final item on teachers' perspectives concerning EFL teachers' attitudes toward assessment. (37.3 %) of teachers "strongly agree" that there is a difference in their attitudes toward assessment. Furthermore, (47.1 %) say they "agree." While (14.7 %) of teachers identify as "neutral." In comparison, with none "disagree" and only (1.0 %) "strongly disagree." According to the results, the mean of this item is (2.94), with a standard deviation of (1.296). This indicates that the item has been received nearly under neutral.

To sum up, according to the total mean of the third part of the questionnaire (3.526), EFL teachers believe that teaching in the implementation of AfL is challenging. Still, they are mostly satisfied with the implementation of AfL strategies in their universities and colleges. Most EFL teachers use AfL strategies in their classrooms as a modern approach. EFL teachers agree that activities like comment-only marking, which involves making comments on students' work more important than delivering scores as feedback, are essential.

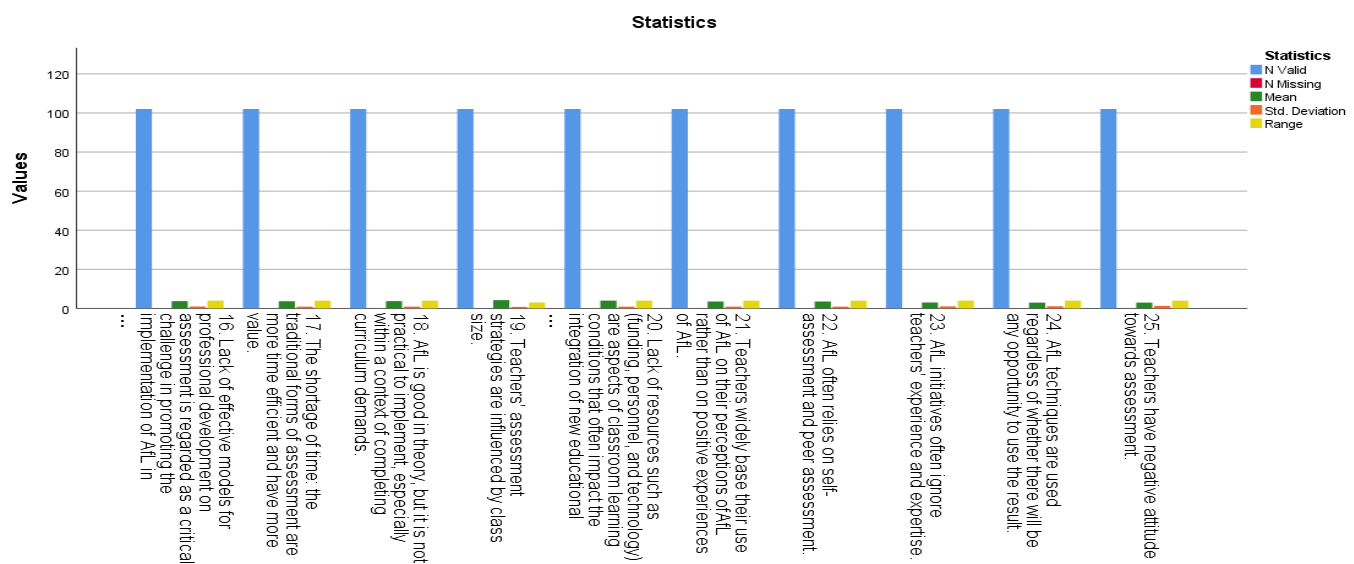


Figure (3) Descriptive Statistics of Part 3: Challenges Teachers Face When Implementing AfL in the Classroom.

Additionally, the current study's findings are supported by those of Song, Y. (2012), whose study showed that AfL can help higher-proficiency students develop their language-learning skills. The same findings that Patel, R. J., et al. (2013) discovered using AfL may be useful in choosing a modern strategy for teaching the classroom as a modern strategy that can be advantageous for teachers and students. This study also confirmed the results of Sardareh, S. A., et al. (2014) that teachers can connect with students and involve them in the learning process by having regular communication with them in order to foster a collaborative learning environment in the classroom. The outcomes are backed by a study by Gan, Liu, and Yang (2017). The results show a strong association between EFL teachers' attitudes toward AfL and their propensity for achievement or deep learning.

However, the questionnaire results were collected from the EFL teachers about AfL as a modern approach and its strategies. The purpose of the study is to give the impression that EFL teachers are confident in their ability to implement policies. The majority of the teachers believed that implementing AfL strategies as an ongoing teaching approach, and students are active participants in knowledge acquisition, teachers as facilitators, peer assessment, collaborative work, and multiactivity in EFL classrooms is beneficial.

Depending on the results, it was founded that university EFL teachers consider that a lack of relevant models for professional development on assessment is a significant barrier to increasing AfL implementation in classrooms for EFL teachers' awareness and real-world teaching practice.

In other words, the findings indicate that using AfL activities in the classroom allows students to engage in self and peer assessment. As a result, the majority of EFL teachers state that there is a gap between the theory they learned in class and the actual practice of teaching at their colleges and faculties. Even though EFL classes are up to standard in terms of instruction, class size impacts teachers' approaches and procedures. As a result, the teachers believe that students are strongly motivated to study and that the following AfL strategies can be used as an active approach. The results demonstrate that EFL teachers are eager to apply Assessment for Learning, regardless of whether the outcome can be accomplished. Most teachers have a positive attitude toward assessment. Accordingly, there are some challenges to implementing the AfL approach, especially the lack of resources (funding, personnel, and technology). However, EFL teachers have a positive perspective on implementing the Assessment for Learning approach as a recent approach.

Finally, these findings demonstrate that EFL teachers perceive AfL strategies as an effective and productive approach, implying that they have positive attitudes toward the use of AfL in EFL teaching. The study's assumption, which states that university EFL teachers have a favorable attitude toward applying Assessment for Learning in EFL classes, is valid. It was proved in a general mean of three parts of the questionnaire together, which is (<3.83).

The main reason for this study's results is that the current situation of assessment practices in higher education in the Kurdistan region insists on implementing on-going assessment procedures and strategies in EFL classes. EFL teachers are required and expected to assess students continuously in the instructional process. However, it is worth mentioning that EFL participating teachers appeared to have limited knowledge about the term AfL, though they often use it practically in their classes. Another perspective that emerge from these positive results is that EFL teachers have demonstrated an eagerness to implement AfL, which can be considered a positive assertion that supports any future work for implementing AfL in the EFL departments at Iraqi universities, particularly in the Kurdistan region.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Although public universities indicated complete support for the Assessment for Learning approach to teaching EFL, although generalizations for the entire body of university EFL teachers are complicated, the results can assist educators in understanding the nature of EFL teaching in Kurdistan universities. In any situation, it is fair to believe that EFL teachers now have the motivation to implement AfL in their classrooms since they have shown evidence of acceptance. According to the findings, EFL teachers believe that students are highly motivated to implement AfL as a new approach and that AfL strategies can be used as an effective approach. The findings also show that EFL teachers face some challenges when implementing Assessment for Learning in the classroom. Still, they also have positive views toward Assessment for Learning as a new approach.

It is recommended that it is necessary to arrange and implement teacher-training sessions and workshops to improve instructors' grasp of current AfL approaches since the implementation of assessment for learning strategies, feedback, and activities can teachers create a safe, stress-free, and active learning environment. Furthermore, it enables learners to collaborate; they share their insights and prior knowledge, as well as their ideas, to help each other achieve their learning goals.

تیروانینی مامۆستایان دهرباره‌ی جی به‌جی کردنی ریبازی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربون له‌ئاستی زانکۆدا

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پوخته:

هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون (AFL) ریبازی که بۆ فیرکردن و فیربوون که کاردانه‌وه دروست ده‌کات بۆ باشتکردنی ئەدای فیرخووازان چونکه ده‌بیته هۆکاریک بۆ زیاتر به‌شداری کردن له پرۆسه‌ی فیربووندا و ده‌بیته هۆی زۆربوونی متمانه‌ییان بۆ ئەو باب‌ه‌تانه‌ی که چاره‌پروان ده‌کهن فیر بین و به‌چ پیوه‌ریک به‌ده‌ستی به‌یئن. ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌کی چه‌ندیه‌تییه و به‌مه‌به‌ستی لیکۆلینه‌وه له تیروانینی مامۆستایانی زانکۆ سه‌بارهت به‌هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون، وه ده‌ستنیشانکردنی ئەو به‌ربه‌ستانه‌ی که پروبه‌رووی مامۆستایان ده‌بنه‌وه له کاتی جیبه‌جیکردنی ئەو ریبازه‌ی فیرکردن له پۆلدا.

بۆ ئەومه‌به‌سته توێژینه‌وه‌که سێ پرسیار ده‌خاته روو: (1) تاچ راده‌یه‌ک مامۆستایانی زمانی ئینگلیزی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون له پۆله‌کانیادا به‌کار دین؟ (2) تیروانینی مامۆستایان سه‌بارهت به‌هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون له پهره‌ پیدانی فیربوونی فیرخووازی زمانی ئینگلیزیدا چیه؟ وه (3) ئەو به‌ربه‌ستانه چین که پروبه‌رووی مامۆستایانی زمانی ئینگلیزی ده‌بیته‌وه له کاتی جیبه‌جیکردنی ریبازی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون له پۆله‌که‌یادا؟

بۆ ولادانه‌وه‌ی پرسیاره‌کانی توێژینه‌وه‌که، ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه راپرسییه‌کی به‌کاره‌یناوه که له ۲۵ برگه‌یی پیکدیت (کۆلی، د.س. ۲۰۱۰ گۆردراو). ئەم راپرسیه به‌سه‌ر ۱۰۲ مامۆستا دابه‌شکراوه له سێ زانکۆی گشتی له هه‌ولیر: سه‌لاحه‌دین (۵۵ مامۆستا)، سۆران (۳۴ مامۆستا) و کۆیه (۱۳ مامۆستا). داتا که به‌سۆفتویری (ئیس پی ئیس SPSS) شیکراوه‌ته‌وه. سه‌ره‌رای هه‌بونی چه‌ند به‌ربه‌ستیکی جیاواز که پروبه‌رووی مامۆستایانی زمانی ئینگلیزی ده‌بنه‌وه له جیبه‌جیکردنی ریبازی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون له پۆله‌کانیادا، به‌گشتی ئەنجامه‌کان ده‌ریده‌خهن که مامۆستایانی زانکۆ تیروانینیکی ئەرینیان هه‌یه بۆ جیبه‌جیکردنی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون وه‌ک ریبازیکی فیرکردن و فیربوون. ئەمه‌ پێشنیار کراوه که خوله‌کانی مه‌شقییکردنی مامۆستایان و ویرکشۆپه‌کان و جیبه‌جیکردنیان پێویسته ریکبخریته‌وه بۆ مه‌به‌ستی چاکترکردنی به‌کاره‌ینانی ریبازی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون له‌لایه‌ن مامۆستایان.

کلیله وشه‌کان: هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون، مامۆستایانی زمانی ئینگلیزی له زانکۆ، تیروانینی مامۆستایان، جیبه‌جیکردنی هه‌لسه‌نگاندن بۆ مه‌به‌ستی فیربوون.

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APPENDICES

Appendix (A): EFL teachers' questionnaire

University/ College..... Scientific title Degree: MA () MED ()
 PhD () Years of experience..... Gender:.....

Using the scale given, please indicate how much you agree with the statements in the table below. <u>Scales:</u> 5 means strongly agree, 4 means Agree, 3 means neutral, 2 means Disagree, and 1 means strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Part I	AFL classroom Strategies	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Providing students with a clear and understandable vision of the learning target.					
2.	Designing lessons to focus on one learning target or quality at time.					
3.	Teaching students to self-assess and set goals.					
4.	Asking open-ended questions that gets them writing/ talking					
5.	Asking students to reflect on the lesson and write down what they've learned					

6.	Asking students to summarize or paraphrase important concepts and lessons.					
7.	Asking a single focused question with a specific goal that can be answered within a minute or two.					
8.	Asking students to respond individually to a short, pencil-paper assessment of skills and knowledge taught in the class.					
9.	Activating students as instructional sources for one another.					
10.	Activating students as owners of their learning					
Part2	Giving Feedback					
11.	Giving the students opportunities to reflect on the work they have done in the course.					
12.	Comment-only marking: only writing comments on learners' work, and don't give marks or scores.					
13.	Giving learners time in class to make corrections or improvement.					
14.	Don't erase corrections: Tell the learners that you want to see how they corrected and improved their work.					
15.	Expressing approval when achievement is satisfactory (i.e.) writing positive comments to students' works.					
Part3	Challenges teachers' face in the implementation of AfL in the Classroom					
16.	Lack of effective models for professional development on assessment is regarded as a critical challenge in promoting the implementation of AfL in classrooms.					
17.	The shortage of time: the traditional forms of assessment are more time efficient and have more value.					
18.	AfL is good in theory, but it is not practical to implement, especially within a context of completing curriculum demands.					
19.	Teachers' assessment strategies are influenced by class size.					
20.	Lack of resources such as (funding, personnel, and technology) are aspects of classroom learning conditions that often impact the integration of new educational policies and practices.					
21.	Teachers widely base their use of AfL on their perceptions of AfL rather than on positive experiences of AfL.					
22.	AfL often relies on self-assessment and peer assessment.					
23.	AfL initiatives often ignore teachers' experience and expertise.					
24.	AfL techniques are used regardless of whether there will be any opportunity to use the result.					
25.	Teachers have negative attitude towards assessment.					

Appendix (B): Retest of Pearson Correlation

Part 1 AfL strategies			
Correlations			
		XA	YA
XA	Pearson Correlation	1	.940**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
YA	Pearson Correlation	.940**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			
Part 2 Giving feedback			
Correlations			
		XB	YB
XB	Pearson Correlation	1	.968**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
YB	Pearson Correlation	.968**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			
Part 3 AfL challenges			
Correlations			
		XC	YC
XC	Pearson Correlation	1	.985**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
YC	Pearson Correlation	.985**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			