

Teacher Perceptions toward Assessment at one of the Public Schools

in Akmola region, Kazakhstan

Botagoz Abdrakhmanova

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NUGSE RESEARCH APPROVAL DECISION LETTER

The NUGSE Research Committee reviewed the project entitled "Teachers' Perceptions toward Formative Assessment at one of the public schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan» and decided:

- ☒ To grant approval for this study
- ☐ To grant approval for this study subject to minor changes, to be signed off by supervisor
- ☐ To request additional information/clarification to determine approval
- ☐ To refer the application for IREC review

Approval: This approval is effective for the life of the study. However, any time you change any aspect of your project (e.g., recruitment process, administering materials, collecting data, gaining consent, and changing participants) you will need to submit a request for modification to the NUGSE Research Committee. Make sure to address all of the information requested on the request for modification form (s). Please be advised that in some circumstances, changes to the protocol may disqualify the project from approval.

Sincerely,

NUGSE Research Committee

December 1, 2016

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Abstract

The assessment system of Kazakhstani schools is shifting from a “norm-referenced” approach of comparing students’ results against the achievements of other students, to a formative assessment belief model. This formative assessment allows tracking students’ progress and, and provides feedback to students. However, teachers may experience challenges, due to teacher beliefs and lack of teacher professional development and therefore, may conduct assessment procedure only for allocating students with grades. Hence, it is pivotal to explore teachers’ understandings toward formative assessment.

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions regarding formative assessment at one of the schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. This study employed a qualitative case study design. Due to the proximity and accessibility of the site convenient sampling strategy was used to select the site. Maximal variation within purposeful sampling was undertaken to select 8 participants within two groups: 4 experienced teachers, who received courses on assessment and have more than 3 years of teaching experience and 4 novice teachers, who did not receive courses in assessment. The participants include males, and females, the participants were teachers of different subjects. The diversity of research participants enabled to bring different teaching experiences and perspectives in this study. The data were collected through eight semi-structured interviews, lesson observations and document analysis. The study found out the following four major factors affecting teachers’ perceptions: lack of teacher practical knowledge; inconsistent professional development; contradictions of teacher practices and teacher understandings; low students’ motivation. There is a discussion of recommendations and conclusion, which may assist in further implementation of the new model of classroom assessment.

Key words: formative assessment, case study, Akmola region, teacher learning.

Аңдатпа

Қазақстан мектептерінде оқушылардың оқу жетістіктерін бағалау жүйесі дәстүрлі «баға қою» жүйесінен қалыптастырушы бағалау моделіне ауысып жатыр. Бағалаудың жаңа моделін енгізу барысында мұғалімдер оқушыларды бағалау бойынша өз тәжірибесін қайта қарастыру, кәсіби қолдаудың жеткіліксіздігі секілді қиындықтарға ұшырауы мүмкін. Соған қоса бағалау оқушыларға кері байланыс беру мақсатымен емес, тек баға қою мақсатымен жүргізілуі мүмкін.

Осылайша, бұл зерттеудің мақсаты –Ақмола облысы (Қазақстан) мектептерінің бірінде мұғалімдердің қалыптастырушы бағалауды түсінуін зерттеу. Бұл жұмыс барысында зерттеудің сапалық әдісі, кейс стади қолданылды. Зерттелетін орынды анықтау үшін тиімді таңдау қолданылды. Зерттеуге қатысатын 8 қатысушыны іріктеуде мақсатты таңдау мен максималды вариация әдісі орын алды. Зерттеуге барлығы 8 мұғалім, оның ішінде, бағалау бойынша курс өткен 4 мұғалім , сондай-ақ бағалау бойынша ешқандай курс өтпеген 4 мұғалім қатысты. Қатысушылардың әртүрлілігі зерттеуге түрлі тәжірибе мен түрлі пікірлерді қосуға мүмкіндік берді. Мәліметтер жартылай құрылымдалған сегіз сұхбат, сабақтарды бақылау және құжаттарды саралау нәтижесінде жинақталды.

Зерттеу барысында мұғалімдердің қалыптастырушы бағалауға қатысты түсінігіне әсер ететін төрт негізгі фактор айқындалды: мұғалімнің қалыптастырушы бағалауды қолдану бойынша тәжірибесінің жеткіліксіздігі, кәсіби даму курстарының жүйесіздігі, мұғалім түсінігі мен тәжірибесі арасындағы қайшылықтар, оқушылардың уәжінің төмендігі. Бұдан әрі берілген ұсыныстарды талқылау және қорытындылар бағалау жүйесінің жаңа моделін қолдануға зор ықпал жасауы мүмкін.

Тірек сөздер: бағалау, кейс стади, Ақмола облысы, кәсіби даму.

Аннотация

Система оценивания учебных достижений учащихся школ Казахстана переходит от традиционного «отметочного» оценивания к модели формативного оценивания. В процессе внедрения новой модели оценивания учителя могут испытывать сложности в плане пересмотра своего опыта оценивания учащихся на уроке, и отсутствия курсов. Оценивание учащихся на уроке может проводиться только с целью определения уровня знаний ученика.

Целью данного исследования является изучение понимания формативного оценивания учителями одной из школ Акмолинской области, Казахстан. В данной работе использовался качественный метод исследования, кейс-стади. Для выбора объекта исследования была использована подходящая стратегия выборочного метода. Целенаправленный отбор с максимальной вариацией был использован для определения участников исследования. В исследовании приняли участие 2 группы учителей: 4 учителя, которые прошли курсы по оцениванию, и 4 учителя, которые не обучались на курсах по оцениванию. Разнообразие участников исследования позволило привнести разный опыт и мнения учителей. Данные были собраны в результате восьми полу-структурированных интервью, наблюдения уроков и анализа документов. В исследовании были выявлены четыре фактора, влияющие на понимание учителями формативного оценивания: недостаточность практических знаний учителя; отсутствие системы курсов профессионального развития; противоречия педагогической практики и понимания учителей; низкая мотивация учащихся. Данная работа включает в себя рекомендации и выводы, которые могут быть полезны в дальнейшем внедрении новой модели оценивания учащихся. Ключевые слова: оценивание, кейс-стадии, Акмолинская область, курсы.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of Study

This study explores teachers' perceptions toward norm-referenced and formative assessment in hopes of supporting and building upon their skills and confidence in conducting particularly formative assessment. This study seeks to explain teachers' perceptions in implementing formative assessment in the context of one of the public schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. The aim of this study is to identify problems teachers encounter while conducting formative assessment in class and to come up with recommendations to amend such challenges.

Classroom assessment shapes the teaching and learning process. In an era of globalization and advancement in technology, competition to keep up with educational and economic global standards require younger generations to be more pro-active, quickly make decisions, and critically analyze and interpret information. With this in mind, one of the ultimate goals of Kazakhstani education presently is to equip students with the skills to learn how to learn and prepare them for future life. Currently, vast educational reforms are taking place in the educational system of Kazakhstan, including reforms of the country's educational assessment system (Governing Body of the School (GBS), Department for Education Quality Assessment, 2012).

The concept of assessment, at first glance, seems very easy to perceive, yet an in-depth analysis illustrates that it involves a wide range of various features, and roles such as improving teaching and learning. Therefore, it would be helpful for further discussion to define the notion of assessment. According to the glossary of Education Reform group located in England, the term *assessment* in education implies a wide variety of methods or tools that teachers use to evaluate students' performance, track their progress, plan further progress, and make records of teaching and learning (Hidden Curriculum, 2014). It is crucial for teachers to know the purpose of assessment. Assessment procedures provide

evidence of students' learning through responses and assessment tasks; however, more importantly is to consider how to use this data, whether to make a judgment or provide feedback to inform further learning. This depends on the assessment procedure and on how the evidence of learning is used by the teachers. Since formative assessment is a relatively new approach in assessment policy within Kazakhstani context, it most likely requires teacher preparation. This preparation may better support teachers in implementing the strategies for undertaking formative assessment in classroom.

Generally, Kazakhstani mainstream schools are applying a norm- referenced assessment system. According to a norm-referenced assessment system, teachers assess students' achievements against the overall median, highest, and lowest level (OECD, 2014). In a norm-referenced assessment system, students' performances are compared to one another. Teachers allocate grades on a scale of one to five with five being the highest, and five is given to students in cases when students demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the topic. However, these grades do not inform further teaching and learning, nor do they allow tracking students' progress. For example, students showed excellent understanding of the topic, and s/he was given a grade of "five." This grade does not give any information to the students on how to improve. As research indicates, in practice teachers tend to skip levels one to two, because they may fear making a negative impact on students' motivation or due to teacher accountability reasons (OECD, 2014). Teachers are accountable for students' performance and they have to report to school administration on the quality of teaching. Research indicates that if students are allocated only grades for their learning with no feedback students do not benefit (Black & William as cited in Wilson, 2004). Norm-referenced assessment measures student achievements in relation to the performance of their peers. Norm-referenced assessment, as noted previously, has a more judgmental nature of assessment with no information for student improvement provided.

This suggests the need for a new assessment system, such as formative assessment, as it better contributes to the development of students' skills by enabling them to set goals, and plan their further learning (Stiggins, 2004).

The prime goal of formative assessment is to enhance teaching and learning. It allows teachers to give timely feedback to students, and students in turn, have opportunities to make adjustments if need be and reflect on their work, which may contribute to their further learning. Formative assessment allows tracking of students' progress, and may serve as a guide for learning. When teachers skillfully apply formative assessment students are engaged in the learning process and take ownership for their learning.

The process of shifting from norm-referenced to the formative assessment belief model was launched in 2013 in this particular school. This shift was the result of reforms in the curriculum design, the focus of which was to align educational practice with the demands of global standards required for young people of the 21st century. According to the school programme, assessment is proclaimed as an indispensable part of teaching and learning (GBS, Department for Education Quality Assessment, 2012). Similarly, formative assessment is acknowledged as a tool to improve teaching and learning by allowing students to evaluate their own learning and find out ways in which they could improve their knowledge via getting feedback from teachers and peers.

Teachers' perceptions and beliefs about assessment influence what techniques teachers utilize in their classroom lessons, as well as how they implement these techniques, and further interpret and provide feedback on students' performances. With the recent reforms being undertaken in the system of Kazakhstani classroom assessment, experienced teachers may face difficulties due to their lack of professional development courses, practical skills, or workload, and based on their past experiences in assessment may feel

uncomfortable with the change. At the same time, novice teachers may not perceive the underlying principles of formative assessment and also feel hesitant, and misinterpret it. Thus, it is important to understand teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment during this assessment reform period in the Kazakhstani educational system.

Personal Journey toward the Proposed Study

This research study contributes to my professional development as a teacher. I have more than 20 years of teaching experience in different grades: primary, secondary, and high school. The schools I worked at are different: mainstream schools, rural schools, and schools for gifted and talented. However, all of these schools have the same system of norm-referenced assessment. I have always been interested in other systems of classroom assessment since I witnessed the drawbacks of norm-referenced assessment system, particularly regarding the lack of feedback and teacher judgments. Therefore, my interest to explore teacher experiences in conducting classroom assessment has arisen from my personal teaching experience.

From my experience, formative assessment is new for Kazakhstani schoolteachers, and I am interested in understanding the challenges teachers experience while implementing this form of assessment. I have been teaching for more than 20 years, and have used both norm-referenced and formative assessment within the classroom. Having more than three years of implementing formative assessment experience, I would say that during my first years of implementing formative assessment and getting used to the new way of assessment it was difficult for me to change my mindset, and to accept this new assessment format, especially because I did not receive guidance in this type of assessment. It took me some time to perceive the underlying objectives as well as the benefits of formative assessment. This was predominantly the impact of gradual personal journey as well as professional trainings on assessment, which were held at school.

However, through informal discussions with teachers we used to claim that it is easier for the teacher to make decisions on her/his own and give a grade to the student without involving the student into the assessment procedure, and justifying the grade. Quite often despite the professional development courses we had, it was challenging for teachers to understand the formative assessment strategies and give up norm-referenced assessment right away. It was difficult for teachers to perceive the concept of formative assessment, since teachers have a long practice of incorporating norm-referenced assessment. The challenges were related particularly to understanding and devising rubrics as well as giving up allocating grades for students' performance. Likewise, the environment at school, in the form of a teacher professional community contributed immensely to my perception of formative assessment. Collaboration with some of my colleagues, who were experiencing the same difficulties in understanding formative assessment, enabled us to collaborate and discuss our challenges. These professional discussions brought about finding ways to understand the process of utilizing formative assessment.

Thus, gradually, implementing formative assessment in class became a consistent practice for me. From my personal experience and informal observation, I think that lack of training impacted the difficulties teachers had in accepting the change when they first started using formative assessment. From conversations with teachers, I have learnt that some teachers misunderstand, and frequently are not confident in utilizing formative assessment techniques in class. In my years as a teacher, I recognize that teacher professional development training and teacher beliefs have a direct impact on the educational change process; in this case, reform toward the implementation of a new assessment system.

Statement of the Problem

The successful implementation of formative assessment requires teachers to incorporate different classroom strategies and techniques in order to record, collect, analyze and track students' progress. Hughes (2010) suggested various activities such as activities, which include student self-assessment procedures, exit-cards, group work with peer feedback, and portfolios as tools to inform teachers on adjusting teaching and learning. However, the concept of formative assessment is relatively new within Kazakhstan: GBS schools started to incorporate formative assessment in 2012. In a period of extensive educational reforms, as Fullan (2001) illustrates, the "change" might lead to teachers' anxiety, resistance and disorientation. Therefore, teachers, especially novice ones, are likely to misunderstand the perception of this concept, due to the lack of teacher courses feeling unconfident whilst incorporating formative assessment in class.

Studies have also shown teachers implement assessment techniques efficiently if they consider and believe that these activities are needed for their classroom (Ajzen, 1985). Consequently, if teachers do not adopt or if they misinterpret the value and importance of formative assessment this might lead to error correction teaching and learning, where teachers only correct students' mistakes and give grades to students and test-driven teaching, which reduce students' motivation. Likewise, if teachers consider formative assessment strategies time-consuming and requiring efforts in terms of resources they may tend to avoid using them in class.

Black and Wiliam (as cited in Wilson, 2004) highlighted assessment should happen during the teaching and learning process; meaning that teachers should monitor students' performance in the course of the lesson, not when the lesson is finished. However, in reality, teachers may conduct assessment when they finish explaining the topic, since this is what is applicable to norm-referenced assessment. Another study explored classroom

practices of teachers from 3rd to 12th grade (Frey & Schmitt, 2010). In line with formative assessment tools (performance-based assessment, teacher-made tests) the frequency of assessment event in class was considered. According to the research, essays and written tasks were the most common assessment forms teachers used in class, similarly, traditional paper-and-pencil testing is classroom assessment format which was used predominantly. Formative assessment is not common, and only a small proportion of classroom tests are formative assessments. In accordance with the study, teachers adhered to some traditional assessment format preferences, however, their preferences varied depending on their teaching experiences.

Likewise, the study by Black and William (2003) explores the practical issues teachers face whilst implementing formative assessment strategies. The study underlines the importance of interventions in the practices of 24 teachers, and follow-up reflections with the same teachers. As the result of these interventions, teachers involved in the research as a focus group, had a snowball effect on other teachers' practices, translating their findings. Through teacher collaboration and overall, the school environment, teachers, who were involved in the interventions spread their experiences that further made a positive impact on the other members of the staff.

A mixed methods research study on assessment involved examining pre-service teachers' perceptions and student of classroom assessment in Baghlan Higher Education Institution, School of Education. The findings, suggested that to increase the knowledge of classroom assessment, short-term courses, workshops and seminars within higher education institutions should be conducted and supported (Mussawy, 2009). The same study highlighted that students were not satisfied with the assessment practices held in class since teachers first inform students on possible topics for assessment, and then teachers might change assessment items. Teachers were not confident in applying

assessment techniques and hesitated while choosing the assessment tasks. The study indicated that teachers lacked both practical skills, and theoretical knowledge. Therefore, it may be concluded that lack of professional development courses on assessment was a challenge for teachers of that particular school. As can be seen from the research findings, teachers adhere to the assessment techniques they get used to, and most of these are knowledge-based and require the answers such as “Yes/No”. The evidence on the experience of Kazakhstani teachers illustrates that currently few teachers in Kazakhstan have been trained to use formative assessment effectively (OECD, 2014). Additionally, to efficiently and proactively implement formative assessment in class, teachers need to accept and perceive the benefits of formative assessment; professional development and training may not truly make an impact in teachers' practices toward reform without their belief in the reform. Hence, it is pivotal to explore the perceptions of teachers towards formative assessment. Although a great deal of research was carried out in the field of assessment internationally, there is still a void of research-based evidence on formative assessment implementation within Kazakhstan.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case-study research is to explore Kazakhstani primary and secondary school teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment implementation at one public school in the Akmola region. This study aims to investigate teachers' experiences, feelings, and understandings of formative assessment, in hopes of proposing ideas to strengthen the assessment process. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how Kazakhstani teachers understand formative assessment and techniques, to enhance students' learning. To have an in-depth understanding of teacher perceptions toward assessment, particularly formative assessment, this paper explores the perceptions of experienced teachers, who received courses on assessment and novice teachers, who did

not have courses on formative assessment. Likewise, these two groups of teachers vary according to their age, ethnicity, and gender. In doing so, this study asks: What are Kazakhstani school teachers' perceptions regarding assessment, more particularly formative assessment? Additionally, the following sub-questions are considered:

1. What are teachers' experiences with assessment, particularly with formative assessment?
2. How do they implement forms of assessment (formative assessment and/or norm-referenced assessment) in their classroom?
3. What are the benefits and challenges in implementing formative assessment?

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial in terms of contributing to the existing research in the field of student assessment within the international research arena. The research topic is relevant to the current innovations in the sphere of educational system of Kazakhstan and is of particular value to the developers of school assessment policy in Kazakhstan, teachers, students, practitioners, school administration may also benefit from this study.

Currently, there is a void of research regarding the education system in Kazakhstan, particularly in the area of classroom assessment. Therefore, internationally, this study will present knowledge of the educational changes and reform in the Kazakhstani classroom assessment system. This study may also benefit other educators and researchers from post-soviet countries, which have educational contexts and classroom assessment systems similar to that of Kazakhstan. Through exploring the process of formative assessment implementation in schools, this research may expand Kazakhstani teachers' perceptions on assessment, contributing to successful incorporation of formative assessment in their classroom practices. Likewise, in the period of extensive educational reforms in Kazakhstan this study may support teachers within Kazakhstani schools context

experiencing educational change. Taking into consideration teacher workload, new reforms, the level of experience in assessment, the study will help to build their level of confidence in implementing formative assessment.

Next, the investigation of different teacher practices, as well as considering teacher challenges will provide insightful information to Kazakhstani educational policy-makers and other educational organizations dealing with classroom assessment, offering ideas on modifying classroom assessment system, to make it efficient and beneficial for both teachers and students. The findings of the study will empower teachers, and support their confidence in conducting formative assessment in the classroom, and perhaps reducing negative feelings related to the new change. Students at Kazakhstani schools will also benefit from the study regarding their learning outcomes, since teachers are expected to improve their practices and to better implement formative assessment strategies.

This chapter highlighted the background of the research problem, and the significance of the problem. It also included the purpose of the study as well as research questions. Chapter 2 reviews the previous studies on assessment and presents Literature review connected to the problem. Chapter 3 is devoted to Methodology, it explains the design of the study, includes description of sampling procedures, describes the setting. It also includes possible limitations and delimitations of the main points. Chapter 3 presents collection and data analysis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter examines the literature on teachers' perceptions of formative assessment. First, the chapter presents information on the former and current situation of educational assessment in Kazakhstan. More specifically, it includes an analysis of the formative assessment role in Kazakhstani schools in accordance with the NIS assessment documents. The next part describes the review of the existing research related to the study. Finally, a summary of the literature is presented, highlighting how this literature frames my study.

An extensive amount of research has been done in the area of classroom assessment on the international scale; however, there is a gap in the field of classroom assessment research in Kazakhstan. The focus of this chapter is to provide a critical review of the existing literature and research pertaining to the study in question. This chapter will also include a brief overview of the classroom assessment system in Kazakhstan in order to better understand the current assessment system within the local context.

Formative Assessment

Shepard (as cited in Chappuis, 2009) defines formative assessment as assessment conducted timely, whilst the teaching and learning process is taking place. The major role of formative assessment is to improve teaching and learning. In some contexts, formative assessment is associated with assessment for learning. The reviewed literature highlights the benefits of formative assessment. Formative assessment compares students' achievements against success criteria and the learning objectives, which students need to achieve. Another important feature of the assessment system is that classroom assessment is closely interrelated with learning objectives (Kurmanbayeva, 2016). What is more, formative assessment is used to make immediate adjustments in teaching and learning, to plan further steps. For example, teacher provides feedback to students, indicating good

areas, and areas for improvement. This constructive feedback from the teacher informs students about further steps, and allows going back and revising the material needed.

The use of formative assessment enables teachers to better understand how their students are learning and use evidence of learning to plan what they will do next with students. The ultimate goal of formative assessment is to enhance “learning to learn” skills (Sach, 2013). The most common examples of formative assessment are peer-assessment among students themselves and student self-assessment. Self-assessment and peer-assessment are important instruments of formative assessment (Herrera, Murry, & Gabral, 2007). As a result of formative assessment strategies such as teacher feedback, and peer-assessment students acquire skills to improve their learning, develop problem-solving skills, take ownership for their learning. For instance, students get feedback from their peers, or teacher and the information in the form of the feedback allows making conclusion on what needs to be improved and allows planning his or her further progress.

Despite the many benefits of formative assessment, the implementation process poses challenges. Quite often the concept of assessment is misinterpreted and associated with ‘testing’ (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015). An undesirable outcome of this misconception is that teachers use the results of formative assessment to make judgments and fix students’ progress by giving grades to them. An instance could be the use of different types of tests and quizzes where teacher as a feedback provides only final scores to students with no comments. These assessment tasks predominantly encourage rote and superficial learning, so that students learn in order to get grades and do not get solid knowledge. In this context, teachers need to clearly understand the purpose of formative assessment. If teachers apply formative assessment in an inappropriate way this may trigger the situation where students will be compared with one another, resulting in students’ competition with each other as well as to students’ low motivation to study.

Similarly, when teacher focuses on rewarding students with grades, provides praises, this may stop learning and students will study in order to get best marks, rather than enhancing their learning (Black and Wiliam as cited in Wilson, 2004).

As it is stated by Black and Wiliam (1998), the improvement of formative assessment process is a relatively slow process, and takes place through support and coherent programs of professional development. Inconsistent teacher professional development is another challenge, which hinders successful implementation of formative assessment. If the courses are conducted episodically efficient implementation of the innovation cannot be guaranteed. To administer, and conduct formative assessment in class, and further interpret evidence of learning, teachers need skills and knowledge. Formative assessment is to be embedded in the lesson; the lack of teacher learning in classroom assessment makes the process of devising formative assessment tasks time-consuming (Angrade & Cizek, 2010).

Sach's (2013) qualitative study using a narrative approach explored facilitators and barriers in formative assessment implementation in class. The study was conducted in the United Kingdom. Overall, 67 lower and middle school teachers were involved in the study. The aim of the study was to identify factors that promoted or hindered formative assessment practices in teachers' practices. In order to obtain deep interpretations of teachers' responses a semi-structured interview was undertaken. As a result, the study found out the following constraints and facilitators of formative assessment implementation: school accountability; school culture, school context; teacher collaboration, school leadership and management. Ultimately, the study demonstrated that formative assessment might be implemented efficiently if the government recognized teachers' professionalism and autonomy meaning that teachers should be given more autonomy. Teachers in the same study indicated that quite often classroom assessment is

used for accountability purposes, and consequently, the implementation of formative assessment is hindered by these factors. An instance is when student achievements are measured against the ‘national benchmark’ and teachers are responsible for the students’ grades.

A research-based handbook on formative assessment (Angrade & Cizek, 2010) pointed out the following challenges: adherence to a purpose for the assessments. Similarly, resources to support professional development, time for planning will make the process of implementation, more efficient. Teacher learning is an important factor in implementing formative assessment, if teachers have both theoretical and practical knowledge that will guide them in the process of implementation. Teachers are likely to feel more confident in applying techniques and strategies.

Educational Change

These days, the ‘knowing of knowledge’ is no longer enough to succeed. Thus, there is a growing acknowledgement that educational system requires change, making a shift from the focus on rote learning to improving the quality of education (The World Bank, 2012). The educational system of Kazakhstan is shifting to a more learner-centered approach. In accordance with the new educational programme, Kazakhstani students will be able to think critically, have problem-solving skills, and independent life-learning (Ayubayeva, Bridges & Shamshidinova, 2014). The incorporation of formative assessment into the classroom, immensely contributes to these changes, since students who are acquiring the skill of evaluating and conducting peer-assessment and self-assessment are opting to gain the skill for lifelong learning (OECD, 2005). For example, as practice reveals, when students reflect on their learning, and plan possible improvements basing on assessment evidence the students acquire the skills of how to learn.

However, in an era of extensive reforms in education teachers past teaching experience in norm-referenced assessment, large amounts of radical changes may influence teachers' formative assessment misconception. Similarly, teachers may resist changes; particularly in cases if they experience lack of training, understand the inconsistency between everyday classroom and high-stake exam. As illustrated by Fullan (2001) changes in beliefs and understanding play a crucial role in achieving lasting reform. Thus, it is of great value to understand teachers' perceptions to formative assessment in the period when these changes are taking place.

Scholars from the United Kingdom, collaboratively worked in a group, named the Education Reform, explored formative assessment, and explained the concept of assessment. According to their definition formative assessment is used by teachers to evaluate, keep track of students' achievements, document them, skill acquisition, or identify learning gaps of students (Hidden Curriculum, 2014). Thus, there exist a great number of roles of assessment. The introduction of educational reforms places much responsibility and workload on teachers; teachers are to master innovations and to effectively utilize them in class. These pressures may affect teacher confidence in applying formative assessment strategies.

As reported by Fullan, (1993) change is not only about new innovative strategies, change requires practice before the expertise is mastered. With this in mind, novice teachers may face challenges, misunderstand and overall, may not be confident in utilizing formative assessment techniques without consistent professional development courses and other professional development initiatives. More importantly, Fullan states that, competence should be underpinned by values and teacher proposals for change. In this context it is important to consider experienced teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment since they have a long practice of implementing norm-referenced assessment

therefore, and it may be difficult for them to change their practices and adopt formative belief model assessment. At the same time, teachers are faced with more demands in terms of a growing amount of paperwork, pressures to teach to the tests, the disconnection of curriculum and assessment, and a constant need to defend themselves regarding student achievements (Kozol, 2008).

These issues may bring about additional burden to teachers and lead to resistance to change their practices. Similar issues may relate to the Kazakhstani schools context, particularly if newly hired teachers experience difficulties in providing constructive feedback from peers and do not get in-service training timely. Perhaps it may be difficult for experienced to change practices in classroom assessment and make a shift from allocating grades and making judgments to a different system of informing students about further improvement. For example, the study of primary school teachers' conceptions in Hong Kong illustrated that teachers implemented formative assessment in class; however, accountability purposes were the prevalent reasons of using formative assessment by some teachers in class (Dayal & Lingam, 2015).

The Evolving Format of Classroom Assessment in Kazakhstan

Classroom assessment in Kazakhstan involves a variety of formats, including observation, questioning, and paper-and-pencil tests. In line with these oral presentations, essays, project work and other assessment tasks provide information on students' learning. However, it is important to consider how to use this assessment data, whether its purpose is to make a critical (and often negative) judgment or to provide feedback to inform further learning. Therefore, assessment plays a role in students' level of engagement to learn; it may either drive education forward through motivating students or may stop students' desire to learning. This depends on the assessment procedure and on how the evidence of

learning is used. These are the underlying reasons of why educational assessment in Kazakhstan has been undergoing changes (Center for Pedagogical Measurements, n.d.).

If to compare, the traditional system of assessment adheres to the norm-referenced assessment type, which involves grading students from one to five scale, where one is never used (Rimini, Soltanbekova, Tynybayeva & Winter, 2014). Teachers while applying norm-referenced assessment predominantly carry out classroom assessment activities to meet external requirements or to inform teaching and learning. For instance, teachers have to prepare for exams, and tend to teach to the test in order to get students prepared for the external exams. Kazakhstani schools are predominantly using norm-referenced assessment, which comes from the Post-Soviet context. Assessment format activities are focused on recalling information, where rote learning takes place. The devised tasks include mainly Multiple –choice questions, and low order of questions which require ‘Yes’/‘No’ answers. Evidence of learning is mainly used as an administrative or control tool, rather than as a pedagogical or curricular instrument (The World Bank, 2012). This type of assessment is built on comparing students’ performance with other students in class.

Research studies claim that if students are allocated only grades for their learning, with no feedback students do not benefit (Black & William as cited in Wilson, 2004). Thus, when applying norm-referenced assessment, teachers usually allocate grades to students in order to assess students’ performance. To compare, in formative assessment students are provided with constructive feedback. The research by Anastasiya A. Lipnevich and Jeffrey K. Smith (2008) compared the effect of feedback and grades on students’ performance. The study was conducted in New Zealand. Overall, the experiment involved 464 students from two universities. In the course of the study, some participants were provided a detailed feedback, others were given grades. To some of the tasks students received both: feedback and grades. The results of the study illustrated that students’ performance

increased when they were given detailed, descriptive feedback with no grades. Thus, it may be concluded that grades lower students' intrinsic motivation and therefore, students are likely to perform worse in their studies.

As the result of the recent educational reforms, similar changes are taking place in classroom assessment within Kazakhstani context. In the process of formative assessment implementation, teachers are making a shift from giving grades to students to providing detailed feedback for improvement. However, in a recent review of research on classroom assessment in Kazakhstan, it was indicated that many teachers were interviewed, and only some of Kazakhstani teachers used formative assessment as an assessment tool (Rimini et al., 2014). The same study illustrated that such concepts as formative assessment, and reflection had been recently introduced through in-service training for teachers. Thus, classroom assessment culture of Kazakhstani schools is changing, although it is obvious that it is always difficult to introduce new reforms, especially at schools, since it involves a variety of stakeholders and many teachers may experience difficulties. Despite the issues regarding the implementation of reforms in educational assessment system of Kazakhstan, still it can be claimed that the country is making advances in this area.

Teachers' Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs about Assessment

Teaching is an activity where teachers employ their educational beliefs and philosophies (Harrison, 2013). Therefore, teacher perceptions play a vital role in the entire process of implementing formative assessment in class. Moreover, teacher perceptions may have a strong impact on their professional practices in the classroom. Therefore, it is pivotal to understand how teachers perceive the notion of formative assessment. Although, formative assessment is considered to be relatively a new change to Kazakhstani classroom assessment practice, there is an extensive international research highlighting the importance of teachers' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs toward formative assessment.

The study conducted by Cheng and Yan (2015) illustrated that attitudes and intentions to applying formative assessment have linear connection. In this study, overall, 450 teachers from 10 primary schools were interviewed. The results drawn from the research revealed teachers with positive attitude to formative assessment were more likely to incorporate it in their teaching practice. Likewise, the same research pointed out that if teachers are under the pressure of accountability and high- stakes exams, they are likely to give up adopting formative assessment techniques. Under these conditions, teachers will "teach to test" even if they are aware of formative assessment benefits.

Black and William (1998) in their article about classroom assessment described the influence of teacher beliefs and conceptions on what and how they organized their classroom practices. Their study underpins three major purposes for assessment: enhancing teaching and learning, making students accountable for learning, and accountability of schools and teachers. When teachers believe assessment is about students' accountability, they will possibly have a weak relationship to students' progress (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Findings from the study include four main teacher beliefs about assessment. First, assessment contributes to the improvement of classroom instruction by interpreting the assessment evidence for decision-making; then, assessment allows learners to take ownership for their learning; teachers or schools are made accountable; assessment is not relevant to the work of teachers and the life of students. Therefore, it is highly important to explore teacher perceptions regarding formative assessment.

As the research study on teacher conceptions in China pinpoints, teacher confidence in the accuracy of assessment techniques may depend on their own professional judgments on student learning, as well as it comes from quality assessment instruments. Overall, 1464 teachers participated in this quantitative study. The participants of the research were teachers from five secondary and four primary schools, the participants had different

teaching experience, subjects. The study highlighted three major purposes for assessment: 1) assessment as improvement both of teaching and learning; 2) assessment as school accountability; 3) classroom assessment as student accountability. Hence, in order to efficiently utilize formative assessment, teachers need to clearly understand the purpose of formative assessment. The research data illustrated that policy, resource, and professional development courses toward an assessment for learning paradigm served as a support for more positive views of assessment (Brown, Hui, Yu & Kennedy, 2010).

Another quantitative study of teachers' conceptions of assessment was held in New Zealand by Brown (2004). 525 primary school teachers and managers completed a questionnaire and according to research findings, assessment improves students' learning and students take ownership for their learning. The same research stated that school quality and teacher efficiency are evaluated through assessment. To compare with previous studies, teacher conceptions of assessment purposes were dependent neither on assessment training nor on teacher practices. The study highlighted that the investigation of teachers' understandings might positively affect teachers' professional development.

To compare, another study by Black and Wiliam (as cited in Wilson, 2004) indicated that improvement of formative assessment positively impacts student performance. In their study, they highlight three major problems: 1) the assessment methods used by teachers are not efficient in promoting good learning, 2) grading practices lead to competition rather than improvement, 3) assessment feedback impacts students negatively. These purposes of assessment should be perceived by teachers and overall, make an impact on their understandings and beliefs about formative assessment as a concept.

These problems may be similar to those, teachers face in the context of this particular school since the process of change is not an immediate process, and "changes in

education sector are inherently complex.” (Kurmanbayeva, 2016, p. 33). The study by Rimini et al.,(2014) pointed out that educational assessment in Kazakhstan mainly utilizes Multiple –choice questions (MCQ), which do not require high-order of thinking. The same study presents suggestions to review school policy on assessment. Similarly, teachers need to have an in-depth understanding of formative assessment and be skillful in applying its techniques. Since most of the teachers have their prior experience with norm-referenced assessment this experience might impede the process of implementation. Teachers practices, prior experiences in assessment, and beliefs may impact on the assessment tasks they devise. In her study, Anastasia Kitiashvili (2014) explored teachers’ attitudes towards formative assessment in Georgia. Georgia is also a post-soviet country, and there are a number of commonalities between Kazakhstan and Georgia with regard to educational assessment. Surprisingly, her research revealed inconsistency between teachers’ attitudes and their assessment practices. The results of her mixed- method research illustrated teachers feel positive about using formative assessment methods, particularly those that require higher order of thinking, however, their assessment practices revealed the lack of such assessment strategies. Similar to that of Kazakhstani experience of using Multiple Choice Questions, the assessment techniques of Georgia teachers lack complexity. An instance is teachers designing activities to monitor and track students’ progress use tests, tasks that are predominantly knowledge-based.

Implementing formative assessment strategies teachers involve students in designing assessment criteria, so that students understand what is expected (Black and Wiliam as cited in Wilson 2004). Additionally, teachers utilize success criteria aligned with learning objectives to assess students’ performance (Kurmanbayeva, 2016).

Teacher Learning

Assessment in the context of Kazakhstan has been undergoing significant changes. However, the successful implementation of formative assessment requires teachers' understandings of the purposes and overall, of its context itself (Hallinger, 2011). Trainings in assessment as well as teaching experiences are important factors that influence effective implementation of formative assessment in class. Teacher skills, knowledge and strategies they use, to a large extent impact effective implementation of formative assessment (Hatzipanagos & Rochon, 2012).

There are some commonalities in challenges teachers face while incorporating formative assessment practices. Teachers' prior experience of norm-referenced assessment may impact their current practices in assessment meaning that teachers have to change and reconsider their practices. Teachers may feel unconfident in applying formative assessment and resist change due to their belief that they lack or have insufficient expertise and skills to implement it (Fullan, 2001). An instance is when, teachers do not understand the purposes of formative assessment, they may skip conducting an assessment for student improvement purposes and they can give the score to students as a feedback for their performance. In such cases, the purpose of assessment will have judgmental character. Thus, students are given grades or scores, which is rather a fixed assessment that does not provide information on further improvement. Also, teachers getting used to allocating grades without comments, may find it time-consuming to provide meaningful feedback to students. Therefore, professional development courses in assessment may support teachers' understandings in this area.

Young and Jackman (2014) asserted teachers' positive attitudes and perceptions to formative assessment from 20 secondary English teachers. The study posits that in cases, where teachers perceive the advantages of utilizing formative assessment they are more

likely to incorporate it in class. Furthermore, they identified considerable discrepancies in the attitudes and perceptions toward formative assessment of teachers, who underwent training and those who did not. The study highlighted the importance of teacher training to equip teachers with mastery skills informative assessment practice “as such experience plays a crucial role in the formation of self-efficacy” (Young & Kanatman, 2014, p.134). The research findings illustrated that teachers need consistent carefully planned, holistic trainings if formative assessment practices are to be effectively incorporated into classroom practice. Likewise, according to Young and Jackman (2014), professional development for teachers predominantly is focused on summative or external assessment.

Teachers need to understand the ultimate goals of assessment. According to Heritage (2007), teachers need to be aware of the variety of formative assessment strategies so that they can increase the opportunities to collect data on students’ performance. Additionally, teachers need to understand that the concept of validity so that to assess the relevant items. Teachers need to master skills of aligning learning objectives with assessment strategies in the lesson. The same study underlines that it is critical for teachers to understand that along with the teacher, students may also provide assessment to their peers via peer and self –assessment, and this may also serve as sources for evidence of learning (Heritage, 2007).

A study by Zhang and Burry-Stock (2003) explored the relationship of teachers’ assessment skills and teacher learning with regard to classroom assessment. The study involved 297 participants, who were teachers from public schools in Fairfax County, US, Alabama. It was found out that teachers, who received professional courses on assessment were confident in applying assessment techniques. Likewise, their expertise in employing assessment strategies was dependent on their professional development courses rather than on their teaching experience.

Theoretical Background of the Study

The theoretical framework of this study is a social constructivist paradigm of research. As claimed by Schunk (2012) in social constructivism, knowledge is not imposed from outside, but rather people construct knowledge inside themselves and make meanings of their social worlds. The present study explores teachers' perceptions regarding the concept of formative assessment. The researcher will examine the views of teachers, so the study in question is built on the idea that the construction of meaning is always social, and is the result of interaction with humans (Creswell, 2014).

From the point of view of social constructivist theory, knowledge emerges from interaction and negotiation with others (Kim, 2001). The social constructivist theory adheres to the belief that participants are actively involved in the research and they can share views from their own experiences and meaning making. From this standpoint, social constructivist paradigm posits that the researcher does her/his best to portray interpretations of participants' meanings of their worlds or experiences. Since my research relies on participants' views of the situation being studied, participants share their opinions and meanings are constructed through these discussions (Creswell, 2014). Formative assessment is closely interrelated with social constructivist theory of learning (Assessment for learning). Vygotsky's (1978) theory on learning through interaction is of paramount importance in social constructivist paradigm. This theory underpins the belief that groups of people play a crucial role in making meanings.

Summary

The review of the existing research revealed that there is a gap in research in the area of formative assessment teacher practices, particularly within a Kazakhstani context. A lack of research in teacher practices makes it difficult to understand what purposes teachers pursue during an assessment event, and what difficulties teachers meet. Similarly,

an in-depth analysis of the reviewed literature indicated that teachers are challenged to implement formative assessment in class due to different reasons: lack of professional trainings, accountability issues, the use of tasks by teachers that are focused on knowledge-based tasks and former experience on classroom assessment.

Likewise, the above presented research does not include the information on how teacher perceptions are formulated, and what factors impact their formulation (Vandeyar & Killen, 2007). Thus, this study will attempt to fill this gap and explore teacher perceptions of formative assessment as well as the challenges they come across in the process of formative assessment implementation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter included a critical review of the existing literature related to the study of formative assessment in different countries. This section introduces the methodology used to explore teacher perceptions of formative assessment at one of the public schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. More specifically, this chapter explains the selection of qualitative research and choice of research design, the empirical procedures, data collection and analysis. Further, the chapter introduces a section of limitations, which indicates missing points of the study.

Design of the Study

This section, specifies the research design used in this inquiry and justifies its choice.

Generally, there exist two research paradigms: quantitative and qualitative. Creswell (2014) points out that quantitative research paradigm is about numerical data and is based on the assumption that reality can be tested, measured, and replicated. Quantitative research paradigm does not allow analyzing data in depth; therefore, this paradigm is not effective to use for the research topic in question. To compare, qualitative research paradigm ensures an in-depth understanding of people's views, and perspectives. A qualitative approach to research relies on deep meaning making, tends to be interconnected with interpretive epistemology, and therefore, provides an in-depth understanding of situations (Creswell, 2014). Similarly, as described by Hiatt (1986), qualitative research is primarily focused on exploring experiences, views, and thoughts of the research participants. Therefore, a qualitative study approach best fits the purpose of the study. The selection of the qualitative research strategy allowed the researcher developing a detailed understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding formative assessment.

To address the research purposes and to generate detailed responses to research questions this study adopted a case-study design within a qualitative approach. The rationale for using a case study is that it focuses on specific features of a ‘case’, considering the phenomenon of formative assessment in relation to the context (Yin, 2014). Creswell (2014) described a case study as part of ethnography, according to Creswell a “case” might be an individual, a process, which includes a series of events, or event. Interestingly, Merriam (as cited in Yazan, 2015) pinpoints unique features of case study such as Particularistic meaning, which is centered on a specific event or situation; Descriptive, which implies that it involves the description of the phenomenon under study; Heuristic feature shows readers understand the phenomenon. Similarly, a case study research design, as illustrated by Yin (2014) explores the phenomenon within its real conditions. Thus, Yin’s approach perfectly fits for this qualitative case study research. Case study focuses on contemporary events, and posits answering such questions as ‘how’, and why’ (Yin, 2014). Hence, the researcher employed a single unique case study since the research took place in one particular school in Akmola region, which had been applying formative assessment for 5 years. The case-study design aims to critically analyze, understand and explore the situation and shed light on teacher perceptions of formative assessment at one of the schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan.

Participants

Convenience sampling strategy within purposeful sampling for selecting the site was applied since it allowed the researcher selecting the site based on accessibility and proximity (Creswell, 2014). The site is convenient for the researcher since it is the school where the new type of assessment is being implemented. Additionally, the setting is located in the Northern part of Kazakhstan, Akmola region and the researcher lives close to this area. Overall, there were 8 participants in this study. Participants were selected through

purposeful sampling, and more specifically, maximal variation. Purposeful sampling fits the small-scale nature of the study and was applied to involve diverse perspectives of individuals, who teach different subjects, have different teaching experiences, and professional development. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher choosing individuals and sites intentionally to understand and know more about the central phenomenon; thus, suiting the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). Maximal variation sampling within a purposeful sampling strategy enables the researcher to select cases or individuals that are different from each other on particular characteristics or traits to demonstrate a variety of perspectives (Creswell, 2014). In order to deeply understand teachers' perceptions the study involved two different groups of individuals based on particular characteristics/traits. Thus, the criteria for the selection of participants included: teachers of various subjects, different teaching experiences, different age range, teachers, who received courses in assessment, and teachers who did not receive any courses, range of gender, representatives of different ethnic groups. Thus, the study involved two groups of teachers:

Group One: Experienced teachers in formative assessment at school, who participated in trainings on assessment. They had more than 3 years of teaching experience at this particular school. The participants were teachers of different subjects. The age range varied from 27 years old up to 52, the participants had prior experience in norm-referenced assessment and formative assessment.

Group Two: Novice teachers, who did not attend any training in assessment. Participants had at least 1 year of teaching experience at this school. The participants' overall teaching experience was no more than 3 years. The participants were teachers of different subjects and their age ranged from 23 up to 26 years old, they implemented formative assessment in their current practices.

The reason for selecting two groups is to deeply understand teachers' perceptions toward assessment, particularly formative assessment, and whether teachers' prior experiences in norm-referenced assessment and professional development courses affect considerably on teachers' understandings of formative assessment.

Overall, 8 teachers from the same school participated in the study, 5 male and 3 female teachers, representing different ethnic groups: 4 Kazakhs, 2 Russians, and 2 Ukrainians were interviewed through semi-structured one-on-one in-depth interviews with open-ended questions.

Procedures

Before the start of the study two main steps were done: getting the approval from the Ethics Review Committee and then receiving permission to access to the site from the gatekeeper. Once the approval was obtained, the researcher ensured the permission of the gate-keeper, who was the principal of the school, to conduct research and select the participants. The researcher gave a Principal Consent form (see Appendix A) to the gate keeper, which included the information on the purpose of the study, details of what was involved. The researcher distributed a recruitment flyer (see Appendix B), which included details regarding the requirements for the participants, contact details of the researcher, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Then, the interested participants, who matched the criteria, contacted the researcher on a voluntary basis. During our first meeting the participants of the research were introduced the procedure, nature as well as the purpose of the research. They were also told that their participation was voluntary and free. Then, the participants were given Teacher Consent forms (see Appendix C). The consent forms described the purpose of the study, recording of data, as well as how the data information would be used. The participants were informed that they could quit the research any time they found it necessary. The participants of the research read the consent form, and they

were provided time to ask any questions. Once the participants agreed to participate in the research, they were asked to sign the consent form. They returned one consent form to the researcher before the interview.

The participants were asked to engage in one 45 -minute interview (see Appendix D). Each participant was individually interviewed. The interviews were conducted, when all classes were finished to ensure comfortable atmosphere for the interviews. The interviews took place in one of the secure quiet rooms of the school, and time was scheduled at convenience of both the researcher and the participant. Overall, 8 semi-structured private interviews were undertaken to explore perceptions of teachers about formative assessment in a particular school, in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. All the interviews were audio taped. Member checking by showing the responses to the participants, and asking to check their responses helped the participants to make sure that their responses were interpreted in the correct way (Creswell, 2014). As a compensation for their participation, the researcher awarded the respondents with the useful brochure, containing information on formative assessment techniques. Teachers might have also benefitted from exchanging experiences, discussions with their peers, reflecting over their teaching practices whilst answering interview questions and sharing their ideas.

Data Collection

Data collection was held via semi-structured one-on-one interviews, lesson observations and document review were conducted in order to guarantee data validity. Triangulation was ensured by comparing observational notes, interview data, and school documents on assessment policy. Triangulation process ensured the accuracy and credibility of the research data (Creswell, 2014).

Interviews. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were used to provide useful and detailed information. Interviews allowed the researcher to ask specific questions.

According to Creswell (2014), one-on-one interviews are conducted with one participant to provide more in-depth answers to interview questions. The structure of the semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to perceive deeply the perspectives of the respondents, since it included open-ended questions. As semi-structured interviews are informal, this will create opportunities to establishing rapport with the participants (Bernard, 1988). The nature of the semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to create trustful atmosphere of the interviews. Each interview lasted around 45 minutes. Before the interview, the researcher negotiated with the participants the time and date appropriate for both. An interview protocol (see Appendix E) was completed to coherently organize the ideas and to record the information. The interviews were conducted in Russian. The interview questions were coded. The interview protocol included open-ended questions, allowing space to jot notes and reflections for the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The researcher asked probing questions to obtain an in-depth understanding of the teacher perceptions toward formative assessment. The open-ended questions of the interviews were related to teacher experiences, examples of practices on classroom assessment as well as benefits and challenges teachers experienced whilst conducting formative assessment in class.

Observation. Observation is part of a case-study design. Non-participant observation was aimed at observing teachers' assessment techniques in the classroom. The participants were informed that they would be observed while conducting a lesson for approximately 40 minutes. We arranged a time and date at the convenience of both participants and the researcher. The participants were sent a reminder two days before the observation period. The researcher visited the class without participating in the activities; non-participant observer is an "outsider", who was not involved in the activities (Creswell, 2014, p. 213). This data collection method enabled the researcher to access further details,

such as teachers' skills, their facial expression and intonation and ensured triangulation of the data. The researcher was making field notes in Lesson Observation Protocol (See Appendix F) whilst observing participants. Observational protocol (see Appendix G) included setting, time, length of observation, description of the activities, and reflective notes of the observer (Creswell, 2014). The documents of the research were collected for further analysis in a special folder. The researcher kept a reflective journal to track the research project and analyze data, as well as thoughts, ideas, and any details that might have arisen during observations.

Document analysis. Document analysis was utilized to provide more richness to research data. Document analysis ensured 'triangulation' of methods and allowed checking validity and the quality of the data from different perspectives (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the purpose of document analysis (see Appendix H) was to understand formative assessment implementation process in accordance with the regulated documents related to school assessment policy. The analyzed documents included lesson plans, school documents with regard to classroom assessment policy.

Data Analysis

This section describes the process of data analysis. The qualitative nature of the research allowed analyzing the data through interpretations and meanings. The data analysis stage started once the researcher gained the raw material. The raw material was obtained through semi-structured interviews, lesson observations and document analysis. The researcher carefully selected required information since interviews might produce mixed results. Member checking by showing the responses to the participants, and asking to check their responses helped the participants to make sure that their responses were written in the correct way (Creswell, 2014). The data was analyzed to answer specific to case-study "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2014).

According to Yin (as cited in Yazan, 2015), the data analysis process should be thoroughly planned. Therefore, first, several folders were created in order to store the gathered data and organize raw material. During the process of data analysis, the researcher categorized obtained data into themes by combining and summarizing similar things. To effectively organize the process of summarizing different colours were used for example, “red” for professional development courses and “green” for educational change. Overall, the data obtained underwent through the following process: first, initial coding, then focused coding and finally, there came out major themes. Headings were developed basing on the major themes. Initially, all the research data was divided into two sections: interviews and lesson observations with experienced teachers and interviews and lesson observations with novice teachers. Findings were interpreted, coded, and divided into themes (Creswell, 2014). Then, since the interviews were conducted in Russian, they were transcribed for further analysis, compared with notes made during the interview, and only then translated into English. School assessment policy documents and lesson plans were analyzed to gain more data as well as for triangulation purposes.

Limitations of the Study

Although current study includes useful findings there exist some limitations of the study. The first limitation of this study is that the study includes only one school, and therefore, teacher experiences of this particular school may not reflect experiences of all other Kazakhstani teachers. Thus, future studies may cover more than one school and consider a comparative analysis of teacher practices in applying formative assessment.

Likewise, the study selected the participants matching specific criteria, this non-random participant choice might be another limitation of the study. Finally, the research takes into account that there may be a variety of external factors, which might have influenced the implementation of formative assessment in the context of this particular

school in Akmola region. These limitations might be addressed by future studies. Next chapter will describe ethical issues, the inquiry process adhered to.

Ethics in Research with Humans

This section presents the adherence of this study to research ethics. Ethical issues are of paramount importance whilst conducting this research project. Therefore, first, the school principal was given an official letter asking a permission to conduct research at school. The recruitment flyer, informed consent form for the principal, informed consent form for teachers were provided and informed consent forms were signed by the participants. The researcher informed the participants about the voluntary nature of the study, as well as about the withdrawal from the research at any time. As soon as the participants got familiar with the consent form, they signed two copies of consent forms and returned one to the researcher before the interview started.

The participants were provided with all the information about the study, including the aims, length of the interview, lesson observation and possible usage of obtained data. The participants were informed that for confidentiality and anonymity purposes, no names and identities would be revealed, instead pseudonyms would be used (e.g., Teacher 1 or Teacher A). The participants were informed that gathered data would not be used to evaluate teacher experiences. Also it was indicated that the obtained data might be used for further publications and possible conferences. All the data prior analyzing was shown to the participants in order to avoid misinterpretation. The audiotapes, transcriptions and field notes were kept in a locker at the office, separately from the consent forms.

Regarding the risks, there were no potential risks related to personal and professional lives of the research participants. The respondents were guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research and were informed that the name of the school would not be mentioned.

A possible benefit for participants might be that teachers would improve on their teaching practices. For example, teachers while answering questions of the interview had an opportunity to reflect over their teaching practices. Consequently, students might benefit from teachers' best practices. Likewise, the developers of school assessment policy in Kazakhstan, might also benefit from this study, since the study identified teacher challenges and benefits whilst incorporating formative assessment. An additional benefit is a void of research regarding the education system in Kazakhstan, particularly in the area of classroom assessment. However, the researcher could not guarantee that participants received any particular benefits from participating in this project. Through the process of data analysis, only the researcher and the advisor had an access to the data. After data transcription, the recorded interviews were completely deleted from the tape-recorder and computer.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study that focused on teacher perceptions regarding formative assessment. The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions toward classroom assessment at one of the schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. This research explored the perspectives of two participant groups:

One group of teachers are experienced in formative assessment at school, and participated in trainings on assessment. Their age range varied from 27 years old up to 52, and they had more than 3 years of teaching experience at this particular school. The participants taught different subjects. The participants' overall teaching experience was at least 7 years and they implemented formative assessment in their current practices.

Another group was novice teachers, who did not attend any training in assessment. The participants' overall teaching experience was no more than 3 years. The participants also taught different subjects and their age ranged from 23 up to 26 years old, currently they had been implementing formative assessment. The choice of two groups of participants enabled the researcher to investigate the impact of professional courses and teachers' prior experiences in norm-referenced assessment on teachers' perceptions of formative assessment.

This chapter describes participants' understanding of the assessment process, and more specifically implementing formative assessment in this particular school. Participants shared their practices with classroom assessment, described their understandings of formative assessment as well as disclosed benefits and challenges they experienced whilst implementing formative assessment.

In the course of the research, the following major themes were identified: 1) Teacher Learning about Assessment 2) Teacher Understandings of Formative Assessment 3) Classroom Assessment Practices 4) Educational Change toward Formative Assessment.

The first theme, which is Teacher Learning about Student Assessment, will provide the information about teacher prior experiences with classroom assessment as well as it will include the information on teacher professional development on classroom assessment and a lack of teacher learning specifically toward formative assessment. The second section, which is Teacher Understandings of Formative Assessment, will present how teachers perceive formative assessment, and implement formative assessment in class. Section three, which is Classroom Assessment Practices, will cover the information on how teachers choose and incorporate assessment techniques in the lesson. The last section, which is Educational Change toward Formative Assessment, will explore the ways students benefit from formative assessment implementation as well as it will include the challenges teachers face in the process of formative assessment implementation in this particular school.

In order to better understand the results of my finding, I will provide detailed characteristics of my participants in the subsection below.

Characteristics of the Participants

The participants of the study were teachers from one school in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. This inquiry explored the perspectives of two groups of teachers with different experiences and backgrounds.

Group One included experienced teachers in formative assessment at school, who participated in trainings on assessment. They had more than 3 years of teaching experience at this particular school. The participants were teachers of different subjects. The participants' overall teaching experience was at least 7 years. Their age range was from 27 years old up to 52 years old.

Group Two: Novice teachers, who did not attend any training in assessment. Participants had at least 1 year of teaching experience at this school. The participants'

overall teaching experience was no more than 3 years. The participants were teachers of different subjects and their age range varied from 23 up to 26 years old. The study involved 5 male and 3 female teachers, who represented different ethnic groups: 2 Russians, 2 Ukrainian, and 4 Kazakhs.

Overall, eight teachers, were interviewed through semi-structured one-on- one in-depth interviews with open-ended questions. The reason for selecting two groups of teachers was to bring different perspectives of individuals who have different teaching experiences, backgrounds, and professional development opportunities. The table 1 below illustrates more detailed description of participants.

Table 1.Information about the Participants

| Pseudonym | Teaching Experience | Subject | Grades | Professional Courses on Assessment | Gender | Ethnicity | Age |
|-----------|---------------------|---------|-------------|------------------------------------|--------|---------------|-----|
| Irene | 2 years | English | 1,2,3,4. | No | Female | Russian | 23 |
| Adil | 2 years | Russian | 7 | No | Male | Kazakh | 24 |
| Kanat | 2 years | Maths | 7 | No | Male | Kazakh | 25 |
| Ardak | 3 years | Kazakh | 7 | No | Male | Kazakh | 26 |
| Alex | 7 years | Kazakh | 2 and 4 | Yes | Male | Ukrainia n | 30 |
| Kairat | 20 years | History | 7 and 9 | Yes | Male | Kazakh | 45 |
| Kate | 27 years | English | 10 and 7 | Yes | Female | Russian | 50 |
| Ann | 30 years | English | 9 and 7 | Yes | Female | Ukrainia n | 52 |

The next section will investigate teacher prior experiences with classroom assessment as well the information related to teachers' need in receiving practical courses on classroom assessment, particularly, formative assessment.

Teacher Learning

This section includes the information on teachers' experiences with formative assessment as well as it illustrates the information regarding the lack of practical professional development on formative assessment for teachers.

Teacher prior experience with classroom assessment. It was found, that all teachers involved in the current study regardless of their professional experience employed formative assessment, the main goal of which was to enhance teaching and learning. At the same time, most of them had previously implemented norm-referenced assessment, where students' performance was supposed to be measured compared to one another and teacher give grades to students for their performance. Curiously, the representatives of both groups: experienced and novice teachers started to implement formative assessment at this particular school. However, most of them had previously implemented norm-referenced form of assessment.

For instance, one of the novice teachers commented, "I had some practice of implementing norm-referenced assessment, though not a long one. Then... hmm...after two years of my working here, at this school, I started applying formative assessment" (Kanat, teacher of Math, 2 years of teaching experience). More experienced teachers shared a similar sentiment concerning the use of formative assessment. Alex, Kazakh language teacher, who has 7 years of teaching experience, describes his experience stating, "When I started working here, at this school there was another type of assessment which is called traditional, so now I am applying formative assessment...I can't say I am so experienced..."

In addition, all participants stated that they started using formative assessment in this particular school. Another participant who has 27 years of teaching experience stated that,

In my previous experience I implemented traditional norm-referenced assessment. Then I changed the school, and when I started working here I found out that this school had another type of assessment.

At first, it was difficult but then gradually I started to understand it, however, I do not have much practice.

(Kate, English teacher)

These responses indicate that teachers have similar experiences with assessment, and they have some understanding of both types of assessment: norm-referenced classroom assessment and formative assessment. While more experienced teachers may, in general, have much more extensive experience in classroom assessment, formative assessment has been as new for them as it was to novice teachers.

Curiously, it was a novice teacher who shared her views in favor of formative assessment approach. Ardak, teacher of Kazakh (3 years of teaching experience), claimed, “I implemented norm-referenced assessment in my previous practice, where we gave grades to students. But now I got used to formative type of assessment, really...seems more applicable.” As can be seen, teachers’ views on classroom assessment do not depend on teachers’ experiences. Although, this novice teacher, Ardak, who has 3 years of teaching experience, and has not received any courses on assessment, accepts this new type of assessment and shows basic understanding of formative assessment.

In sum, it can be concluded that teachers are mostly aware of both types of assessment strategies. Although they did use formative assessment in their current practice,

the findings revealed teacher's overall hesitation when it came to their perceived knowledge and practice of formative assessment.

Teacher professional development. This subsection will present the information related to the lack of courses for teachers on classroom assessment, particularly, formative assessment. When asked about courses on classroom assessment, teachers in the study reported that they did not have sufficient education in assessment. Even though some teachers received trainings, these trainings were not consistent. For example, if they worked at this particular school for three years, they received courses on assessment only once. The inconsistency in teacher courses on assessment is likely to challenge teachers to utilize formative assessment techniques in the lesson and overall, hinder the process of formative assessment implementation.

For instance, Anna, one of the English language teachers, shared her story about formative assessment implementation. She reported that while she was working at the school for four years, she went through professional development courses on assessment only once:

My overall experience is more than 30 years, and

at this school I have been working for 4 years ...

Yes, I had some courses; I think... it was only once.

It would have been better if I had more....

Another teacher brought his own example saying "As for professional development ... yes, I had courses in assessment attended some seminars also" (Kairat, History teacher, 20 years of teaching experience). However, very few teachers had an experience with professional development courses on assessment. For instance, when I asked the question such as "Did you receive professional training on assessment?" experienced teachers

responded that they had only once, while all novice teachers responded negatively: “No, unfortunately I didn’t”(Irene, English teacher, 2 years of teaching experience).

Moreover, lack of practical knowledge on formative assessment has been a recurring theme in the majority of the interviews. According to these teachers’ comments it could be concluded that even if some of the teachers had professional development courses, these courses were not consistent and there was a lack of practical knowledge. For instance, Kanat, who was a Math Teacher (2 years of teaching experience), acknowledged that it was difficult for him to work and assess students without practical support. Ardak (Kazakh Language teacher, 3 years of teaching experience), who did not have any professional development, and had been working at this school for 3 years, was quite confident in sharing her experience, and gave examples of her classroom assessment techniques: “In the classroom we apply formative assessment, for example, graphic organizers teacher monitoring ... just a variety of them. During lesson planning sessions we discuss and share techniques and strategies...that helps me a lot.”

However, Adil (Russian Language Teacher), who did not undergo any professional development on assessment, hesitated while giving responses: “We use different techniques.... for example ... hmmm....problems...and other tasks... usually...after a new topic... we conduct formative assessment.” The responses of Adil and Ardak indicated that some novice teachers, particularly Ardak was gaining new knowledge and was supported by colleagues during co-planning sessions in terms of utilizing formative assessment strategies. This informs the researcher that experienced teachers, who had courses on formative assessment, were more confident in formative assessment strategies compared to novice teachers, and were translating their knowledge to novice teachers through teacher collaboration. Another participant, Kairat, History Teacher (20 years of teaching experience), who received training on formative assessment reported that, “... I always try

to find new techniques and strategies ... related to classroom assessment myself.” This response shows that there are teachers, who seek opportunities for professional development for themselves. And some teachers are likely to enhance their teaching practices regarding the use of formative assessment through co-planning sessions.

Overall, teachers’ comments indicated that teachers were aware of formative assessment techniques, however, the experienced teachers pointed out the issues of inconsistency in professional development courses on formative assessment and lack of practical knowledge.

Teacher Understandings of Formative Assessment

This section illustrates the ways teachers understand the purpose of formative assessment and overall, represents teacher understandings of this concept. In order to explore how teachers utilize formative assessment techniques teachers were asked what the purpose of formative assessment was. An instance was, more experienced History teacher, Kairat, who had courses on assessment identified the difference between formative and norm-referenced assessment and reported that formative assessment was different from norm-referenced in a variety of ways. For instance, “students are not given grades, and scores...”

Other participants explained the purpose of formative assessment stating that, “Formative assessment is an important part of teaching and learning. Formative assessment identifies what students know, as well as what needs improvement.” (Adil, Russian Language Teacher, 2 years of teaching experience). The same ideas were reiterated by another teacher: “The purpose of classroom assessment is to define the level of students’ knowledge and work toward further improvement.” (Ann, English teacher, 30 years of teaching experience). These comments indicate that teachers’ understandings are aligned with the definition provided in school assessment policy and both of these teachers novice

and experienced one have similar understanding of the goals of formative assessment. Another set of experienced teachers, who had professional courses on assessment stated that, “Formative assessment allows students understand expected outcomes, students are involved in the learning process, and students’ performance is measured against specific criteria “(Alex, Kazakh language Teacher). “Assessment motivates, stimulates learners for further success, and measures students’ performance” (Kate, English teacher).

Interestingly, English language teacher, Kate, who had 27 years of teaching experience, in her interview reported that students were motivated by formative assessment. However, after lesson observation, she stated that, “I got used to norm-referenced assessment, it proved its efficiency through years...in my view, there are still many questions around formative assessment.” Lesson observation data revealed that teachers experienced and novice ones tended to give scores to students. These scores were not supported by any descriptive feedback. Lesson observation data revealed that some teachers in the lesson tried to align lesson objectives with assessment procedures, which according to school assessment policy was part of the formative assessment.

As can be seen, both experienced and novice teachers in their responses highlighted important aspects of formative assessment, such as when students knew expected outcomes of the lesson, they were involved in the learning process through assessment procedures. In sum, teachers provided clear explanation of the purpose of formative assessment and from teachers’ explanations it was vividly seen that teachers had some theoretical understandings of formative assessment. More importantly, all of the teachers provided similar explanations, which gave me the information that teachers despite their teaching experiences, prior experiences in classroom assessment, professional development courses had basic understanding of formative assessment.

Classroom Practices with Formative Assessment

This section describes teacher practical experiences in the process of implementation of formative assessment. Teachers reflected on the ways how they chose formative assessment techniques and strategies to assess students' performance in the lesson as well as provided examples of specific techniques.

Selection of assessment techniques. In accordance with school assessment policy teachers are supposed to select assessment techniques, taking into consideration lesson objectives. Three teachers, participating in this study, reported that they chose assessment techniques deliberately. For example, majority of the participants shared similar view that "assessment techniques are selected in accordance with lesson objectives." (Adil, Russian Language Teacher, 2 years of teaching experience). It was important for teachers to "first... select lesson objectives" (Kairat, History Teacher, 20 years of teaching experience), and "also take into account the expected outcomes of the lesson" (Alex, Kazakh Language Teacher, 7 years of teaching experience).

Other teachers revealed that they chose the assessment form "...in accordance with the topic of the lesson" (Kanat, Maths teacher, 2 years of teaching experience). Kate, English teacher, also stated, "We usually choose formative assessment tasks according to the topic we are covering". Likewise, some teachers in the course of the lesson distributed tasks to students and named these tasks formative tasks. This informs the researcher that teachers experience lack of practical knowledge.

However, some participants hesitated to comment on how they chose particular forms of assessment for their lessons. For instance, Ardak, Kazakh language teacher (a novice teacher) claimed that assessment technique was chosen, "Usually ... according to the structure of the lesson plan, we design lesson plan, invent activities..." While another set of teachers did not seem to have a particular criteria or method for selecting the

assessment form stating that, “hmm...We usually select strategies when we have co-planning sessions” (Irene, English teacher). This view was seconded by another participant English language teacher, Anna, who also claimed that strategies were chosen during the co-planning session. This informs the researcher that effective teacher collaboration plays a crucial role in translating this knowledge. Novice teachers did not have courses on formative assessment, however, they were improving their practices through cooperation with experienced teachers, who had courses on formative assessment.

At the same time, these teacher comments illustrate that not all teachers are possibly familiar with the accepted approaches of how to choose assessment techniques, although this information is represented in school policy assessment documents. Similarly, some teachers were hesitant during the interview, which showed that they felt unconfident in selecting formative assessment techniques for the lesson. Overall, it may be stated that, as it was shown in the previous subsection, teachers have some theoretical knowledge, and are able to provide the purpose of formative assessment, however, when it comes to practice both experienced and novice teachers do not know how to efficiently use formative assessment in practice.

Formative assessment techniques in the lesson. This subsection will explore teachers’ practices with formative assessment, particularly, how teachers use formative assessment in the classroom. Teachers named formative assessment techniques, such as teacher observation, peer and self assessment, and stated they had some practices with formative assessment and shared their strategies and techniques utilized in class. The findings from the interviews revealed that participants used a variety of methods to conduct formative assessment.

As it was mentioned by Alex, Kazakh Language Teacher, who was an experienced teacher: “I use different techniques, for example, One –minute essay, teacher observation,

and ... a variety of tasks in the lesson.” Some more examples given by Kairat, History Teacher, included “peer and self assessment and other assessment activities”. These assessment strategies were also employed by Kate, who further explained that “for example, if the aim is to monitor listening then I design the tasks related to listening, and if it is writing then writing...” (Kate, English Language Teacher).

Despite enlisting a variety of ways to undertake formative assessment in the classroom, some of the responses revealed the need in giving scores or grades to students for completing the tasks in the lesson. For instance, “Students seek for grades or want to get scores by the end of the lesson” (Kairat, History teacher, 20 years of teaching experience). The same ideas were seconded by Anna, English teacher: “Students do not complete the task perfectly, if I do not give scores to them” (Anna, English language teacher). Both of these teachers were experienced teachers, who received trainings on assessment. At the same time both of these teachers in their previous experience applied norm-referenced assessment and their prior experience with using grades to assess students’ performance was likely to affect their current teaching practice.

At the same time according to teachers’ responses students were much more motivated when they were given scores, and when students understood that the scores contributed to their final grade, they performed better. However, in accordance with school policy teachers are not supposed to give scores or grades. These responses indicate that though teachers seem to understand school formative assessment policy, still they contradict themselves by using scores while assessing students’ performance. For instance, “I think, each lesson students need to get scores. For example, each lesson should have its particular score, for example ‘six’ and students will do their best to get this score” (Alex, Kazakh Language Teacher, 7 years of teaching experience).

Lesson observation data revealed that teachers opted to use assessment activities in the lesson which required giving scores to students, rather than teacher feedback. For example, in the Kazakh language lesson, Ardak (Kazakh language teacher, 3 years of teaching experience), who was a novice teacher, used feedback communicating students on what should be improved, used peer and self assessment techniques in the lesson.

However, this practice was not common, most of the teachers used scores to assess students' performance in the lesson. In sum, although some of the participants in the interviews said that they applied a variety of assessment techniques, the results of the lesson observation showed that in practice teachers use assessment tools which were almost the same as testing students' knowledge. For instance, Kairat (History Teacher, 20 years of teaching experience) indicated a variety of activities while giving an interview, although during lesson observation he used assessment techniques which required just giving short responses such as Yes/No and Multiple Choice questions. Regarding the importance of classroom assessment in general, Kairat, History teacher disclosed accountability issues stating that,

By the end of the academic school year students are supposed to take exams, the exams include Multiple Choice questions, and as a teacher I am responsible for the result of the exam, so I have to prepare the students and practice a lot similar tasks with students.

In line with school assessment policy, formative assessment starts the moment teacher starts the lesson. Formative assessment should be present at all stages of the lesson and be incorporated in classroom activities. Although, Irene, an English teacher, a novice teacher, and Alex, Kazakh language teacher, who was an experienced teacher, used assessment task as an activity only once in the lesson. They indicated the activity in the

lesson plan as a separate “formative assessment task”. First, teachers covered the topic of the lesson, then by means of formative assessment checked students’ understanding of the topic. After completing the task, the students were given scores with no feedback. This gives me information that teachers used students’ assessment to test students’ knowledge, but not to improve further learning. Interestingly, experienced teachers’ practices on classroom assessment were similar to those of novice teachers despite their different teaching experiences and professional development courses.

Going back to History lesson observation, it needed to be mentioned that when students were informed that they were going to complete a formative assessment task, that information made them nervous and anxious. Once the students were introduced the formative assessment task, they started to look at each other, asking the teacher and their peers again and again: “Is it formative? ... Formative assessment?” Students started to behave differently than at the start of the lesson, and overall, it was obvious from their facial expression and gestures that they were concerned about the task. This evidence showed that students understood formative assessment undertaken in the lesson as a test. The same evidence with Alex, Kazakh Language teacher (7 years of teaching experience), who explained that although teachers were not supposed to give scores to students, teachers still practiced it. He shared his reflections saying that,

students do not take formative assessment seriously, so

I practice giving scores to students for the particular

activity, although I know that the scores will not

contribute to the students’ final grade, and even some

students tell me about it, still in my view, these scores motivate

students and may serve as an information for parents.

Teachers' comments and lesson observation showed that both experienced and novice teachers applied scores to assess students' performance, yet according to school assessment documents teachers were supposed to provide feedback to students, but not scores. So, this entails the information on contradictions with teacher practices and teacher understandings of formative assessment.

Educational Change

This section will illustrate the information on the positive impact of formative assessment on students as well as it will present teacher challenges regarding the implementation of formative assessment. Overall, teachers pointed out that students benefited from formative assessment implementation. For instance, formative assessment provided support to students in the process of learning, as well as students were not compared against one another. In line with the benefits teachers mentioned the challenges they faced in their everyday classroom practice.

Opportunities and challenges. This section will present teachers' perspectives on benefits and challenges in the process of formative assessment implementation. When asked about the benefits of formative assessment implementation, all of the teachers brought a number of ways of how students benefitted from formative assessment implementation. The majority of participants reported that they understand the need for a change from norm-referenced assessment to formative belief model. For example, Alex, Kazakh Language Teacher supported these ideas, saying that "I am open to the changes in classroom assessment, I think, it's good, students are not afraid of grades for the particular task." The same ideas were reiterated by Anna, English language teacher,

and I think, it has lots of advantages...This type of assessment is different from what I got used to, and I understand that we can not go back to norm-referenced assessment, since as it is told it

does not support students to further progress in their studies.

Both of these teachers are experienced teachers, who have previously implemented norm-referenced assessment. Teachers acknowledge that this type of assessment is advantageous for students, because students' performance is not measured against one another in class, it serves as guidance for further improvement. Also, teachers state that there is no place for traditional assessment because this type of assessment is fixed, meaning it does not give the information on how to improve.

Alex, Kazakh Language Teacher said that, "Formative assessment enables students to understand expected outcomes, they are involved in the learning process, and students' performances are measured against specific criteria." Anna, English language teacher enumerated the following things:

Formative assessment has a lot of benefits. Firstly,
we do not compare students against each other, we use
criteria, students reflect, speculate over their learning
... can identify and analyze their own mistakes
and use them as an instrument for further learning.

However, in my view, we need to develop
students' understanding of formative assessment.

Both Ann, English teacher and Alex, Kazakh language teacher indicated that formative assessment enabled students to know about the objectives of the learning process. Likewise, students' performance was assessed against criteria, which they knew beforehand. Curiously, Anna, an English teacher pointed out the need to raise students' awareness in terms of their perceiving the concept of formative assessment. Another experienced participant, Kairat, who taught History, indicated that, "The existing type of classroom assessment has a lot of benefits. It involves students' metacognitive skills,

makes a positive impact on the development of students' self-regulation skills." Similarly, another teacher in the study, said that, "students can use this information to improve. I think this is important..." (Kanat, Maths Teacher). Interestingly, Ardak, who was a novice Kazakh language teacher, claimed that, "...students reflect over their progress, track their own progress, and get constructive feedback from their peers for further better performance."

Overall, all of these teachers highlighted the significance of formative assessment and enlisted many benefits of implementing formative assessment that positively affect students, such as, for example, students improve in their studies through formative assessment. Both experienced and novice teachers highlighted how students benefitted from formative assessment implementation. The knowledge on formative assessment shared by novice teachers might be gained due to efficient collaboration with experienced teachers. At the same time talking about benefits teachers mentioned the challenges they faced while incorporating formative assessment.

When teachers were asked about benefits they reflected on their teaching process, showing how formative assessment was beneficial to students and further expressed their ideas, related to difficulties they confronted in their everyday practices. The main challenges were: difficulties in designing formative assessment strategies, another challenge: formative assessment was time-consuming, meaning that teachers considered that incorporation of formative assessment in the lesson took too much time in the lesson, and as a result teachers were not able to cover all of the material planned for the lesson. Another challenge was low students' motivation, meaning that according to school assessment policy students were not allocated grades, therefore according to teachers' comments it negatively impacted students' motivation.

For example, Adil, Russian language teacher agreed that, “We need more practice on formative assessment, we need to discuss them at school.” Kate, English teacher echoed Adil, Russian language teacher and described her experience saying that, “when I started working here I found out that this school had another type of assessment...it was difficult for me to understand the details of the new assessment system, we did not discuss such issues at school meetings, unfortunately.” Both of these teachers are novice teachers and in their comments they expressed lack of support from school administration. School administration did not address the issues teachers had, and even might not be aware of them.

Another teacher in the study, Anna, English Teacher shared her experience saying that,

Honestly...sometimes ... students do no complete home task... and when I tell them off , they openly say to me that these tasks do not contribute to the final grade...

I can't help it... and do not know what to do.

The same ideas were seconded by Adil, Russian language teacher, who said that, “students are not diligent enough in their studies, because formative assessment does not contribute to the students’ final grade.” These teachers’ comments indicate low students’ motivation, which gives me the information that students do not perceive the purpose of formative assessment appropriately. Adil, Russian language teacher continued saying that, “formative assessment is intangible” and added that, “students are not happy with that, students want to get a precise information on their performance in the lesson... I mean... something, they can take and show their parents.” Both of these teachers Adil, Russian language teacher and Anna, English teacher had similar issues with students’ motivation despite their different practices and professional development courses.

It was found that teachers would better cover lesson material than incorporate formative assessment techniques in the lesson. For instance, Kanat, teacher of Maths said that, “....it takes too much time to design rubrics, ... and it’s time-consuming in the lesson..”Kairat, History teacher reiterated Kanat’s ideas saying that, “If to incorporate formative assessment techniques throughout the lesson, I cannot cover lesson material... everything I have planned ...”

The recurring challenge of teachers were students’ low motivation, difficulties in designing assessment tasks, and also teachers perceived that incorporation of formative assessment in the lesson did not leave time to cover the planned material.

This chapter reported the findings from a qualitative case-study design inquiry. The purpose of the current study was to explore teacher perceptions towards formative assessment at one of the schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. The data gathered illustrated that teachers enhanced their practices through collaboration, because many teachers indicated that they consulted colleagues in case they were challenged. At the same time, both novice teachers and experienced teachers had basic understanding of formative assessment since they provided definition, explained the purpose, however, when it came to practice they did not incorporate that knowledge in their practices. Likewise, from the data obtained it became obvious that there might be a variety of reasons that possibly hindered the process of formative assessment implementation. The main findings are as follows: 1) Inconsistent professional development on formative assessment; 2) Lack of teacher practical knowledge 3) Contradictions with teacher practices and teacher perceptions; 4) Low students’ motivation.

Further, in the next chapter the discussion of these results will be explored in depth.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

In this chapter, the researcher will summarize and interpret the data from this study, dedicated to teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment, particularly formative assessment at one of the schools in Akmola region, Kazakhstan. The chapter consists of two sections. The first section illustrates an in-depth analysis of major findings and the second section will discuss recommendations.

The researcher interpreted the data generated from the interviews with eight teachers, including the data entailed from lesson observations and document analysis. Throughout the research four major factors affecting teacher perceptions regarding formative assessment were identified: 1) inconsistent professional development, includes the information on teacher learning, which according to research data, has an episodic character;) 2) the next major finding, which is lack of teacher practical knowledge, meaning the need to involve teachers in practical sessions on formative assessment rather than theoretical ones; 3) the following subsection, which is contradictions of teacher practices and teacher perceptions, discusses teachers' practices and teachers' understandings of formative assessment, which are not aligned; 4) low students' motivation, came out as another major finding. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations.

Major Findings

This subsection gives a summary of major findings gained in the result of this research. Research findings illustrate that there are different factors that shape teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment.

Inconsistent professional development. The major finding of the study reveals that teachers' professional development in receiving courses on classroom assessment is inconsistent. Teacher experiences with formative assessment need support from school

administration and also there is a need in coherent system of professional development courses. Teacher professional development needs to be consistent and ongoing, rather than a quick course (Cambridge International Examinations, 2015). Teachers are likely to expand their knowledge and enhance their expertise on classroom assessment when they are consistently supported and guided in the process of implementation of educational reforms. Many experienced teachers, who received courses on classroom assessment, emphasized that they had professional development courses once in three years. What is more, these professional courses, according to the participants, usually were held for a week or even less days. The participants of the research did not find such courses beneficial for their practice. This factor is aligned with the statement by Black and Wiliam (2003) who claim that short-term professional training sessions from one to five days are not effective.

Teachers in order to efficiently utilize formative assessment techniques need to perceive the underlying principles of formative assessment and be ready to change or adapt their teaching practices. Efficient implementation of formative assessment may be ensured, if teachers are involved in the process of the development of formative assessment belief model. Accordingly, as Fullan (2001) states, teachers are the agents of educational change, and therefore, if teachers receive quality ongoing training, as a result they will efficiently implement it into practice. At the same time, as the findings of the research indicate teachers need to accept the reforms, change their mindsets toward the reforms and it requires time. Both novice and experienced teachers had some theoretical knowledge regarding formative assessment, however, they were hesitant in using formative assessment strategies in the lesson. This factor aligns with the study toward formative assessment implementation by Black and Wiliam (1998) which says that the

implementation of formative assessment process needs time, support and sustained programs of professional development.

The research findings of this particular study are in line with the quantitative study by Young & Jackman (2014), which explored the opinions of 20 English teachers, and revealed that teachers need thoroughly planned, consistent trainings in case the governing body of the school or school administration wants it to be efficiently employed by teachers into their practices. The findings of this quantitative research are similar to the findings of the current study, since the participants of the study in question also experience the same challenges as in the research described by Young and Jackman (2014).

Taking these factors into account, it is crucial for teachers to have holistic professional development on classroom assessment, focused on the development of practical skills in order to promote this practice in their own and other teachers' practices.

Lack of teacher practical knowledge. As the result of the research, it is hoped that a better understanding of teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment will contribute to effective implementation of formative assessment. According to research findings, lack of practical knowledge in teachers' classroom experience is pointed out as the core hindrance in the process of formative assessment implementation. Most teachers highlighted that the courses they had completed were predominantly based on theoretical knowledge, and not on practical examples and procedures. Most of the research participants have experience in employing norm-referenced assessment, therefore, this previous experience in classroom assessment may impede the whole process of implementation. Teachers, particularly, experienced ones have some content knowledge on formative assessment and there is a good practice of teacher collaboration at school in the form of co-planning sessions, which provide support to novice teachers. However, both experienced and novice teachers struggle in applying their knowledge in practice.

Therefore, the need in practical knowledge on formative assessment has been a recurring factor in most of the interviews.

This finding was consistent with the mixed methods study by Helen Dixon and Ruth Williams (2001), which was conducted in New Zealand. The study explored 40 primary school teachers' understandings of formative assessment and the ways teachers utilized assessment techniques in class. The data from the study showed that teachers accepted the positive impact of formative assessment; they also provided theoretical explanations of formative assessment purposes. However, they could not meaningfully explain how they used formative assessment to improve students' performance. This informs the researcher that teachers experienced lack of practical knowledge in implementation of formative assessment and the need in practical support.

Likewise, the majority of the research participants were hesitant in utilizing formative assessment techniques in the lesson since the professional development courses they had were about international practices in classroom assessment, and it was difficult for teachers to adapt it and bring into their own classroom assessment practice. In line with study findings, teachers in research have some basic theoretical knowledge on formative assessment; however, except theory, they need skills and practical knowledge to be more confident in applying formative assessment techniques. These findings are congruent with the qualitative study by Young and Jackman (2014), which highlights the importance of teacher education in order to equip teachers with mastery skills in formative assessment practice.

As reported by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) (2006), Continuing Professional Development made a positive impact on improving teachers' practices. The Ofsted report was based on the survey of 13 secondary, 14 primary and 2 special schools teachers. The major focus of the survey was to investigate

the effectiveness of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). According to Ofsted report results (2006), CPD was effective in case school managers identified teachers' needs and planned teacher professional development. The same study indicated that professional development planning for teachers in most of schools was not thoroughly considered. It was advised that senior school managers needed to find out possible teacher courses to support teachers of their school. More importantly, these courses should be practice oriented. To cope with these challenges schools need to create collaborative atmosphere within school staff and develop trustful relationship between school administration and teachers.

Hence, these findings illustrate that practical support for teachers in implementing formative assessment in class is of a special value.

Contradictions of teacher practices and teacher understandings. Another major finding that came out in the result of the study was contradictions of teachers' practices and teachers' understandings of formative assessment. According to the school-regulated documents on classroom assessment (School assessment policy, 2016), formative assessment is an assessment conducted during the teaching and learning process, it ensures feedback between teachers and students and allows making timely adjustments in students' performance. The underlying principles of formative assessment are formative assessment defines the level of students' mastery in acquiring specific knowledge and skills, helps to identify gaps in learning and provides support to students in achieving learning objectives. More importantly, formative assessment involves ongoing feedback, it does not include scores and grades and the results of formative assessment do not contribute to the final grade.

According to research findings, teachers in the research have basic understanding of formative assessment, since they give appropriate definitions of formative assessment as

well as identify benefits of formative assessment implementation. This may be due to the professional courses on classroom assessment that were predominantly based on theory. Having analyzed the responses of these participants, as well as considering school assessment policy documents, it could be concluded that most of the teachers in class suggested the techniques and strategies in accordance with school assessment policy. However, some teachers predominantly utilized Multiple Choice questions, supporting their practices with argument that they had to prepare students for external exams, that were based on factual information and include Multiple –Choice questions.

The study by Kitiashvili (2014) in Georgia entailed similar data regarding the contradictions between teacher practices and teacher understandings. The results of both studies illustrated that teachers were open to change their practices, however in their teaching practices, they did not incorporate formative assessment properly. The same study in Georgia revealed that teachers also use Multiple Choice questions in their practices. These practices of both Georgia teachers and Kazakhstani teachers indicate that teachers have the same tendency of assessing knowledge- based content and preparing students for the test.

The same as in the research, conducted in Georgia, in the interviews, most of the teacher participants highlighted the benefits of formative assessment. However, the majority of the teachers in the research, both novice and experienced ones in order to assess students' performance opted to give scores to students, and did not provide feedback to students which contradicted school assessment policy. Some teachers by the end of the interviews admitted that they gave scores to students since scores motivated students, whereas they named formative assessment as something intangible. Black and Wiliam (1998) in their review, shared their idea that scores and grades did not contribute to students' better learning. This shows that teachers need to have a deeper knowledge

regarding the benefits of formative assessment. Similarly, it was found that most of the teachers are unaware of the fact that learning objectives should be aligned with assessment strategies, which showed that teachers had not mastered properly how to devise assessment techniques.

According to the findings, it may be claimed that teachers are likely to misinterpret the purpose of formative assessment. This is a worrisome finding meaning that inconsistent nature of teacher learning may negatively impact or even worsen the implementation process.

Low students' motivation. Low students' motivation is another major finding of this study. Teachers in the study frequently mentioned this factor. This finding is likely to be the result of teachers' misconception and irrelevant practices regarding formative assessment in their classroom.

Teacher beliefs play a crucial role in implementing any change in the educational sphere. Teachers often are imposed these educational reforms, and therefore they need to change and adjust their practices. In this context, teachers may experience fear to change and feel inability to gain new skills and understand new approaches. Similarly, teachers having a long practice of implementing their tried and tested approaches may inwardly give up or do not accept changes. As stated by Fullan (1992), efficient implementation of any educational policy is directly dependent on how this policy is understood. This relates particularly to teachers, who transmit their experience and apply it in their everyday teaching practice. Teachers in research had their previous practice in classroom assessment, where they employed norm-referenced assessment and that practice might impede teachers' understanding of formative assessment, therefore in practice teachers opted to take a quick snapshot of students' learning and made their own judgment on students' performance by giving scores. In other words, teachers misinterpreted the

underlying principles of formative assessment and predominantly corrected the mistakes and gave scores to students.

Black and Wiliam (as cited in Wilson, 2014) claim that when teachers give scores or grades to students it hinders getting quality knowledge. Similarly, students are likely to compare their scores with their classmates and therefore, it leads to students' low motivation. Formative assessment is supposed to motivate students, allow them adjusting their learning and tracking their own progress. However, in conjunction with the research findings students are not motivated, even more, students feel anxious and concerned about classroom assessment. As lesson observation data reveal, students are anxious about formative assessment in the lesson, because teachers undertake assessment as testing. Teachers in order to measure students' performance give tasks to students, and then allocate scores, whereas scores are not a part of formative assessment according to school assessment policy. Due to the lack of support from school administration in extending teachers' understanding of formative assessment, inconsistent courses in the period of implementing reforms and change teachers are likely to be disoriented and feel anxiety (Fullan, 2001). This study found that there was a need to raise students' awareness regarding formative assessment since they perceived formative assessment as testing. Students' understanding of formative assessment might be also the result of teachers' disoriented practices.

In line with the major finding, the unexpected finding was that teachers were not supported by school administration in expanding their expertise in formative assessment. Lack of teacher support from school administration might negatively affect the process of formative assessment implementation. School administration when considered teachers' challenges could implement within the school the initiatives, promoting and supporting the implementation of formative assessment.

Recommendations

This section presents recommendations for practice and future research. The current study aimed at exploring teacher perceptions regarding classroom assessment, particularly, formative assessment at one of the schools at Akmola region, Kazakhstan. The study looked at factors that impeded the process of formative assessment implementation and came up with possible recommendations, which were based on the major conclusions of the study. The recommendations are targeted at different stakeholders, namely, school administration, governing body of the school, teachers. Similarly, these recommendations can be also considered in other developing countries, which have the same experience of shifting from norm-referenced assessment to formative assessment belief model. Additionally, the recommendations suggest future direction of research studies on classroom assessment, particularly formative assessment implementation.

The study suggests recommendations for school administration. First, there should be included practical professional development courses regarding new reforms, particularly, formative assessment at school. School administration has to consider the measures aimed at developing teachers' awareness in terms of implementing formative assessment in practice. Thus, if school administration wants to make the teaching and learning process more efficient, the major regard must be paid to teachers' learning whilst implementing new initiatives. School governing body is responsible for building school social capital. It should acknowledge that there is a need to track the process of policy implementation in order to analyze teachers' and students' challenges and make timely improvements. At the same time, school governing body needs to make teacher professional development more consistent and based on practice rather than on theory.

The study did not explicitly explore students' perceptions of formative assessment, but it became clear from the interviews and lesson observations that students

misunderstand the purpose of formative assessment. Therefore, it is important to raise students' awareness with regard to formative assessment.

Future Research

Taking into consideration the results of the study as well as considering limitations of the study in question, which are indicated in Chapter 3 of this study, recommendations for further research are suggested.

First, the results of this study have proven that students being one of the important stakeholders of the teaching and learning process play a vital role in promoting and efficient implementation of formative assessment. Therefore, it would be beneficial for further research to explore students' beliefs and understandings of formative assessment. This investigation will help reduce the level of students' low motivation.

Second, future studies may include more than one school and compare teachers' practices that may ensure quality data for further data generalization. Therefore, there is a need for comparative studies on this topic, which will attempt to include more participants.

Finally, the study involved the participants matching specific criteria, this non-random participant choice as well as the number of participants may be another limitation of the study. With this in mind, it is beneficial to engage more participants in the research as well as utilize other methods to select participants for the research. According to the regulated documents on school assessments (School assessment policy, 2016) formative assessment is an assessment conducted during the teaching and learning process, it ensures feedback

between teachers and students and allows making timely adjustments in students' performance. The research data revealed that teachers were aware of formative assessment as a notion, and were able to explain the purpose of formative assessment. Document analysis (see Appendix F) involves the main purposes of formative assessment and describes its procedures in accordance with school assessment regulated documents.

According to lesson plan analysis, it can be claimed that some teachers have indicated formative assessment as a separate task to check and monitor students' progress. This informs the researcher about the insufficiency of teachers' practical knowledge.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to explore teacher perceptions toward classroom assessment, more specifically, formative assessment. The researcher examined teachers' understandings of formative assessment, analyzed challenges teachers faced in the process of implementation and came up with recommendations. In order to have an in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding formative assessment the study explored the perceptions of experienced and novice teachers.

Summarizing the results of the study it was found that both groups of teachers , experienced and novice ones felt lack of practical knowledge to efficiently implement formative assessment. Similarly, experienced teachers had inconsistent professional development on formative assessment, and as a result, there occurred contradictions with teacher practices and teacher perceptions. Most of the novice teachers were aware of formative assessment purposes; they worked in collaboration with experienced teachers and had co-planning sessions, which positively impacted their awareness with regard to understanding the theory behind formative assessment. However, the barriers in the process of formative assessment implementation brought about low students' motivation.

Most of the teachers previously had an experience of employing norm-referenced assessment to assess students' performance. At the same time, despite their different experiences: both novice and experienced ones faced challenges whilst implementing formative assessment although it was expected that teachers who had more experience would be more confident in applying formative assessment techniques. Similarly, according to the results, teachers have some theoretical knowledge; however, teachers are hesitant to implement these assessment procedures in their practices due to the lack of practical knowledge. Thus, lack of practical experience came out as a major finding of this study.

Teacher professional development shapes the whole process of teaching and learning. According to the research findings, teachers received courses on classroom assessment inconsistently. Even experienced teachers, who have been working at this particular school receive courses only once in three years whereas novice teachers, working at this school for more than two years do not get any courses on classroom assessment. However, novice teachers worked in collaboration with experienced teachers, therefore, that had some basic knowledge regarding formative assessment. Curiously, the courses on classroom assessment were conducted for a maximum of 5 days. However, to adapt and change classroom practices regarding assessment teachers need time and practice.

In the course of the research, it was found that low students' motivation was another challenge for teachers. Students expressed anxiety and concern during lesson observation when they were given assessment tasks. This entails the data that students perceive formative assessment as a test to assess students' performance. Students' misconceptions toward formative assessment may be triggered by teachers' strategies and approaches in the lesson with regard to formative assessment.

Thus, the results of this study may contribute to the process of formative assessment implementation in Kazakhstan and also those countries with similar background on classroom assessment.

Researcher Reflection

This qualitative case-study design research was my first experience of conducting research. Previously, I made some attempts to conduct small-scale studies related to my teaching practice; however, these studies were not so profound. The topic I had chosen to explore was interesting for me as a teacher, and turned the research process into an exciting journey for me. In the course of the study, I familiarized myself with the underlying

principles of conducting research, such as ethical issues, participant recruiting procedures, research methodology and all of the details of conducting research.

Overall, it was a valuable experience for me to discuss educational initiatives with other teachers firsthand, since as a teacher, I also faced challenges and hindrances whilst implementing formative assessment. The research process enabled me to understand that teachers could make change within schools and overall, that teachers played a central role in the process of implementation of any educational reform. While doing research, I got familiar with an extensive amount of research in the area of classroom assessment and teacher leadership and managed to compare and contrast those studies with teachers' practices and educational reforms in Kazakhstan. One of the most important things drawn from these research data analysis was that school context, and school culture needed to be taken into consideration while implementing any educational reform and analyzing the effect of these reforms. Similarly, the studies enabled me to reflect over educational initiatives, which were being implemented in Kazakhstan these days.

Data collection stage was the most interesting moment of the research for me, since it allowed analyzing different perspectives, getting an in-depth understanding of the reasons that impeded the implementation process. At the same time I was impressed by teachers' openness and willingness towards change with regard to formative assessment implementation, despite their long practices in norm-referenced assessment most of the teachers wanted that change to happen; however, it was difficult for them to understand the principles of formative assessment and change their mindsets in a short period of time. At the planning stage of the research, I thought that it would be difficult to recruit the participants. It seemed to me that teachers would try to escape participation in the research due to a variety of reasons. Conversely, as it turned out in reality, teachers willingly participated in the research and openly talked about their concerns and shared their

perspectives. It was amazing that school has a strong teacher collaboration which may further be used as a vehicle to improve teachers' practices.

Overall, the investigation of teachers' perceptions toward formative assessment enabled me, as a researcher to analyze teachers' understandings of formative assessment at this particular school and explore teacher challenges, which would be beneficial for me as a teacher, and a researcher. It was surprising for me to find out that in the process of formative assessment implementation, research participants did not engage students and did not explicitly explain them the purposes and advantages of formative assessment. In my view, students as important stakeholders of the educational process needed to be involved and clearly informed about the changes related to the assessment of their performances. From my perspective, for the next time, the study may be extended by exploring students' perceptions of formative assessment at this school. More specifically, I am interested in students' understandings of formative assessment, their views on purposes of classroom assessment, and the real reasons for students' low motivation.

From my perspective, if the same research is done at this particular school it may go differently since it may involve other teachers with other experiences, perspectives and teacher practices. Likewise, the school governing body as well as school administration may incorporate initiatives to improve teachers' practices and therefore with the time going contradictions of teachers' practices and teachers' perceptions would be eliminated and the overall situation may be improved. In sum, I found the process of conducting research exciting and engaging. I think, the knowledge I gained while conducting the research will contribute to the improvement of my further practice as a teacher and a researcher.

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Appendices

Appendix A

PRINCIPAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM (*English version*)

**Research Project: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS TOWARD FORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT AT ONE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AKMOLA REGION**

Dear Principal,

My name is Botagoz Abdrakhmanova, and I am a graduate student conducting research as part of my Master degree at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. Your school teachers are invited to participate in a research study on classroom assessment. The study will focus on teacher understandings and practices on classroom assessment. The purpose of the research project is to know more about teacher practices on classroom assessment. The researcher is interested in understanding teacher practices and experiences. The purpose of the researcher is to examine teacher practices. It would be much appreciated if teachers of your school participate in this research.

The researcher will request to observe one of the participants' lessons, the participants will be asked to participate in one-on-one 45-minute interview, to be scheduled at a place and time of your convenience. Participation in the research project is on a voluntary basis, and participants can withdraw anytime. Interviews will take place in a private, secure room. If participants find some of the questions challenging they may skip them and the researcher will continue the interview. The researcher will record the interviews. Further the tape will be transcribed, after transcribing the tape and the transcriptions will be kept in a locker at the office, separate from the consent forms. The interview information will be kept confidential, and the access to the tapes will have only the researcher and the supervisor.

Research findings will be included in the final research report and may be used at potential conferences and/or publications. The audio tape, transcriptions and findings of the research will be kept for three years, and then removed. Everything discussed will remain confidential and teacher identity will not be shared. The researcher for confidentiality purposes will assign numbers to the interviewees or use pseudonyms.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Teachers' participation in the interview will take approximately 45 minutes, and classroom lesson observation will last for 40 minutes.

RISKS:

Regarding the risks, there may be minimal psychological risks, such as fear or embarrassment to disclose their feelings or idea, or they may have negative experiences in thinking about previous stories and sharing memories. The researcher will assure the participants that the purpose of the research is to know more about teacher practices. Teachers may also fear misinterpretation of their interview answers. They may be uncomfortable sharing personal information and worry about confidentiality. To minimize these risks, the researcher will inform the participants that she will return at another date to conduct member-checking, to review the transcripts and field notes with participants, so they can edit or revise their responses.

The participants will also be assured of the confidential nature of the interviews. The researcher will assign pseudonyms to each of the interviewee - no names or personal information identifying participants will be used in the study. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Findings of the research will be used in the final research and at potential conferences or publications, and will be kept for three years in a secure place. After transcribing the audio tape and the transcriptions will be kept in a locker at the office, separate from the consent forms. The interview information will be kept confidential, and the access to the audio tapes will have only the researcher and the supervisor. The

researcher will read the consent form with the respondents, and remind them of the voluntary nature of the interviews.

BENEFITS:

A possible benefit for participants is that teachers may improve on their teaching practices. For example, teachers while answering questions of the interview will have an opportunity to reflect over their teaching practices. Consequently, students will benefit from teachers' best practices. Likewise, the developers of school assessment policy in Kazakhstan, may also benefit from this study, since the study will examine teacher challenges and benefits whilst incorporating formative assessment. An additional benefit is that there is a void of research regarding the education system in Kazakhstan, particularly in the area of classroom assessment. However, I cannot guarantee that participants will receive any particular benefits from participating in this project. Likewise, participants will not be given any compensation for participation and if you reject to participate, it will not affect you in any way.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, (*Dr.Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews, amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz*)

The researcher: Botagoz Abdrakhmanova botagoz.abdrakhmanova@nu.edu.kz
+7 701 559 88 06

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS TOWARD FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT 80

Please sign this consent form if you agree and allow conducting this research at this site.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Principal Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Researcher Signature: _____

Date: _____

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL (*Russian Version*)

ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ ПИСЬМО ДИРЕКТОРУ ШКОЛЫ

Тема исследования:

**ПОНИМАНИЕ УЧИТЕЛЯМИ ОДНОЙ ИЗ ШКОЛ АКМОЛИНСКОЙ
ОБЛАСТИ ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ УЧЕБНЫХ ДОСТИЖЕНИЙ УЧАЩИХСЯ НА
УРОКЕ**

Я, Ботагоз Абдрахманова, магистрант Высшей Школы Образования по программе ‘Лидерство в Образовании’, провожу исследование по теме ‘Оценивание учебных достижений учащихся на уроке’, обращаюсь к Вам с просьбой дать разрешение на проведение научного исследования на базе школы, руководителем которого Вы являетесь.

Данное исследование направлено на изучение практики учителей и изучение понимания учителями оценивания в классе. Целью данного исследования является изучение практики учителей в плане проведения процедуры оценивания учащихся в классе. Исследователь заинтересован опытом учителей в плане оценивания учебных достижений учащихся.

Коллектив Вашей школы приглашен принять участие в исследовании на тему: Оценивание учебных достижений учащихся на уроках. Участникам будет предложено участие в интервью, длительность которого составляет примерно 45 минут, а также один из уроков участников (длительность наблюдения 40 минут), будет посещен исследователем.

Участие в исследовании является добровольным, также, в случае если участники посчитают некоторые вопросы в интервью сложными или некомфортными, они могут не отвечать на них, в таком случае исследователь

продолжит интервью дальше. Участники могут отказаться от участия в исследовании и остановить интервью, как только посчитают нужным. Интервью будет проходить в кабинете, свободном от посторонних лиц.

Интервью будет записываться, аудио запись далее будет транскрибирована. Вся информация по результатам исследования конфиденциальная, Ваша анонимность будет защищена, при описании данных исследования участникам будут присвоены псевдонимы или номера, к примеру, Учитель №1 или Учитель А. Полная анонимность будет сохранена, Ваше имя или название места работы не будут раскрыты. В процессе анализа доступ к данным будут иметь только руководитель по проекту и исследователь. С целью подтверждения правильности понимания Ваших ответов и для устранения возможных недоразумений или сомнений исследователь предоставит Вам свои записи после их оформления. Записанные интервью будут храниться отдельно от формы информационного согласия, в безопасном месте. Данные исследования будут использованы в работе исследователя, и будут храниться три года, с целью возможного участия в конференциях, публикациях.

ДЛИТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ИНТЕРВЬЮ: Участие в интервью будет длиться 45 минут и 40 минут займет наблюдение Вашего урока.

РИСКИ:

Рисков, связанных с участием в исследовании нет, за исключением таких рисков как страх или смущение, или возможных не очень приятных воспоминаний. Также возможным риском может быть неправильное толкование Ваших ответов. Во избежание этих рисков Вам будут предложены записи исследователя, с целью проверки их правильного толкования. После ознакомления с Вашими ответами вы вправе внести изменения в ответы. Исследователь гарантирует конфиденциальность интервью. Ваше решение о согласии либо отказе в участии никаким образом не

повлияет на Ваши отношения с Назарбаев университетом или Вашу работу. Исследователь в своей работе использует псевдонимы: никаких имен или личной информации исследователь не упоминает в своей работе. Будет производиться аудиозапись интервью и далее интервью будут транскрибированы. Результаты исследования будут использованы в работе исследователя или возможных выступлениях и публикациях. После транскрибирования запись и транскрипты интервью будут храниться отдельно от формы информационного согласия в безопасном месте, в офисе. Доступ к данной информации будут иметь только исследователь и руководитель проекта. Участие или отказ принимать участие в проекте не повлияют на отношения участников проекта с Назарбаев Университетом или на работу.

ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:

Возможным преимуществом является профессиональное развитие учителя посредством участия в исследовании. Участие в исследовании позволит участникам проанализировать свою практики преподавания, и возможно, поможет учителям еще глубже раскрыть свой потенциал как учителя. Участие в исследовании не предусматривает каких-либо вознаграждений.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Вопросы: Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, Вы можете связаться с руководителем исследователя, используя следующие данные:

Dr.Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews, Amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz

Ботагоз Абдрахманова : botagoz.abdrakhmanova@nu.edu.kz

+7 701 559 88 06

Независимые контакты: Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета по телефону +7 7172 70 93 59 или отправить письмо на электронный адрес gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы даете разрешение на проведение научного исследования.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;
- С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании.

Подпись директора: _____

Дата: _____

Подпись исследователя: _____

Дата: _____

Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer

English version



Appendix B
Recruitment Flyer (English version)

DEAR TEACHERS!

I am a graduate student conducting research as part of my Master degree at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education. I would encourage you to participate !
Research Focus: TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

| Who can participate in the research? | What is involved? |
|---|--|
| <p>1) Teachers, who had attended professional development courses on assessment at least once, have 3 years of teaching experience</p> <p>2) Teachers, who did not receive any courses, have at least 1 year of teaching experience</p> | <p><i>You will be asked to participate in:</i></p> <p>1) private 45 minute interview in between December 8 - 12, 2016</p> <p>2) be requested to observe one of your classrooms (40 min) between December 12-27 , 2016.</p> |

Benefits for Participants

- expand your knowledge on classroom assessment;
- be able to share your experiences and understandings in the area of classroom assessment;
- receive useful techniques and strategies on classroom assessment;

PLEASE CONTACT ME BY DECEMBER 5 , 2016
botagoz.abdrakhmanova@nu.edu.kz, 8 701 559 88 06

CONFIDENTIALITY! PARTICIPATION IS FREE AND VOLUNTARY!
 Everything discussed will remain confidential and your identity will not be shared.

It would be much appreciated if you take part and contribute to school changes regarding classroom assessment.

Russian version

 **Флаер (Russian version)**

ДОРОГИЕ УЧИТЕЛЯ!

Я, магистрант Высшей Школы Образования, Назарбаев Университета, провожу исследование в рамках диссертации. Приглашаю Вас принять участие в исследовании, надеюсь, Вы получите хороший опыт и извлечете много полезного для себя.

Тема исследования: ОЦЕНИВАНИЕ УЧЕБНЫХ ДОСТИЖЕНИЙ УЧАЩИХСЯ НА УРОКЕ

| Кто может принять участие? | Мероприятия для участников |
|---|---|
| 1) Учителя, которые прошли курсы по оцениванию, и имеют опыт работы более 3 лет. 2) Учителя, которые не прошли курсы по оцениванию, имеют опыт работы по крайней мере 1 год. | Вы примете участие в интервью: 1) Длительностью 45 минут, с 8-12 декабря, 2016 года. 2) Один из уроков (40 минут) будет посещен исследователем, в период с 12-27 декабря, 2016. |

Преимущества участия

- расширить понимание оценивания на уроках;
- поделиться опытом и пониманием оценивания на уроках;
- получат полезные техники и стратегии оценивания на уроках.

Контактная информация:
botagoz.abdrakhmanova@nu.edu.kz 8 701 559 88 06

УЧАСТИЕ ДОБРОВОЛЬНОЕ И БЕСПЛАТНОЕ
КОНФИДЕНЦИАЛЬНОСТЬ
 Анонимность и Конфиденциальность участия будет гарантирована.
 Будем очень признательны за участие в исследовании и внесение вклада в изменение системы классного оценивания.

Appendix C

TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT FORM (*English version*)

**TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT AT
ONE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AKMOLA REGION**

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in a research project on classroom assessment. The study will focus on teacher understandings on classroom assessment. The purpose of the research project is to examine teacher perceptions on classroom assessment. The researcher is interested in understanding teacher perceptions regarding classroom assessment.

One of your classroom lessons will be observed by the researcher for 45 minutes, and you will also be asked to participate in private 45-minute interview with me, to be scheduled at a place and time of your convenience. Participation in the research project is on a voluntary basis, and you can withdraw anytime. If you find some of the questions challenging you may skip them and the researcher will continue the interview. The interviews will be audio taped and further the tape will be transcribed. After transcribing the tape and the transcriptions will be kept in a locker at the office, separate from the consent forms. The interview information will be kept confidential, and the access to the tapes will have only the researcher and the supervisor.

Research findings will be included in the final research report and may be used at potential conferences and/or publications. The transcriptions and findings of the research will be kept for three years, and then removed. Everything discussed will remain confidential and your identity will not be shared. The researcher for confidentiality purposes will assign numbers to the interviewees or use pseudonyms, for example, Teacher 1 or Teacher A.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation in the interview will take approximately 45 minutes, and classroom lesson observation will be for 45 minutes.

RISKS:

Regarding the risks, there may be minimal psychological risks, such as fear or embarrassment to disclose their feelings or idea, or you may have negative experiences in thinking about previous stories and sharing memories. The researcher will assure you that the purpose of the research is to know more about teacher practices, and the researcher is not going to evaluate or judge teacher practices. You may also fear misinterpretation of your interview answers. You may be uncomfortable sharing personal information and worry about confidentiality. To minimize these risks, the researcher will return at another date to conduct member-checking, to review the transcripts and field notes with participants, so they can edit or revise their responses.

The participants will also be assured of the confidential nature of the interviews. The researcher will assign pseudonyms to each of the interviewee - no names or personal information identifying participants will be used in the study. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Findings of the research will be used in the final research and at potential conferences or publications, and will be kept for three years in a secure place. The interviews will be audio taped and further the tape will be transcribed. After transcribing the tape and the transcriptions will be kept in a locker at the office, separate from the consent forms. The interview information will be kept confidential, and the access to the tapes will have only the researcher and the supervisor. Your rejection to participate will not affect in any way to your relationship with Nazarbayev University or your current employment. The researcher will read the consent form with the respondents, and remind them of the voluntary nature of the interviews.

BENEFITS:

A possible benefit for participants is that teachers may improve on their teaching practices. For example, teachers while answering questions of the interview will have an opportunity to reflect over their teaching practices. Consequently, students will benefit from teachers' best practices. Likewise, the developers of school assessment policy in Kazakhstan, may also benefit from this study, since the study will examine teacher challenges and benefits whilst incorporating formative assessment. An additional benefit is that there is a void of research regarding the education system in Kazakhstan, particularly in the area of classroom assessment. However, I cannot guarantee that participants will receive any particular benefits from participating in this project. Likewise, participants will not be given any compensation.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS:

If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work, (*Dr.Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews, amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz*)

The researcher: Botagoz Abdrakhmanova botagoz.abdrakhmanova@nu.edu.kz

+7 701 559 88 06

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz Please sign this consent form if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;
- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;
- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;
- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student Researcher Signature: _____

Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT FORM (*Russian Version*)

ФОРМА ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО СОГЛАСИЯ УЧАСТНИКА

Тема исследования:

**ПОНИМАНИЕ УЧИТЕЛЯМИ ОДНОЙ ИЗ ШКОЛ АКМОЛИНСКОЙ
ОБЛАСТИ ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ УЧЕБНЫХ ДОСТИЖЕНИЙ УЧАЩИХСЯ НА
УРОКЕ**

ОПИСАНИЕ: Вы приглашены принять участие в исследовании на тему: Оценивание учебных достижений учащихся на уроке. Целью данного исследования является изучение практики учителей в плане проведения процедуры оценивания учащихся в классе. Исследователь заинтересован пониманием учителей оценивания учебных достижений учащихся на уроке.

Вам будет предложено участие в интервью, длительность которого составляет примерно 45 минут, а также один из Ваших уроков длительностью 45 минут будет посещен исследователем. Участие в исследовании является добровольным, также, в случае если Вы посчитаете некоторые вопросы в интервью сложными или некомфортными, Вы можете не отвечать на них, в таком случае исследователь продолжит интервью дальше. Вы можете отказаться от участия в исследовании и остановить интервью, как только посчитаете нужным.

Интервью будет записываться, аудио запись далее будет транскрибирована. Вся информация по результатам исследования конфиденциальная, Ваша анонимность будет защищена, при описании данных исследования участникам будут присвоены псевдонимы или номера, к примеру, Учитель №1 или Учитель А. Полная анонимность будет сохранена, Ваше имя или название места работы не будут раскрыты. В процессе анализа доступ к данным будут иметь только руководитель по проекту и исследователь. С целью подтверждения правильности понимания Ваших

ответов и для устранения возможных недоразумений или сомнений исследователь предоставит Вам свои записи после их оформления. Записанные интервью будут храниться отдельно от формы информационного согласия, в безопасном месте. Данные исследования будут использованы в работе исследователя, и будут храниться три года, с целью возможного участия в конференциях, публикациях.

ДЛИТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ИНТЕРВЬЮ: Участие в интервью будет длиться 45 минут и 45 минут займет наблюдение Вашего урока.

РИСКИ:

Рисков, связанных с участием в исследовании нет, за исключением таких рисков как страх или смущение, или возможных не очень приятных воспоминаний. Также возможным риском может быть неправильное толкование Ваших ответов. Во избежание этих рисков Вам будет предложены записи исследователя, с целью проверки их правильного толкования.

После ознакомления с Вашими ответами вы вправе внести изменения в ответы. Исследователь гарантирует конфиденциальность интервью. Ваше решение о согласии либо отказе в участии никаким образом не повлияет на Ваши отношения с Назарбаев университетом или Вашу работу. Исследователь в своей работе использует псевдонимы: никаких имен или личной информации исследователь не упоминает в своей работе. Будет производиться аудиозапись интервью и далее интервью будут транскрибированы. Результаты исследования будут использованы в работе исследователя или возможных выступлениях и публикациях. После транскрибирования запись и транскрипты интервью будут храниться отдельно от формы информационного согласия в безопасном месте, в офисе. Доступ к данной информации будут иметь только исследователь и руководитель проекта. Участие или отказ принимать участие в проекте не повлияют на Ваши отношения с

Назарбаев Университетом или на Вашу работу. Исследователь вместе с участниками зачитают Информационную форму согласия.

ПРЕИМУЩЕСТВА:

Возможным преимуществом является профессиональное развитие учителя посредством участия в исследовании. Участие в исследовании позволит Вам сделать анализ своей практики преподавания, и возможно, поможет Вам еще глубже раскрыть свой потенциал как учителя. Участие в исследовании не предусматривает каких-либо вознаграждений.

ПРАВА УЧАСТНИКА:

Если Вы прочитали данную форму и решили принять участие в данном исследовании, Вы должны понимать, что Ваше участие является добровольным и что у Вас есть право отозвать свое согласие или прекратить участие в любое время без штрафных санкций и без потери какой - либо возможной выгоды для Вас. В качестве альтернативы можно не участвовать в исследовании. Также Вы имеете право не отвечать на какие-либо вопросы. Результаты данного исследования могут быть представлены или опубликованы в научных или профессиональных целях.

КОНТАКТНАЯ ИНФОРМАЦИЯ:

Вопросы: Если у Вас есть вопросы, замечания или жалобы по поводу данного исследования, процедуры его проведения, рисков и преимуществ, Вы можете связаться

с руководителем исследователя, используя следующие данные:

Dr.Amanda Ajodhia-Andrews, amanda.ajodhia@nu.edu.kz

Ботагоз Абдрахманова :botagoz.abdrakhmanova@nu.edu.kz

+7 701 559 88 06

Независимые контакты: Если Вы не удовлетворены проведением данного исследования, если у Вас возникли какие-либо проблемы, жалобы или вопросы, Вы можете связаться с Комитетом Исследований Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета по телефону +7 7172 70 93 59 или отправить письмо на электронный адрес gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz.

Пожалуйста, подпишите данную форму, если Вы согласны участвовать в исследовании.

- Я внимательно изучил представленную информацию;
- Мне предоставили полную информацию о целях и процедуре исследования;
- Я понимаю, как будут использованы собранные данные, и что доступ к любой конфиденциальной информации будет иметь только исследователь;
- Я понимаю, что вправе в любой момент отказаться от участия в данном исследовании без объяснения причин;

С полным осознанием всего вышеизложенного я согласен принять участие в исследовании.

Подпись участника: _____

Дата: _____

Подпись исследователя: _____

Дата: _____

Одна подписанная копия информационного согласия хранится у Вас.

Appendix D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS (*English version*)

**Project title: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS TOWARD FORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT AT ONE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AKMOLA REGION,
KAZAKHSTAN**

Date:

Venue:

Time of interview:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

[After introducing yourself, tell the participant about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the measures ensuring the confidentiality of the interviewee (the name of the participant and other people mentioned in his stories will not be revealed), and (c) the approximate time for the interview.] [Ask the interviewee to read carefully and sign the consent form.] [Remind the interviewee about tape recording the interview.] [Test tape recorder.] [Ask the interviewee if he/she has any questions before the interview starts.]

Interview Questions:

Questions regarding teacher background:

1. What subject do you teach?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. Which grades do you teach?
4. Could you tell me about your teaching experience?
5. What is your prior experience in classroom assessment?

Questions regarding teacher assessment practices:

1. How do you understand the concept of assessment?

2. Could you share your teaching practices in assessment?
3. Please, provide examples and describe any strategies you usually use to assess your students.
4. Did you attend any professional development courses in assessment?
5. How do you select assessment strategies in class?

Questions about strategies to address the challenges:

1. What are your challenges in conducting classroom assessment?
2. How do you cope with challenges if there are any?

Questions about benefits of classroom assessment:

1. What are the benefits of classroom assessment?
2. What are your suggestions in improving classroom assessment?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (*Russian Version*)

ПРОТОКОЛ ИНТЕРВЬЮ

Название проекта:

**ПОНИМАНИЕ ФОРМАТИВНОГО ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ УЧИТЕЛЯМИ
ОДНОЙ ИЗ ШКОЛ АКМОЛИНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ**

Дата:

Место:

Время интервью:

Интервьюируемый:

Должность интервьюируемого:

[После представления себя, ознакомь участника с (а) целью исследования, (б) мерах, обеспечивающих конфиденциальность интервьюируемого (имя участника и других людей, упомянутых в его рассказах, не будут раскрыты) и (в) приблизительной продолжительностью интервью.] [Попроси интервьюируемого внимательно ознакомиться и подписать форму информированного согласия.] [Напомните что сейчас начнется запись интервью.] [Проверь работу диктофона.] [Спросите у интервьюируемого, есть ли у него/нее какие - либо вопросы, прежде чем начнется запись интервью.]

Вопросы, относящиеся к опыту работы учителя:

1. Какой предмет Вы преподаете?
2. Как долго Вы работаете учителем?
3. В каких классах Вы преподаете?
4. Расскажите о Вашем опыте работы? Не могли бы вы поделиться опытом оценивания в классе?

Вопросы, касающиеся опыта ведения оценивания в классе:

1. Как Вы понимаете понятие 'оценивание' на уроке?
2. Расскажите о Вашем опыте классного оценивания учащихся на уроке?
3. Приведите примеры и стратегии, которые Вы обычно используете в классе для оценивания учащихся в классе?
4. Посещали ли Вы какие-либо курсы по оцениванию?
5. Как Вы подбираете стратегии для оценивания учащихся?

Вопросы касающиеся трудностей при проведении оценивания в классе;

1. С какими трудностями сталкиваетесь при оценивании учащихся на уроке?
2. Как Вы справляетесь с трудностями в плане оценивания в классе, если таковые имеются?

Вопросы касающиеся положительных факторов проведения оценивания в классе:

1. Какие есть преимущества проведения оценивания на уроке?

Какие бы Вы внесли предложения с целью улучшения практики оценивания в классе?

Appendix E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TRANSCRIPT

Date: December, 8

Venue: room 307

Time of interview: 15.20

Interviewee: Teacher A

Position of Interviewee: English teacher

The researcher: Good afternoon! My name is Botagoz, I am a graduate student conducting research as part of my Masters degree at Nazarbayev University, Graduate School of Education. Thank you for your agreement to participate in this study.

The purpose of the study: so, you are invited to participate in a research project on classroom assessment. The study will focus on teacher understandings and practices on classroom assessment. The purpose of the research project is to know more about teacher practices on classroom assessment. The researcher is interested in understanding teacher practices and experiences, the researcher is not going to evaluate programs, teacher practices or students.

Please, get familiar with the Consent form, read it carefully and sign it. Ok, thank you.

First, you will be asked some questions related to the topic of the research. Feel free to speak any language (Kazakh/Russian/ English) you are comfortable with. If you have any questions, you can ask me before, during and after interview. Now, I want to remind you about the recording the interview. Do you have any questions, before we start?

Teacher 1- No, we can start.

The researcher: What subject do you teach?

Teacher 1- I teach English.

The researcher: *How long have you been teaching?*

Teacher 1 - 2 years

The researcher: *Which grades do you teach?*

Teacher 1-My students are primary grade students, grades 1,2,3,4.

The researcher: *Could you tell me about your teaching experience?*

Teacher 1-"I have been working as a teacher for two years. Last year I taught high school students, so I have experience of working with different age groups."

The researcher: *What is your prior experience in classroom assessment?*

Teacher 1-"Since the school I work at is implementing criteria- based assessment I in my classroom apply formative and summative assessment."

The researcher: *How do you understand the concept of assessment?*

Teacher 1"Assessment, particularly, classroom assessment motivates, stimulates learners students for further success."

The researcher:

2. *Could you share your teaching practices in assessment?*

Teacher 1"Earlier while teaching we gave grades to students, now we apply formative and summative assessment, design rubrics, indicate lesson objectives, and finally make decision on students' performance."

The researcher:

3. *Please, provide examples and describe any strategies you usually use to assess your students.*

Teacher 1:"Since my students are young learners it is difficult for them to create rubrics and provide constructive feedback to each other, therefore, in my teaching practice, I predominantly use Smiley faces, Traffic light strategies, Thumbs Up/Down."

The researcher: *Did you attend any professional development courses in assessment?*

Teacher 1: No, I didn't.

The researcher: *How do you select assessment strategies in class?*

Teacher 1:

".....hm... We usually select strategies when we have co-planning sessions."

The researcher: *What are your challenges in conducting classroom assessment?*

Teacher 1:

"Mostly the struggles I experience are related to the age of students, since they can't design rubrics on their own and always need teacher support. Also, they cannot provide feedback in English due to the level of language proficiencyhmm.....They just can't make up such sentences and I think it is easier for them to assess their peers using stickers, or by giving smiley faces.

Also it is difficult to design rubrics for every lesson....And I think, it is easier to give the scores or grades, for example, three/four/five, just according to his or her performance in class. Because when we give stickers to students, this is rather feedback than formative assessment, and I think, ... students are not happy with that, students want to get a precise information on their performance in the lesson... and formative assessment is intangible...

Another challenge for me areparents. Parents ...they...hmm....-got used to norm-referenced assessment where students are allocated grades, since they were assessed by allocating grades when they studied at school. Now, with the formative assessment, when we use Smiley faces, give stickers to students, parents often tend to ask me: " How well my son/daughter is performing in English? What is the grade? How will I know about his/her achievements? The smile does not give me much information." Then we, teachers, explain them, but still it's difficult for them to understand. I think, parents need time to understand this change in assessment."

The researcher: *How do you cope with challenges if there are any?*

Teacher 1: “There are challenges.... because ... we need to teach students how to conduct assessment, teachers need to clarify learning objectives, and sometimes there emerge questions related to summative grade. Well, we need to explain both parents and students the whole process of assessment procedure. And also... time pressure. Sometimes I do not cover all the material planned since formative assessment takes much time.”

The researcher: *What are the benefits of classroom assessment?*

Teacher 1: “One of the benefits is students’ motivation, when students get good scores, they are motivated, they try to achieve more.”

The researcher: *What are your suggestions in improving classroom assessment?*

Teacher 1:

“I think, still, we need to give students grades or may be scores or something like that for their classroom performance. This will be clear for parents and it will increase students’ motivation.”

The researcher: Thank you! Best in your teaching

Appendix F**OBSERVATION PROTOCOL** (*English version*)**TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT AT
ONE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AKMOLA REGION, KAZAKHSTAN****Observation Focus: Classroom Assessment**

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher strategies • Assessment techniques used by the teacher • Teacher feedback to students | |
| Length of observation: | |
| Setting: | |
| Participant: | |
| Time: | |
| Observational Field Notes : | Reflective Notes: |
| Teacher Strategies: | |

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| | |
|---|--|
| | |
| Assessment techniques used by the teacher | |
| Teacher Feedback to students | |

Appendix F**OBSERVATION PROTOCOL** (*Russian Version*)

**ПОНИМАНИЕ ФОРМАТИВНОГО ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ УЧИТЕЛЯМИ
ОДНОЙ ИЗ ШКОЛ АКМОЛИНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ, КАЗАХСТАН**

Цель наблюдения: Оценивание учебных достижений учащихся на уроке

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Цель наблюдения: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Стратегии учителя • Техники оценивания • Обратная связь учащимся | |
| Заметки по посещению урока | |
| Дата: | |
| Место: | |
| Наблюдатель: | |
| Время: | |
| Продолжительность наблюдения урока: | |
| Стратегии учителя на уроке: | Рефлексивные Заметки: |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Техники оценивания учащихся на уроке: | |
| Обратная связь учителя учащимся | |

Appendix G**LESSON OBSERVATION PROTOCOL****TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT AT
ONE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AKMOLA REGION, KAZAKHSTAN****Observation Focus: Classroom Assessment**

| | |
|--|---|
| Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher strategies • Assessment techniques used by the teacher • Teacher feedback to students | |
| Length of observation: | 40 min |
| Setting: | room 331 |
| Participant 1: | English Language teacher |
| Time: | 9.25- 10.05 |
| Observational Field Notes: These are grade 2 nd students, the material covered in class is related to the topic “The world around us” | Reflective Notes: Teacher greeted the students, introduced lesson objectives. |
| Teacher Strategies: According to the main task of the lesson the students were to describe pictures and the other half of the class was to draw pictures. Then peers exchanged their cards and compared the results. | The class was organized into groups. The class worked in pairs. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Assessment techniques used by the teacher</p> <p>Students counted the number of correct answers.</p> <p>Students shared the number of correct answers they have with class.</p> <p>Teacher asked each student: How many correct answers do you have?</p> <p>The students gave numbers.</p> | <p>Overall, there was not much space for feedback or formative assessment in the lesson.</p> <p>To monitor students' progress teacher asked the students to count the number of correct answers.</p> <p>Sometimes teacher monitored students by teacher observation.</p> |
| <p>Teacher Feedback to students</p> <p>Well done, Good job</p> | <p>Throughout the lesson the teacher was using mostly praises. At the end of the lesson the students were suggested Traffic light strategy. The students were familiar with this strategy and easily identified things they struggled with in the lesson.</p> |

Appendix H

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

According to the regulated documents on school assessments (School assessment policy, 2016) formative assessment is an assessment conducted during the teaching and learning process, it ensures feedback between teachers and students and allows making timely adjustments in students' performance.

Formative assessment details

- Formative assessment defines the level of students' mastery in acquiring specific knowledge and skills, helps to identify gaps in learning and provides support to students in achieving learning objectives.
- Formative assessment involves ongoing feedback. Formative assessment does not include scores and grades.
- Formative assessment is conducted through a variety of techniques and strategies (asking questions, practical tasks, lab works, project, tests and others) at different stages of the lesson (while presenting the topic of the lesson, while completing the tasks, checking the tasks).
- While applying formative assessment pair, group work of students can be used.
- As a result of the formative assessment teachers make timely adjustments, eliminates possible learning gaps before summative test.
- Students achieve learning objectives in accordance with the subject programme.
- In case students are absent due to different reasons, the material should be covered within two weeks after the students are back to school.
- The results of formative assessment do not contribute to final grade.

Lesson Plans Analysis

Most of the teachers in their lesson plan have indicated formative assessment as one separate activity. This assessment is conducted after teachers cover new topic. This contradicts school assessment policy.