STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract:

This descriptive study aims to investigate how EFL teachers and EFL students perceive Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) as well as to seek for possible similarities and differences between the two groups' perceptions. The current study was conducted with the participation of 60 teachers and 100 students at an EFL Language Center in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Main findings reveal that: (1) almost all teachers and students are highly aware of SETE in relation to its necessity and benefits except for its validity and reliability; (2) the two groups of participants acknowledged their frequent participation in SETE and expressed their preferences for certain SETE procedures; (3) there are major similarities and differences between teachers' and students' perceptions of SETE.

Keywords: Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE), student ratings, teaching quality, course improvement, forms of assessment

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Context
Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness (SETE or SET) has been one of the most popular tools used to enhance the accountability of various universities all over the world (Witte & Rogge, 2011). Wachtel (1998), who published a brief review on student evaluation of college teaching effectiveness, mentions Remmers and Brandenburg as the pioneers of the preliminary research on SETE. According to Chen and Hoshower (2003),

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teaching effectiveness is even defined and measured in order to make a contribution to many decisions in higher education. Macfadyen et al. (2016) are in agreement with this viewpoint featuring an increase in the prevalence of SETE across higher education in an effort to guarantee course improvement and quality. Prior literature on main purposes of conducting SETE was introduced by some scholars (Marsh & Dunkin, 1992; Richardson, 2003; Chen & Hoshower, 2003). Specifically, student evaluation can be encouraged to reach four major targets as follows. As a formative and diagnostic feedback mechanism, this activity is aimed to enhance teaching and courses. As a summative feedback mechanism, SETE is considered a contributory factor leading to administrative decision-making. Furthermore, as a useful source of information, SETE is utilized for the purpose of helping students select course units and lecturers. The last purpose is to provide plenty of data for academic community in which SETE has still been under research. Tomasco (1980) and Calderon et al. (1996) claim that merely investigating teacher performance as well as relevant aspects of lecture is not a central objective of student feedback. Instead, it is students' involvement, commitment and interest in their disciplines that should be fully appreciated.

In terms of potential benefits, Marsh (1987) finds this kind of rating advantageous to administrators, teachers and students. The managers can collect the data of evaluation for their future reference such as making decisions of tenure or promotion. Moreover, student feedback on teaching performance enables teachers to adapt their instruction and enhance their own growth and reflection. In addition, Marsh (1987) believes that SETE proves beneficial to students by turning them into "*professional teacher watchers*" within the capability of making reasonable and sensible judgments about teaching. However, studies on SETE is noted to have triggered a lot of emotional disputes. Many questions arise as to whether or not student evaluation is legitimate with respect to performance management and quality assurance (Stowell, Addison & Smith, 2012). A dearth of belief in reliability of SETE is attributed to some different elements such as perceived biases of kinds of student (Centra & Gaubatz, 2000), student's shortage of ability and maturity to give accurate comments on teaching effectiveness (Bedgood & Donovan, 2012), and a reduction in response rates (Adams & Umbach, 2012). It was almost 30 years ago when SETE was stated to be probably "*the most thoroughly studied of all forms of personal evaluation*" (Marsh, 1987, p.369). It is noticed that the majority of studies on SETE focus on characteristics or validity and reliability of the employed questionnaire (Wachtel, 1998; Centra, 2003; Marsh, 2007); factors influencing student ratings and adequate evaluation of teaching quality (Isely & Singh, 2005; Weinberg, Hashimoto & Fleisher, 2009; Brockx, Spooren & Mortelmans, 2011); but rarely do they give insights into perceptions of both teachers and students.

With regard to the practice of SETE, questionnaires have gain a good reputation as the best form of student evaluation but there are various effective means of collecting students' opinion including one to one student interviews, e-mail, bulletin boards, students' diaries and informal comments. In general, it is advisable to promote an integration of different mechanisms with the intention of thoroughly aggregating student

feedback (Brennan & Williams, 2004). The procedures of evaluation have evolved and been applied in 11 western colleges, according to McGee (1995), comprising four major forms of assessment: student, peer, self and administrative evaluation. There is an inclination to compare student evaluation with other forms of assessment like self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and alumni evaluation on the grounds that the standardized criterion of SETE is unsatisfactory (Hobson & Talbot, 2001).

These days, student evaluation of teaching effectiveness (SETE) is becoming more and more familiar with most researchers, educators and learners throughout the world. Hejase et al. (2013) expose a fact that SETE has contemporarily been put in use in many countries in global scope. It is ascertained that the universal application of SETE stems from US, UK, Canada, Australia, and many European countries. This group of researchers also introduces a modest experiment on this sort of assessment in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. That many Australian universities produced policies on the practice of online SETE was revealed by McCormack (2005). In Australia, the results of SETE can be gathered from websites and used for faculty purposes like promotion or probation.

In the Vietnamese context, schools and universities have imposed a restriction on using student's ratings to evaluate teaching performance. Tran (2018) examining whether or not SETE may contradict the Vietnamese cultural norm admits that despite its long-standing popularity in professional development and teaching evaluation in the world, SETE has just been common in Vietnam over the past 10 years. It is an explanatory incident due to the profound influence of Confucian Heritage Culture on the implementation of this procedure. In reality, Vietnamese students are supposed not to comment on their teachers' teaching, so student evaluation is somehow alien and unpleasant for both evaluation givers and receivers. Le Ha (2013) reveals in Vietnam, it is enacted by the Ministry of Education and Training that the activities pertaining to SETE had better be looked up as useful sources to help teachers better their teaching and to determine teaching quality, especially at universities. University of Languages and International Studies in Hanoi has put the SETE process into practice since 2012, according to Tran (2018). The integrated data indicate that SETE deserves its value as an effective tool of measuring teaching quality and providing useful feedback for Vietnamese teachers. It is also believed that if manipulated appropriately in relation to the consideration for cultural factors, SETE will hopefully be exploited throughout Vietnam. In Central Vietnam, a survey conducted by Truong et al. (2016) in order to investigate perceptions and practices of SETE from both teachers and students acknowledges the common usage of SETE at Hue University of Foreign Languages.

However, it appears that this area is not well-known to researchers and educators in Southern Vietnam, particularly in the Mekong Delta. What is more, there are few studies focusing on SETE at foreign language centers. For these theoretical and practical reasons, a determined effort was made to conduct this study.

1.2 Research Questions
The current research aims to answer the following questions:

1) How do the teachers perceive student evaluation of teaching effectiveness?
2) How do the students perceive student evaluation of teaching effectiveness?
3) What are the similarities and differences between teachers' and students' perceptions of student evaluation of teaching effectiveness?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE)
2.1.1 Definitions of key terms
A. Student evaluation
Zerihun et al. (2012) defines student evaluation as one of the instruments used to collect feedback on instruction. According to the official website of University of Washington, student evaluations are also interpreted as student ratings or student comments that provide review and promotion committees with a useful source of information regarding teaching performance. At this university, the evaluation process takes place at the end of the course on a daily basis and the students are valued as authorities on evaluating their learning experience and perceptions in the role of learners. Little, Goe and Bell (2009) trace student evaluations back to "*the form of a questionnaire that asks students to rate teachers on a Likert-type scale (usually a four-point or five-point scale)*" (p.13). In terms of the universal design of a student evaluation form, Spooren et al. (2007) confirm no consensus on the evaluation design but models of student evaluation commonly contain multiple-choice items adapted on Likert scales and simple open-ended questions.

B. Teaching effectiveness
Marsh (1987) introduces a lot of attention to teaching effectiveness in research literature and emphasizes the necessity of defining and measuring this subject referring to important decisions in higher education. In the book "A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness" by Little, Goe and Bell (2009), teaching effectiveness denotes "*a teacher's ability to improve student learning as measured by student gains on standardized achievement tests*" (p.1). Skelton (2005) argues that the definition of teaching effectiveness has still been a contested notion and concludes that it should be connected with a specific context in which the evaluation occurs. Well-designed questionnaires are typically used to measure teaching effectiveness, specifically teaching styles or behaviors under observation (Wright & O'Neil, 1992) with the intention of improving course content, format and structure (Simpson, 1995).

C. Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness
Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness (SETE) or student evaluation of teaching (SET) is an alternative expression of student ratings and it has been an area of interest for a number of researchers (Hejase et al, 2013). There are many terminologies pertaining to the process of student evaluation. Several relatively common concepts are composed of Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) or SET effectiveness (Marsh, 1987);

Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) (Coffey & Gibbs, 2001); student evaluation of teacher performance (Chuah & Hill, 2004); student evaluation of instruction (Clayson et al., 2006); student course satisfaction (Betoret, 2007) and student course evaluation (Huynh, 2015). According to the classified and defined terms basically used in higher education established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, student evaluation of teaching (SET) is described as "*the process of using student inputs concerning the general activity and attitude of teachers*" (Vlasceanu, 2004, p.59) and this definition is directly linked to three major aspects comprising the evaluation of the teacher, the teaching process, and the learning outcomes. It is equivalent to the general framework for the evaluation of marketing service also constituted by three main components, namely the "search" qualities, the "experience" qualities and the "credence" qualities.

2.1.2 The history of SETE

According to Wachtel (1998), teaching evaluation was first initiated in around 1915. The 1915 witnessed the first teacher rating scale (Spencer & Flyr, 1992) and not until the 1920s was the first research on SETE conducted. With the exception of SETE itself, bias factors that may influence the SETE process were well-researched in the 1920s. Wachtel (1998) outlines a brief review on the history of SETE and contends that it is Remmers who is considered one of the pioneers to do a lot of research on SETE in 1927, 1928 and 1930. In the domain of student evaluation, Remmers addressed some dominant issues such as the agreement between the judgments of student and those of peers and alumni. Murray (2005) has conducted many studies at the colleges and universities in North America and states that SETE was applied in the late 1960s or early 1970s. Moreover, the first school using SETE is known as University of Washington, which put SETE into practice in the 1920s. Marsh (1987) is all in favor of this piece of historical information that the procedures of SETE were welcomed at several well-known US universities in the 1920s.

2.1.3 The implementation of SETE in the world

Morley (2014) has investigated the application of SETE since its first introduction in the 1920s and discloses that in the past, student evaluation took place on a voluntary basis and it provided confidential information between teacher and student. The early freewill and private use of student evaluation was traced back to the 1960s. Nonetheless, there was a considerable change during the 1970s when student evaluation was generally implemented for formative and summative purposes (Centra, 1993). Since then, SETE has gained in popularity over recent years, which is proved by the growing percentage of SETE application from about 29% of colleges and universities in 1970 up to 86% in 1993 and it was universally used all over North America (Seldin, 1993). Surgenor (2013) claims that contrary to compulsory application and universal approval of summative SETE in most North American universities, European institutions are more reluctant to implement SETE. For instance, Irish universities in the year of 2013 were reported to have no mandatory centralized systems of SETE and other academic institutions have been

detected to be unwilling to accept this sort of feedback system. As far as it is concerned, the implementation of SETE was accepted not only in American, Australian and Western nations but also in Asian countries despite its limited acceptance in Europe.

2.2 Benefits of SETE
2.2.1 Benefits to directors

Cook-Sather (2006) subscribe to potential advantages of SETE for teacher professional development, which provokes many institutions into using student evaluations with the aim of underlining course and teacher strengths and sketching ways for improvement. Student evaluation of teaching effectiveness is regarded as a valid and reliable measurement by Marsh (1987) who also finds this kind of rating advantageous to students, faculty and administrators. Providing more detailed explanation, Marsh (1987) indicates that student ratings are used for four primary purposes. One of the recommended targets is to supply faculty with formative feedback about the teaching effectiveness with the purpose of fostering teaching improvement. In terms of a summative nature, a study conducted by Spencer and Schmelkin (2002) is an affirmation that administrators can collect the data of evaluation for their future reference such as making decisions of tenure or promotion. Generally, schools are found to capitalize upon SETE for both summative and formative uses. However, the purposes of raising tenure and promotion in relation to summative use take priority over the targets of improving teaching established by formative use (Ballantyne et al., 2000). Additionally, Doyle (1983) states that faculty will be capable of diagnosing future learner's needs with the aid of information analyzed from student evaluation.

2.2.2 Benefits to teachers

Student feedback on teaching performance enables teachers to adapt their instruction, enhance their own growth and reflection and help teachers predict learning needs in the future (Doyle, 1983). An agreement with this standpoint is reached by Marsh (1987) when the researcher notes that providing diagnostic feedback to staff about their teaching efficiency is one of the prominent goals of SETE. This activity of evaluation, in the long run, is expected to trigger a development of teaching quality. Moreover, student ratings are seen as the useful source of data for pedagogical research (Marsh, 1987). Ballantyne, Borthwick and Packer (2000), in their study on the application of two formal systems of SETE available to the lecturers teaching undergraduate program at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), eventually emphasizes potential advantages of SETE for the staff. During their classes, the students at QUT are supposed to accomplish a structured questionnaire containing a certain number of standard and optional items together with open-ended questions which require them to express their personal opinions and comments on lecturers' teaching performance in class. In case lecturers desire to perceive their own teaching based on student rating, they are optional to select SETE instrument. In this way, the lecturers are able to receive mainly formative feedback,

both positive and negative comments, from their students with the best intention of improving their teaching quality.

2.2.3 Benefits to students

Considering the review of Marsh (1987), in addition to benefiting directors and teachers, SETE is of use to students who conduct the evaluation as well. Marsh (1987) believes that students have freedom to select instructors and courses on the evidence of evaluative information. Students commonly play the role of learners and participants in their classroom but SETE can modify such a usual stereotype by turning students into *"professional teacher watchers"* within the capability of making reasonable and sensible judgments about teaching if they are questioned on their own experiential background (Miller, 1988). Doyle (1983) is in favor of the benefits to students reporting that not only can teachers grow and reflect themselves, but learners can also gain their own growth and reflection thanks to student evaluation.

2.3 A controversy about validity and reliability of SETE
2.3.1 The advocates of validity and reliability of SETE

Previous studies strongly advocate the widespread implementation of SETE as the approach is concluded to be a reliable measurement of teaching effectiveness (Aleamoni, 1999; Arubayi, 1987; Marsh, 1984, 1987). As a consequence, SETE has recently gained its popularity among universities, colleges and other academic institutions throughout the world, especially in the continent of America (Seldin, 1993; Surgenor, 2013; Blair & Noel, 2014). Many prior studies focusing on SETE's reliability and validity conclude that the evaluations are independent of prejudice and, therefore, fairly reliable and valid (Centra, 1993; Marsh & Dunkin 1992; Wachtel, 1998). Other advocates like Barnes and Barnes (1993), and Feldman (1989) are dedicated to the demonstration of SETE's reliability, stability and generalizability when highlighting that SETE can yield reliable and consistent outcomes. McKeachie (1997) in support of his personal experiences cherishes the belief that SETE is definitely more valid than many other personnel committees and Machina (1987) is likewise agreeable to this declaration.

2.3.2 The opponents of validity and reliability of SETE

On the contrary, the implementation of student ratings to rank teaching ability has aroused suspicion among several scholars. Murray (2005) wonders how well student ratings work as a reliable and valid form of assessment and he discovers that this question has drawn attention of over 2000 published studies. Wachtel (1998) is suspicious of the validity and reliability of SETE due to the factor of gender bias. The results are also arguable since some researchers find out that females have tendency to give higher ratings than males (Feldman, 1977; Tatro, 1995) whereas some are totally opposed to this viewpoint (Koushki & Kuhn, 1982). In addition, students' interest tends to impact their ratings. Howard and Maxwell (1980) suggest that students tend to deliver higher ratings if they are into the subject or positively impressed by the teacher. Merritt (2008)

introduces some components affecting student evaluation consisting of teacher's smile, gesture, and other mannerism. As a consequence, it is possible that students underestimate teacher's knowledge, clarity, organization and other elements connected with good teaching performance on the assumption that the instructor unintentionally drops a negative image into students' mind.

2.4 Related studies

Worthington (2002) conducted a case study in Finance Education. The study focuses on examining student characteristics and perceptions of the teaching evaluation process that impact on student ratings. The research findings reveal that student ratings are significantly affected by student's grade expectation, ethnicity, gender and age. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the impact of student perceptions and characteristics is inconsistent depending on different dimensions of teaching performance.

Nasser and Fresko (2002) do research on teachers' perceptions of SETE at a college faculty. They pursue an aim of finding out the answers to four posed questions on instructors' attitudes towards course evaluation; the usefulness of course evaluation for instruction improvement; the role of course evaluation in faculty evaluation systems; and instructors' attitudes and beliefs related to several dimensions. According to the outcomes, in the vast majority of cases, instructors reported their satisfaction of students' feedback on their teaching performance via SETE and also expressed positive attitudes towards the validity of SETE as well as their practicability for advancing instruction. Additionally, there seems to be a state of general tension surrounding course evaluation, so it is believed to more or less impact instructors' attitudes towards the SETE process. Accordingly, just few instructors acknowledged modifying their instruction by virtue of student ratings.

The research conducted by Truong et al. (2016) provides a wider understanding of both teachers' and students' perceptions of SETE. 37 teachers together with 131 undergraduate and postgraduate students of MA and BA TESOL training courses get involved in the descriptive research. The analysis and interpretation of collected data indicate that SETE is an essential process for the institution and that there is still an existing incompatibility between perception and practice along with a mismatch between teachers' and students' responses.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

60 teachers and 100 adult students from a foreign language center in the Mekong Delta were selected to participate in this study. They are found to teach or study English in EFL classes in which SETE has been applied. The first group are composed of 45 teachers in their twenties and 15 teachers in their thirties. In the second group, 39 people are teenage students and 61 people are university students. In particular, the 160 participants were

requested to complete the questionnaires at first. Then, six respondents including three teachers and three students were invited to attend semi-structured interviews.

3.2 Instruments

Two major instruments were employed in this study, including (1) questionnaires for the sake of exploring teachers' and students' perceptions of SETE as well as comparing these two groups' perceptions; and (2) semi-structured interviews aiming to gain further information about the participants' thoughts and expectations about the implementation of SETE in their settings.

The questionnaires are classified into two categories- the questionnaire on teachers' perception, and the questionnaire on students' perception towards SETE. These two different questionnaires are adapted from those invented by Nasser and Fresko (2002), Spencer and Schmelkin (2002), Hejase et al. (2013), and Truong et al. (2014) to suit the current study context.

The interview questions were designed based on the questionnaire content and an adaptation of question lists composed by Truong et al. (2014). The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese so that the participants would be able to comprehend the inquiries and feel at ease to express their stances on SETE to the fullest.

3.3 Procedures

In the first place, 20 students and 13 teachers who were not from the sampling of this present study were responsible for checking whether the questionnaires could be clearly comprehended. Also, interview questions were piloted by two experienced and knowledgeable teachers who were not from the research population. In week three of the study, all participants including 100 adult students and 60 teachers at the EFL Language Center were explained the purpose of this study and asked for their participation in questionnaire completion prior to the distribution of questionnaires via e-mail. The researcher proceeded to manage this activity in week 3 and then had all questionnaire answers gathered in week 4. It was not until the quantitative data from the questionnaires were synthesized that the interviewees were contacted to join real interviews. After asking for permission, the researcher had all happenings during the interviews recorded and transcribed the recorded utterances for later data analysis. The rest of the procedure focused on interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data.

4. Results of the study

4.1 Results from the questionnaires
The total mean scores of five clusters, namely Necessity, Practice, Benefits, Procedure, and Validity and Reliability of SETE were illustrated in Figure 1.
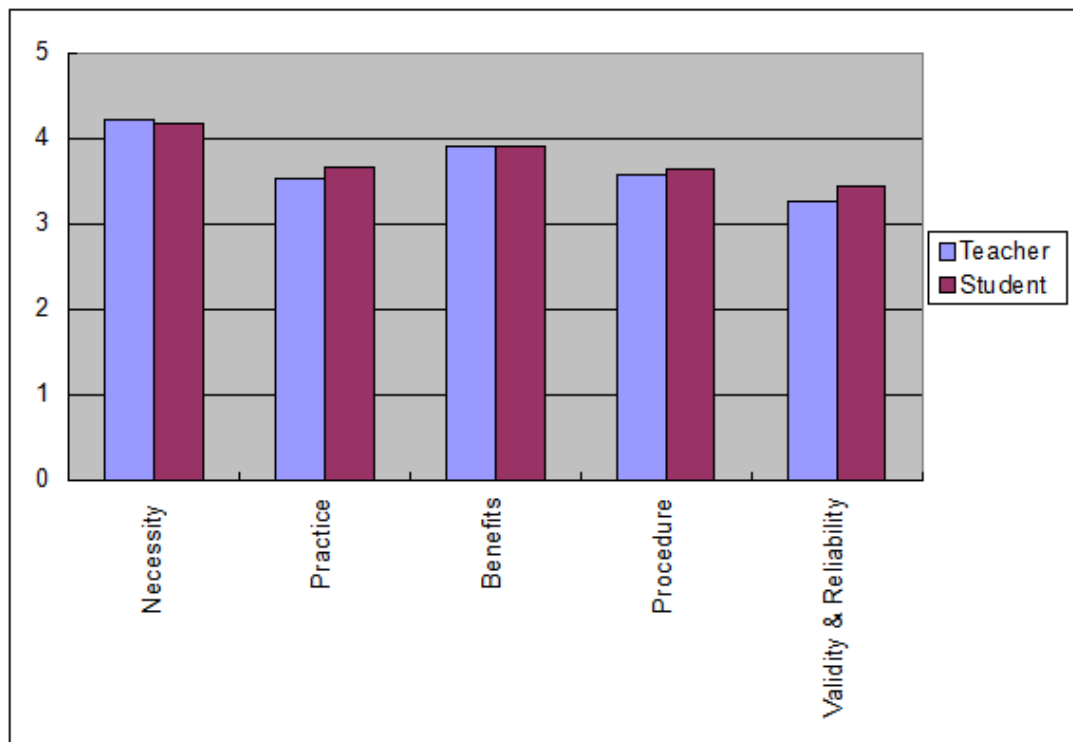
Figure 1: Mean scores of teachers' and students' perceptions of SETE

As can be seen in Figure 1, both EFL teachers and EFL students in this study were the most aware of the necessity of SETE in their classes, which was proved by the highest mean scores of their perceptions towards cluster 1 *(M=4.22 and M=4.18)*. Again, the two groups had a similar viewpoint as Cluster 2 describing benefits of SETE was the second most agreeable to both sides *(M=3.91 and M=3.92)*. Another similarity is that both teachers and students considered Cluster 5- *Validity and reliability of SETE*, the least consented cluster *(M=3.26 and M=3.44)*. In terms probable differences, EFL teachers appreciated Cluster 3- *Procedure of SETE (M=3.59, SD=0.42)*, more than Cluster 2- *Practice of SETE (M=3.53, SD=0.58)*. On the other hand, EFL students overestimated Cluster 2 *(M=3.67, SD=0.58)* rather than Cluster 3 *(M=3.64, SD=0.61)*.

A. The necessity of SETE

Both EFL teachers *(M=4.22, SD=0.48)* and EFL students *(M=4.18, SD=0.60)* expressed their strong agreement on the significant role of SETE. Moreover, the teachers were likely to have higher awareness of SETE's importance *(M=4.22 > M=4.18)*. The teachers appreciated the important role of SETE in their teaching context most while the students assumed that SETE plays the most important role when teachers make evaluation on learning outcomes and reflect on their own teaching. However, to a certain extent, both groups of participants raised a little doubt about more effective learning as a result of frequent SETE.

B. The practice of SETE

Table 1: Teachers' and students' practice of SETE

Item	Teacher		Student	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
6. I often put SETE in use every single course I teach.	3.57	1.02	3.7	0.96
7. I make use of questionnaires to collect students' opinions at the end of the course.	3.42	0.98	3.89	0.92
8. I often use SETE to collect students' opinions during my course.	3.53	1.07	3.62	1.04
9. I combine 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire with open-ended questions in student evaluation form.	3.27	1.09	3.94	0.83
10. Many of my students' opinions from SETE have. been noticed and applied.	4.22	0.76	3.91	0.83
11. My students take evaluating the teachers in their courses seriously.	3.18	0.70	4.33	0.65
12. Student evaluations are used in my tenure and salary raise decisions.	3.07	1.06	3.83	0.88
13. When students give low evaluations, I adjust to improve my teaching.	4.13	0.7	3.99	0.77
14. I prefer to provide my students with written evaluation forms rather than online forms.	3.62	1.11	2.98	1.14
15. Students don't write many comments on the evaluation form for fear of being identified.	3.25	1.19	2.54	1.26

Table 1 shows that students expressed higher agreement on the practice of SETE suggested in the questionnaire than teachers *(M=3.53 < M=3.67)*. EFL teachers showed their most agreement on item 10 *(M=4.22, SD=0.76)* and their least agreement on item 12 *(M=3.07, SD=1.06)*. Meanwhile, EFL students expressed their fullest agreement on item 11 *(M=4.33, SD=0.65)* and their least support for item 15 *(M=2.54, SD=1.26)*. That is to say, the teachers' perception varied from a strong approval to a neural view while the students did not hesitate to show both agreement and disagreement about the practice of SETE.

C. The benefits of SETE

It was noted that the mean scores of EFL teachers' perception *(M=3.91, SD=0.51)* and EFL students' perception *(M=3.92, SD=0.56)* were nearly the same. It indicated that both teachers and students in this study acknowledged possible benefits of SETE. To conclude, both teachers and students entirely agreed with the idea that teachers could gradually improve their professional knowledge and skills thanks to SETE. In contrast, they all rejected the likelihood that SETE could not undermine student-instructor relations.

D. The procedure of SETE

In comparison with the group of teachers, 100 students were noticed to have higher perception of SETE procedure *(M=3.64 > M=3.59)*. Particularly, the teachers agreed on the use of an informal talk during SETE procedure most and denied the fact that other

teachers could read the questionnaire responses. Meanwhile, the students supported the use of electronic questionnaires most and maintained neutral to the idea that only the evaluated teacher could read their comments.

E. The validity and reliability of SETE

Table 2: Teachers' and students' perception of the validity and reliability of SETE

Item	Teacher		Student	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
38. Most students treat course evaluations seriously.	2.98	0.87	3.55	0.98
39. Students have enough knowledge to judge the quality of instruction.	2.82	0.91	2.69	1.25
40. Good instructors always get high course evaluations.	3.42	0.87	3.57	1.07
41. Instructors who demand a lot from their students get low evaluations.	2.78	0.80	2.66	1.11
42. High-leveled courses get low evaluations.	2.65	0.78	2.62	1.08
43. Unqualified instructors always get negative evaluations of teaching.	2.98	1.03	3.39	0.95
44. Student ratings are an acceptable criterion for granting promotion.	3.43	0.81	3.62	0.93
45. Questionnaires administered in my foreign language center is a reliable mean for the evaluation of teaching.	3.42	0.70	3.67	0.85
46. SETE provides specific and clear objectives for teachers and students.	3.7	0.72	3.92	0.86
47. Students have the ability to judge their instructors' attitudes and behavior.	3.43	0.79	3.9	0.84
48. I believe that the instructors consider the SETE results to make improvements in their teaching and courses.	4.12	0.72	4.21	0.64
49. The highest SETE score means the most effective teaching.	3.62	0.99	3.53	1.05
50. There are not many differences in the results of SETE in a course.	3	0.90	3.45	0.90

As can be seen in Table 2, the second group had tendency to believe in valid and reliable feedback on teaching effectiveness more than the first group *(M=3.44 > M=3.26)*. It was interpreted that both teachers and students consented to teachers' consideration of SETE to better their teaching and courses, but the latter showed their stronger agreement *(M=4.21 > M=4.12)*. In addition, the two groups of participants both kept neutral *(M=2.65 and M=2.62)* to the idea that learners in high-leveled courses were supposed to offer low evaluations.

F. Perceptions of SETE based on different age groups

Table 3: Teachers' perceptions of SETE from two age groups

Cluster	Age Group	M	SD
Necessity	22-29	4.21	0.46
	30-39	4.24	0.55
Practice	22-29	3.60	0.49
	30-39	3.31	0.80
Benefits	22-29	3.96	0.42
	30-39	3.75	0.71
Procedure	22-29	3.64	0.40
	30-39	3.47	0.48
Validity & Reliability	22-29	3.30	0.44
	30-39	3.14	0.46

As can be seen from Table 3, except for Cluster 1 - *Necessity*, the first group aging 22-29 years old are inclined to offer higher level of agreement on aspects of SETE compared to the second group including 30-29 year-old teachers. Particularly, younger teachers were more aware of their practical application and procedural rules during SETE than experienced teachers *(M=3.60, SD=0.49 > M=3.31, SD=0.80 - Practice; M=3.64, SD=0.40 > M=3.47, SD=0.48 - Procedure)*. Additionally, the first group at the age of 20-29 held their firmer belief in benefits *(M=3.96, SD=0.42 > M=3.75, SD=0.71)* and put their trust in validity and reliability of SETE *(M=3.30, SD=0.44 > M=3.14, SD=0.46)* in comparison to the second group. On the contrary, the mean scores of Cluster 1 - *Necessity*, indicate that the first group perceived the essential role of SETE less than the other *(M=4.21, SD=0.46 < M=4.24, SD=0.55)*.

Table 4: Students' perceptions of SETE from two age groups

Cluster	Age Group	M	SD
Necessity	13-18	4.17	0.68
	19-30	4.18	0.54
Practice	13-18	3.75	0.64
	19-30	3.63	0.53
Benefits	13-18	3.91	0.64
	19-30	3.93	0.51
Procedure	13-18	3.62	0.61
	19-30	3.65	0.62
Validity & Reliability	13-18	3.44	0.69
	19-30	3.45	0.50

As can be seen from Table 4, university students in the second group were indicated to express their higher approval for four distinct dimensions of SETE than the first group of teenagers, apart from Cluster 2 - *Practice*. In other words, the older group of students tended to gain greater awareness of the significance of SETE *(M=4.18, SD=0.54 > M=4.17, SD=0.68)*, its potential benefits *(M=3.93, SD=0.51 > M=3.91, SD=0.64)*, suggested

procedures *(M=3.65, SD=0.62 > M=3.62, SD=0.61)* and valid and reliable results of SETE *(M=3.45, SD=0.50 > M=3.44, SD=0.69)*. In contrast, teenage students were likely to perceive their implementation of SETE better *(M=3.75, SD=0.64 > M=3.63, SD=0.53)*.

4.2 Results from the interviews
4.2.1 Insights into the necessity of SETE - the most agreeable cluster
All interviewees emphasize that SETE is necessary for EFL teachers, EFL students and the managers in the foreign language center. Firstly, it proves necessary and beneficial to EFL teachers.

> *"Teachers can know about students' thoughts of their teaching, lessons as well as care in class."* (Teacher 1, line 3, Appendix 5)

> *"This activity provides some important opinions so that the teachers can recognize their shortcomings which they cannot find out, but their students can. Many student evaluations help a teacher improve the curriculum and teaching methodology to enhance teaching effectiveness after all."* (Student 1, lines 3-6, Appendix 5)

What is more, SETE was also advantageous to EFL students. This point of view is illustrated in the following statements.

> *"It is considered a useful means for students to express their expectations for the courses. In this way, the students feel that their voices can be heard and more actively participate in the lessons."* (Teacher 2, lines 3-5, Appendix 5)

> *"Through this activity, the students can have an opportunity to express their expectations and the teachers can have deep understanding of their students. They can cooperate with each other easily."* (Student 2, lines 4-6, Appendix 5)

Besides that, the board of managers at the EFL language center can derive substantial benefits from this form of evaluation.

> *"I think it is an important source of information that helps teachers and managers at the center gain more practical insights into teaching effectiveness so as to make the curricula more suitable."* (Teacher 3, lines 2-4, Appendix 5)

It can be concluded that the interviewees are in agreement about the vital role of SETE because of its evident benefits to EFL teachers, EFL students and the foreign language center.

4.2.2 Insights into the validity and reliability of SETE - the least approved cluster

When asked about main reasons for the possible unreliability of SETE, the interviewees all reported that SETE was influenced by certain elements.

"In my opinion, there are three factors. Firstly, it's the time. The amount of evaluating time, 15 minutes, seems insufficient for students to note their opinions. Secondly, if they are not instructed how to evaluate, the results can be against expectations. Thirdly, Eastern culture makes the students afraid of evaluating their teacher honestly." (Teacher 1, lines 25-29, Appendix 5)

"It is willingness and honesty of the students. If the students take this activity seriously, the next step will be very obvious and vice versa." (Teacher 2, lines 29-30, Appendix 5)

Besides that, the relationship between teacher and students can have impact on SETE's reliability. This view is presented in the following extracts.

"In my opinion, the most influential factor is the relationship between teacher and students. For instance, if a teacher is not really good at teaching methodology but his teaching style makes him very popular with the students, he'll receive good evaluations. (Student 2, lines 15-17, Appendix 5)

"The first one is the relationship between teacher and students. I think if a teacher has a good relationship with his or her students, the students will tend to give positive feedback despite bad performance of teaching." (Student 3, lines 13-15, Appendix 5)

To conclude, the six interviewees are in favor of the idea that SETE is just relatively reliable due to several influential factors such as teachers' ambiguous instruction, Eastern culture, students' dishonesty, instructor- student relations and other factors.

5. Discussion

The findings from the questionnaires and the interviews show that EFL teachers and EFL students believe in the essential role of SETE in their classes. This conclusion did support the hypothesis proposed by Truong et al (2016) that considered SETE a crucial process for the institution. The highest mean scores for perception of the necessity indicate that both teachers and students were highly aware of the importance of SETE because of its benefits to teachers, students and directors at the EFL Language Center.

The results of the questionnaires and the interviews indicated that the participants frequently carry out SETE either at the end of the course or during the course. Moreover, they are always ready for joining SETE whether this process is compulsory or not. Teachers and students at the EFL Language Center acknowledged their experiences of using a questionnaire combined with some open-ended questions. When asked about

their implementation of SETE in reality, the three interviewed teachers revealed that they got accustomed to using questionnaires. This finding confirms what Blair and Noel (2014) found out, that is, a questionnaire using a rating scale has gained its popularity among various forms of student evaluation all over the world.

The finding is entirely consistent with a review of Marsh (1987), who claims that SETE is beneficial to administrators, teachers and students. This result was explained because no one except the teachers can directly read students' comments and then adjust to improve their teaching. It is compatible with prior studies by Doyle (1983), who found that SETE generates opportunities for teachers to reflect on their instruction, reform their own growth and predict learning needs as well. The participants believed that SETE proved responsibility and attention of the directors to teaching and learning quality. What is more, SETE is also noted to make students more confident to raise their voices in classes. These findings are in line with a previous study examining the process of SETE at the University of Western Ontario by Murray (2005). Teachers' and students' low agreement on the impossibility of deteriorating student-instructor relations consolidates the belief of Tran (2018), who states that students' hesitation in joining SETE comes down to Confucian Heritage Culture. Truth be told, students are found terrified of undermining teacher- student relations in case they honestly criticize their instructors.

With regard to the procedure of SETE, anonymous questionnaires were reported to be an essential form of evaluation. This finding is consistent with a decision made by Worthington (2002), who used a questionnaire that keeps the evaluators' information confidential to collect data in his study on the effectiveness of SETE. When asked about their preferable procedures, the surveyed teachers appreciated informal talks as the most effective way and this finding is in agreement with a viewpoint stated by Spencer and Schmelkin (2002). In contrast, the participating students preferred the use of electronic questionnaires as a substitute for paper ones. This finding confirms what Anderson, Brown and Spaeth (2006) notified in their study.

Almost all of the participants expressed their least approval for the validity and reliability of SETE. Particularly, the teachers kept neutral and the students relatively consented to valid and reliable results of SETE. This conclusion is in line with what Avi-Itzhak and Kramer (1986) found in an empirical study. In addition, not all respondents in the survey agreed that the highest evaluation always means the most effective teaching, which is consistent with prior studies conducted by Feldman (1977), and Howard and Maxwell (1980). These scholars suggest that if students are interested in the discipline or the instructor, their ratings are likely to be much higher.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Both EFL teachers and EFL students in this study were the most aware of the necessity of SETE in their classes. In addition, the perception of potential benefits was the second most agreeable to both sides. What is more, the participants in two separate groups believed that SETE was not completely valid and reliable due to certain influential factors. In terms

of age groups, less experienced teachers expressed their higher agreement on different aspects of SETE except for its necessity and university students showed their greater perception of SETE with the exception of their application in reality.

In light of the major findings from this present study, five implications will be discussed as follows with the purpose of improving the quality of SETE and meeting the participants' demands.

Firstly, it is vital to help teachers and students raise awareness of the necessity of this evaluation activity. Meetings or conferences can be organized so that staff members and EFL teachers are well informed of the significance of SETE, its objectives, potential benefits as well as thorough procedures. Above all, from the outset of the course, EFL students should be notified of in-depth information about SETE so as to grasp its process and make this activity much more effective.

Secondly, it is recommended that the EFL Language Center should promote the practice of SETE via making it compulsory for all classes if possible. A reward-punishment system can be established so that students who enthusiastically participate in the SETE process will be complimented and teachers who are willing to join SETE will achieve pay rise or promotion.

Thirdly, online anonymous questionnaires designed with specific evaluation criteria should be considered. In addition to questionnaires, the participating teachers in this study suggested holding teacher-student conferences outside the classroom and informal talks at recess with the aim of encouraging students to express more personal opinions on the course.

Fourthly, teachers and students should be required to have frequent practice of SETE , at least twice or three times a course. The participants are expected to take part in these phases of SETE during the course rather than just completing a questionnaire at the end of the course.

Finally, it is necessary to find a department that takes responsibility for conducting SETE. The staff working for this department are considered a bridge connecting teachers and students, so they should be well trained to get on well with the two groups and make the procedure run smoothly.

In conclusion, the results of this study can hopefully be used to enrich the future research into teachers' and students' perceptions of SETE. It is recommended that the next studies can be conducted to investigate both perceptions and practices of SETE in different contexts. Alternatively, to gain thorough assessment of teachers' instruction, further research is expected to combine student evaluation with other forms such as peer-evaluation and self-evaluation. Besides that, there is a need to explore perceptions of SETE in comparison with other forms of evaluation.

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