

## Professional Development Needs of Thai EFL University Teachers: A Focus on the Assessment Literacy and Practice of Student Self-assessment in Classrooms

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### Abstract

In response to the growing needs for student-centered classrooms, student self-assessment is considered as a form of formative assessment that boosts students' effective learning. The key role for implementing effective student self-assessment in classrooms is indeed played by teachers, who should be equipped with certain knowledge, skills, and other means of support regarding the use of student self-assessment. This study investigated English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' levels of assessment literacy and practice of student self-assessment in undergraduate classrooms. The study also delved into the teachers' needs for training on the use of student self-assessment and their perceived challenges to the success of the training. To collect the data, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire with opened questions was administered to Thai EFL teachers at the nine Rajamangala Universities. The analysis of the 163 returned questionnaires revealed that the teachers had a moderate level of assessment literacy regarding the use of student self-assessment. It was also found that more than 55.67% of the teachers had implemented student self-assessment in their classrooms. It is interesting to find that despite their intentions to participate in the training, the teachers were concerned about certain challenges, including student characteristics, teacher workloads, and university contexts. The findings of this study suggest possible implications for EFL teacher training, as part of continuing professional development, in order to successfully promote EFL teachers' assessment literacy and practices regarding the use of student self-assessment in their own classroom milieus.

**Key words:** *Assessment literacy, Assessment practice, Training needs, Student self-assessment, EFL teachers*

### Introduction

To be assessment literate in student self-assessment, the teacher is considered key (Brown & Abeywickrama. 2010). Teacher need to possess a foundation of so-called *assessment literacy* – the assessment-related knowledge and skills required for effective assessment with proper principles and conceptions (Davies. 2008; Fulcher. 2012; Inbar-Lourie. 2008). Teachers with assessment literacy possess the knowledge and skills necessary for creating and practicing assessment tasks to satisfy particular assessment purposes. Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, and Arter (2012) explicitly stated that assessment-literate teachers exhibited a sound knowledge of how to involve students in productive self-assessment in order to promote their learning success. Teachers are required to fall within a specific range of assessment literacy, but it seems that most of them lack principles of assessment, resulting in their receiving of unsound assessment results in return. Being assessment literate is therefore crucial for the teacher's professional development endeavors.

To promote effective student self-assessment among teachers, five main domains of assessment literacy should be incorporated into the training: *knowledge* of student self-assessment, *skills* to conduct student self-assessment, *principles* of student self-assessment, *conceptions* of student self-assessment, and *awareness* of students' language-specific competencies.

#### *Knowledge of student self-assessment*

According to Stiggins (1991), knowledge is described as a teacher's knowledge of purpose of assessment, focused achievement to be measured, design and development of assessment, delivery of assessment, high- and low-quality assessment, impact on stakeholders, factors affecting assessment result and outcomes, feedback, indicators of sound and unsound assessment, methods to prevent what may go wrong with an assessment, and possible negative consequences of unsound assessment. Based on Stiggins (1991), the constructs under the knowledge of the student self-assessment domain are identified as definition of student self-assessment, purposes of student self-assessment (Tan. 2008), focused achievement for student self-assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama. 2010), design and development of student self-assessment, student self-assessment tools (Alderson. 2012; Brown & Abeywickrama. 2010; Wan-a-rom. 2010), implementation and delivery of student self-assessment and methods to prevent what may go wrong with student self-assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama. 2010).

#### *Skills to conduct student self-assessment*

As the second domain, skills are described as when teachers are able to develop, perform, and evaluate language assessment (Fulcher. 2012). The skills used to conduct student self-assessment in this paper were developed from Fulcher's (2012) general description of skills. They are specifically conceptualized as follows:

Teachers' skill in developing student self-assessment (design of the student self-assessment for their English courses)

Teachers' skill in performing student self-assessment (implementation of the sound student self-assessment into their English courses) (Brown & Abeywickrama. 2010)

Teachers' skill in evaluating student self-assessment (evaluation of the student self-assessment practice using predefined criteria and planning for the development of a student self-assessment (Watson Todd. 2002).

#### *Principles of student self-assessment*

Principles of language assessment literacy refer to the principles used to implement proper use of language assessment practices, with consideration of codes of practice, ethics, fairness, professionalism, proper use of language tests, and test impact (Davies. 2008; Fulcher. 2012). It is important to note that this current research adapted the ten principles of assessment for learning to guide classroom practice, as proposed by the Assessment Reform Group (2002). The ten principles of student self-assessment involve the following constructs: student self-assessment as an assessment for learning, a part of effective planning, focuses on how students learn, classroom practice, the key to professional skills, sensitivity and constructiveness, fostering motivation, promotion of understanding goals and criteria, helping learners know how to improve, developing the capacity for self-assessment, and recognising all educational achievement.

#### *Conceptions of student self-assessment*

Conceptions refer to the mental structure of assessment, including beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like (Thompson. 1992, cited in Opre. 2015). According to Brown (2004), the teacher's conceptions can be categorised into four main groups: conceptions of improvement in teaching and learning, school accountability, student accountability, and treating assessment as an irrelevance. First, the conception of improvement in teaching and learning is the teachers' belief that the assessment can be used to determine the students' learning progress and the quality of instruction. Second, the conception of school accountability is the teachers' belief that the assessment can be a good indicator of the school's quality. Third, the

conception of student accountability is the teachers' belief that the assessment can be used to determine student achievement. Finally, the conception of treating assessment as an irrelevance is the teachers' belief that the assessment is irrelevant to the instruction and or student learning. Using Brown's (2004) concepts of conceptions, four conceptions of student self-assessment become apparent. They are the conception of university accountability, conception of student accountability, conception of improvement in teaching and learning, and conception of treating student self-assessment as an irrelevance.

#### *Awareness of students' language-specific competencies*

The last domain is the awareness of students' language-specific competencies, which is defined as the language assessors' awareness of various facets of linguistics, language use, linguistic competence, current language perspectives and language norms of the test takers (Inbar-Lourie. 2008). This domain is to serve the needs of the students as well as accommodate the assessment context. According to Inbar-Lourie (2008), language assessors are required to acknowledge the current perspectives of language use, especially the language norms of the test takers. For example, language assessors who evaluate ESL students should be aware of the influence of the students' first language and culture. Since this study was conducted with EFL university teachers who are expected to use student self-assessment with EFL university students, this paper employed the language norms of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Inbar-Lourie. 2008).

To help teachers to be assessment-literate, an effective professional development programme could be employed to achieve such a goal. (Chinda. 2009; Koh. 2011). Effective professional development should also be sustainably embedded and evolve within the teacher learning community (Chapman. 2008; Desimone. 2009). However, EFL teachers' professional development, particularly regarding their use of student self-assessment in classrooms, has been less explored in the Thai educational context. The results reported in this paper are part of a larger research project aiming to develop effective professional development for Thai EFL university teachers, with reference to the use of student self-assessment.

### **Objectives**

To explore in particular the Thai EFL university teachers' implementation of student self-assessment and their assessment literacy in student self-assessment as well as their preferences regarding training needs on the use of student self-assessment.

### **Research Methodology**

In order to understand how Thai EFL university teachers have been implementing student self-assessment in their classrooms and how they would prefer their training to be organized, a questionnaire survey was employed. The questionnaire consisted of both five-point-scale items and open-ended questions. With the scaled items, the participants could indicate what student self-assessment practices were applied to their current classrooms, what areas of student self-assessment literacy they had, and what training activities and support they would prefer to be included in their training. In the open-ended questions, the participants shared their perspectives of student self-assessment, their working conditions, and additional information regarding the possible effects of contributions and constraints of the training on their assessment literacy and practices, with reference to the use of student self-assessment.

### Research Participants

The population of this study was 254 in-service EFL lecturers who were serving at the 24 campuses of the nine branches of the state-run Rajamangala University of Technology (9 RMUTs) in the 2016 academic year. The sample was selected by proportionate stratified random sampling, and according to Yamane (1973), at least 155 prospective university teachers were expected to be included in this study. The researcher intended and expected to have as many questionnaire respondents as possible in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the collected data and the data analysis. Therefore, the questionnaire was administered to all 254 lecturers, and 178 questionnaires were returned to the researcher. However, only responses from 163 lecturers were used in this study, which will be discussed in more detail in the Data Collection section below.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument employed in this study was a survey questionnaire, as briefly mentioned above. It was designed and then developed based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, augmented with findings from a series of discussions between the researcher and some university lecturers who did not serve as the participants in the main study. The questionnaire survey consisted of four main parts as follows.

*Part I: Background information* – A mixture of open-ended questions, close-ended questions, and partially close-ended questions was designed to collect data on the questionnaire respondents' personal background.

*Part II: Practices of student self-assessment* – In this part, there were 10 items aimed at eliciting the respondents' implementation of student self-assessment. This part involved both close-ended questions and partially close-ended questions.

*Part III: Assessment literacy in student self-assessment* – This part was comprised of 25 items evaluating the participants' current levels of assessment literacy in student self-assessment. The participants indicated their levels of assessment literacy in the close-ended five-point-scale items.

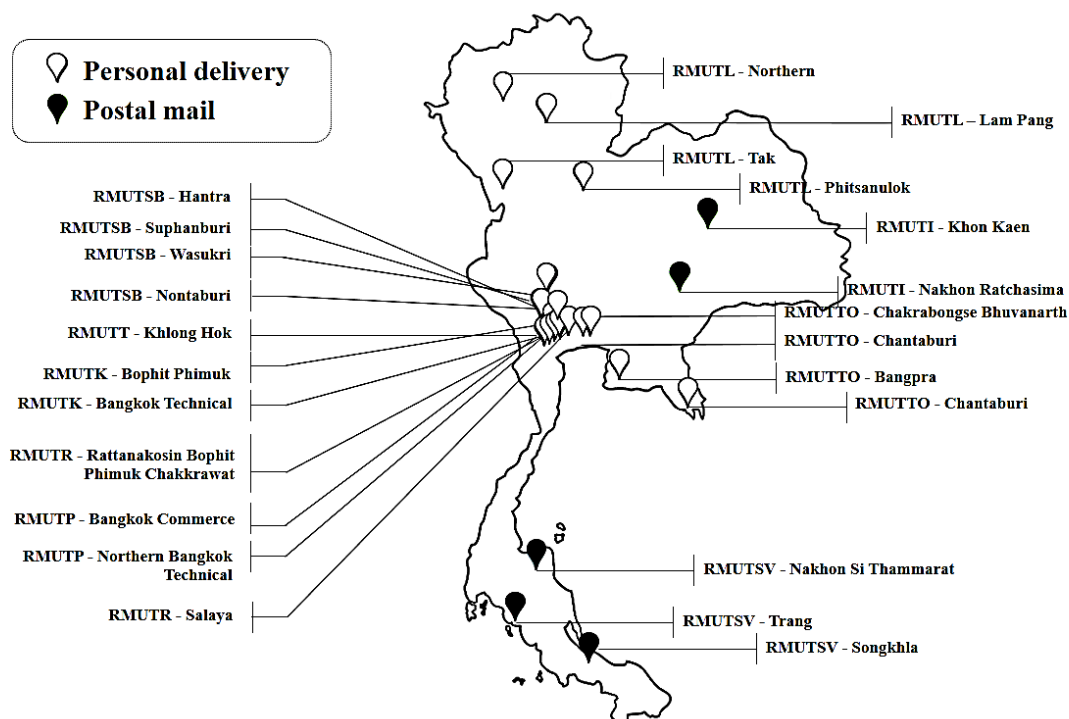
*Part IV: Training needs regarding the use of student self-assessment* – This part consisted of 21 items aiming to collect data on training needs regarding the use of student self-assessment. The participants indicated their preferred training content and training activities in the five-point-scale items. The open-ended questions were provided at the end of this part in order to yield additional opinions from the participants with regard to the training.

To provide the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was validated by experts and piloted with a group of Thai EFL university teachers who were not included in the main study.

### Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered to the participants using two methods: 1) postal distribution of the questionnaire and 2) drop-off and pick-up of the questionnaire. The questionnaires distributed by post were for the participants in outlying areas. As presented in Figure 1, participants at 19 campuses were given the questionnaires in person and the other five campuses received the questionnaires by post. In total, 163 questionnaires were returned.

Figure 1: Geographical areas of the research sites and delivery methods



### Data Analysis

The received returned questionnaires were pre-screened for missing data, unclear responses, incomplete check boxes, and outliers. Upon completion of the pre-screen, 15 questionnaires were rejected, leaving 163 questionnaires available for the data analysis. The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires were analysed for descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics 22. In addition, the content analysis method was applied to the qualitative data from the open-ended questions. Categories and sub-categories of the codes were created. Two raters employed the same set of codes to perform coding. The results from the descriptive statistics analysis and the findings from the content analysis were combined and used to formulate the participants' current assessment literacy, practices, and training needs regarding the use of student self-assessment.

### Results

The participants were composed of 163 Thai EFL university teachers from the nine Rajamangala Universities in the 2016 academic year. They were 20 Thai EFL teachers from RMUTSB (12.27%), 12 from RMUTK (7.36%), 16 from RMUTI (9.82%), 25 from RMUTT (15.34%), 21 from RMUTTO (12.88%), 9 from RMUTR (5.52%), 17 from RMUTP (10.43%), 13 from RMUTSV (7.98%), and 30 from RMUTL (18.40%).

When considering the demographic and background characteristics of the participants, it was found that this study involved 124 female (76.07%) and 39 male (23.93%) university teachers. The largest proportion of the participants was from the 31-45 age group. More than half of them had been serving as EFL teachers for less than 10 years. In terms of educational background, 142 participants (87.12%) had an M.A. or M.Ed. A total of 73 (44.79%) participants were found to teach two courses, 57 (34.97%) were found to teach one course, 31 (19.02%) were found to teach three courses, and 2 (1.23%) were found to teach four courses. The distributions are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the participants according to demographic and background characteristics (n = 163)

	N	%
Gender		
Female	124	76.07
Male	39	23.93
Age (years old)		
25 – 30	17	10.43
31 – 35	41	25.15
36 – 40	40	24.54
41 – 45	21	12.88
46 – 50	13	7.98
51 – 55	16	9.82
56 – 60	15	9.20
	N	%
Length of service (years)		
0 – 5	55	33.74
6 – 10	48	29.45
11 – 15	20	12.27
16 – 20	10	6.13
21 – 25	14	8.59
26 – 30	4	2.45
31 – 35	6	3.68
36 years and up	6	3.68
Highest educational attainment		
Bachelor's (e.g. B.A., B.Ed.)	4	2.45
Master's (e.g. M.A., M.Ed)	142	87.12
Doctoral (e.g. PhD)	17	10.43
Course(s) taught		
1	57	34.97
2	73	44.79
3	31	19.02
4	2	1.23

#### Current Assessment Literacy in the Use of Student Self-assessment

Overall, it was found out that 94 (55.67%) participants were users of student self-assessment (SSA users), which made them a majority when compared with the 69 (42.33%) non-users of student self-assessment (non-users of SSA).

Regarding the five domains of assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment, the participants indicated their levels of knowledge, skills, principles, conceptions, and awareness of students' language-specific competencies regarding student self-assessment, as well as providing additional information on their assessment literacy. The means ( $\bar{x}$ ) from the quantitative analyses in this study were interpreted as follows:

$\bar{x} = 4.21 - 5.00$	means	Very high degree
$\bar{x} = 3.41 - 4.20$	means	High degree
$\bar{x} = 2.61 - 3.40$	means	Moderate degree
$\bar{x} = 1.81 - 2.61$	means	Low degree
$\bar{x} = 1.00 - 1.80$	means	Very low degree

According to Table 2, the overall level of assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment was moderate ( $\bar{x} = 3.29$ ,  $SD = .697$ ). It was found that the participants reported having moderate levels of assessment literacy in the first two domains: knowledge ( $\bar{x} = 3.01$ ,  $SD = .803$ ) and skills ( $\bar{x} = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 1.007$ ). On the other hand, they reported having high levels of assessment literacy in principles ( $\bar{x} = 3.62$ ,  $SD = .808$ ), conceptions ( $\bar{x} = 3.77$ ,  $SD = .845$ ), and awareness of students' language-specific competencies ( $\bar{x} = 3.56$ ,  $SD = .982$ ).

Table 2: Levels of assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment (n = 163)

No.	Aspects of student self-assessment	Level of SSA literacy		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
<b>1.</b>	<b>Knowledge: I know...</b>			
1.1	purposes of student self-assessment	3.29	1.004	Moderate
1.2	skills and factors they can focus on in student self-assessment	3.18	.968	Moderate
1.3	the definition of student self-assessment	3.17	.991	Moderate
1.4	the strengths and weaknesses of student self-assessment	3.13	1.057	Moderate
1.5	the challenges in using student self-assessment	3.07	.963	Moderate
1.6	the steps taken in using student self-assessment tools	2.94	.983	Moderate
1.7	the details of student self-assessment tools	2.91	.932	Moderate
1.8	how to evaluate the implementation plan for student self-assessment.	2.87	1.007	Moderate
1.9	how to draft an implementation plan for student self-assessment	2.79	.919	Moderate
1.10	how to revise the implementation plan for student self-assessment.	2.79	.980	Moderate
	<i>Overall level of 'Knowledge'</i>	<i>3.01</i>	<i>.803</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Skills: I am able to...</b>			
2.1	explain the steps taken in using student self-assessment tools with my students.	3.36	2.629	Moderate
2.2	analyse the context of my English course so that I can choose appropriate self-assessment tools.	3.25	1.031	Moderate
2.3	select the appropriate student self-assessment tools for my classes.	3.20	1.001	Moderate

2.4	demonstrate the steps taken in using student self-assessment tools with students.	3.12	1.080	Moderate
<i>Overall level of 'Skills'</i>				
		3.17	1.007	Moderate
<b>3. Principles: I think that student self-assessment ...</b>				
3.1	is sensitive and constructive.	3.69	.933	High
3.2	is an assessment for learning.	3.64	.980	High
3.3	can be used to promote students' understanding of how they are assessed or expected to perform, regarding their language performance.	3.64	.960	High
3.4	can be practiced in the English classroom.	3.60	1.010	High
3.5	can be used to foster motivation in learning English among the students.	3.53	.912	High
		<i>Overall level of 'Principles'</i>		
		3.62	.808	High
<b>4. Conceptions: I believe that student self-assessment ...</b>				
4.1	is applicable to my classes.	3.81	.920	High
4.2	can be used to improve teaching and learning.	3.78	.923	High
4.3	can be included as part of the learning standards of the curriculum (e.g. The curriculum should include student self-assessment activities as part of classroom activities).	3.72	.871	High
		<i>Overall level of 'Conceptions'</i>		
		3.77	.845	High
<b>5 Awareness of Students' Language-specific Competencies: I am aware that ...</b>				
5.1	my students use and study English as a foreign language, so they may have some limitations in self-assessing their own English performance.	3.56	.982	High
		<i>Overall level of 'Awareness of students' language-specific competencies'</i>		
		3.56	.982	High



Overall level of SSA literacy 3.29 .697 Moderate

**Current Practices in the Use of Student Self-assessment**

The 94 (55.67%) participants who belonged to the SSA users group were examined on their current practices in the use of student self-assessment, focusing on three aspects: perceived level of SSA practice, perceived level of SSA reliability, and perceived level of SSA effectiveness in promoting student learning. As shown in Figure 4, the largest proportion of the SSA users (45.74%) perceived that they had a moderate level of student self-assessment implementation in their classrooms. The second aspect of the practices dealt with the reliability of the student self-assessment. It was found that a majority of the SSA users (54.26%) perceived that student self-assessment had a moderate level of reliability. In terms of effectiveness in promoting student learning, a majority of participants (57.45%) perceived that student self-assessment effectively promoted students' learning at a moderate level.

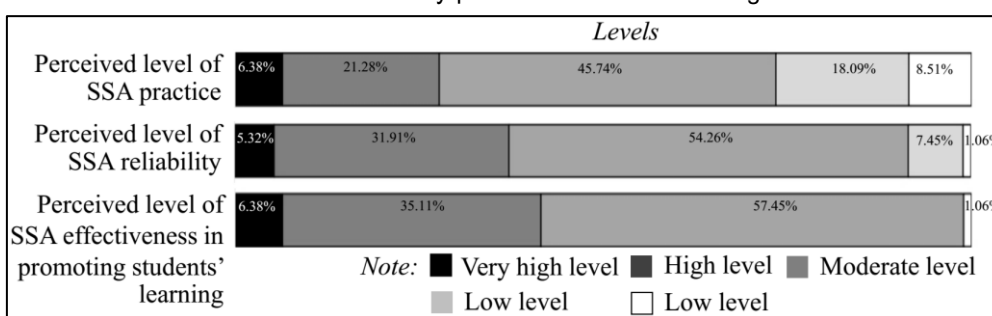


Figure4: Current practices in the use of student self-assessment (n = 94)

On the other hand, the 69 participants who were in the SSA non-users group were asked about the reasons behind the absence of student self-assessment practice in their classrooms. According to Figure 5, the absence of student self-assessment practice was strongly due to context-specific outcomes. When the reasons were arranged from the most frequently reported reason to the least frequently reported one, it was found that the SSA non-users reported class size as the biggest challenge to the use of student self-assessment in their classrooms (f = 28). The others reasons involved the reliability of SSA (f = 16), teachers' workloads (f = 15), students' underestimation of their own performance (f = 13), time consumption (f = 8), lack of student cooperation (f = 8), and students' overestimation of their own performance (f = 7), respectively. These reported reasons were rooted in each teacher's personal context, and highly influenced their decision whether to implement the student self-assessment in their classrooms.

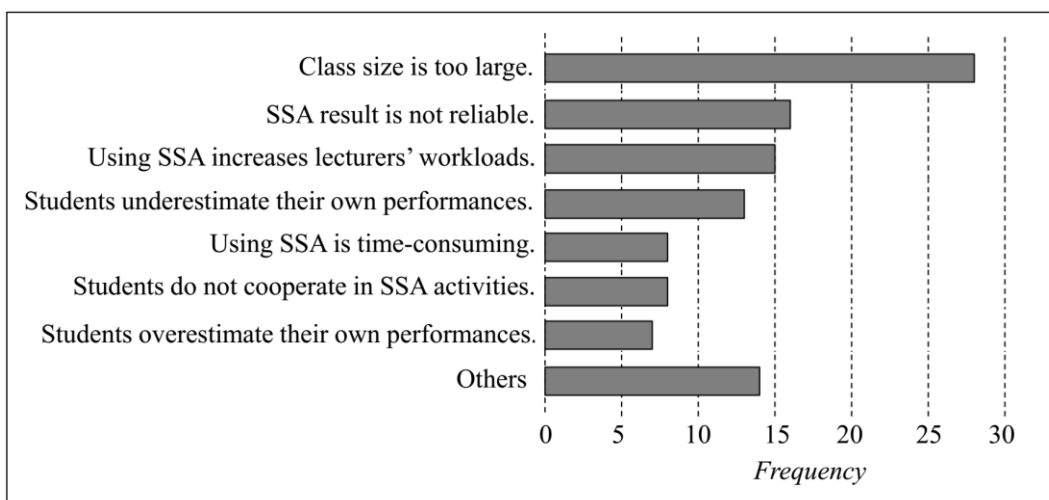


Figure 5: Challenges to the implementation of student self-assessment in classrooms (n = 69)

### Identifying Areas of Training Needed in the Use of Student Self-assessment

In general, the participants reported having a high level of need regarding training on the use of student self-assessment ( $\bar{x} = 3.68$ ,  $SD = .798$ ). Their needs could be divided into four categories: need for knowledge in the use of student self-assessment, need for skills in the use of student self-assessment, training activities, and additional needs.

#### *Needs for knowledge in the use of student self-assessment*

According to the participants' opinions from the open-ended responses, knowledge in the use of student self-assessment was considered as a key factor affecting their practice of student self-assessment in their classrooms. For example, one participant mentioned:

*"The teacher should know the student self-assessment very well in order to explain it to the students. So, the students will be able to self-assess themselves."*

The results indicated that the participants were mostly concerned about knowledge of the implementation of student self-assessment in their classrooms (See Table 3). The following pieces of knowledge were given a high priority: how to write the implementation plan for student self-assessment ( $\bar{x} = 3.75$ ,  $SD = .977$ ), how to revise the implementation plan for student self-assessment ( $\bar{x} = 3.80$ ,  $SD = .963$ ), details of student self-assessment tools ( $\bar{x} = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.014$ ), and steps taken in using student self-assessment tools ( $\bar{x} = 3.71$ ,  $SD = .955$ ). **The factors affecting failure in using student self-assessment also came into focus as they reported a high level of need to learn about challenges in using self-assessment ( $\bar{x} = 3.68$ ,  $SD = .960$ ).** In addition, they needed to know about the skills and factors focused on in using student self-assessment ( $\bar{x} = 3.67$ ,  $SD = .950$ ), and the purposes ( $\bar{x} = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .933$ ), strengths and weaknesses ( $\bar{x} = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.014$ ), and definitions ( $\bar{x} = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .931$ ) of student self-assessment.

Table 3: Knowledge needs in the use of student self-assessment (n = 163)

No.	Knowledge	Level of needs		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
1.	How to revise the implementation plan for student self-assessment	3.80	.963	High
2.	How to write the implementation plan for student self-assessment	3.75	.977	High
3.	Details of student self-assessment tools	3.72	1.014	High
4.	Steps taken in using student self-assessment tools	3.71	.955	High
5.	Challenges in using student self-assessment	3.68	.960	High
6.	Skills and factors that I can focus on in using student self-assessment	3.67	.950	High
7.	Purposes of student self-assessment	3.61	.933	High
8.	Strengths and weaknesses of student self-assessment	3.61	1.014	High
9.	Definition of student self-assessment	3.55	.931	High
	Overall level of need for 'Knowledge'	3.68	.861	High

### Needs for skills in the use of student self-assessment

When the participants were asked to identify their need for skills in the use of student self-assessment, they reported having a high level of overall need ( $\bar{x} = 3.74$ ,  $SD = .916$ ) (See Table 4). They put importance on the context of their English classes ( $\bar{x} = 3.81$ ,  $SD = .978$ ) and the appropriateness of the student self-assessment tools ( $\bar{x} = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.003$ ) as they rated their needs for these skills at high levels. Also, they would prefer to learn how to demonstrate ( $\bar{x} = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 1.019$ ) and explain ( $\bar{x} = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.003$ ) the steps taken in performing student self-assessment with their students. Unlike knowledge, skills in drafting ( $\bar{x} = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.000$ ) and revising the implementation plan ( $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 1.016$ ) were not prioritised, though they still rated these skills needs at high levels.

Table 4: Skills needs in the use of student self-assessment (n = 163)

No.	Skills	Level of needs		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
1	Analyzing the context of their English class	3.81	.978	High
2	Selecting the appropriate student self-assessment tools	3.81	1.003	High
3	Evaluating the implementation plan for student self-assessment	3.76	.961	High

No.	Skills	Level of needs		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation
4	Demonstrating the steps taken in performing student self-assessment with the students	3.75	1.019	High
5	Explaining the steps taken in performing student self-assessment with the students	3.72	1.003	High
6	Drafting the implementation plan for student self-assessment in their English course(s)	3.71	1.004	High
7	Revising the implementation plan for student self-assessment in their English course(s)	3.60	1.016	High
Overall need for 'Skills'		3.74	.916	High

### Needs for training activities employed in training on the use of student self-assessment

According to Table 5, participants had a high level of preference for four training activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .855$ ). Above all, participating in a workshop was reported as the top one ( $\bar{x} = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.025$ ). The participants also had a high level of preference for participating in a teachers' conference ( $\bar{x} = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.018$ ), making portfolios on their implementations of student self-assessment in their own classrooms ( $\bar{x} = 3.56$ ,  $SD = .982$ ), and joining individual conferences with the trainers ( $\bar{x} = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.032$ ).

Table 5: Preferred training activities on the use of student self-assessment (n = 163)

No.	Training activities	Level of needs		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Interpretation

1.	Participation in a workshop	3.78	1.025	High
2.	Participation in a teachers' conference	3.57	1.018	High
3.	Practice making my own portfolio	3.56	.982	High
4.	Participation in an individual conference	3.47	1.032	High
Overall need for 'Training activities'		3.60	.855	High

As the participants prioritized a workshop as the top training activity, they were also concerned about the content included in such a workshop; one participant wrote:

*"[Lecturers] should be trained in appropriate and effective student self- assessment, in a seminar or workshop run by the true experts in the field...I would be glad to attend the training if it was good for my students."*

**4. Additional training needs**

Additional needs involved miscellaneous needs other than knowledge, skills, and training activities. Table 5 summarizes the open-ended responses from the questionnaires on the training needs in the use of student self-assessment. There are three categories in total: formal training activities, informal training activities, and support. These three additional needs, according to the participants, were considered as key to the success of training on the use of student self-assessment; one participant mentioned that:

*"Even though the teachers already have sufficient knowledge and skills in the use of student self-assessment in classrooms, they may not be able to implement the student self-assessment in the actual classrooms due to many factors."*

According to Table 6, it seems that the participants need to learn about practical activities and a model of the use of student self-assessment, as they called for the practice of skills to develop the student self-assessment and a context-specific model of the use of student self-assessment. In addition, it seems that support is treated as another important factor affecting the success of the training. At least three forms of support were mentioned in the open-ended responses: one form of support was classified as an informal training activity and two forms of support as miscellaneous. Also, it was found that they did not want the training to interrupt their working routines as they would prefer an appropriate time to receive the training.

Table 6: A summary of the open-ended responses from the questionnaires on training needs in the use of student self-assessment (n = 163)

Category	Sub-category	Preferences	Teachers' recommendations
Formal training activities	Content of training	Promote knowledge to develop SSA	"There should be training in order to promote the lecturers' efficiency in developing student self-assessment tools."
		Practice skills to develop SSA	"Teachers should be trained in student self-assessment in order to create standard student self-assessment rubrics and boost teachers' self-confidence in using student self-assessment tools."

Demonstrate a concrete model	<p>“It should have a prototype for student self-assessment that could be applied to RMUT students.”</p> <p>“I wanted to learn or see a model of student self-assessment in English courses.”</p> <p>“A seminar that showed concrete samples of student self-assessment.”</p>
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Category	Sub-category	Preferences	Teachers' recommendations
Informal training activities	Group support	Provide a teachers' group support	“Lecturers should have an opportunity to exchange their experience in using student self-assessment so they can revise or develop their use of student self-assessment.”
Miscellaneous support	Timing	Deliver the training at an appropriate time	“An appropriate time means the training should not be arranged during teaching periods.”
	Departmental support	Promote mutual understanding	“It should have a seminar meeting about student self-assessment to promote mutual understanding among the lecturers.”

#### *Challenges Regarding the Training on the Use of Student Self-assessment*

In the open-ended responses, the participants also revealed possible challenges that they had been concerned regarding the training on the use of student self-assessment, which could be grouped into three categories: students' characteristics, students' prior knowledge, and teachers' working conditions (See Table 7). With regard to the first two categories – students' characteristics and students' prior knowledge – the participants were concerned that the students' own characteristics would affect the validity, effectiveness and process of student self-assessment. They considered student self-assessment to be highly reliant on the students. They believed that students were the ones who controlled their evaluations and assessments. Therefore, they thought that the students' honesty, responsibility, and maturity were threats to the trustworthiness of student self-assessment in classrooms. One participant even wrote:

*“By nature, it is hard for the students to be honest [in their own assessment]. Therefore, student self-assessment in our contexts may be ineffective.”*

Also, some were concerned about how students with limited knowledge of English would be able to self-assess their own work. These opinions might be rooted in their beliefs that student self-assessment is a student-controlled activity.

Finally, the teachers' working conditions were crucially regarded as the last challenge to the success of training on the use of student self-assessment. With regard to the distinct context, one participant considered Rajamagala universities as a unique context in which they needed to tailor student self-assessment to their own classrooms. The workloads were also considered as a threat to the success of the training and the practice in the use of student self-assessment.

Table 7: A summary of possible challenges that teachers may encounter in the use of student self-assessment (n = 163)

Category	Challenges to	Sub-categories	Teacher's opinions
Students' characteristics	Validity of SSA	Honesty	"It could hardly be used as a tool for grading because its accuracy was influenced by the students' honesty."
	Effectiveness of SSA	Responsibility	"Those who were able to perform student self-assessment activities must have responsibility."
	Process of SSA	Maturity	"I thought that the students might have a lack of maturity to self-assess themselves."
Students' prior knowledge	Effectiveness of SSA	Linguistic knowledge	"I thought that the students might have a lack of linguistic knowledge to self-assess themselves."
Teachers' working conditions	Implementation of SSA	Distinct context	"We had such a different background from the other universities that we could not use similar student self-assessment."
		Teachers' workloads	"It student self-assessment was a good activity, but it was hard to implement in classrooms because we carried teaching loads of more than 24 hours week."

## Discussion

Teachers' assessment literacy is an important predictor of the practice of assessment (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008). It is preferable that the teacher has the knowledge and skills to perform a sound assessment. However, it cannot be assumed that sound assessment practice only needs knowledge and skills. It is not surprising that the participants in this study perceived they had a certain level of assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment while expressing concerns regarding the ineffectiveness of student self-assessment due to the students' 'honesty', 'irresponsibility', and 'lack of linguistic knowledge'. These perceptions reflected findings from previous

studies, in that some students might overestimate or underestimate their own performances due to psycholinguistic factors such as anxiety (MacIntyre, Noels, Clément. 1997), experiences in language learning (Suzuki. 2015), and perceived competence (Malabonga, Kenyon, Carpenter. 2005). In addition, Matsuno (2009) compared the scores from writing tests rated by self-, peer- and teacher-assessment. It was revealed that the self-assessors underestimated and underrated their own writing tests but gave higher scores to their friends. Matsuno (2009) also found that the test scores from self-assessment were not consistent with the ones on tests rated by teachers. These previous studies pointed out that there were discrepancies between the scores given by the students and those given by the teachers. This study, therefore, has additionally found that the teachers' assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment could be affected by their perceptions of students' use of student self-assessment. As the teachers observed the students using student self-assessment in classrooms, they also made judgments on the validity, reliability, and effectiveness of student self-assessment in their own classrooms from the outcomes. These perceptions, then, could have become a foundation of their conceptions which later influenced their assessment literacy (Brown. 2004). These findings thus confirmed that assessment literacy requires other domains besides knowledge and skills. The other domains are principles (Davies. 2008), conceptions (Brown. 2004), and awareness of students' language-specific competencies (Inbar-Lourie. 2008).

This study presented mostly positive signs for the Thai EFL university teachers' development on the use of student self-assessment in their classrooms. It also indicated useful practices for training program developers to create more context-specific training. The results of this current study suggested that the training program developers should consider the context of the trainees as a basis for development. With the increasing contextual factors, such as teachers' working conditions, students' background, etc., the design of the training on the use of student self-assessment should emphasize not only how the course content could educate the teachers, but also how the teachers could prolong their practices of student self-assessment in their own contexts. To achieve this goal, the training should equip the teachers with assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment. As identified from the results, the training should cover the five major areas of training: the knowledge, skills, principles, and conceptions of student self-assessment, and awareness of students' language-specific competencies. With regard to the knowledge and skills, the participants perceived that they did need training in these areas as a basis of their implementation of student self-assessment in their classroom. The third area, principles, was also identified as a crucial factor. The participants were well aware of their conditions and situation as well as the need to find a way to integrate student self-assessment in relation to their institutional conditions. With regard to the fourth major area, conceptions, the results showed that the participants' conceptions were regarded as key to the success or failure of training on the use of student self-assessment. This finding was consistent with the notion of assessment literacy which states that effective assessment practice requires assessment-related knowledge and skills with the proper principles and conceptions (Davies. 2008; Fulcher. 2012; Inbar-Lourie. 2008).

Besides providing the five domains of assessment literacy in the use of student self-assessment, possible forms of support would also be appreciated by the participants. The first form of support could be a teacher support group, which is a community of professionals in which two or more teachers collaborate in meetings and work on a shared goal (Richards & Farrell. 2005). The teacher participants could observe and exchange their conceptions and principles of student self-assessment. As a result, their principles and conceptions of student self-assessment should be enhanced by promoting understanding among the teachers (Brown. 2008). In addition, a flexible training schedule

and appropriate time were also mentioned as factors affecting participation in training. Good timing could have a cumulative effect when the trainer promotes the training among the teachers.

### Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Although this study presented the overview of the current situations of assessment literacy, practices, and training needs in the use of student self-assessment, this study does not provide in-depth and complete information about the context under investigation. It has not, for instance, investigated the participants' organizational practices and policies on the use of language assessment, which might account for the participants' decisions to use student self-assessment. Moreover, in the open-ended responses, the participants did mention about the context-specific factors influencing their use of student self-assessment and their training. To look more closely at these issues, more qualitative research is necessary to explore the information from various stakeholders, and to understand how the teachers' assessment literacy and practices in the use of student self-assessment could be influenced by training with a context-specific design. Other aspects – such as teachers' working conditions, teachers' beliefs regarding students, and teachers' backgrounds in the use of student self-assessment – should also be examined in order to construct a framework on the use of student self-assessment in EFL classrooms at Thai universities.

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