

Students' Feedback: Perceptions and Expectations

Dr. Abdel Rahman Abdalla

Al-Zahra University College for Women
Muscat-Sultanate of Oman

Abstract

Universities and colleges often administer student feedback surveys on teaching to elicit students' views of how a particular course is taught in order to improve teaching quality and provide opportunities for better learning. This paper reports the views of (40) English teachers and (124) General Foundation Programme (GFP) students on student feedback in institutions of higher education in the Sultanate of Oman. Findings reveal variation in the views of teachers and students pertaining to involving students in providing feedback to teachers. The study argues that it is necessary to have consistency in the perceptions of teachers and students on student feedback. The study also confirms the importance of providing proper training for the GFP students on quality feedback and reflective learning before asking them to embark on such a demanding task.

Key Words: Quality Assurance, Student Feedback, Teacher Response, Quality Teaching, Transformative Reflection, Teacher Perception.

إفادات الطلاب: ملاحظات وتوقعات

الملخص

كثيراً ما تقوم الجامعات والكليات بإجراء مُسوحات لاستجلاء آراء الطلبة حول عملية التدريس؛ وذلك للارتقاء بالعملية، وتطوير جودتها لخلق فرص أفضل للتعلم. تتناول هذه الورقة آراء (40) مدرساً للغة الإنجليزية، و(124) دارساً في البرنامج التأسيسي حول إفادات الطلاب عن كيفية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في مؤسسات التعليم العالي بسلطنة عمان. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة تبايناً في آراء المدرّسين والطلاب حول إشراك الآخرين في عملية تقييم الأساتذة، وفي هذا الصدد، ترى الدّراسة ضرورة وجود توافق في مفاهيم الطلبة ومدرّسيهم حول إشراكهم في عملية التقييم. وقد أكّدت الدراسة ضرورة تدريب الطلبة على البرنامج التأسيسي حول التعلم المبني على التأمّل ومدى أهمية ذلك، كما أكّدت الدّراسة أهمية عملية تقييم الأساتذة في إطار نظام ضبط الجودة قبل إشراكهم في مثل هذه العملية الهامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ضبط الجودة، إفادات الطلاب، استجابة المدرّسين، التدريس النوعي، التفكير التحويلي، اتجاهات المدرّسين.

1. Introduction

English language teaching (ELT) together with the growth of English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) is a progressive field that often witnesses methodological innovations. Teachers, researchers, and practitioners are in continuous search for the best teaching tools and practices that can help learners succeed in their language learning and meet the employment criteria and market needs. According to Cook (2003:30), “different approaches to teaching English did not just occur by chance, but in response to changing geopolitical circumstances and social attitudes and values, as well as to shifts of fashion in linguistics which, for all its apparent objectivity, was itself subject to social change”. In response to the increasing demand for quality teaching and learning, particularly in the ESL/EFL contexts, quality assurance (QA) system has evolved from the outset of its inception as a peculiar and unique practice in the higher education new agenda. In their quest for quality education, institutions of higher learning often adopt a set of policies and procedures to ensure that quality learning is achieved by quality teaching. This equation rests on clearly-articulated quality assurance philosophy which requires teachers to continuously reflect on their teaching, and to motivate students to view learning as meaningful and useful. Effective teaching, as a requirement of quality education and quality learning presents students and teachers with continuous demands and challenges. Teachers must develop transformative reflection, adjust their teaching strategies and decisions, and set the suitable learning setting for meaningful practices.

Students, on the other hand, must always reflect on their learning experience and approach of learning with positive expectations. In this context, Biggs & Tang (2007:31) argued that “effective teaching requires that we eliminate those aspects of our teaching that encourage surface approaches to learning and that we set the stage properly so that students can more readily use deep approaches to learning”. Thus, effective teaching and professional development directed towards effective learning are better enhanced by feedback teachers receive on their teaching. One of the sources of teacher reflection is the direct feedback students provide on the courses they join. This process of obtaining direct information from students, despite becoming an essential quality assurance procedure, is believed to be shaped by a number of factors such as the students’ awareness of their role in evaluating a course they join, and their willingness to participate in any feedback delivery exercise. The involvement of students in providing feedback on their learning experience and teachers’ performance is a salient feature of quality assurance system in a sense that it provides a platform for students to make their voice heard. In support of exploring the views and expectations of both teachers and students about the learning and teaching process, Jean & Simard (2011: 467) argued that “knowing how both parties perceive the efficacy of the ways in which teaching and learning are taking place is consequently of prime importance”. It is worth noting that an examination of the summative information provided by students on teaching is imperative. In addition, the involvement of students in the quality assurance procedures needs to be monitored and

carefully planned for, thus making a better platform for formative perspective. Therefore, it is necessary to eliminate the negative elements which may jeopardize the goal of such an important procedure.

1.1 Why Evaluate Teacher?

The implementation of quality assurance system has changed the scene in university teaching and learning where traditional practices are no longer valid. According to Danielson & McGreal (2000:7) “one factor fueling the shift has been an expanded understanding of learning, and what constitutes good teaching”. Quality-oriented teaching is believed to be grounded on continuous reflection by teachers in order to enhance students’ active engagement in the learning process (Cowan, 2006). Thus, teachers are required to continuously develop transformative reflection by receiving insights on their teaching from sources including their students. Biggs & Tang (2007:41) argued that “a characteristic of award-winning university teachers is their willingness to collect student feedback on their teaching, in order to see where their teaching might be improved”. The exercise of receiving feedback through self-directed assessment is also supported by perspectives obtained from student feedback questionnaires for the purposes of quality assurance and teachers’ professional development. Thus, “surveys can offer highly valuable insights into a teacher’s performance, and they can provide feedback to teachers that is unavailable from any other source” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000: 51). It is observed that the

current practice in teacher evaluation bears on summative and informative feedback as an indicator of a teacher performance where the former is used for promotion decision-making and the latter for the purpose of enhancing teacher professional development and good practices.

2. Review of Literature

Research on quality teaching and learning has focused mainly on the procedural aspects and significance of student feedback on teaching. Leckey & Neill (2001) reported the importance of continuous evaluation of quality procedures in higher education in the UK. The researchers examined the factors affecting quality management and enhancement as the poorest graded area. The researchers examined the failure of institutions to implement students' feedback, and concluded that the views of students whether on the courses they join, teaching quality, or learning quality and experience are of paramount significance in the quality assurance system. It could be argued that assessing the feedback of students on a particular course is useful in giving a clearer picture of the teaching and learning process.

In another study, Douglas & Douglas (2006) compared students' evaluation of teaching quality and peer review of teaching to see the significance of each on the teaching quality. The researchers reported that teachers have great doubt about student feedback. The findings of their study drew attention to the fact that student feedback as an indicator for teacher performance must be implemented carefully and with clearly stated goals in order to have fair and comprehensive results. In another

study, Zerihun et al. (2011) examined teachers' and students' views on learning and teaching and the impact of those on the evaluation of teaching. The researchers found out that both teachers and students valued teaching as an activity for passing knowledge, and assessment as recall of knowledge. The study is significant as it explored students' views on the role of teachers as knowledge givers and assessors. The study also shed some light on the significance of understanding how teachers and students view the process of teaching and assessing learning. Research has also attempted to assess the involvement of students in providing feedback. Josefson et al. (2011) evaluated the impact of students' participation in providing feedback in Sweden universities. The researchers called for assessing the involvement of students in providing feedback since they are viewed as key partners in the universities, activities. Cheng (2011) observed the necessity for addressing the gap between teachers' definition of quality and students' understanding of quality. The latter tend to relate quality to teaching practice rather than their reflective experience as learners.

The growing volume of research in quality assurance practices in higher education has focused on the value of student feedback on teaching and learning. However, little is known about EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards student feedback on learning experience and teachers. This paper examines the views of English teachers and students at the General Foundation Programme (GFP) on students' feedback and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning English. The study's problem can be encapsulated in the following specific

questions:

1. How do teachers perceive students' feedback?
2. Do students and teachers hold similar understanding of feedback as a quality requirement?
3. How do students evaluate teacher performance?
4. What are the effects of student feedback on teacher performance?
5. To what extent is student feedback quality-driven?

3. Method and Procedures

This study is exploratory in nature in a sense that it investigates teachers' and students' reactions towards the feedback provided by EFL students, with the use of minimal statistical analysis. To achieve such an objective, two questionnaires (see Appendix A-Teacher Questionnaire, & Appendix B- Student Questionnaire) were designed and distributed to total of (40) teachers of English and (124) GFP students in two higher education institutes in the Sultanate of Oman. A group of (40) teachers with varieties of teaching experience took part in this study, while the (124) GFP students represented a group of EFL learners with different levels, aptitudes, learning experience, and proficiency in English.

3.1. Procedures

This study employed one source of data: questionnaire surveys. The questionnaires were used to elicit the participants' perceptions about feedback given by students on teachers of English at the GFP. The questionnaires were also administered to understand the effects of student

feedback on the teaching process and teacher professional growth and development.

4. Results and Discussion

As stated above, the questionnaires were designed to elicit the respondents' perceptions about the views of students on teaching and learning as a fundamental requirement in the quality assurance system. They were distributed to 40 teachers and 124 students and later collected for further analysis. Frequencies for both teacher and student questionnaires were taken and categorised separately. The results of teacher questionnaire were shown and discussed under the categories of 'teachers' perceptions on student feedback, Figure1; effects of student feedback, Figure2; factors affecting student feedback, Figure3; feedback quality, Figure4; training students for quality feedback, Figure5; and significance of learner feedback, Figure6; The students' responses were presented under the themes of awareness of feedback significance, Figure7; factors shaping students' decisions, Figure8; teaching skills and teacher personality, Figure9; views on teaching, Figure10; and training for quality feedback, Figure11; The results of teacher and student questionnaires were shown and discussed below.

Teacher Questionnaire (Figures 1- 6)

Figure1- T: Teachers' perceptions on student feedback

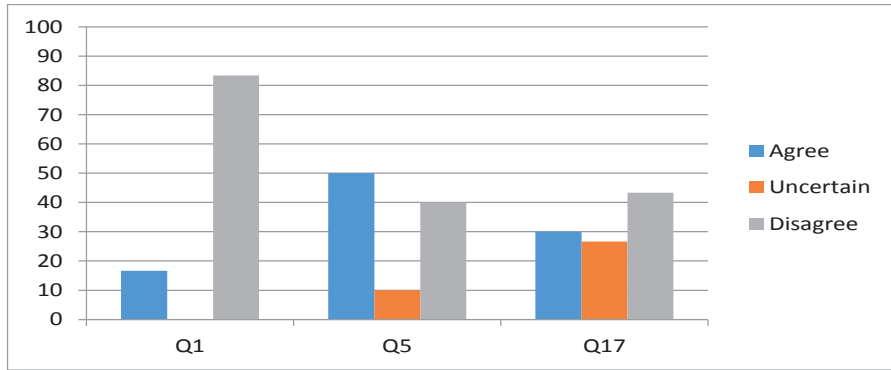
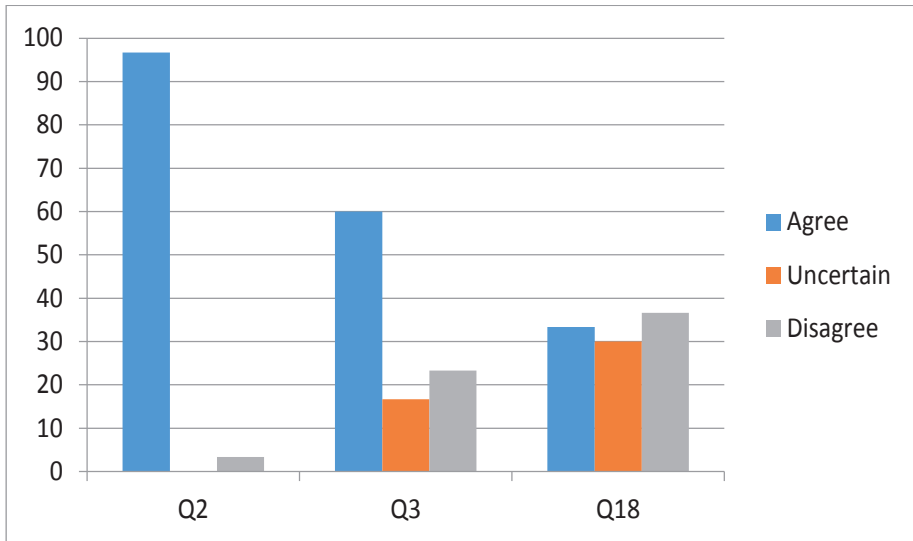


Figure1 above summarises teachers' perceptions on student feedback. Item (1) in the questionnaire addresses the idea that student feedback is not necessary. The analysis revealed that 83% of the respondents disagreed with the idea that student feedback is not necessary, and 17% perceived it as less important. The positive response teachers provided indicates the positive perception they hold for student feedback. This result serves the issue addressed in the study's first question pertaining to teachers' perceptions about the views of students on teaching but learning. The analysis also revealed that 50% of the respondents agreed and 40% disagreed with the idea of discussing students' feedback in class, 10% remained uncertain (item 5); however. This draws attention to the significance of viewing students- whose views are of paramount significance for effective teaching- as key participants in the learning process. On limiting student feedback only to the course they join, (item 17), 30% agreed, 43% disagreed but 27% remained uncertain. It is observed here that a recognisable portion of the respondents

preferred a wider focus of student feedback surveys so that they could get more comprehensive feedback on the subjects as well as other teaching-related aspects.

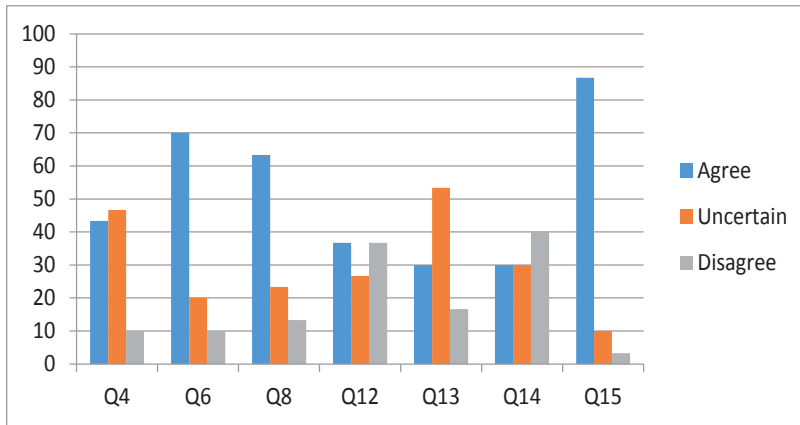
Figure2- T: Effects of student feedback



Items (2), (3), and (18) in Figure2 above addressed the impact of student feedback as perceived by the teachers. The analysis showed that 97% agreed, but only 3% disagreed that student feedback enabled them to be more reflective (item2). In the same vein, the analysis of item (3) revealed that 60% of the respondents agreed while 23% disagreed that they always respond to the students' comments by adjusting their teaching skills. However, 17% of the respondents remained uncertain of their stand. This result which addresses question 4 in the study suggests that teachers benefit from the perspective provided by the students since that helps them in adjusting and improving their teaching. In this context, it

could be argued that reflective teachers are dynamic and susceptible to growth and development. This idea is supported by Biggs & Tang (2007) who suggested that “expert teachers continually reflect on how they might teach even better” (p.41). The analysis of item (18) revealed somewhat similar responses of agreement 33%, uncertainty 30%, disagreement 37% about the effects of student feedback on teachers’ strategies for assessing students’ learning.

Figure3- T: Factors affecting student feedback



Teachers were asked about their perceptions pertaining to factors affecting student feedback (Figure3). The analysis of item (4) revealed that 43% agreed that grade seekers’ feedback is influenced by the grades they obtain, while 47% of the respondents were uncertain of their views. Only 10% disagreed with the statement. Interestingly, the analysis of item (6) revealed that 70% agreed but 20% were uncertain that peer views on a teacher may influence other

students' decisions in providing feedback; only 10% disagreed with the idea. This result draws attention to the necessity of educating students on the value of their comments and their roles as key players in the quality teaching-learning process. Item (8) focused on the relation between learners' own experience in a particular course and the teacher who teaches it. The analysis demonstrated that 63% of the participants agreed, whereas 13% disagreed that the students' learning experience influences their decision in providing feedback on the course they join and the teacher who teaches it. Results also demonstrated that 23% remained uncertain. The analysis of item (12) revealed that the respondents scored the same percentage, 37%, for supporting and opposing the idea that too many class activities form negative tendency in the students. It is worth noting that students' perceptions towards language activities depend upon the nature of such activities in terms of quality not quantity. However, 26% of the respondents were uncertain of their stand. This result is significant because some teachers hold the view that tasks based on quantity without quality might discourage deep learning of English. Thus, teachers might need to reflect on how to maintain a balanced teaching practice for quality learning. The analysis of item (13) revealed that 30% agreed, but 17% disagreed that students who attain low grades tend to rate their teachers low, while 53% remained uncertain. Item (14) examined the teacher's personality as a factor that might influence students' views when giving their feedback on teaching and learning. The analysis of this item revealed that the respondents scored the same percentage, 30%, for supporting the

statement and expressing uncertainty as well, while 40% disagreed with it. The analysis also revealed another interesting finding with regard to the way the teacher treats his/her class and the effect of that on the student feedback. The majority of the respondents, 87%, agreed that the teacher's behaviour towards class determines the type of feedback students provide, 10% were uncertain, while 3% disagreed with the statement. These findings are significant as they serve the study's fifth question which focuses on the quality of feedback provided by students. It could be argued that understanding the factors affecting students' views enables institutions to measure the extent to which student feedback confines to quality standards. Furthermore, teachers need to continually address their students' needs, be aware of the conditions of the learning setting, and develop the ability to control the teaching and learning process as well as choosing the appropriate time for a particular decision.

Figure4-T: Feedback quality

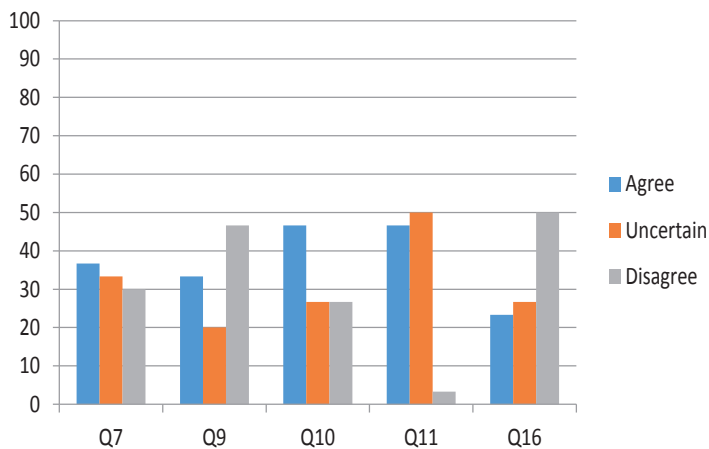
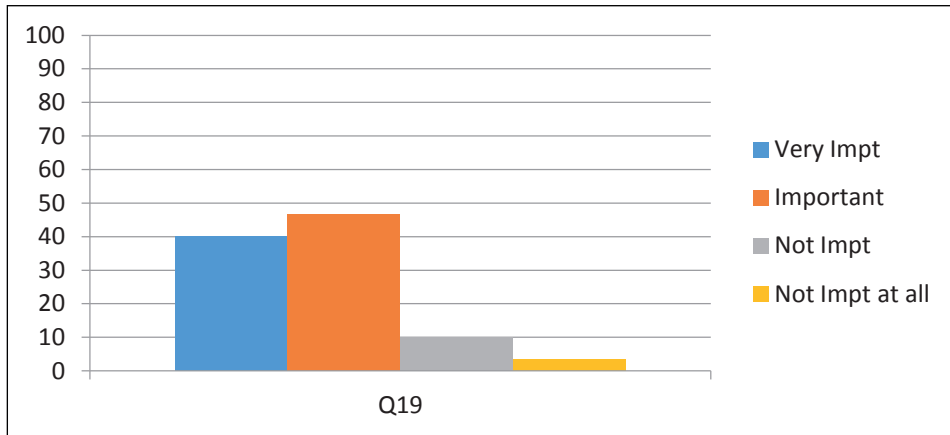


Figure 4 above summarises the respondents' perceptions about feedback quality. The analysis of item (7) revealed that the respondents scored 37%, 33%, and 30% for agreed, uncertain, and disagreed respectively in relation to their perception about the students' ability to judge the knowledge of the teacher. In the same context, the analysis of item (9) revealed that 33% agreed that learners are unable to judge the teachers' ability to teach, while 47% believed students are able to do so, 20% were uncertain about their stand; however. The relatively higher percentage of the respondents who valued student feedback suggests that there is growing awareness among teachers for the significance of obtaining students' views for the purposes of quality teaching and teacher growth, and professional development. The analysis of item (10) revealed that 47% believed that student feedback may not be reflective of the classroom reality, while other respondents scored the same value, 27%, for both disagreement with and uncertainty about the idea in the statement. This mixed view, however, contradicts the respondents' score in item (9) where 47% of the teachers felt that even with little or no knowledge of the language, learners are still able to judge the teachers' ability for teaching. The analysis of item (11) revealed that 47% agreed that when students participate in providing feedback on their learning experience, they are able to reflect on their learning as well. However, 50% were uncertain, while 3% disagreed with the statement. The result also revealed that 23% agreed with item (16) which suggested that teachers should please students to avoid negative feedback. 50% of the respondents disagreed while 27% were uncertain. This result is consistent with the analysis of items (1, 5, & 17-Figure 1) in

addressing the issue raised in the study's first question.

Figure5-T: Training students for quality feedback



Item (19) in Figure5 above focuses on training students in the quality procedures before involving them in any activity of evaluating teaching and learning. The analysis revealed that 87% of the respondents perceived training students as an important requirement for quality feedback. No doubt educating students on the quality culture creates opportunities for students' reflection and more positive focus on their learning experience.

Figure6- T: Significance of learner feedback

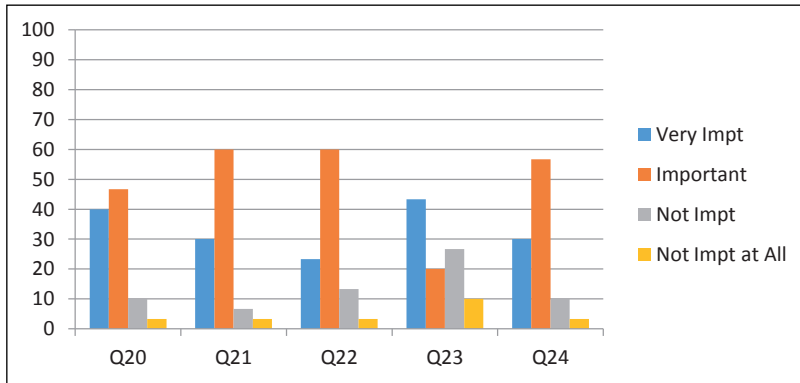


Figure6 above presents interesting results pertaining to teachers' perceptions about the significance of the student feedback. The analysis of item (20) revealed that 40% of the respondents perceived learners' feedback on the teachers' communication skills and pronunciation clarity as very important, and 47% believed that it as is important to obtain the views of students on teachers' communication skills and pronunciation. The analysis revealed that 10% perceived it not important, while 3% considered it not important at all. In the same vein, item (21) revealed that 30% and 60% of the respondents perceived student feedback on teachers' skills as very important and important respectively. The rest of the respondents perceived it as not important with 7%, and not important at all with 3%. Moreover, item (22) revealed the same result with 23% of the respondents viewing it as very important to explore students' views on the teachers' availability and accessibility during and after class, and 60% supported the idea as important. Some of the respondents with 13% viewed it as not important and 3% as not

important at all. Student feedback on the way tests and quizzes are conducted (item 23) was perceived by 43% of the respondents as very important, and by 20% important, while 27% perceived it as not important. Only 10% viewed it as not important at all. Item (24) examined teachers' views on exploring students' feelings about the feedback they receive from their teachers. The analysis revealed that 30% of the respondents believed that it is very important to explore the students' perceptions about their teachers' feedback, and 57% considered it important. 10% of the respondents viewed it as not important and 3% perceived it as not important at all. The overall result here serves the study's first question and reveals that the respondents valued student feedback as significant for quality teaching. It is also observed that the respondents showed consistency in their responses to items 21 & 22. The higher percentages in every item were taken as indicators of the respondents' positive perception about student feedback. However, it is of paramount importance to explore students' perceptions about the feedback they provide the courses they attend and the teachers who teach them as well. By so doing, institutions of higher education will be able to get some insights about planning and implementing quality assurance system. The following section discusses the analysis of the student questionnaire.

Student Questionnaire (Figures 7- 11)

Figure7- S: Awareness of feedback significance

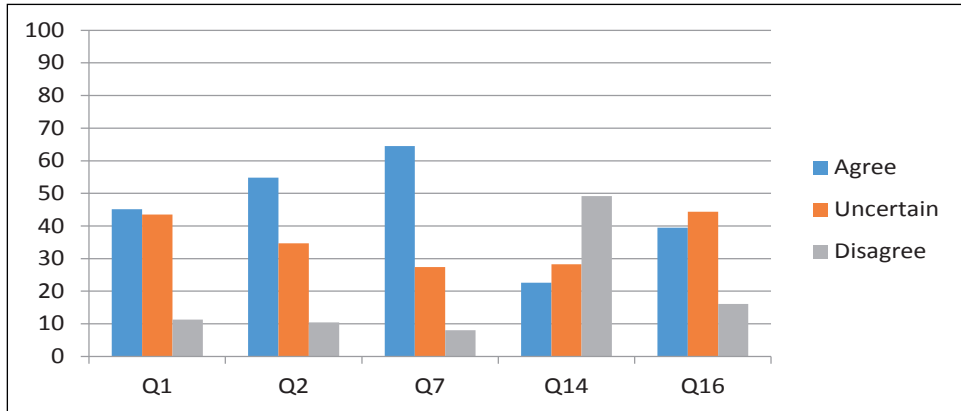
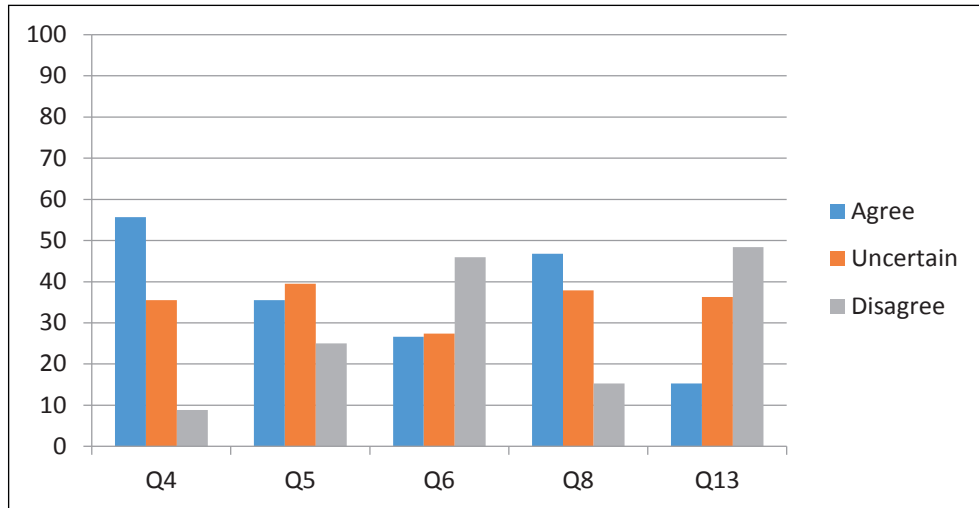


Figure7 presents students' awareness of the value of their own feedback on both learning experience and their teachers as well. The analysis of item (1) in students' questionnaire revealed that 45% (not very high) of the students agreed that they were aware of the significance of their feedback on learning and teaching. However, 44% were uncertain of their stand, while 11% disagreed with the statement. It is worth noting that teachers have given student feedback great value and importance (Figure1, items 1&5). This result suggests that some students need to be educated on the QA system and procedures. This finding also serves the study's second question about whether or not teachers and students hold compatible understanding of feedback as a quality requirement. The analysis of item (2) revealed that 55% of the respondents agreed, while 10% disagreed with the idea of making it mandatory for foundation students to participate in providing feedback on their experience in learning a particular course and the teacher who teaches it. The results

showed that 35% of the students remained uncertain. The study also attempted to examine the degree of the students' seriousness while filling out the feedback survey forms. The analysis of item (7) revealed that 65% agreed 8% of the students disagreed that they did read the questions on the feedback form carefully before answering them, while 27% of the respondents were uncertain of their opinion. It could be argued that training students on the significance of their feedback may encourage them for more active and serious participation in the evaluation process. It could be argued that for the QA tools to operate effectively, all key participants must play their roles with clear understanding of the objectives of such tools. Item (14) presented mixed responses pertaining to the accuracy of the student feedback on different teachers where 23% agreed but 49% disagreed with the idea that they tend to provide the same feedback on all teachers. Some of the respondents remained uncertain about their stand, scoring 28% of the total population. Students need to view teachers as individuals with distinct personalities and teaching skills. Item (16) focused on the relation between the students' grades in a particular course and their feedback on the teacher of that course. 40% of the students agreed but 16% disagreed that they provide positive comments on their teachers even if they get lower grades. However, 44% remained uncertain about their stand. This result suggests that some students are unsure about their ability to maintain objectivity when giving feedback if the assessments affect their grades. It is imperative to inculcate in students the values of providing constructive feedback by being more reflective learners.

Figure8- S: Factors shaping students' decisions



The study also attempted to explore factors that might affect students' decisions when evaluating teachers (Figure8). The analysis of item (4) revealed that 56% agreed but 9% disagreed that they always expect to get higher marks, while 35% reported uncertainty about their stand. This result can be interpreted on the suggestion that students' expectations for higher grades might influence their evaluation of a course they take. It is worth mentioning that teachers' response to the same idea (Figure3, item4 of the teacher questionnaire) indicated that grades-seekers' feedback might be subjective if they attain low grade. The analysis of item (5) revealed that 35% agreed while 25% disagreed that they share information with colleagues about teachers before taking any course with them. 40% of the respondents remained uncertain. This result contradicts with the teachers' perceptions about the impact of

peer factor on student feedback (Figure3, item6). This result also answers the study's second question about the uniformity in understanding quality feedback by teachers and students alike. Item (6) attempted to assess the influence of peers on students when evaluating their teachers. The analysis revealed that the respondents scored the same percentage of 27% for both 'agree' and 'uncertain' while 46% disagreed that they sometimes follow friends when evaluating teachers. This result suggests that the majority of the students maintain independence while filling the teacher efficiency surveys. The analysis of item (8) revealed that 47% agreed whereas 15% disagreed with the idea that they disfa- vour multitasking teachers. 38% of the respondents remained uncertain. It is important to mention that many factors shape the students' reaction to a particular class activity such as the nature of that task. Item (13) in the students' questionnaire explored the students' reaction towards teacher feedback. The analysis of this item suggested that 15% of the respondents agreed while 48% disagreed that they provide negative feedback if they obtain low grades. However, 36% of the students remained uncertain.

Figure9- S: Teaching skills & teacher personality

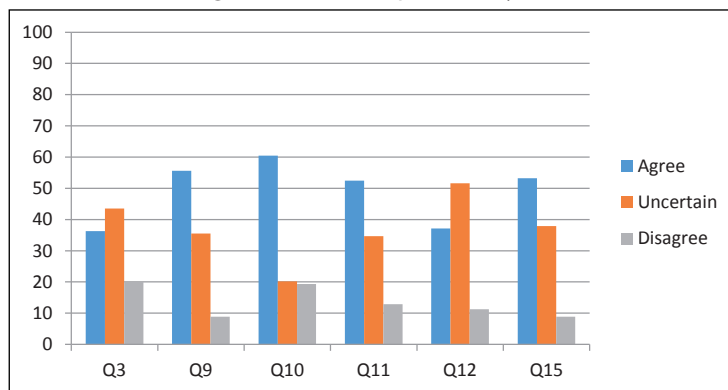


Figure 9 above summarises the students' perceptions about their teachers' skills and personal traits and their preferences when giving feedback. The analysis of item (3) revealed that 36% of the students agreed but 20% disagreed that evaluating teachers is unnecessary because teachers are knowledgeable enough, while 44% remained uncertain. The analysis of item (9) also revealed that 56% of the students agreed that they found teacher feedback useful, while 35% were uncertain about their opinion. Only 9% disagreed with the statement. Item (10) explored the students' perceptions on their teachers' help, encouragement and motivation. The analysis suggested that 60% of the respondents agreed, 19% disagreed that their teachers attempt to motivate them and encourage them to learn, while 20% expressed uncertainty about their stand. Teachers' adherence to the time allotted for classes was also explored (item 11). The analysis revealed that 52% of the students agreed, while 13% disagreed that they prefer the classes which finish early. However, 35% of the respondents remained uncertain. The analysis of item (12) which attempted to explore the students' views on multi-tasking classes revealed that 37% of the respondents agreed, but 11% disagreed that they do not support classes which have many activities and tasks. 52% of the students remained uncertain of their views. The analysis of item (15) suggested that 53% of the respondents agreed that they are concerned with the way teachers treat them in class. The result also showed that 38% of the students were uncertain while 9% disagreed with the statement. This finding supports the study's third question which addresses the way students evaluate teachers.

This result also suggests that in all ESL/EFL classes teachers may expect to see some students who show concerns over teacher's behaviour in class. Professional teachers need to be able to deal with all the different class circumstances and be able to adjust their teaching whenever it is required.

Figure10- S: Focus on the teacher

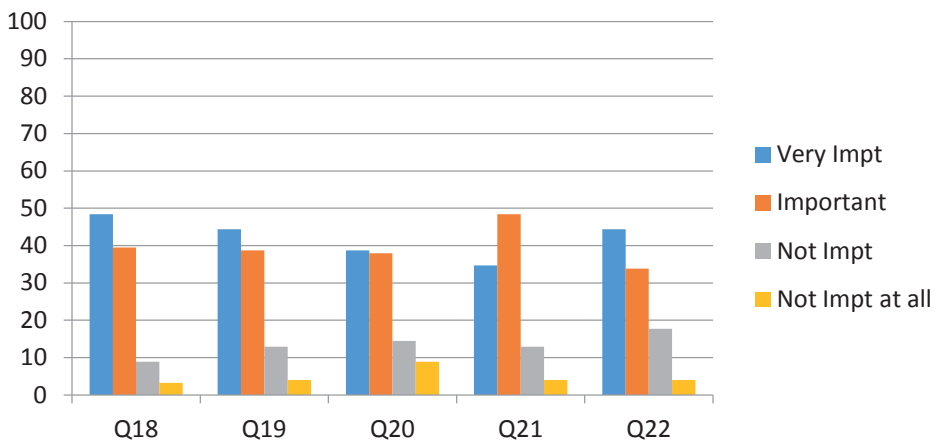
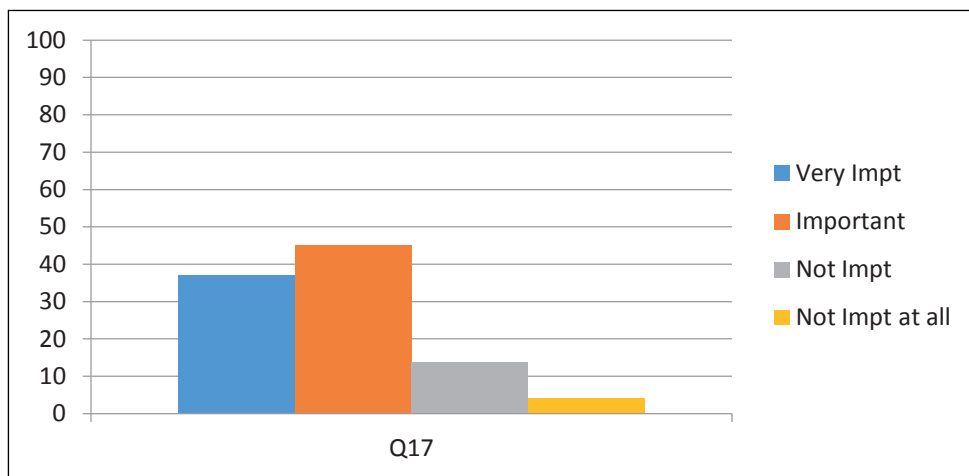


Figure10 above summarises the students' views on teachers' communication skills in terms of comprehensibility and pronunciation. The analysis of item 18 revealed that 48% of the respondents believed that it is very important for the institutions to know the students' views on the teachers' communication skills, 40% viewed it as important while 9% believed it is not important to do so. Only 3% of the respondents perceived it as not important at all. The analysis of item (19) revealed that 44% of the respondents believed it is very important but 39% believed it is important to explore students' views on the teaching skills

and methods of teachers. Results also showed that 13% of the respondents believed it is not important and 4% viewed it as not important at all to seek student feedback on teachers' teaching skills. The analysis of item (20) revealed that 39% of the respondents and 38% of them believed that it is very important and important respectively to receive student feedback on the accessibility and availability of teachers during class and consultation sessions as well. 15% of the respondents believed it is not important whereas 9% believed it is important to do so. The analysis of item (21) revealed that 39% of the respondents believed that it is very important to get student feedback on the assessment procedures. In addition, 38% of the respondents believed that their feedback on the way tests and quizzes are conducted is important, while 13% perceived that as not important, and 4%; however, perceived as not important at all. The analysis of item (22) revealed that 44% of the respondents believed that their feedback on teachers' comments is very important and 34% of them trusted it is important to do so. On the other hand, 18% believed it is not important, while 4% perceived that as not important at all. The overall result of the analysis of the items in Figure10 is consistent with the analysis of the items in Figure9 as it serves the study's third question. The result also suggests that students hold high value and support for their involvement in the teaching evaluation process. This result is consistent with the teachers' responses (Figure6) in holding positive views about students' participation in teaching evaluation.

Figure11-S: Training for quality feedback



The analysis of Figure11 revealed that 37% of the respondents perceived training students for providing quality feedback as a very important strategy, and 45% viewed it as important. On the other hand, 14% of the respondents suggested it is not important, while 4% believed it is not important at all. This result shows consistency with the analysis of teachers' positive perceptions (Figure5) about training students on QA matters especially evaluation of teaching and learning before involving them in such activities.

5. Concluding Remark

This study is set to explore the views of English language teachers and the General Foundation Programme (GFP) students on student feedback and its impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The analysis of the teacher and student questionnaires revealed varieties of

perceptions by teachers and students about student feedback on teaching and learning. While teachers were found to value and appreciate student feedback as an important perspective on how courses are taught and learned, some students were found to lack awareness of the significance of their feedback. The GFP students' lack of awareness of the significance of their feedback could be attributed to the fact that these students are young and novice at QA practice and are unable to understand the importance of such a demanding task. In addition, teachers reported that students' comments affect the assessment strategies. This could be attributed to the nature of assessment policies and procedures undertaken in the GFPs in many institutions of higher education with team teachers and coordinators setting the exams rather than individual teachers. All in-class tests, quizzes and exams are designed, shared, and administered for different groups of students by all teachers in the language centres. Such a process might minimise the individual teachers' chances for adjusting assessment strategies unless such a move is approved by the department. Moreover, results revealed that teachers showed variation in views about whether or not to discuss students' comments in class. Since students' feedback was valued by teachers, it is of importance for teachers to respond to students' views and make the necessary adjustments. Thus, educating students on reflective learning is deemed imperative in transforming them to active learners rather than grade seekers. Moreover, embracing creative and constructive teaching methods grounded on strong support for the social dimension will provide opportunities for quality teaching and learning. Students'

participation in evaluating their experience of teaching and learning is necessary for quality teaching and learning and has to be geared into transforming students from viewing learning as passing exam activity to more reflection on learning.

Bibliography

- Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2007). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (3rd ed.). New York: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Cheng, M. (2011). "Transforming the learner" versus "passing the exam": Understanding the gap between academic and student definitions of quality. *Quality in Higher Education*, 17, (1), 3-17.
- Cook, G. (2003). *Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cowan, J. (2006). *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in Action* (2nd ed.). New York: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Danielson, C., & McGreal, T. (2000). *Teacher Evaluation*. USA: Educational Testing Service.
- Douglas, J. & Douglas, A. (2006). "Evaluating teaching quality". *Quality in Higher Education*, 12, (1), 3-13.
- Jean, G., & Simard, D. (2011). Grammar teaching and learning in L2: Necessary, but boring. *Foreign Language Annals*, 44, (3), 467-494.
- Josefan, K., Pobeiga, J., & Strahlman, C. (2011). "Student participation in developing student feedback". *Quality in Higher Education*, 17, (2), 257-262.
- Leckey, J., & Neill, N. (2001). "Quantifying quality: The importance of student feedback". *Quality in Higher Education*, 7, (1), 19-32.
- Zerihun, Z., Beishuizen, J., & Van Os, W. (2011). "Conceptions and practices in teaching and learning: implications for the evaluation of teaching quality". *Quality in Higher Education*, 17, (2), 151-161.

Appendix (A)

Teacher Questionnaire

Dear colleagues:

This questionnaire forms part of a study exploring English teachers' and foundation students' perceptions about the involvement of students in evaluating teachers. I would therefore very much appreciate it if you could spend a little time to respond honestly and objectively to this questionnaire. Your responses will help me to identify preferences and perceptions of teachers and students within quality teaching and learning context. Kindly be informed that the questionnaire is conducted for research purposes only.

Please respond to All the items in this questionnaire precisely.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation and help with this research.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation and help with this research.

Please respond to the following statements by placing a tick (√) mark in the box that represents your attitude.

Agree=3

Uncertain=2

Disagree=1

Items	3	2	1
1 Student feedback is not necessary.			
2 Student feedback enables me to reflect on my teaching.			
3 I always adjust my teaching skills after receiving the students' comments.			
4 Grade seekers rate teachers according to the results they get.			
5 Student feedback should be discussed in class.			
6 Students sometimes follow their peers in evaluating teachers.			
7 Students are able to judge the knowledge base of the teacher.			
8 Students' experience in learning a course influences their feedback on that course teacher.			
9 Since the student is still a learner with little or no knowledge of the language, s/he is no position to judge the teacher's ability to teach.			
10 Student feedback may not reflect the actual classroom reality.			
11 The involvement of students in evaluating the courses they learn and the teachers enables the students to become reflective learners.			
12 Students normally don't prefer too many language activities and practices.			
13 The weak students usually rate their teachers low.			
14 Students are concerned about their teacher's personality more than the language course content.			
15 The way the teacher treats class influences the students' feedback.			
16 Since the student is a learner and an 'authority', teachers have to please them.			
17 Student feedback should focus on the course they learn only.			
18 Students' comments affect my assessment strategies.			
Very important=4 important at all=1	Important=3	Not important=2	Not

statement	4	3	2	1
19 Training students on feedback process as quality assurance requirement.				
20 Getting the learners' views on teachers' communication skills in terms of pronunciation and comprehensibility.				
21 Students' views about the teaching skills of teachers.				
22 Knowing students' views about the teachers' availability and accessibility in and out of the classroom.				
23 Exploring students' views on the way tests and quizzes are conducted.				
24 Exploring students' perceptions about the feedback given by their teachers.				
25 If you have other comments to offer you may do so below				

Appendix (B)

Student Questionnaire

Dear students:

Directions: In this questionnaire, you will find statements about you and what you think. For each statement, you should choose the one you think is best. Kindly be informed that the questionnaire is conducted for research purposes only and your answers have nothing to do with your grades.

Please respond to All the items in this questionnaire.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation and help with this research.

Please respond to the following statements by placing a tick (✓) mark in the box that represents your attitude.

Agree=3

Uncertain=2

Disagree=1

Items	3	2	1	
1 My feedback is the most important information for teachers.				
2 All foundation students must give feedback about the courses they learn and the teachers as well.				
3 Since my teachers know everything it is not useful to evaluate them.				
4 I always expect to get higher marks in my subjects.				
5 I collect information about my teachers before taking any course with them.				
6 I sometimes follow my friends in evaluating teachers.				
7 I read the feedback form carefully before answering it.				
8 Students don't like the teacher who gives a lot of work.				
9 Teachers' comments on my work are always useful.				
10 My teachers always encourage me to learn English.				
11 Teachers who finish their classes early are good.				
12 Students normally don't like too many language activities and practices.				
13 If I get less mark in my exams, I also give the teacher less mark in the feedback form.				
14 I give the same feedback on all my teachers.				
15 I care more about the way the teacher treats us in class.				
16 I give good feedback on my teacher even if I get low marks.				
Very important=4 important at all=1	Important=3	Not important=2	Not	
statement	4	3	2	1
17 Training me on feedback process before asking me to evaluate my teachers.				
18 Getting my views on teachers' communication skills in terms of pronunciation and comprehensibility.				
19 My views about the teaching skills of teachers.				
20 Knowing my views about the teachers' availability and accessibility in and out of the classroom.				
21 Asking me about my views on the way tests and quizzes are conducted.				
22 Knowing my opinions about the feedback given by my teachers.				
23 If you have other comments to offer you may do so below				