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From the Editor

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I hope that the practices discussed in this journal will be helpful to our readers.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Under the Microscope:
Principal Perceptions of the Mississippi Statewide Teachers Assessment Rubric
(MSTAR), a Pilot-Year Study

Matthew Boggan and Penny Wallin

Abstract

The mandate that teachers are accountable for student performance has driven states to initiate new evaluation instruments for administrator use to assess teachers. This study examined leaders' perceptions of a first-time statewide accountability instrument used for teacher assessment in one southern state, with 230 K-12 principals anonymously responding. The survey was designed to cover the themes of Principal Training, Expectations, Time, Word Choice /Clarity of Directions, Equity, and Collaborative Support.   It consisted of 20 statements with a 4 choice response scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The findings will provide feedback to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) for consideration in improving the evolving accountability process and add to the research on teacher evaluation systems. The results suggest that in every area some educators need more support and clarification in implementing this accountability instrument consistently and fairly.

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Introduction

Traditionally educational accountability has been the responsibility of local school boards and communities. Since No Child Left Behind in 2001, Race to the Top in 2012, and in 2015 the new Every Student Succeeds Act that replaces the No Child Left Behind Act, accountability responsibilities are increasingly designated to administrators and their teachers, as well as student individual and collective performances on assessments. By 2005, every state and the District of Columbia were implementing plans to track both processes and results in schools (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2004). Common national and state standards based on best pedagogical practices and learning standards serve to guide accountability plans that hold teachers responsible for the performance of their students as a crucial component of improving teacher quality and raising student academic performance.   According to Secretary of Education Duncan, "Student growth can and should be one of a number of measures in evaluating the performance of teachers… Better evaluation systems improve classroom instruction." *(*Huffington Post Blog, 2012*).* With teachers being held directly responsible for student achievement, efforts across the country have focused on improving accountability measures to support teachers in order to insure student success:

> It is clear that state education agencies are working hard to realign their organizations with the many new responsibilities that have been thrust upon them… Improving teacher quality has become the centerpiece of the Obama administration's education agenda and of the contemporary school reform movement. And this effort in turn, is dependent on the development of new teacher-evaluation systems with multiple measures of performance rooted in student achievement that can provide reliable data around levels of effectiveness and allow states to better support teaching and leading throughout the cycle of an educator's career from preparation to practice. (McGuinn, 2012, p. 57)

Literature Review

While the idea of a statewide documentation of educator performance is appropriate, the process of this type of accountability system in different states has caused debate of whether or not this type of system is effective. Bowie (2014) studied various teacher accountability systems in Maryland and made some mind boggling discoveries. Bowie found that in Carroll County Public Schools, Maryland, only 2% of teachers were rated as ineffective. Bowie found that 82% of teachers in Baltimore County were rated as highly effective, and Howard County rated all teachers as effective or highly effective. Kane, Taylor, Tyler, and Wooten (2011) found that the Race to the Top program by the Obama Administration proved a lack of agreement in how to best identify and measure effective teaching. According to Megan (2014), Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy requested a slowdown of the teacher evaluation program and recommended reducing the number of times administrators observe classroom teachers in action and streamlining more data into the teacher evaluation system. Marzano (2012) found that there are two big problems that come to the forefront when measuring teacher effectiveness: 1) evaluation systems do not adequately discriminate between effective and ineffective teaching and 2) teacher evaluations have not aided in developing a high skilled workforce. Marzano also surveyed teachers who shared that proper teacher development is the biggest issue in regards to teacher evaluation. Danielson (2001) found that there are inadequacies with current teacher evaluation systems. Danielson suggests a method that includes an administrator who takes notes or scripts during a teacher's lesson. At the end of the period, the administrator provides the teacher with a copy of the notes, and both teacher and administrator evaluate the administrator's observation. After analyzing the notes, the teacher and administrator meet to discuss the positives and negatives aspects of the lesson. Danielson (2001) also found that there are deficiencies of the

traditional evaluation systems such as outdated checklists, oversimplified evaluative comments that fail to provide guidance toward improvement, a lack of consistency among evaluators, and top-down communication that feels punitive to teachers.

The Cincinnati Public Schools' Teacher Evaluation System (TES) used data to connect specific teaching practices with student achievement outcomes which provided evidence of teaching practices that could be widely shared (Kane, et.al., 2011). Marshall (2012) reviewed the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project which focuses on unannounced visits, face-to-face conversations, and use of standardized tests scores to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Meyer, Brodersen, and Linick (2014) found that four states' evaluation systems did not include a professional development component and that states are failing to implement effective teacher support related to teacher evaluations. According to Costello-Dougherty (2009), the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) used in a New Orleans Charter School provides intensive professional development for teachers and detailed rubrics showing how teachers are evaluated. TAP has been also used at Lucia Mar Unified School District and the Los Angeles School District in California. Garrett (2011) found the LMUSD and LAUSD using TAP resulted in the teacher and evaluator sharing specific praises as well as suggestions for improvement. Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012) found that value-added models that include data on class size, home/community support, individual student needs, and prior teachers can help in measuring teacher effectiveness. Garrett (2011) cautioned that the biggest challenge with value-added systems is getting teachers to trust the system.

While it is possible that all teachers in a school district could be rated on the high end of the evaluation scale, one may think that this is unlikely. Danielson (2011) found that one of the most common problems with traditional evaluation systems is the fact that there is inconsistency

among evaluators. Donaldson, G. and Donaldson M. (2012) found that there are five crucial

steps that cultivate high-quality teaching and trust. These steps provide for including teachers in

the designing of performance evaluation systems, protecting opportunities to learn and grow,

honing principals' skills at observing and consulting with teachers, building time for teacher

evaluation into a principal's workload, and making instructional improvement a district-wide

priority.   Hall (2013) found four ways to change the mindset of teacher evaluations in schools:

1) teacher mentoring and feedback. 2) meaningful and relevant supervisor communication, 3)

non-threatening supervisor communication , and 4) shared vested growth mindset of the school

on the part of the teacher and supervisor. Danielson (2001) suggested that school administrators

must clearly define and model good or effective teaching, to be implemented in a collaborative

culture (Newmann &Wehlage, 1995; DuFour, 2004).

Mississippi Statewide Teachers Assessment Rubric (M-STAR)

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) believes that effective teachers, who are

supported by knowledgeable and invested principals, are essential components to ensuring that

all students reach high standards of learning. The Mississippi Statewide Teachers Assessment

Rubric (M-STAR) will be referred to throughout this paper and can be accessed at

http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/teacher-center/revised-m-star-rubric-june-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

M-STAR is:

> the evaluation process designed to improve the professional performance of all educators.
> MSTAR provides a system of performance assessments based on common standards to
> gauge teacher effectiveness, help track educational progress, identify areas of need, and
> improve performance throughout a teacher's career (MDE, 2016).

The instrument evaluates teachers on five domains: Planning, Assessment, Instruction, Learning

Environment, and Professional Responsibilities. Each of the twenty standards found in the

domains is assessed through one or more evaluation methods, including Artifacts Review,

Pre/Post Observation Conferences, Classroom Observation, and/or Student Survey. M-STAR is

designed with the explicit goals:

> to provide formative assessment information about the performance of individual teachers to help highlight areas of strength and identify areas for growth; to serve as a guide for teachers as they reflect upon their own practices; to provide shared understanding regarding priorities, goals, and expectations of quality practice; and to serve as a tool to help structure principal instructional leadership and feedback (MDE, 2016).

During the 2013-14 school year, MDE initiated the pilot year for school districts to use

M-STAR. The purpose of M-STAR is to bring about a higher and more consistent level of

accountability for K-12 teachers. MDE provided a series of orientation sessions, both face-to-

face and online, to administrators and teachers. As with any new evaluation system, feedback is

essential to ensure that training, expectations, language, and scoring rubrics are clear, fair, and

consistent with U. S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan's statement that, "…because teacher

evaluation systems are still a work in progress, it is vital that school leaders and administrators

continue to solicit feedback, learn from their mistakes, and make improvements." (Huffington

Post Blog, 2012). This study examines principal perceptions on the early use of M-STAR.

Method

The researchers on this project gathered feedback with the following research question:

How do practicing principals assess their initial experience with the mandated M-STAR, the

statewide evaluation system of teachers, to bring accountability for K-12 teachers?

K-12 Principals in the state of Mississippi were the target for this study to provide feedback on

the new statewide evaluation instrument. The survey, designed by the researchers with

assistance from graduate students in Educational Leadership at Mississippi State University's

Meridian Campus, consisted of 20 statements about the instrument. Two hundred and thirty

principals scored each statement with Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree to

give perceptual feedback on this anonymous survey on the M-STAR instrument after their pilot

year experiences.

Results

The survey addressed perceptions on key areas of M-STAR to include the categories of Principal

Training, Time, Expectations, Word Choice /Clarity of Directions, Equity, and Collaborative

Support. Survey statement responses were analyzed in Frequency Tables, depicted on bar

graphs, followed by feedback summary according to the themes.   While there were 230

participants who participated, some participants did not answer all of the questions. Because of

this, each question will not have 230 participant responses.   The survey numbers only reflect

the exact number of responses for each question. However, each question has at least 227

participants.

Table 1.1   Statement 1: *I have been trained adequately in the MSTAR Instrument.*

Statement 1	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	39	17
Agree (A)	134	58
Disagree (D)	55	24
Strongly Disagree (SD)	2	1
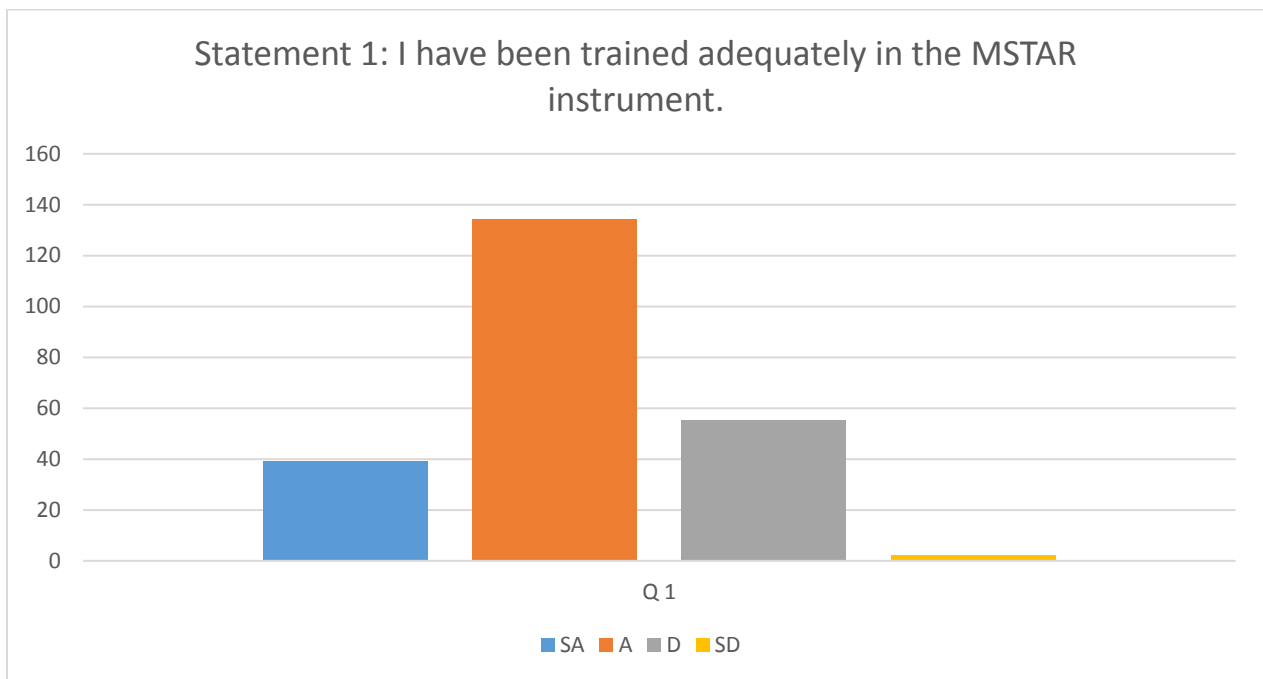
Figure 1.1. Analysis: Seventy-five percent of administrators trained with MSTAR felt the preparation offered by the State Department of Education for leaders was sufficient, with twenty-five percent disagreeing.

Table 1.2. Statement 2: *The number of walk-in observations (5) and formal observations (2) with the MSTAR instrument is appropriate.*

Statement 2	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	9	4
Agree (A)	92	40
Disagree (SD)	85	37
Strongly Disagree (SD)	44	19
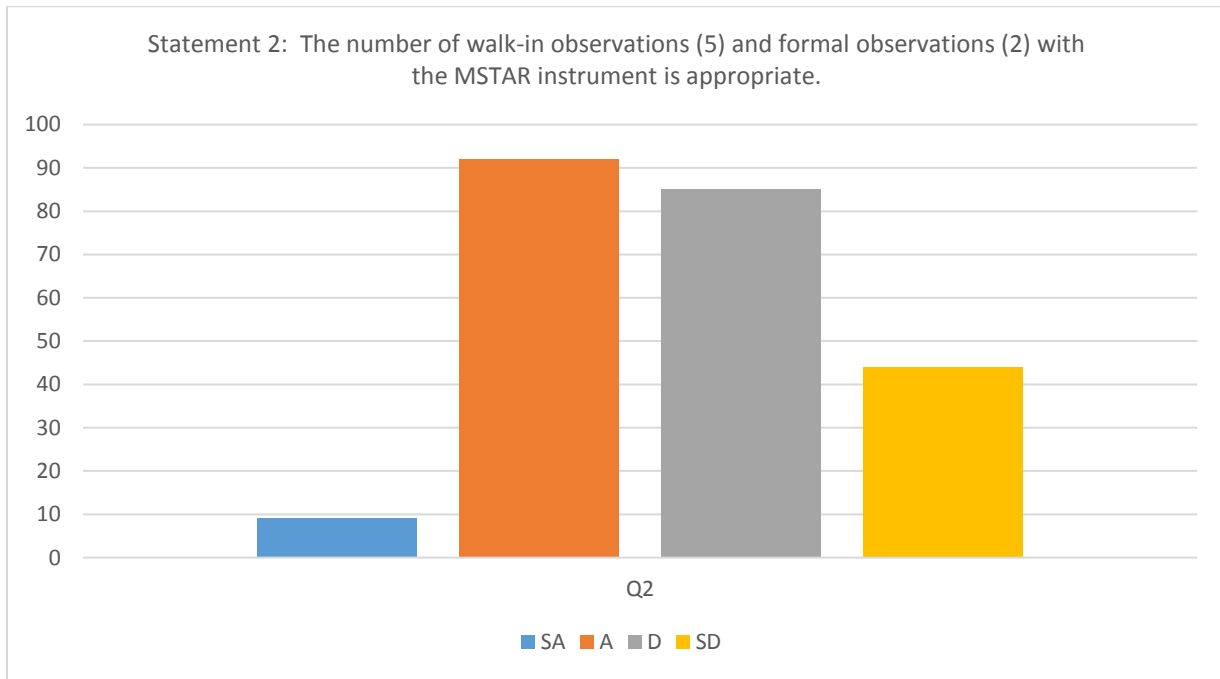
Figure 1.2. Analysis: Fifty-six percent of the administrators surveyed thought the 7 classroom visits were excessive, while forty-four percent believed that 7 visits were appropriate.

Table 1. 3. *Statement 3: If the number of MSTAR observations were reduced to two walk-in observations and two formal observations this would give enough information for formative and summative teacher assessments.*

Statement 3	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	54	23
Agree (A)	89	38
Disagree (D)	72	31
Strongly Disagree (SD)	14	8
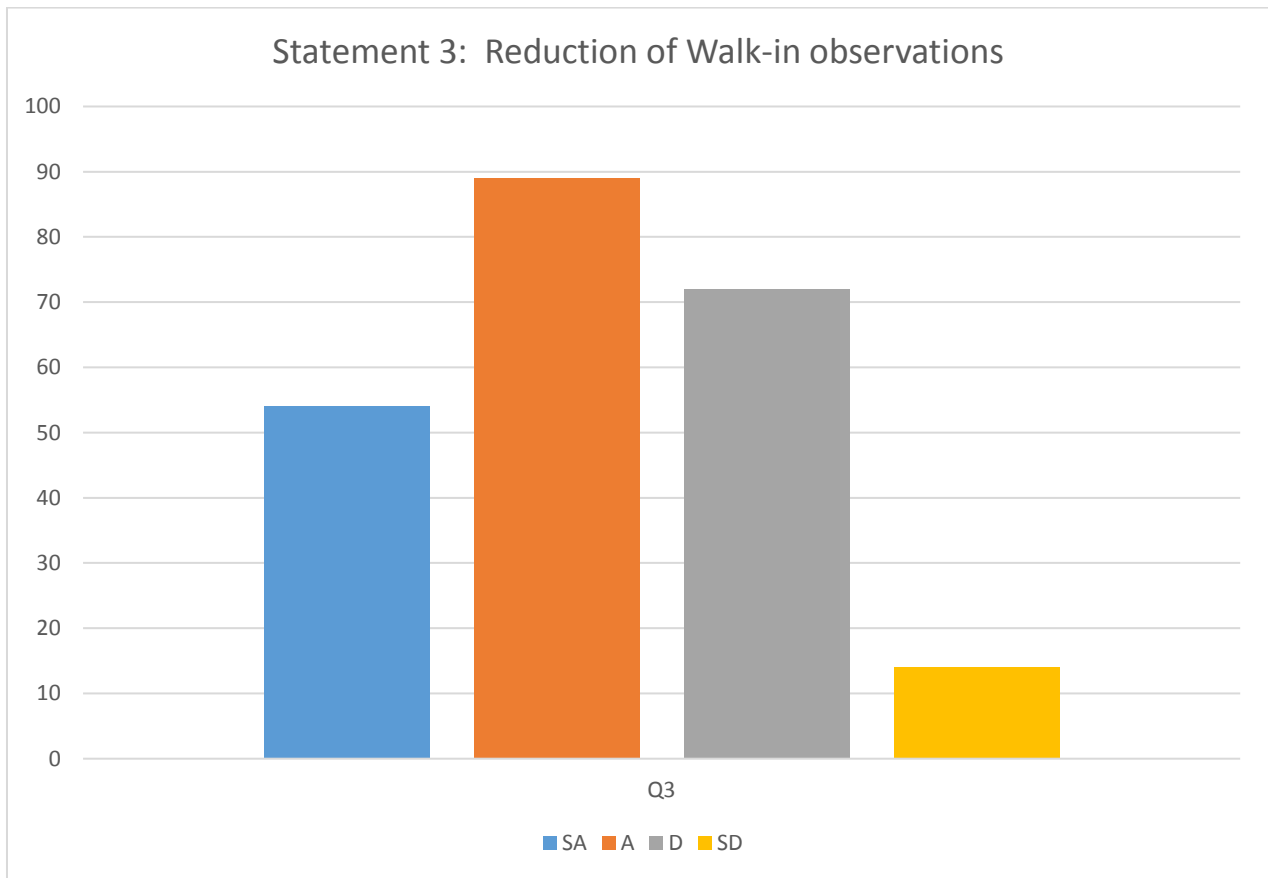
Figure 1.3. Analysis: The suggestion to reduce the number of observations to 4 was embraced by 61% of the administrators, but 39% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 1.4. Statement 4: The time frame for observations is fair.

Statement 4	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	15	7
Agree (A)	154	67
Disagree (D)	48	21
Strongly Disagree (SD)	12	5
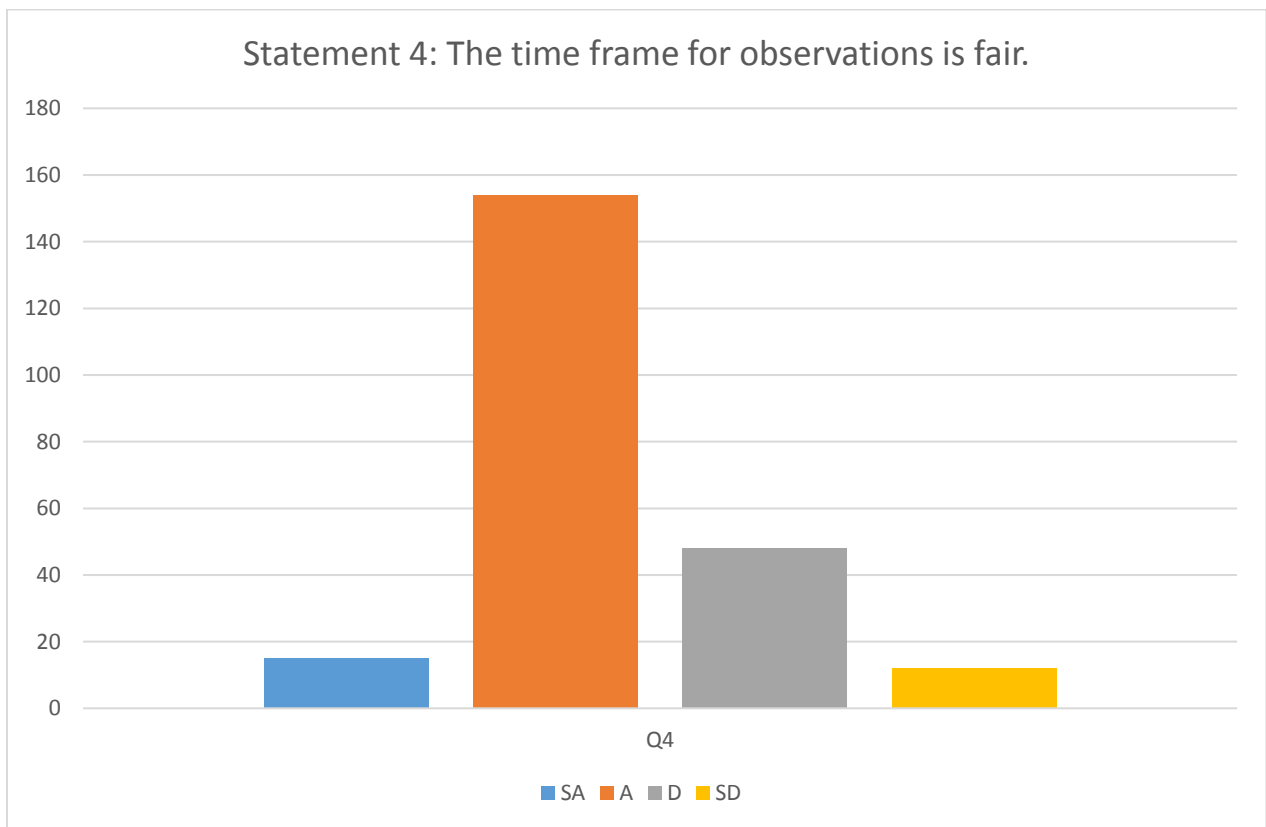
Figure 1.4. Analysis: Seventy-four percent believed that the time frame for observations are fair, with twenty-six percent disagreeing.

Table 1.5. Statement 5: The instrument allows sufficient time for the administrator to assess.

Statement 5	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	11	5
Agree (A)	139	61
Disagree (D)	65	29
Strongly Disagree (SD)	12	5
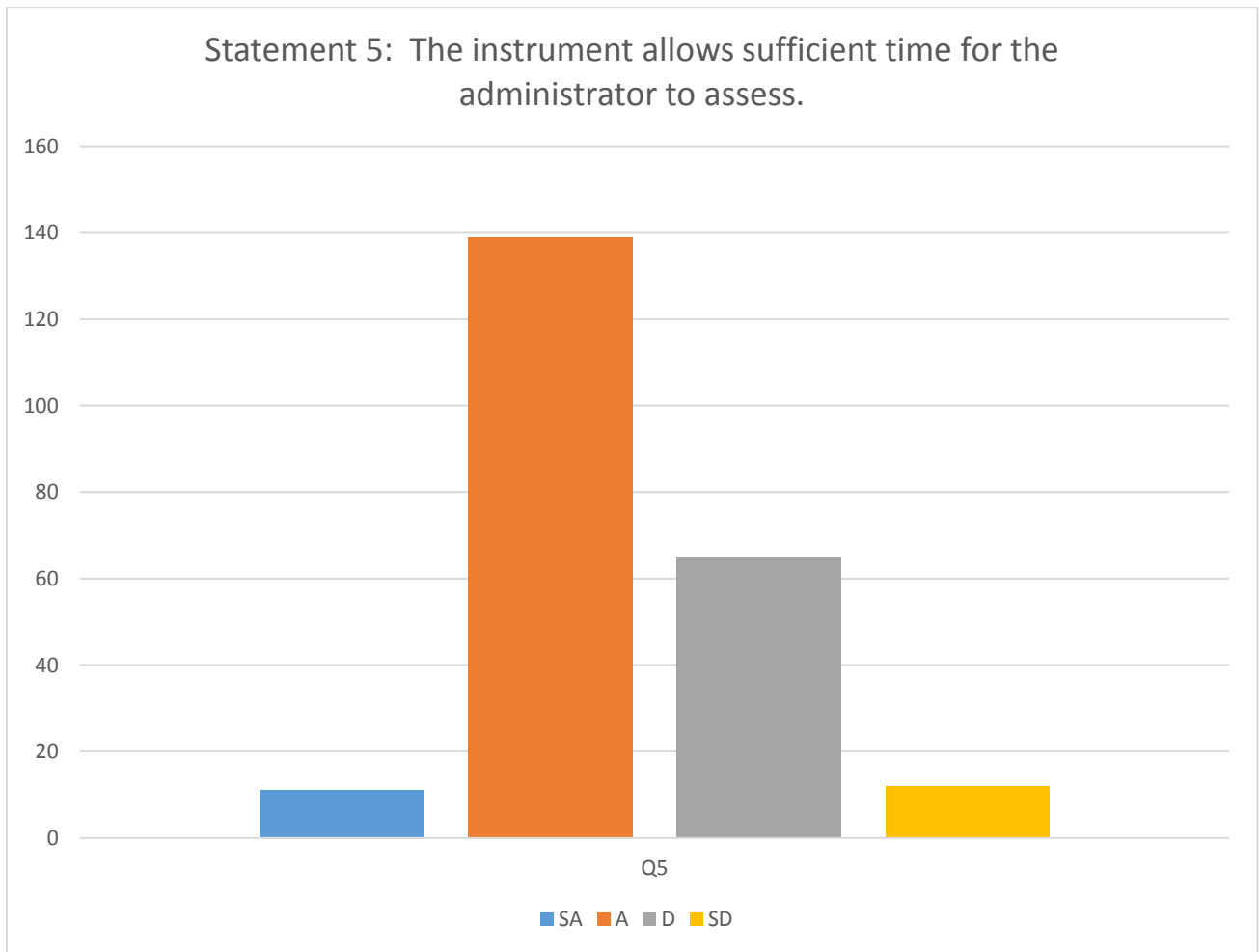
Figure 1.5. Analysis: Sixty-six percent felt the timeframe was sufficient for assessing teachers, with thirty-four percent disagreeing.

Table 1.6. *Use of words consistently, frequently, appropriate, multiple, and sporadically, does not provide a quantitative measurement.*

Statement 6	n	%
Use of words consistently, frequently, appropriate, multiple, and sporadically, does not provide a quantitative measurement.		
Strongly Agree (SA)	52	23
Agree (A)	126	56
Disagree (D)	46	20
Strongly Disagree (SD)	3	1

Statement 6: Use of words consistently, frequently, appropriate, multiple, and sporadically, does not provide a quantitative measurement.
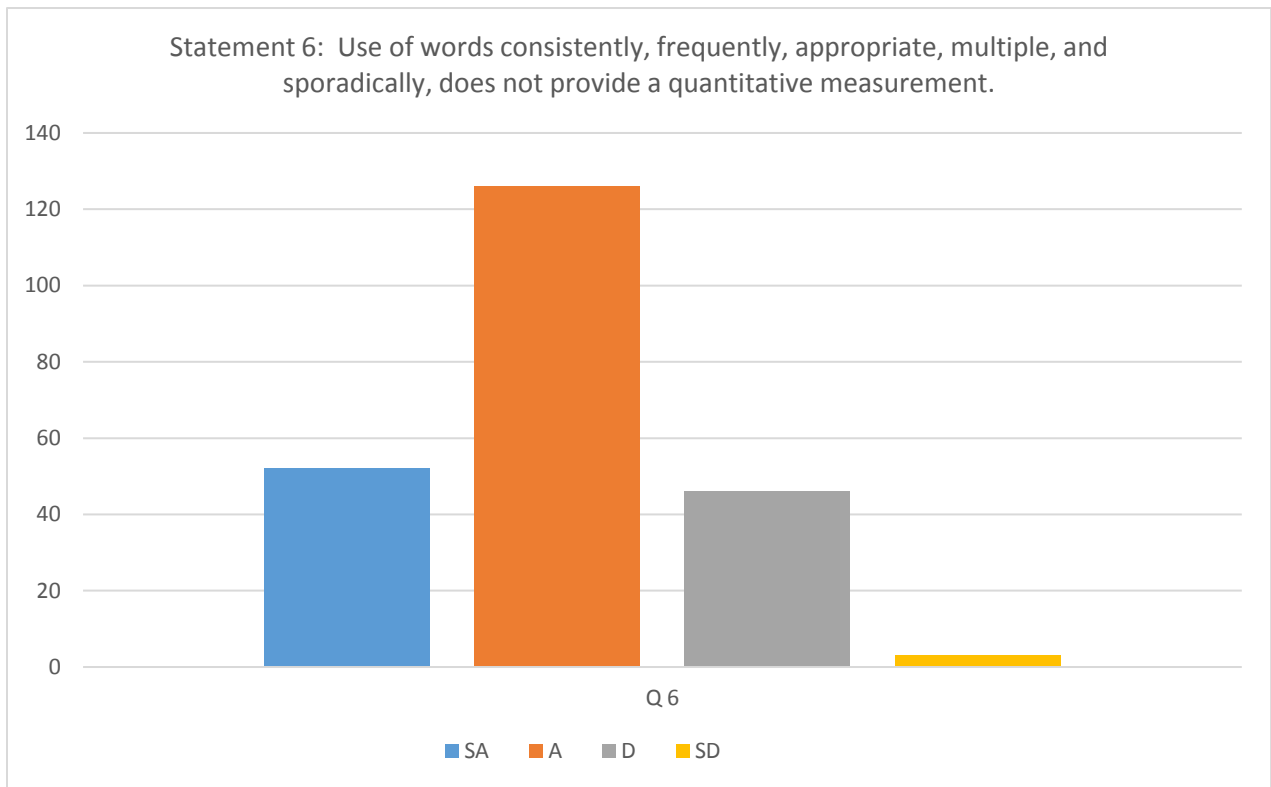
Figure 1.6. Analysis: Seventy-nine percent of administrators felt the word choice did not provide a quantifiable measure.

Table 1. 7. *Statement 7: For each domain, having a number of specific artifacts or observable practices for each standard in the rubric in addition to classroom observations would be more effective in assessing teacher performance.*

Statement 7	n	%
Strongly Agree(SA)	26	11
Agree (A)	119	52
Disagree (D)	71	31
Strongly Disagree (SD)	13	6
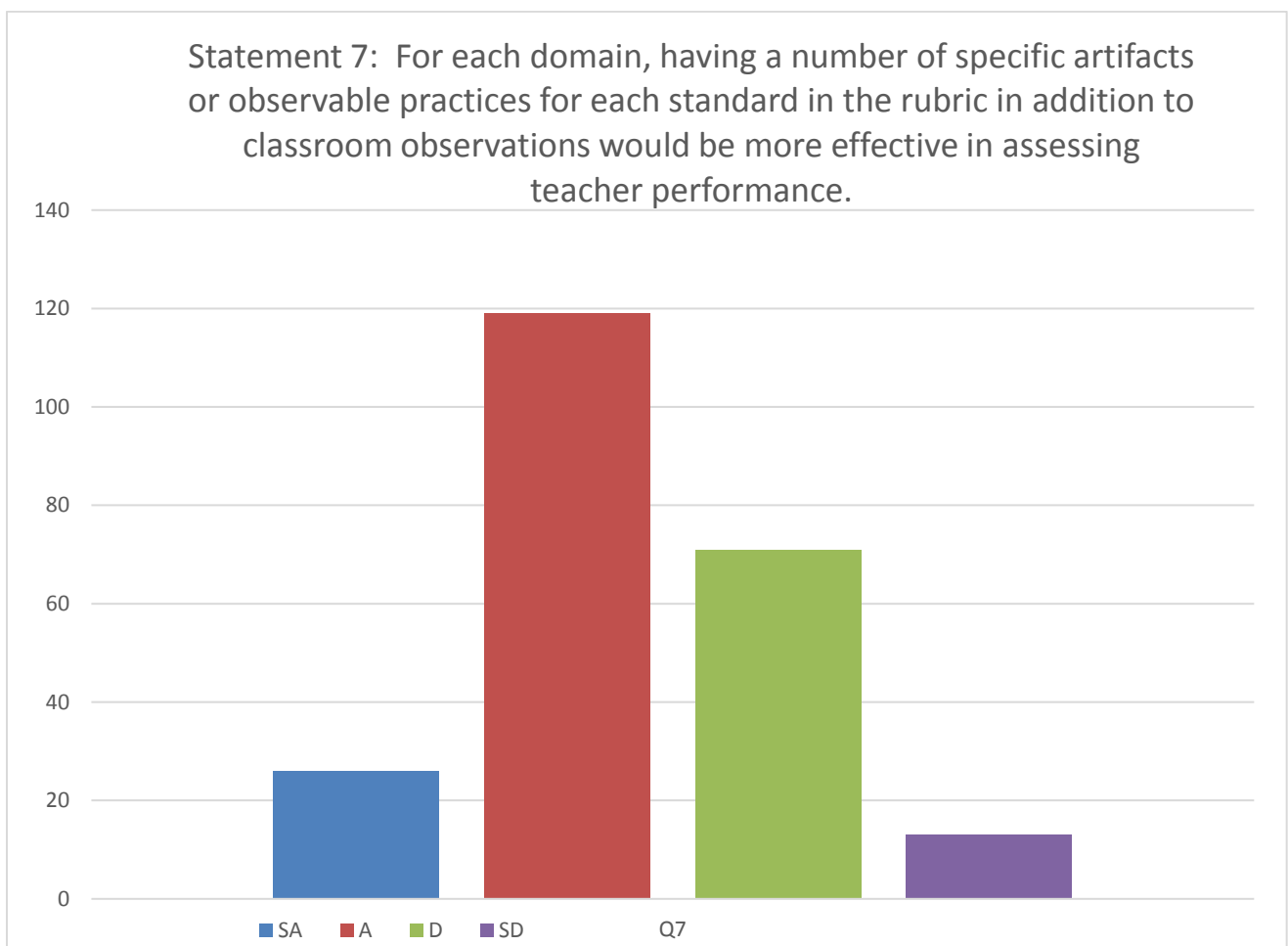
Figure 1.7. Analysis: Sixty-three percent believed that specific artifacts and practices would assist administrators in the evaluation process, with thirty-seven percent disagreeing.

Table 1.8. *Statement 8: There seems to be repetition in each standard.*

Statement 8	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	37	16
Agree (A)	145	64
Disagree (D)	44	20
Strongly Disagree (SD)	0	0
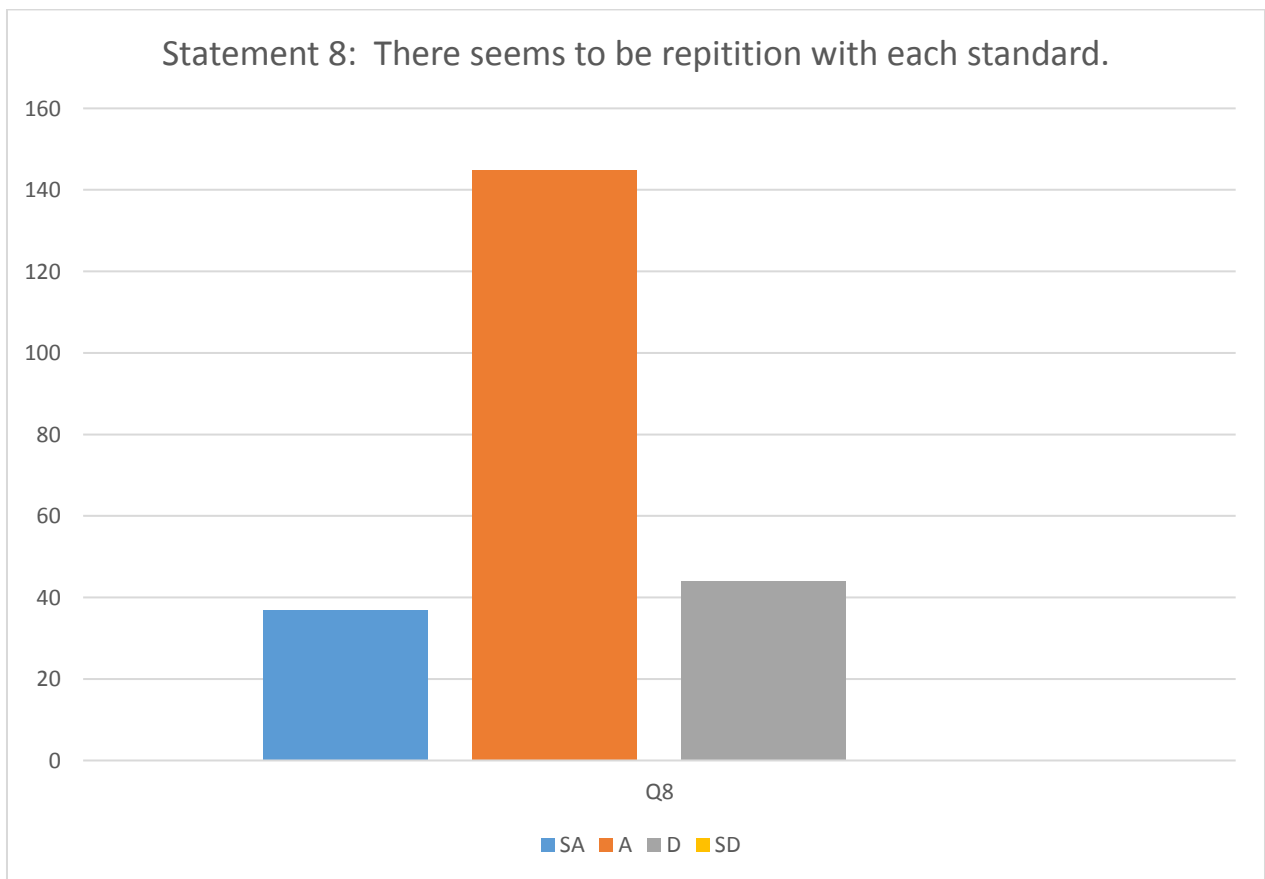
Figure. 1.8.   Analysis: Eighty percent agreed that the standards overlapped and were redundant.

Table 1.9. Statement 9: The lack of uniformity in lesson plans and testing formats is problematic in assessing teacher performance.

Statement 9	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	36	16
Agree (A)	118	52
Disagree (D)	68	30
Strongly Disagree (SD)	6	2
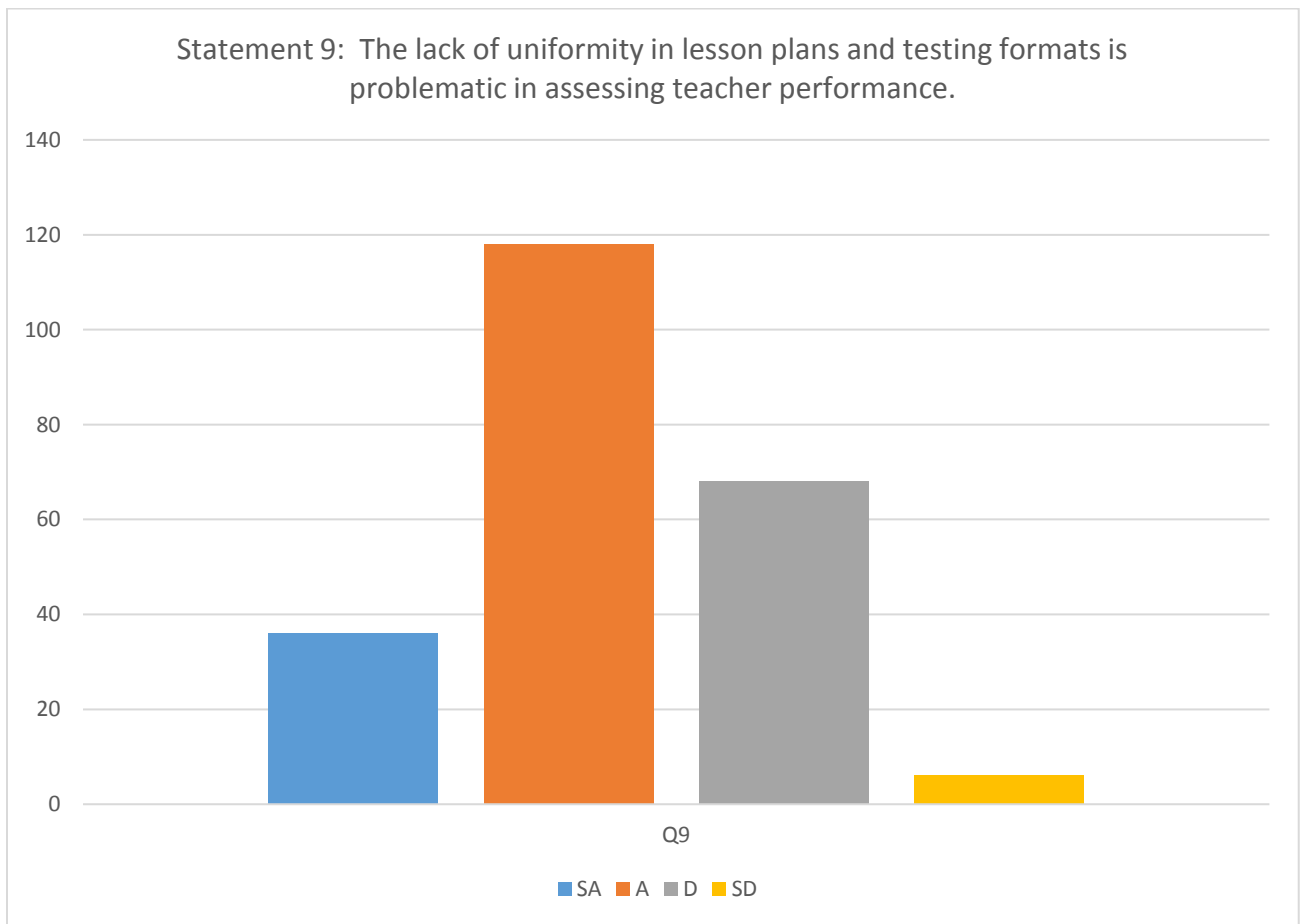
Figure 1.9. Analysis: Sixty-eight percent addressed the lack of consistency in formats as an issue in evaluating teachers.

Table 1.10. Statement 10: The wording in the domains needs to be simplified.

Statement 10	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	58	23
Agree (A)	130	57
Disagree (D)	41	18
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1	0
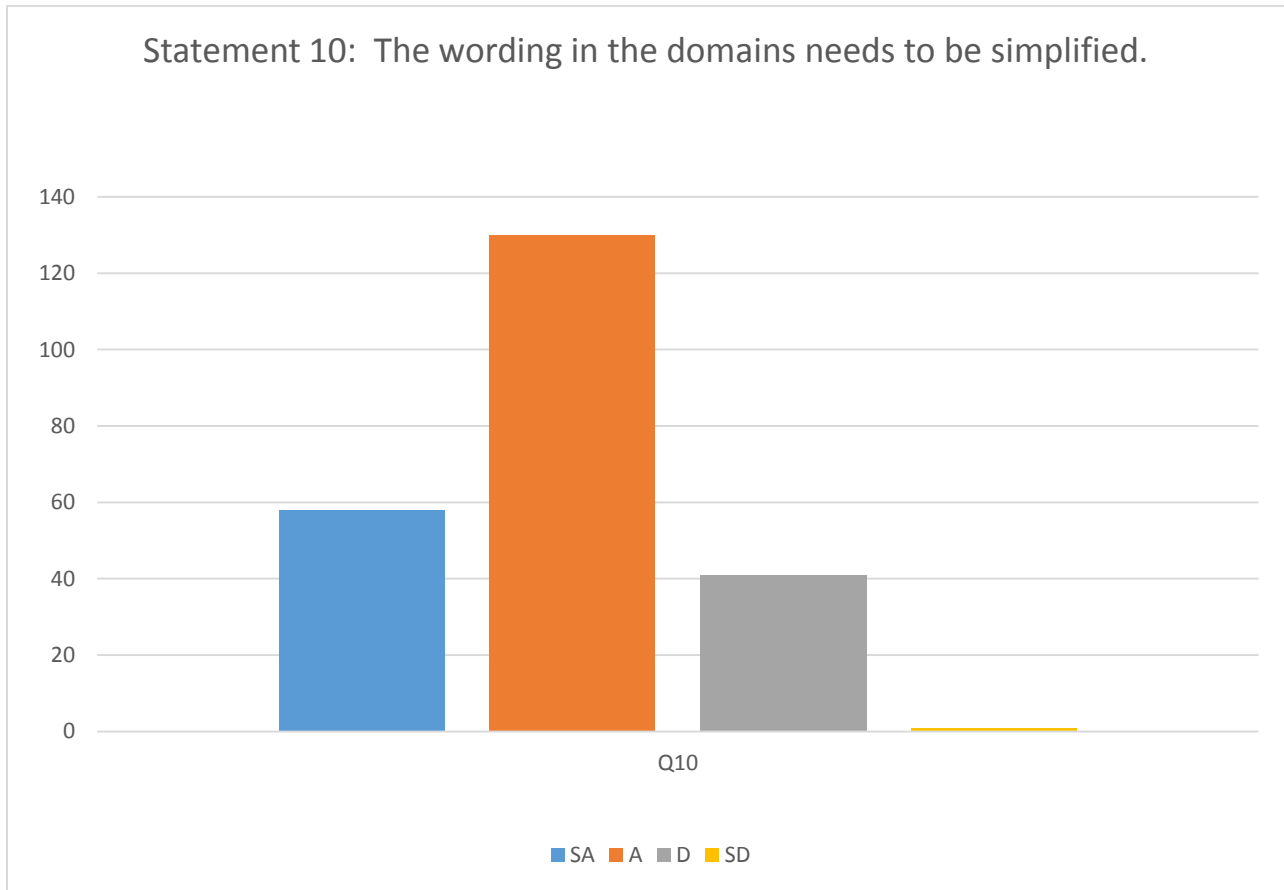
Figure 1.10. Analysis: Eighty percent thought the choice of words in each Domain needed to be simplified.

Table 1.11. Statement 11: Wording is not fair for new teachers.

Statement 11	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	25	11
Agree (A)	102	45
Disagree (D)	99	43
Strongly Disagree (SD)	2	1
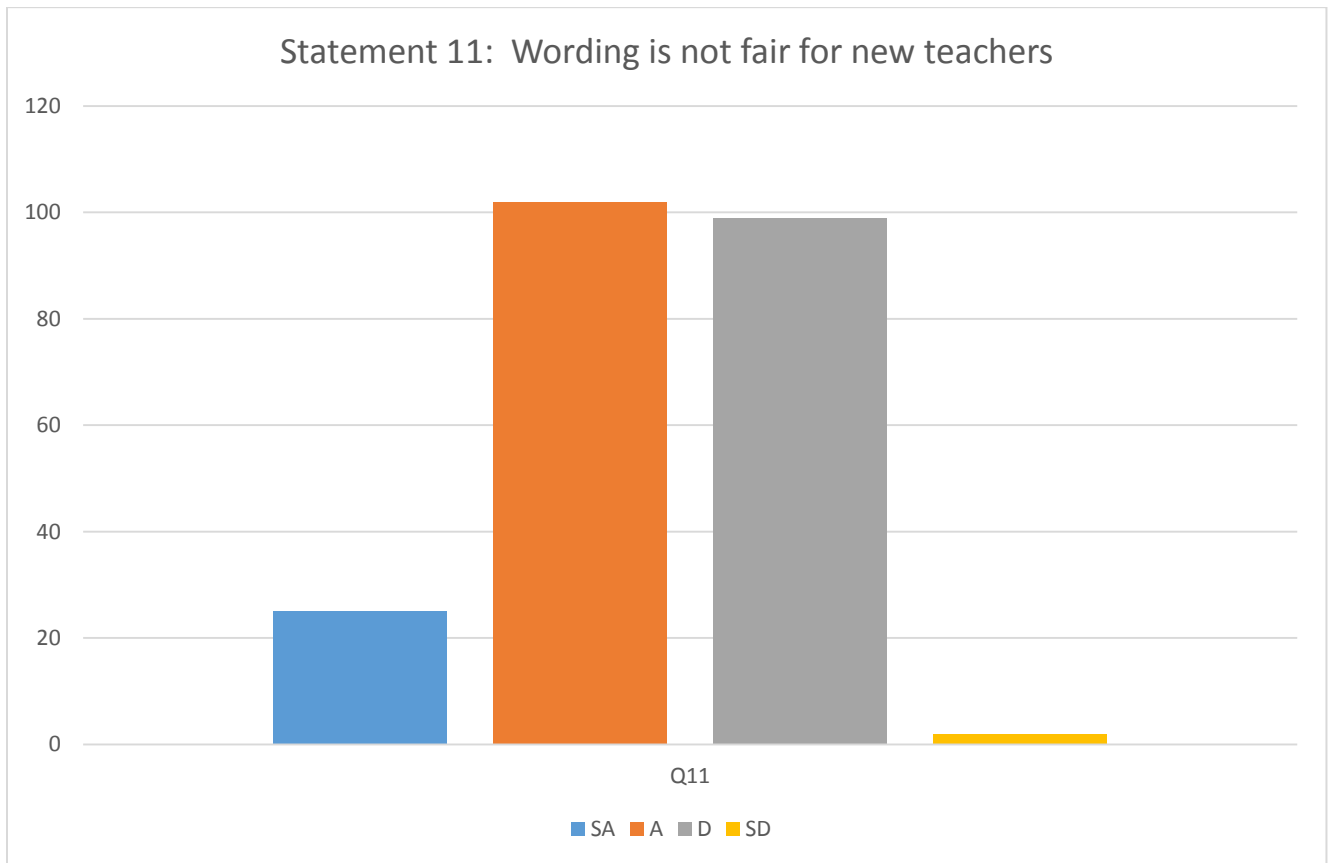
Figure 1.11. Analysis: Fifty-six percent felt the wording was difficult for new teachers, while 44% thought the wording was fair.

Table 1.12. Statement 12: Being 'frequent', but not 'consistent' in regards to relevance in student's lives is acceptable.

Statement 12	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	11	5
Agree (A)	73	33
Disagree (D)	121	54
Strongly Disagree (SD)	18	8
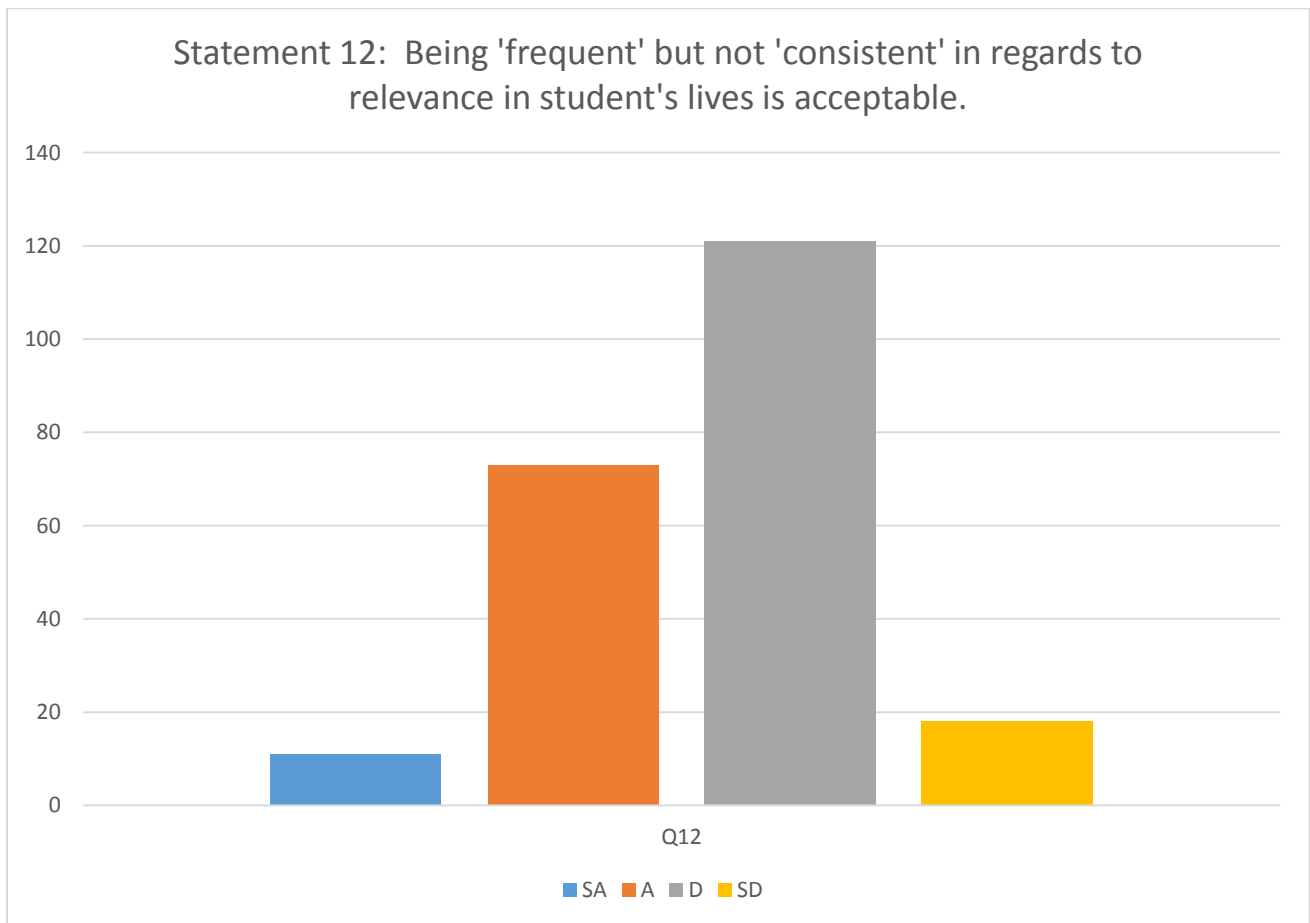
Figure 1.12. Analysis: Sixty-two percent of administrators indicated that class work relevance to students' lives needed to be consistent, while thirty-eight percent thought that frequent relevance was acceptable.

Table 1.13. Statement 13: I use the PLC meetings to assess the planning domain.

Statement 13	n	%
Strongly Agree(SA)	13	6
Agree (A)	134	58
Disagree (D)	75	34
Strongly Disagree (SD)	7	2
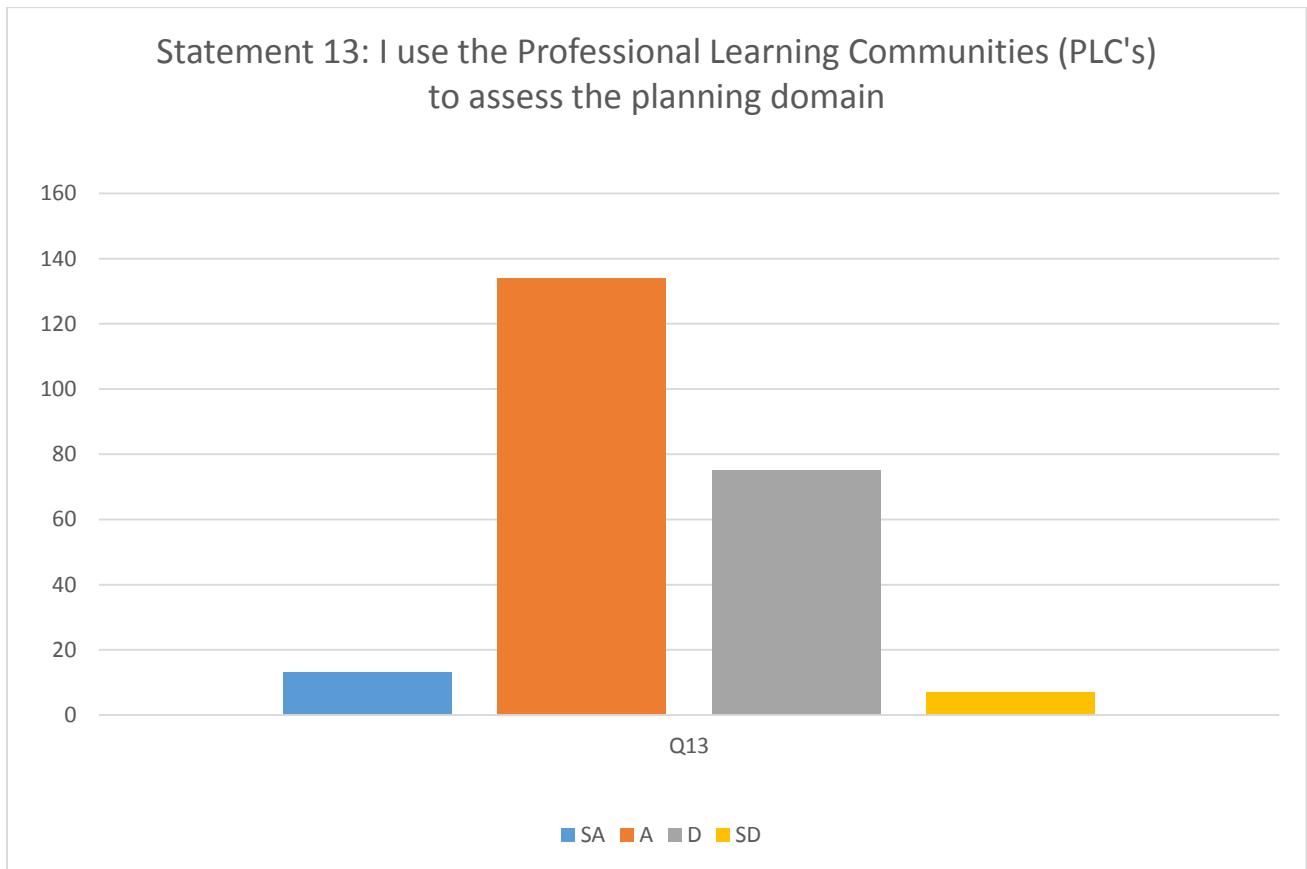
Figure 1.13. Analysis: Sixty-four percent used PLC meetings as a key source in assessing the Planning Domain.

Table 1.14. Statement 14: The instrument accurately reflects room for growth.

Statement 14	n	%
Strongly Agree(SA)	16	7
Agree (A)	144	63
Disagree (D)	60	26
Strongly Disagree (SD)	10	4

Statement 14: The instrument accurately reflects room for growth.
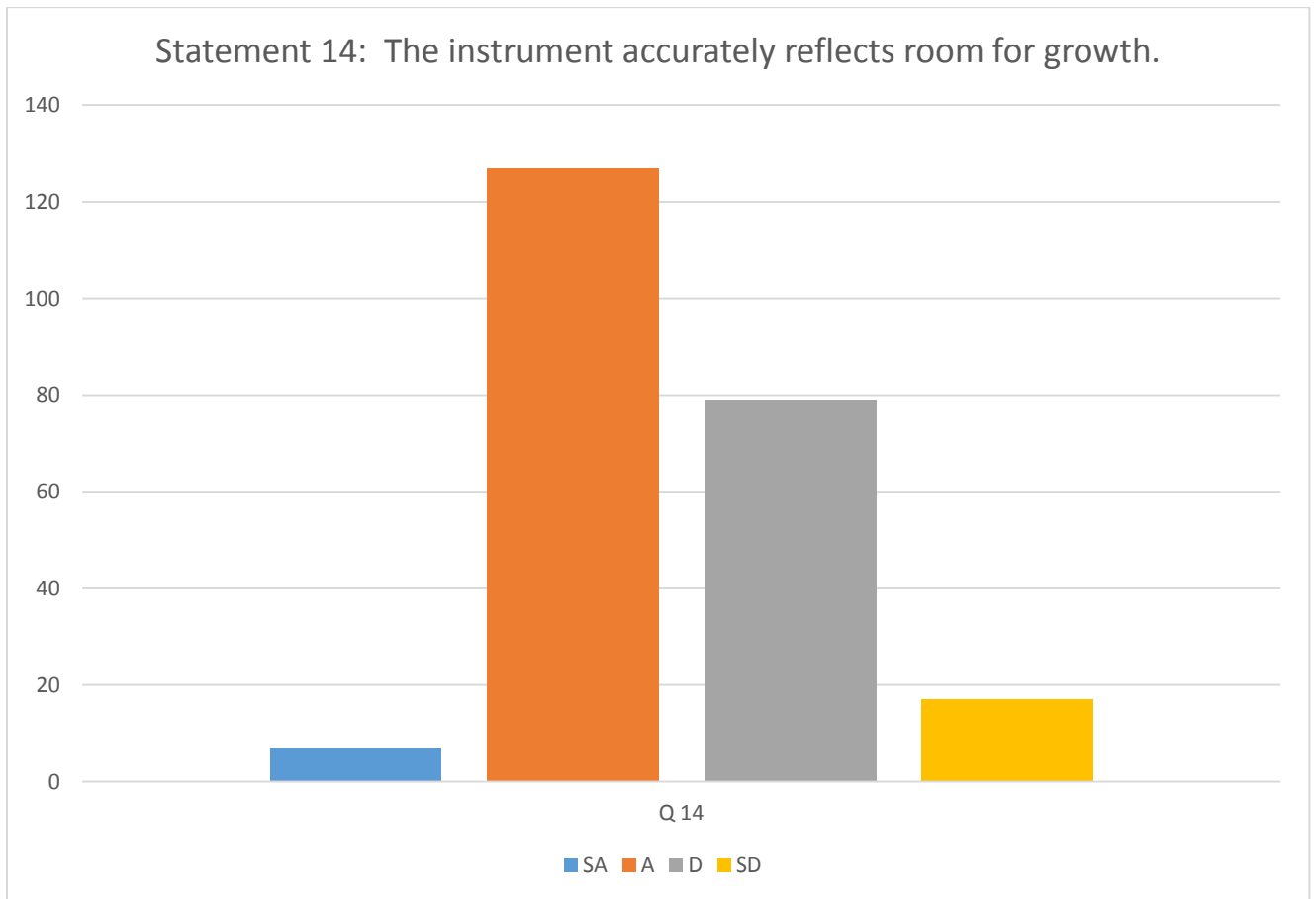
Statement 1.14. Analysis: Seventy percent agreed that MSTAR provides information for areas of growth, with thirty percent disagreeing.

Table 1.15. Statement 15: The rubric levels accurately represent a teacher's performance level and the implementation of best practices.

Statement 15	n	%
Strongly Agree(SA)	7	3
Agree (A)	127	55
Disagree (D)	79	34
Strongly Disagree (SD)	17	8
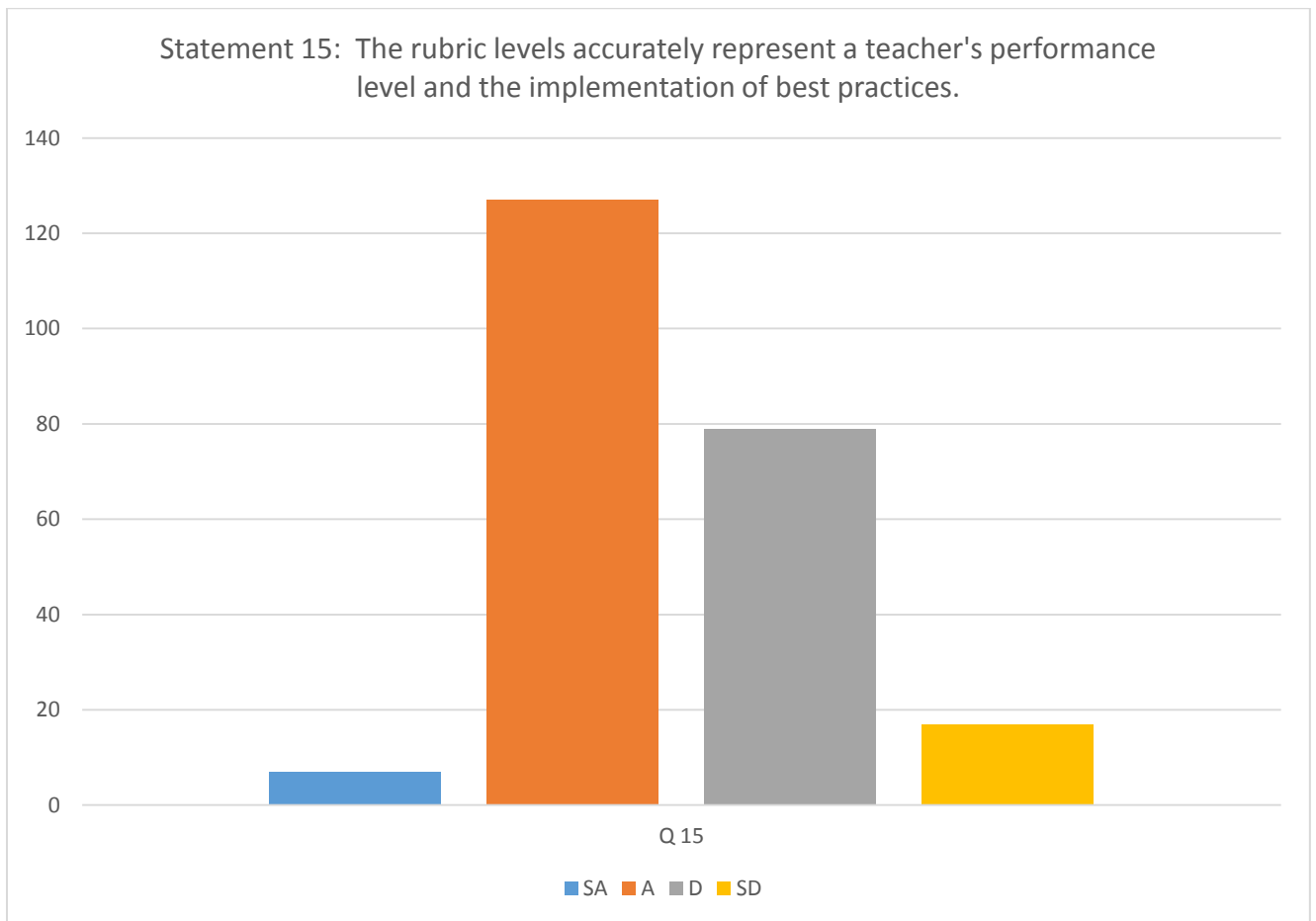
Figure 1.15. Analysis: Fifty-eight percent felt the rubric showed a teacher's performance and use of best practices, while forty-two percent disagreed.

Table 1.16. Statement 16: The MSTAR evaluation instrument raises teacher awareness and effectiveness.

Statement 16	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	35	15
Agree (A)	132	58
Disagree (D)	48	21
Strongly Disagree (SD)	14	6

Statement 16: The MSTAR evaluation instrument raises teacher awareness and effectiveness.
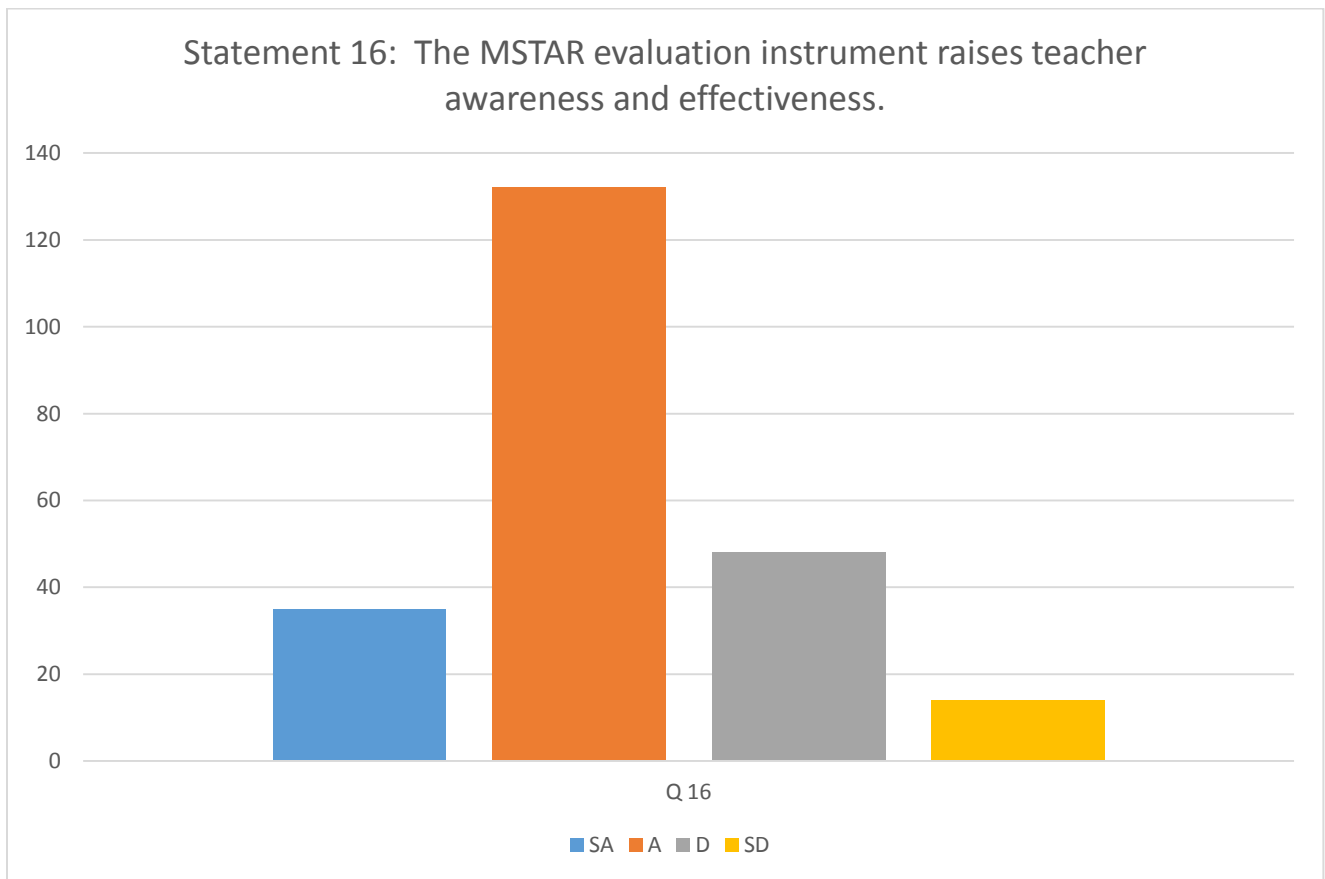
Figure 1.16. Analysis: Seventy-three percent believed MSTAR served to raise awareness and effectiveness, with twenty-seven percent disagreeing.

Table 1.17. Statement 17: The MSTAR evaluation instrument allows for equity of teacher evaluations.

Statement 17	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	17	8
Agree (A)	111	49
Strongly Disagree (SD)	76	33
Disagree (D)	24	10
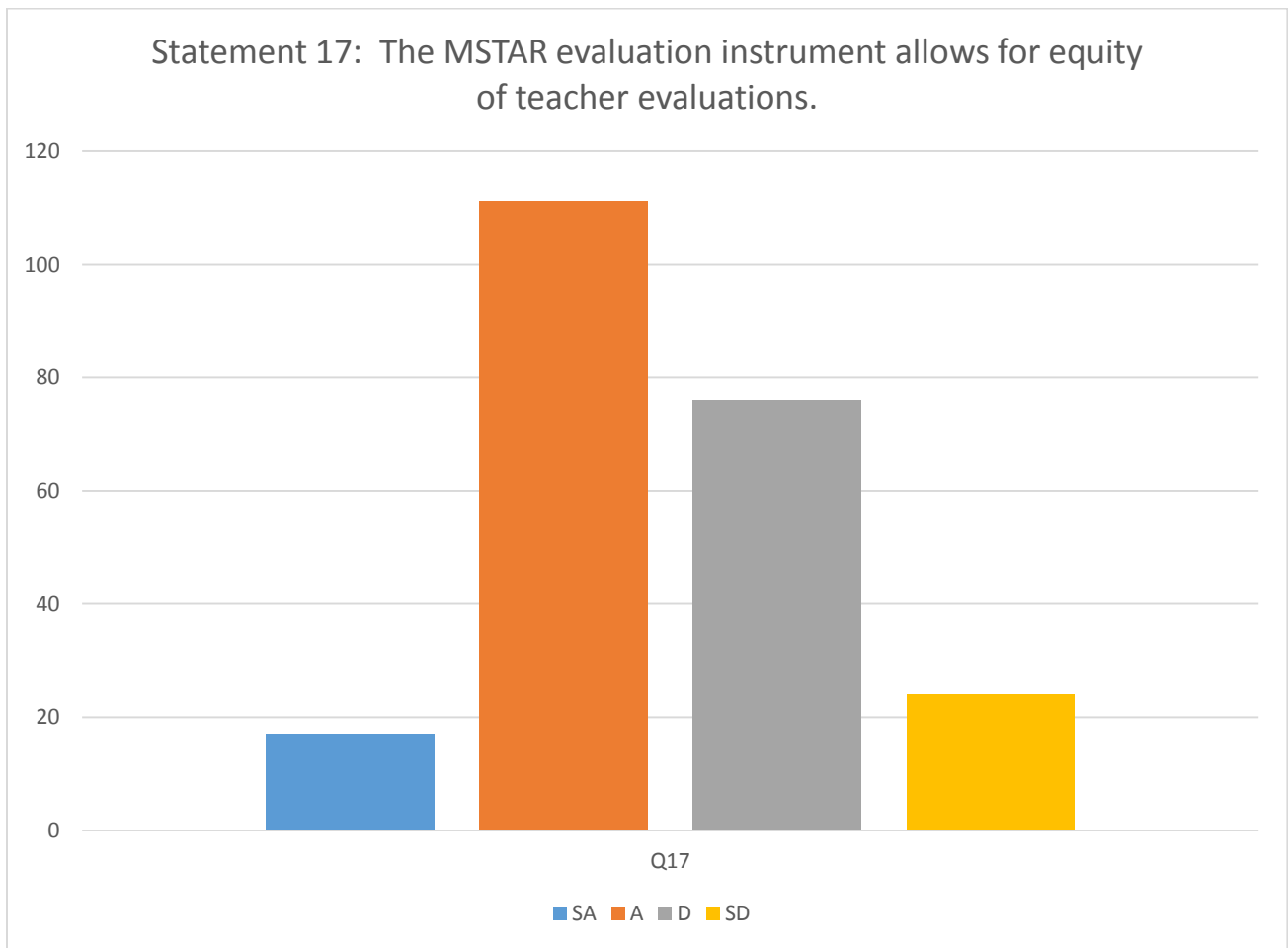
Figure 1.17. Analysis: *Fifty-seven percent felt the instrument allowed evaluation equity, with forty-three percent disagreeing.*

Table 1.18. Statement 18: The MSTAR evaluation instrument encourages Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity.

Statement 18	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	27	12
Agree (A)	138	61
Disagree (D)	51	23
Strongly Disagree (SD)	11	4

Statement 18: The MSTAR evaluation instrument encourages Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity
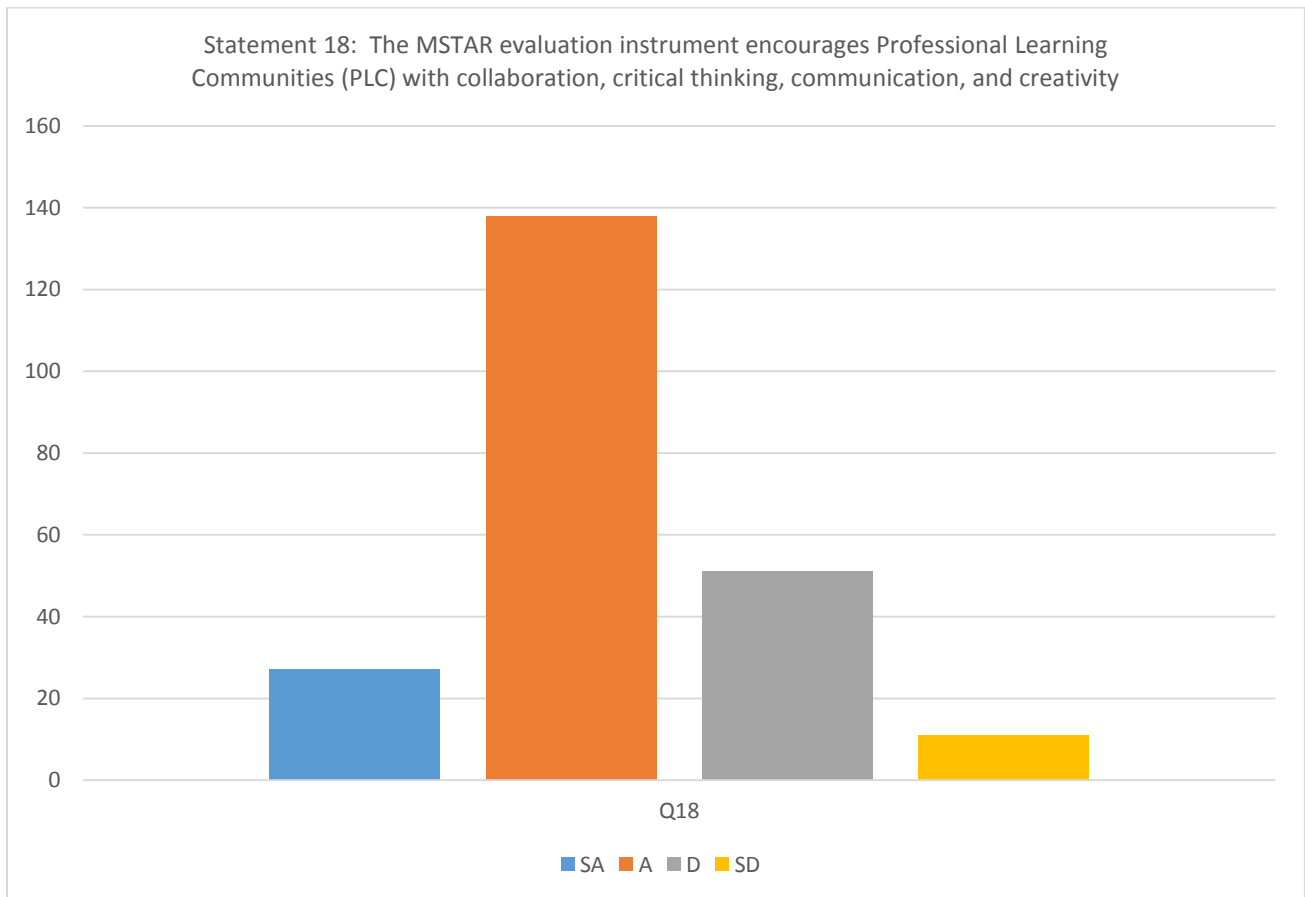
Figure 1.18. Analysis: Seventy-three percent believed the MSTAR encouraged PLC work, with twenty-seven percent disagreeing.

Table 1.19. Statement 19: The MSTAR evaluation instrument encourages more frequent interactions between the teacher and the school administrator.

Statement 19	n	%
Strongly Agree(SA)	40	17
Agree (A)	141	62
Disagree (D)	40	17
Strongly Disagree (SD)	9	4
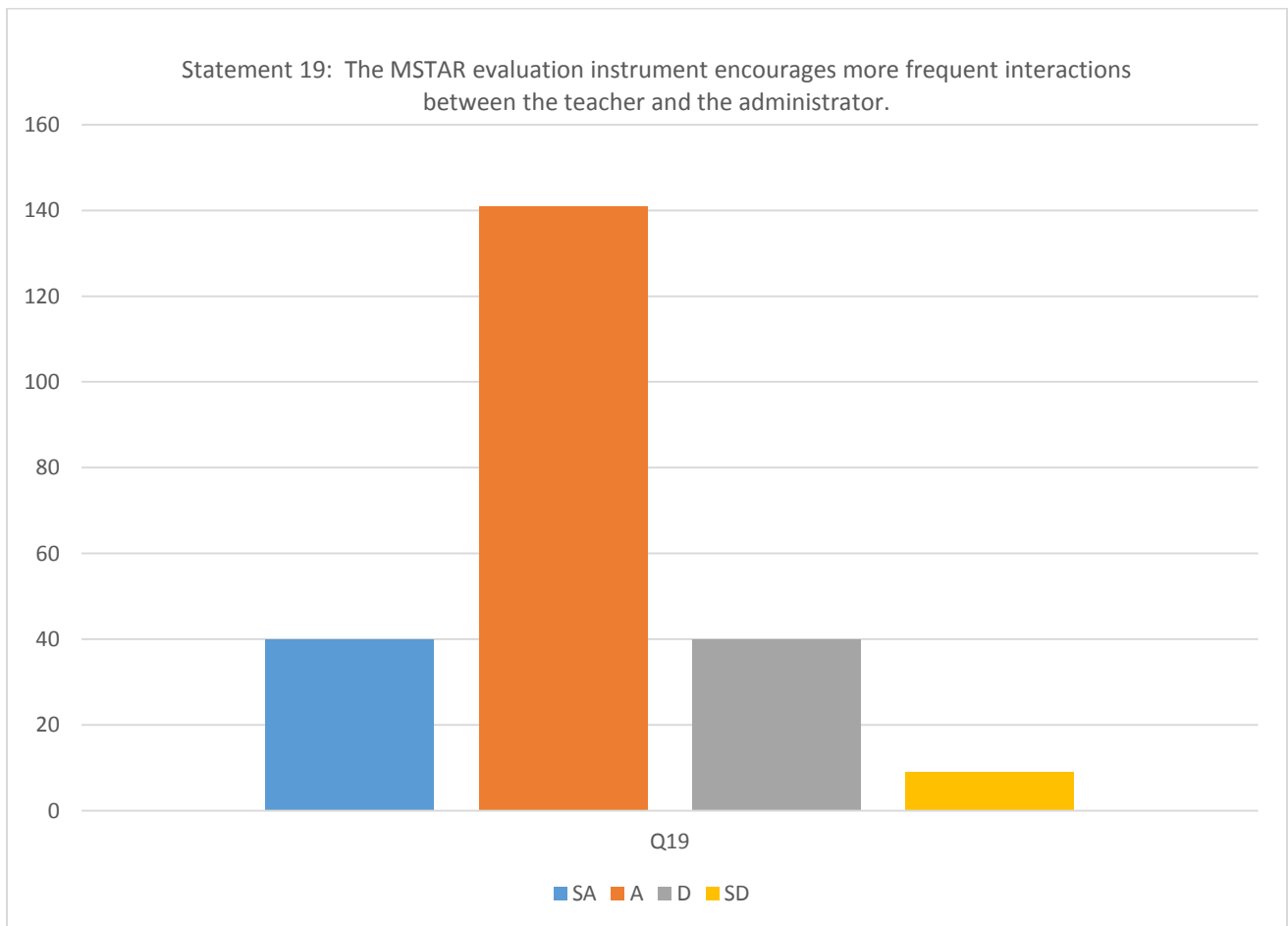
Figure 1.19. Analysis: Seventy-nine percent felt the instrument supported more interactions, with twenty-one percent disagreeing.

Table 1.20. Statement 20: The MSTAR instrument raises the expectation of distinguished teaching.

Statement 20	n	%
Strongly Agree (SA)	42	18
Agree (A)	127	56
Disagree (D)	51	22
Strongly Disagree (SD)	10	4
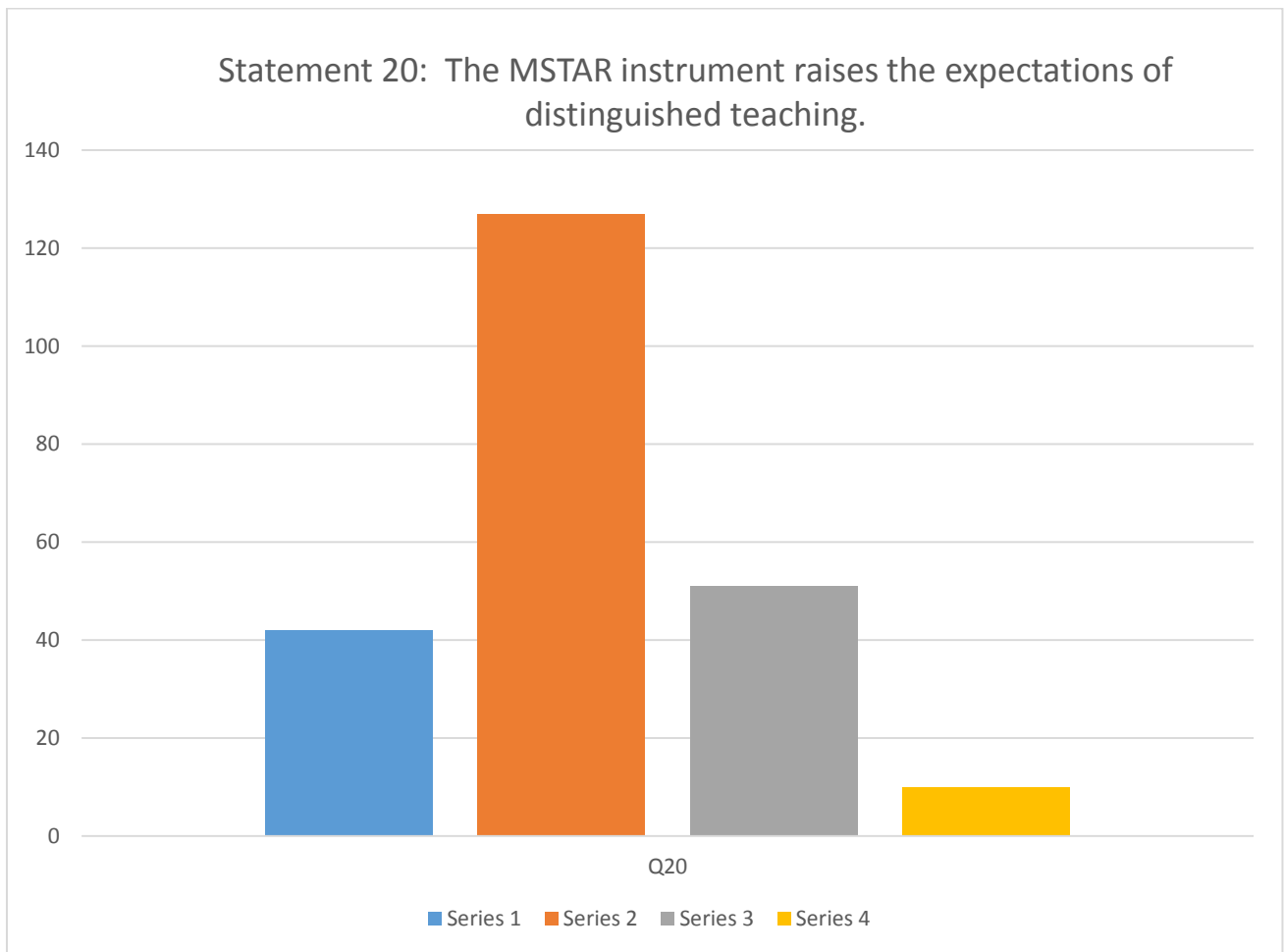
Figure 1.20. Analysis: Seventy-four percent believed MSTAR raised the expectation of distinguished teaching, while twenty-six percent disagreed.

Summary of Responses by Theme

Survey responses were categorized by the themes of Principal Training (Statement 1),

Time (Statements 4, 5), Expectations (Statements 2, 3, 12, 14, 15, 20), Word Choice /Clarity of

Directions (Statements 6, 8, 10, 11), Equity (Statements 7, 9, 17), and Collaborative Support

(Statements 13, 16, 18, 19).

Principal Training (Statement 1): The State Department of Education provided multiple

training sessions on the M-STAR instrument. 75% (n=170) of the surveyed principals believed

they had received the necessary training, but 25% (n=57) principals did not feel they were

adequately prepared to use the instrument.

Time (Statements 2, 3, 4, 5): Feedback on the number of observations required (7)

indicated 61% (n=143) of administrators felt that 4 observations would be adequate to cover

both formative and summative teacher assessments. The amount of time required for Teacher

Observations was adequate for 75% (n=169) of the principals surveyed, but the time to assess the

observations was not sufficient for 34% (n=77) of the principals.

Expectations (Statements 12, 14, 15, 20): 'Consistent relevance' in teaching content was

important to 37% (n=84) of principals surveyed, and 'frequent relevance' was acceptable for

61% (n=139). One hundred and sixty principals believed M-STAR showed areas for teacher

growth, but only 59% (n=134) thought it depicted teacher performance accurately. Overall, 169

(n=74%) principals felt MSTAR raised understanding of distinguished teaching.

Word Choice /Clarity of Directions (Statements 6, 8, 10, 11): There was consensus that

clear and concise language was not provided with M-STAR. Wording did not provide adequate

direction for quantifiable measurements, and 80% (n=182) of principals felt that repetition in the

standards hindered the ability to focus on the unique characteristics of each standard for teacher

feedback.

Equity (Statements 7, 9, 17): M-STAR currently utilizes artifacts in the Domains of

Planning, Assessment, and Professional Responsibilities, but not in the Observation Domains of

Instruction and Learning Environment. 64% (n=145) of principals agreed on the need for a

number of specific artifacts and observable practices for each standard, and the district autonomy

in formats of lesson planning and testing made it difficult for 68% (n=154) principals to assess

teachers, with 100 concerns about equity of teacher evaluations across the state using M-STAR.

Collaborative Support (Statements 13, 16, 18, 19): Professional Learning Communities

are a statewide requirement, yet 27% (n=62) did not see the meetings as important in planning

content and pedagogy of lessons, establishing higher order thinking with instructional goals,

accommodating student diversity, and aligning units with state standards. 74% (n=167) of

principals agreed that the M-STAR process raised teacher awareness and effectiveness, and 80%

(n=181) agreed that the instrument encouraged dialogue between administrator and teachers.

Implications

The results of this study suggest that there is an overall favorable response to the new

accountability instrument created by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) on the part

of principals. From this study it can be concluded that the majority of respondents utilized the

new M-STAR with some degree of understanding of the evaluation instrument as well as finding

the instrument more effective than ineffective. However, the responses on every statement on

the survey showed evidence of a lack of deep understanding to effectively ensure that the

evaluation process is being conducted systematically and with fidelity throughout the state. It is

suggested that more extensive explanation of, training in, and feedback on the evaluation

instrument can assist in further developing common understanding for optimum use. Therefore,

the recommendation is to continue frequent dialogue and training opportunities on the Domains

and the Standards within M-STAR to help principals use this accountability tool more effectively

and consistently.

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The Effectiveness of Content-Based Instruction in English Language Teaching

Evangelin Arulselvi

Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Content-based instruction (CBI) method over the conventional method in learning Optional 1 English among College of Education students in the Salem District of the Tamil Nadu state in southern India. A randomized pretest, post-test, control group and experimental group design were employed. Students from the university formed both the control and experimental groups. Each group consisted of 30 learners. The t-test analysis revealed that for teaching English to these students who are non-native English speakers, CBI was more effective than the conventional method and the CBI students developed their language skills as well as gaining access to new concepts through meaningful content.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, training procedures, content integration, dictogloss and graphic organizers

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Introduction

English language today is a powerful unifying factor in our national and international life. It is through English that we are connected with information technology and electronic time and space. There are many ways and approaches introduced in this century to teach the English language to non-native English language learners. These approaches are providing learners with opportunities to practice English for communicative purposes. Content based instruction (CBI) is one among the communicative approaches gaining favor in recent times. CBI is becoming increasingly popular in general education as well as in second and foreign language teaching.

CBI is an approach to language teaching that focuses not on the language itself, but rather on what is being taught through the language; that is, the language becomes the medium through which something new is learned. In the CBI approach, the student learns the target language by using it to learn new content. CBI has characteristics which make it particularly effective in language instruction. According to Stoller (1997), one of its most important benefits is that it lends itself to the natural teaching of the four language skills. For example, within CBI students are required to read authentic reading materials, to interpret and evaluate the information contained in them, and to cooperate so that they can respond either orally or in writing.

As Optional I and II English courses of the Bachelor degree of Education (B.Ed) program at the College of Education in the Salem District of Tamil Nadu state in southern India aim to provide in depth knowledge in the area of language teaching, the researcher has interest to identify a suitable method of instruction. The researcher has identified the need for a professional development activity to support the student teachers' understanding and to relate to each other during intellectual experiences. She conducted research in the strategy of teaching learning process with the goal of having the desired impact on teacher understanding.

There are many things that can be considered 'content'; what is important is that what is being taught or discussed through the language and not be language instruction related. Aspects of the curriculum, discussions about current events and world cultures or even general topics of interest are all valid content options.

Instructional methods are used by teachers to create learning environments and to specify the nature of the activity in which the teacher and learner will be involved during the lesson and the researcher has selected CBI as a teaching strategy for this purpose. CBI is not exclusively a language program, but instead it integrates the learning of language with the learning of some content. The content can be any academic subject matter. It has been observed that academic subjects provide natural content for language study (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003). Keeping this view in mind, the researcher has selected Optional 1 English course as a source of content for conducting this research.

Content-based instruction has been defined as "the teaching of content or information in the language being learned with little or no direct or explicit effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught" (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 204). This teaching approach is considered by many researchers to be an effective and realistic teaching method in terms of combining language and content learning. According to Crandall (1999), CBI can be used in various ways depending on the skills being taught and includes not only traditional teaching methods such as grammar-based instruction or vocabulary development, but also contemporary approaches such as communicative language teaching and humanistic methods.

Krashen (1982) emphasized ways of decreasing learner anxiety, such as providing interesting texts as well as meaningful activities, which are comprehensible to learners. This

supports a CBI approach which also promotes: learning a language through academic content, engaging in activities, developing proficiency in academic discourse, fostering the development of effective learning strategies (Crandall, 1999). Thus, this methodology puts emphasis on "learning about something rather than learning about language" (p. 604). In Content-based instruction, language teaching focuses on how information and meaning from meaningful content are utilized in discourse or texts, not in single sentences. Next, the skills of the target language are not separate from each other, and they together are involved in all activities. For example, students in CBI are supposed to "read and take notes, listen and write a summary, or respond orally to things they have read or written" (p. 208).

Review of Related Literature

Various studies have been conducted surrounding the effectiveness of CBI. This review will present key studies and their outcomes.

Yoon (Christina) Heo (2005) conducted research on Content-based instruction (CBI). It was found to be an effective approach to teach English as a second language because with CBI, students can develop their language skills as well as gain access to new concepts through meaningful content. Her research paper has reviewed general information about the features of CBI, including its theoretical foundations and models. The paper also covered several issues to be considered in the application of CBI such as assessment of language and content, teacher education, and the use of CBI in the EFL classroom. The relationship between CBI and skill based instruction, particularly in the teaching of writing, has also been discussed. Finally, the researcher suggested that CBI can fit in well with broader principles of language teaching and learning in both ESL and EFL situations.

Silvia Pessoa and Heather Hendry (2007) conducted research on testing the effects of CBI in the foreign language classrooms. They researched how this type of instruction actually is appropriated, understood, and carried out in practice by foreign language teachers. This study examined the role of two sixth grade Spanish teachers' discursive practices in Content-based instruction, the goals of instruction, and the students' proficiency. Through classroom observations, discourse analysis, teacher interviews, and student writing assessments, this study shows the significance of teacher-talk in engaging students in learning both language and content, an overarching goal of CBI.

Stuart D. Warrington (2008) conducted research focusing on the concerns with CBI in Asian EFL contexts. The findings state that a considerable amount of interest was shown in CBI over the past decade and, inevitably, CBI has found its way into Asian EFL contexts. This is largely due in part to its success in ESL environments and its global attraction as a mode of language education for the world.

Fragoulis Iosif (2011) conducted research regarding CBI in the teaching of English as a foreign language. This article aimed to link theory to practice, and to help English teachers maximize the full potential of using CBI in English teaching. The findings of this article reported benefits to many English teachers for using CBI.

Mulamba Patrick Omoto (2013) conducted research on CBI to investigate the elements of CBI and its process in the teaching and learning of English in primary schools. The objectives of the study included: to find out how the CBI approach was used in the teaching of English in primary schools of a particular district, to examine the nature and relevance of material used to facilitate the CBI approach in English language teaching, to determine the perception of teachers of English regarding the use of CBI in the teaching and learning of English, to determine the

perception of learners who experience CBI in the learning of English and to investigate the challenges the teachers of English face in the attempt to use CBI. This particular study provided insight for curriculum developers, policy makers, language educators and teachers to understand and use CBI.

Neil Matthew Addison and Richard John Walker (2000) examined Japanese University English students` attitudes towards studying a content based media course that incorporated a blended approach towards analysis and discussion of critical subject matter. They followed a selected examination of previous academic work pursued in this field, a diagnostic analysis of students' schematic problems in approaching critical thinking in English, and a description of the pedagogic ambitions and rationale of this course. The effectiveness of the research was then assessed with reference to statistics taken from student response questionnaire data. Recommendations made in light of this data suggest that future research could focus upon a consideration of ways to scaffold and build upon existing learner methods, and on the construction of more effective course materials to compliment the teaching of a critical content based pedagogy.

Integrating CBI in the Language Classroom

Stoller (2002) lists eight practices that allow for natural content integration:

1. Extended input, meaningful output, and feedback on language and grasp of content.

2. Information gathering, processing, and reporting.

3. Integrated skills (using reading, writing, speaking and listening in natural classroom activities).

4. Task-based activities and project work, enhanced by cooperative learning principles.

5. Strategy training (to produce more metacognitively aware strategic learners).

6. Visual support (ie. Images, graphic organizers, language ladders etc.).

7. Contextualized grammar instruction.

8. Culminating synthesis activities (knowledge is displayed in writing and orally).

The Role of Teachers in CBI

The teachers' role influences and directs the learners' activities in relation to the content.

According to Stryker and Leaver (1993), teachers play the following role during CBI lessons:

(1) They must be knowledgeable in the subject matter and able to elicit that knowledge from

their learners.

(2) Teachers are responsible for selecting and adapting authentic materials for use in class.

(3) Teachers must create truly learner-centered classroom.

(4) Teachers must keep context and comprehensibility foremost in their planning and

presentation.

(5) Teachers must contextualize their lessons by using content as their point of departure.

Teachers must help learners to understand authentic texts. Teachers make meaning clear through

the use of visuals, repeating and by giving a lot of examples, and building on students' previous

experiences. Teachers also design activities that address both language and content and the

discourse organization of the content, with specific language activities highlighting how

language is used in a particular subject. Students are actively involved in learning language

content, often through interaction with other students. Thinking skills are promoted to undertake

academic tasks. Graphic organizers are one tool used to assist this process.

The Role of Materials in Content-Based Instruction

Materials are very important during the instructional process of English language. They

play an essential role in the development and practice of CBI. The material must bear certain

characteristics. The characteristics are as listed below with reference to Stryker and Leaver (1993):

(1) Materials must contain the subject matter of the content course.

(2) Materials must be authentic – like the ones used in native language instruction.

(3) Examples must be drawn from reality and real life experience and contemporary issues from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV.

(4) Material must bear linguistic simplification to adopt texts and promote comprehensibility.

Developing a CBI Approach

During the administration of CBI, the instructor divided the class into small groups and assign each group small research tasks and a source of information to help them fulfill the task. Then once they completed their research they formed new groups with students that used other information sources and shared and compared their information. There should then be some product as the end result of this sharing of the information which could take the form of a group report or representation of some kind.

The selected portion of the content is taught to the group using the following techniques of CBI.

1. Dictogloss Technique

Dictogloss is a classroom activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for reconstruction. In a dictogloss, (Wajnryb, 1990) students listen twice to a short passage on appropriate content. The first time through, students listen for the main idea, and then the second time they listen for details. Next, students write down what they have remembered from the reading. Students are encouraged to take notes while listening and they reformulate their notes. Students get practice in note taking in this way.

2. Graphic Organizers

Graphic Organizers are visual displays that help students to organize and remember new information. They involve drawing or writing down ideas and making connections. They combine words and phrases, symbols and arrows to map knowledge. They include diagrams, tables, columns and webs. Through the use of graphic organizers, students can understand text organization, which helps them learn to read academic texts and to complete academic tasks.

3. Process Writing

In process writing, students brainstorm ideas about a topic and begin writing. Then they have repeated conferences with the teacher and other students during which they receive feedback on their writing up to the point, and then they make revisions based on the feedback they receive and carry on writing. In this way, students learn to view their writing as someone else's reading and to improve both the expression of meaning and the form of their writing as they draft and redraft. Process writing shifts the emphasis in teaching writing from evaluation to revision.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to find out whether CBI method is more effective than the traditional approach for College of Education students in the Salem District of the Tamil Nadu state in southern India.

Hypotheses

I. There exists no significant difference between the pre and post mean scores of the experimental group.

II. Control and Experimental groups do not differ in their academic achievement scores.

Methodology

In the present study, the non-randomized control group pretest, post-test design was adopted. The groups were formed according to the requirements of the CBI method.

Sample Selection

In the present study, the experimental group and the control group were selected. The two groups were selected from the College of Education in the Salem District. Bachelor of Education students were considered for this purpose. Although the two groups were equal in terms of achievement scores, the subjects in each group were not equal and they varied in terms of their academic abilities. The composition of the Content-based instruction teams were made on the basis of the achievement scores of the learners. The subjects of the two groups were selected and the application of randomness led to the classification of the control and experimental groups.

Selection of the Experimental Group

The experimental group was formed on the basis of the academic achievement scores of the students. Thirty learners were grouped into five teams with six members in each team based on the scores of the first term examination of the English language. The first five highest scorers formed the first members of the five teams and the remaining scorers were distributed to each team as per the procedure of distribution. This sort of distribution of the subjects would enable achieving considerable equality among the teams in each group, but at the same time, heterogeneity of learner ability within a team was maintained as per the requirement of CBI.

Selection of the Control Group

The control group consisted of 30 learners studying in the same class of the same college. The group was exposed to the traditional method instruction and no novel treatment was given to this group.

Research Tools

The investigator's self-made achievement tests were used for the pre-tests and post-tests of both the groups. The same question paper was used for both the groups to evaluate pupils' skills in Optional I English covering selected topics of the content. At the beginning of the test, the instructions for answering were given and the subjects were asked to write the answer. The time allotted for answering was one hour. Both the groups were administered a pretest in which the previous knowledge was assessed. Contents of units 5 and 6 in Optional I English were selected for the administration of the pretest. In order to increase the reliability and validity of the post-test performance and to eliminate the testing effect of the pretest, two other achievement tests were constructed. These tests were a slight modification of the Pretest. The same type of questions and same number of questions were used for these two tests. The procedures adopted in developing the pretest tool were employed while constructing these tools also. Other important contents of unit 5 and 6 were selected for administering the other two tests.

Test Validity

The content of both the tests were validated by a team of English language specialists. The team validated the content and instructions of the test, the relevance of the questions to the content, its suitability of attaining the goals, the number and arrangement of questions and time allotted. The remarks and suggestions of the team were taken into consideration and the researcher made the necessary modification before its application.

Test Reliability

A pilot group of 30 students was randomly selected from the population of the study who were excluded from the sample. Test-retest method was used to check the reliability. First, a test was administered to them and it was repeated on the same group after two weeks. The reliability

correlation coefficient of the tests results were calculated using the Pearson correlation method. The obtained value of the Pretest was 0.84 which was an indication of its reliability. The obtained values of the Post tests were 0.77 and 0.79 respectively.

Test Administration Procedure

Both the experimental group and the control group were administered a pretest in which the previous knowledge of the students were assessed. Units 5 and 6 in Optional I English were the units selected for the administration of the pretest. Two other achievement Posttests were also constructed. These tests were a slight modification of the Pretest. The same type of questions and same number of questions were used for these two tests. The procedures adopted in developing the pretest tool were employed while constructing these tests. Other important contents of the same units were selected for administering the other two tests.

<div align="center">

Results and Discussion

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The results of the study are presented in Tables 1- 6 with interpretation. The pre-test was administered to both the control and the experimental groups. Both the groups did not differ in their pre-test mean achievement scores as testified by the t-value of 0.19 which is not significant at the 0.05 level. Note that N represents number, M represents mean, SD represents standards deviation, and t represents the t-score.

Table 1
Pretest – Comparison between Control and Experimental Groups

Group	N	M	SD	t
Control	30	56.4	8.5	0.19
Experimental	30	56.8	7.2	

Table 2

Comparison of the Pretest and Post-test I of the Experimental Group

Group	N	M	SD	t
Pretest	30	56.8	7.2	7.13
Post-test I	30	71	8.2	

Table 3

Comparison of the Pretest and Post-test II of the Experimental Group

Group	N	M	SD	t
Pretest	30	56.8	7.2	8.7
Post-Test II	30	73	7.2	

Table 4

Comparison of the Post-test 1 and Post-test II of the Experimental Group

Group	N	M	SD	t
Post-Test I	30	71	8.2	1.0
Post-test II	30	73	7.2	

Table 5

Post -test 1 – Comparison between Control and Experimental Group

Group	N	M	SD	t
Control	30	52.5	9.5	8.1
Experimental	30	71	8.2	

Table 6

Post-test II – Comparison between Control and Experimental Group

Group	N	M	SD	t
Control	30	57.2	7.2	8.5
Experimental	30	73	7.2	

The overall conclusion is that the homogeneity of the two groups was maintained during the pre-test period. This proves the true composition of the control and experimental group. Achievement scores of the pretest and post-test I of the experimental group were compared. The experimental group showed a significant difference between its pre- test and post-test -1 mean achievement scores(t = 7.13) The performance of the experimental group was found better in the post-test -1 when compared with its pre-test performance. This reveals the effectiveness of Content-based instruction.

Achievement scores of the Pretest and Post-test II of the experimental group were compared and there existed significant difference between these two scores as demonstrated by the t-value 8.7 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The group showed better

performance in Post-test II than in its Pretest performance. This evidenced the effectiveness of Content-based instructional approach in enhancing the academic achievement of the learners.

Achievement scores of Post-test 1 and Post-test II of the experimental group were compared and there existed no significant difference between these two scores as demonstrated by the t value 1.0 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. It is observed that the academic performance of the experimental group in Post-test I and Post-test II was equally better and the experimental group was slightly better in Post-test II when compared with post-test1 performance.

Achievement scores of the Post-test I of the control and experimental groups were compared and there existed significant difference between these two scores by the t-value 8.1 which is significant at 0.05 level. From the table it is inferred that the experimental group excelled more than the control group in academic performance. This indicates the effectiveness of the Content-based instructional approach over the traditional methods of Instruction.

Achievement scores of the Post-test II of the control and experimental groups were compared and there existed significant difference between these two scores by the t-value 8.5 which is significant at 0.05 level. From the table it is inferred that the experimental group excels beyond the control group in academic performance. This indicates the effectiveness of the Content-based instructional approach over the traditional methods of instruction.

The results of the comparisons clearly demonstrate that both hypotheses are rejected.

Findings of the Study

The results of this small piece of research showed that this Content-based instruction course was successful and the present study clearly reveals the effectiveness of the CBI method over the conventional method of instruction. It is found that CBI is more effective than the

traditional approach in enhancing the academic achievement of the learners. The result indicated that CBI method can be used successfully for students of diverse abilities and it can be easily used as a modification to instruction with no extra time or effort required of the teacher. One lesson plan using Content-based instruction method has built-in peer tutoring and support within the heterogeneous class groupings, which eliminates the requirement for several different plans to meet the needs of all students.

Based on the findings and conclusion discussed, the researcher suggests the following implications. CBI can be an effective way for students to learn language in the language class, using themes that students find of interest and such themes provide sustained motivation beyond intermediate levels of proficiency and prepare students, if they choose, for the transition to content area classes in school, college or university. CBI fits in well with broader principles of language teaching and learning, and it can be applied in various situations. It could be used effectively in ESL as well as EFL classrooms. It can make learning a language more interesting and motivating. Students can use the language to fulfill a real purpose, which can make students both more independent and confident. Teachers should encourage Content-based instruction method where students interact with each other to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter and to meet common learning goals. The Content-based instruction method helps students to carryout active learning activities which help them to develop their potential. High-priority topics can be given to the students with a focus upon academic development through the teaching of content. Explicit instruction in learning strategies can be given to the students that help foster a better understanding of content. Teachers should be in-serviced on the technique of integration to reinforce its appropriate use and practice.

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