

**Teachers' Empowerment and the Self-Study Process: An
Interpretative Phenomenological Study of Teachers'
Perceptions and Lived Experiences of New England
Association of Schools and Colleges Self-study within US-
Curricula School in Dubai**

تمكين المعلمين وعملية التقييم الذاتي : دراسة ظاهرية تفسيرية للمفاهيم والخبرات
المكتسبة للمدرسين في مدرسة تتبع المناهج الأمريكية في دبي خلال عملية الاعتماد
الأكاديمي من مؤسسة نيو انجلاند للمدارس والكليات

by

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates whether NEASC self-study as part of the accreditation process empowers teachers, contributes to improving self-efficacy, and encourages reflective deliberation. The study explores the lived experience of teachers in a US-curricula school in Dubai during NEASC self-study by employing a phenomenological approach in a postmodern framework of complexity theory and interpretivism to present teachers' perceptions and accentuate their voices. Interviews of structured and semi-structured nature were conducted and coded. An online survey, to collect responses of a larger population in relation to the self-study process and teachers' involvement, was crafted to make important inferences once compared with the coded interview.

Findings are teachers appreciate guided learning. Self-study is an influencing evaluation instrument which encourages instructional improvement. Self-efficacy is shown while reflective deliberation occurs but does not lead to the next steps: decision-making and empowerment. The research will be significance to accrediting bodies, policymakers and school management, among many, to look at the role of teachers during such initiatives that are part of the standards and accountability wave, especially in the field of capacity development which is the central purpose of education in the UAE and is highly related to economic growth.

نبذة

تبحث تهدف رسالة الماجستير هذه الى البحث حول ما إذا كانت عملية التقييم الذاتي للمدارس خلال عملية الاعتماد الأكاديمي من مؤسسة نيو انجلاند للمدارس والكليات (NEASC) تساهم في تمكين المعلمين، و تحسين الكفاءة ، وتشجع على إجراء تبادل الآراء و المداولات لما فيها من مصلحة للعملية التعليمية.

تم استخدام أدوات بحث كمية ونوعية لا استكمال عملية جمع البيانات أساسها توظيف النهج التفسيري التحليلي ما بعد الحدائي و نظرية التعقيد في مجالي الإدارة الإستراتيجية والدراسات التنظيمية للظواهر لتقديم تصورات المدرسين عن تجربتهم وإبراز آرائهم. حيث تم التحرى عن تجربة مجموعة من المعلمين و المعلمات في مدرسة تتبع المناهج الأمريكية في دبي خلال عملية الاعتماد الأكاديمي من مؤسسة نيو انجلاند للمدارس والكليات (NEASC) . وتم استعمال الترميز المواضيعي لاستخلاص المفاهيم الأساسية. كما شملت أدوات البحث استبانة عبر الإنترنت للمعلمين للوقوف على آراءهم المختلفة فيما يتعلق بعملية التقييم الذاتي و تمكين المعلمين ، وذلك من أجل استنباط استنتاجات مهمة بعد مقارنتها مع المقابلات. وقد اشارت النتائج إلى وجود نسبة تحسن إيجابي في الكفاءة الذاتية للمعلمين نتيجة لعملية التقييم الذاتي. كما أعلن معظم المشاركين أن المعلمين يقدروا التعلم و الإرشاد الموجه . وتستخلص الدراسة أن عملية التقييم الذاتي أداة تقييم مؤثرة تشجع على التحسن التعليمي ولكنها لا تؤدي إلى الخطوات التالية و هي: صنع القرار و التمكين للمعلمين.

وفى ختام الدراسة تم استخالص العديد من الاقتراحات والتوصيات الممكنة لهيئات الاعتماد الاكاديمية وصانعي السياسات التعليمية والإدارات المدرسية ، لا سيما في مجال تنمية القدرات وهو الهدف الرئيسي للتعليم في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة ويرتبط بشكل كبير بالنمو الاقتصادي، لتأخذ في الاعتبار دور المعلمين أثناء هذه المبادرات والتي تشكل جزءاً من منظومة جودة عمليات المعايير و المساءلة في المؤسسات التربوية و التي تهدف إلى الأرتقاء بالمنظومة التعليمية.

Dedication

To my father, Bassam Nweiran: it takes a brave and self-disciplined person to not just tell the truth but to live it every day. Your life-long dedication to truth and justice taught us determination, independence and instilled an insatiable thirst to knowledge and critical thinking. Although it has been years since you have passed away, I take your lessons with me every day.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. 1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides a background to the scope of the study and identifies the research question raised to guide this study. The purpose of this study is determined and its importance is highlighted. The chapter includes the introduction, theoretical framework, the purpose and the objectives, statement of the problem, conceptual framework, a brief description of the methodology, and the significance of the study.

1.1.1 Introduction

“The real asset of any advanced nation is its people, especially the educated ones, and the prosperity and success of the people are measured by the standard of their education”H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

To a great extent the countries’ social and economic well-being depends on the quality and the efficacy of their citizens’ education. The aggrandized expansion of globalisation influenced nearly every aspect of life causing decentralisation, marketisation, commodification and an increased local and global competition. This has altered the educational scene particularly with the technological advancement, the revolution of information and media, and the increased specializations which demanded advanced functional and technical knowledge and skills and leading to the emergence of “knowledge society”. (Cambridge & Thompson 2004; Velde 2005; Altbach 2013; Tarc 2012).

The growing significance of crafting skilful capacity to face up to the competitive dynamics of employment market and growing international economic competition, have been a challenge for many countries, including UAE, particularly in achieving desirable end

objectives with the current variants of acuminous reality. For the economic and political wellbeing of individuals and of nations, international literacy becomes crucial (Dolby & Rahman 2008; Bunnell 2011; Coulby 2011; Edge & Khamsi 2012).

Many education systems adapted to the dynamic circumstances and served as catalyst of change as transformational reforms swept the educational systems world-wide (Bellanca & Brandt 2010). Enhanced industry-tailored quality assurance strategies, inspection and evaluation tools do not only demonstrate a commendable educational service nationally and internationally, but become a cornerstone to sustain the educational reform (Eurydice 2004). One way to improve quality and accountability and ensure sustainability and growth is through international accreditation which is perceived as vital for education provided locally as it secures some uniformity and constancy across many institutions in the eyes of the public and warrants international dimensions within schooling.

Efficiency becomes integral too. In today's world, schools are required to reach the national goals and international standards while making the best use of available resources. Fullan (2001) indicates that efficacy lies in the organizations' ability to turn their staff into constant learners and equip them with skills to be able to work in a diverse local and global context to enhance the countries' national competitiveness too (Inbar 2006; Resnik 2006). However, these standards and policy reform in education profoundly depend upon the professional competences and involvement of the academic staff (Noordin & Jusoff 2009).

As teachers pro-actively enable in the country's efforts to establish a knowledge-based economy, further attention needs to be directed at them as they are directly involved in the standards wave, and on how these standards shape their professional work and communities. Consequently, the relationship between self-study process during accreditation and teachers' empowerment structures itself strongly. Teacher empowerment becomes focal in any standard reform.

1.1.2 UAE Educational Scene

As the United Arab Emirates government carries on with investment and development plans in its knowledge-based economy, education is prioritized as a key driver for growth as stated by UAE Vision 2021, announced by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. UAE educational landscape has been momentarily experiencing an unyielding wide-scale reform not only to improve the quality of education but also to provide sustainable solutions to the education challenges and to impact economic growth strongly.

On a micro-level, UAE education is tasked not only to educating UAE citizens and residents but also with the “Emiritisation” or nationalisation of the labour market, which greatly relies on foreign expatriates. The need to establish an “information-rich” nation able to employ knowledge for economic development required an internationally recognized educational system (Naidoo 2007; Zaatari 2017). Simultaneously, the impact of globalisation triggered UAE various education models to switch into English-based instruction and international curricula than the previous Arabic-based model leading into a qualitative and quantitative expansion in the educational market and becoming the epicentre for a successful transformation. Many educational institutions from universities and schools sought and were granted accreditation by regional and international accrediting bodies like the UK or US (AL-Hai1 990; Findlow 2005; UNESCO 2010).

To provide UAE students with top level of modern education, UAE Ministry of Education (MoE), Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) and the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), the education regulator supervising the growth of the private schools in Dubai, have been actively developing educational policies and frameworks to implement innovative strategies of teaching and learning to attain key qualitative improvement towards quality education with world-class standards. The latest is the Ministry of Education’s teachers’ licensing program (MoE 2017), and the accreditation initiative of KHDA’s

partnership with NEASC towards a fully developed accreditation scheme (KHDA 2013).

Emphasizing the fact that this partnership was a pioneering step towards a fully developed accreditation scheme that would induce profound changes, this study investigates whether NEASC self-study as part of the accreditation process empowers teachers, contributes to improving self-efficacy, and encourages reflective deliberation. This case analysis of a Dubai-based school that completed accreditation in 2017/18 includes data from various sources such as online surveys, teachers' interviews, and document reviews. The findings are NEASC self-study is an influencing evaluation instrument which promotes instructional improvement, but it is not assured to empower teachers. Self-efficacy improvement and reflective deliberation take place, but the next stages of decision-making and empowerment are not fully reached. The NEASC self-study process could enhance instructional improvement by adding opportunities for teacher empowerment.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

To touch upon the possible implications for the development of quality culture in Dubai private schools in general, while drawing important lessons for upcoming international accreditation and external reviews for other educational institutions such as colleges and universities, the research delves into exploring the impact of NEASC self-study processes on empowering teachers by investigating main factors in theory and practice that emerge during the self-study process in the accreditation process.

As self-study of the accreditation process is of an investigative participatory nature, with multiple voices and perspectives that mutually work together, reflective deliberation becomes an integral part of their practice. Patton refers to as “process use”, “in which being engaged in the process of evaluation can be useful quite apart from the findings that may emerge from those processes” (1997, p. 88). Reflection as deliberative and distributive does not only aim to improve students' academic attainment but teacher's professional growth and

empowerment to decision-making and judgments as part of a transformative change. Consequently, several objectives rise emphasizing teachers' experiences and perceptions towards the self-study process and concepts of empowerment identifying factors which are conducive or obstructive to the process. The uncovering of any shortcoming in the implementation of the process reveals areas of improvement to policymakers, international and local accrediting bodies, and school management beside fellow researchers. Additionally, the researcher hopes that this study may contribute towards growing research in this field of the study.

1.3 Statement of Problem

In spite of the many research in the field of teachers' empowerment and school performance worldwide and UAE, still, teachers' conditions at the local level have received inadequate attention, which makes it one of the most "understudied systems" (Litz 2014, p. 2). Moreover, literature on how empowerment may be influenced by the self-study and accreditation process is still not much tackled (Denison & Mishra 1995; Argyris 1998; Eylon & Au 1999; Robert et al. 2000). Even though there are many NEASC's studies on accreditation and school communities; however, they mainly focus on the value and impact of accreditation on the learning-teaching process; not on the impact of the self-study (NEASC 2006).

This is the gap this study sought to fill. Several questions rise: Is there a relationship between teacher empowerment and the international accreditation process through teachers' expected performance in the self-study process? Does NEASC self-study accreditation process for private school empower teachers to improve teaching conventions and praxis, contribute to enhancing self-efficacy, strengthen their autonomy and decision-making skills, and encourages reflective practice in school community?

Thus by investigating key factors in theory and practice, the study aims to highlight the extent of relationships between teacher empowerment and school accreditation process particularly the self-study. This inquiry is manifested through the guiding questions:

- How and to what extent are these elements of teacher empowerment evident and promoted in the NEASC self-study evaluation process for a private US school in Dubai?
- What aspects of the self-study process contribute to improving teacher self-efficacy?
- To what degree does the self-study process engage teachers in reflective deliberation?

1.4 Conceptual Framework

A subsidiary intention is advocating the self-study thematic domain (Thyer 2010). This strongly correlates with the theoretical aims of self-study of giving voice to the voiceless. The main conclusion is that for empowerment and quality improvement to be accomplished, technical implementation of self-study procedure is not enough without the emancipation of thought and action through reflective practice and exercising sound decision-making.

Self-study is strongly rooted in educational researches on democratic practice, empowerment, and reflective practice (Dewey 1933; Schön 1983). The study's theoretical framework views the self-study process from the renowned participatory evaluation approach, the Deliberative Democratic Evaluation (DDE), to identify the impact the process has on the organizational culture in general and teachers' professional growth and empowerment in particular.

Accordingly, a systematic review of UAE educational reform movements particularly in Dubai and a substantial body of theory and research from multiple fields of research especially of contemporary philosophies and approaches for evaluation process was performed. Reflection is a wide-ranging topic; its most pertinent aspects are presented here in relation to education and self-study. A focus on the conditions under which empowerment initiatives are optimally effective, and the researcher's analysis of national and international studies are

included along with an analysis of NEASC and KHDA official reports, to mine strengths and shortcomings and display the correlation between theoretical knowledge and operational procedures. This review helps the readers to become aware of:

- The difficulties many teachers are confronted with while joining these initiatives that are meant to enhance opportunities of empowerment and the quality of accountability and transparency such as the self-study.

- The fact that a significant proportion of studies on empowerment and self-study as part of the accreditation process was carried outside the UAE context. There is a dearth of literature available, internationally and nationally, on the relationship between teacher's empowerment and NEASC self-study and its impact on academic performance.

The study does not aim at studying improvement in students' attainment nor attempts to review the accreditation process in detailed or compare and draw conclusions with the other local or international accrediting associations. Conclusions cannot be generalised about other Dubai-based US schools with different circumstances due to the limited scope of this research.

1.5 Methodology

The motivation to design and conduct the phenomenological study in a postmodern framework of complexity theory and interpretivism stemmed from the researcher's commitment to present teachers' perception and accentuating their voices on empowerment and self-study process. The second reason is to signify the factors that are conducive or discouraging to the expansion of empowerment. Results aim to advance the design and delivery of effective empowerment opportunities.

The complex reality of teachers' context characterized by international and national standards, increased accountability, inclusive education policies, and diversity in students' population makes it paramount to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs during the accreditation process with the myriad of their daily responsibilities as it assists in recognising

the approaches and practices to sustain the reform's success.

Therefore, teachers' perception and interpretation to the self-study experiences cannot be underestimated particularly if decision and policymakers are to continue to meet future challenges and demands to sustain the educational reform. The exploratory study was conducted throughout six months using qualitative and quantitative case study methodologies to examine the subject matter.

As the research aims at accentuating teachers' voices and discovers the hidden realities of their daily teaching experiences, the first part was a phenomenological design that describes the experiences of five school teachers in relation to several organizational and personal factors, empowerment and the rigorous self-study process. Structured and semi-structured nature interviews were conducted and coded. Main concepts, identified in the thesis and literature, are referred to through content analysis leading to the conclusion. To gain further insight, the researcher crafted an online survey to collect responses of a larger population in relation to the accreditation process and teachers' involvement in the self-study to draw conclusions and make important inferences once compared with the coded interview.

1.6 Significance of the Research Study

Since KHDA declared the quality and accreditation of Dubai private schools and programs as top propriety on the national educational policy, accreditation became a hot topic in the discourse community of private sector education in Dubai. Evidently, it has been triggered by the on-going reform for establishing and sustaining comparable educational system through developing national and international quality assurance mechanism, and by nation-specific conditions conceptualized in UAE National Agenda which guides the process. As the accreditation process consumes many resources, it would be best for schools to be involved in a process that is a catalyst for educational improvement.

The study with its findings affirms the critical role of teachers in the improvement of education. Official entities such as MoE and KHDA can use the research to identify similarities and differences and implications for teachers' empowerment within the international accreditation system. Some elements might also be contextualized in the national teaching license system or pre-service teacher programs. Also, it constructs the conceptual understanding of how schools' leadership perceives the reform's expectations and materializes the government's vision.

The research will be a significant contribution to policymakers and school leadership and management to have a close look at the role of teachers in the self-study process during accreditation especially in the field of capacity development which is the central purpose of education in the UAE and is highly related to economic growth. Additionally, the research can be of interest to academic agencies, parents, students and other community members as it guides in determining the most suitable programs and the type of school within UAE educational context and explains the value of international accreditation and education.

The research identifies some gaps in the existing body of literature particularly in GCC and UAE regarding both phonology as a paradigm and the research problem and hopes to set the momentum for that which presents the potential to contribute to the educational literature of theory and practice in UAE schools and Dubai mainly. As the study portends to facilitate the design of more effective empowerment opportunities to the benefit of both teachers and students, the findings also add to the existing studies on leadership models during UAE educational transformation.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter identifies the key concepts and theoretical framework guiding this study. It also includes a review of the literature related to this study.

2.2 Empowerment: Concepts and Approaches

“To improve a person’s performance, there is a need to focus on the whole individual, not just that part that relates to the job” (Watts & Hammond 2002, p.9).

Numerous thinkers and researchers have been trying to explain what empowers people at work. Different approaches have resulted in many theories regarding empowerment. Emerged as a fundamental theme in the progressive movements for social justice, empowerment is the processes through which people generate different ways to overcome dominating authority through personal and organizational change (Conger & Kanungo 1988). The underpinning principles of empowerment implicate restructuring the organizational dynamics so that they would be initiated at the bottom through the redistribution of power, duties, and responsibilities with the aim to improving organizational culture, human capital and increasing employees’ commitment and participation (Perkins & Zimmerman 1995; Rappaport 1984).

A plethora of Western research on organizational leadership and behaviour theories and human resources management attempted to articulate the definitions and functional usages for employee empowerment for its imperative role to organization’s success (Dunst, Trivette & LaPointe 1992; Lightfoot 1986; Rappaport 1987; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz & Checkoway 1992). Paving the way to modern perspectives on empowerment, the work of Lightfoot (1986) and Gruber and Trickett (1987) conditioned organisational setting and professional life to

impact individual and organizational performance positively. Lightfoot predestined empowerment to “the opportunities a person has for autonomy, responsibility, choice, and authority” (1986, p. 9), while Gruber and Trickett stipulated empowerment as the extent of true decision-making power held by people in an organization. Contemporary strategies of empowerment entail management and leadership to provide employees with challenging, rewarding tasks, appropriate professional training and monitoring the physical and mental health of the employees to improve productivity and minimize turnover but also moves towards providing the employee with a higher degree of flexibility to take work-related decisions. Some includes making changes to when, where and how an employee will work to better meet individual and organizational needs without refereeing to and consulting their superiors; hence, initiating and strengthening the organizational dynamics to commence at the bottom (Atchison 1999; Budhwar 2000; Greasley et al. 2004; Robbins 2005; Malik et al. 2014).

Professional behaviour profile becomes based on interpersonal skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and motivational aspects of personal efficacy. Organizational culture turns out to be as important and valuable as financial assets and technological resources for sustainable growth and success (Armstrong 2006). Decentralisation of the organizations becomes a perquisite particularly if it evolves away from mere delegation into a well-designed and carefully implemented transmission of authority, accountability and responsibility from central to tangential or top-bottom flow enhancing its independence and autonomy (Karlsen 2000).

Renowned motivational theories, mainly categorised as content theories such as Maslow’s Needs Hierarchy (1943), or McClelland’s Achievement Motivation (1961), and main process theories such as Skinner’s Reinforcement Theory, Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), and Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1977) underpinned dozens of contemporary researches on psychological empowerment. Within these theories, some observe

empowerment as phenomena and deduce common indicators. Others perceived empowerment as a complex combination of the individual's personal and professional behaviour within the "organizational, political, sociological, economic, and spiritual" context as Rappaport explains (1987, p. 130). Accordingly, personality and cognitive traits such as self-determination and self-esteem, and motivational aspects of personal efficacy and democratic participation in a community are indicators to empowerment (Bandura 2002; Locke & Latham 2004; Gagné & Deci 2005).

Frederick Herzberg, a prominent motivational psychologist, believed that jobs that offer growth opportunities and allows employees to experience accomplishment triggers motivation, satisfaction and enhances the levels of commitment and performance (Herzberg 1966; Sergiovanni 1992). Consequently, employees gear towards acquiring further expertise and proficiency (Ryan & Deci 2000; Locke & Latham 2004)

As an intrinsic value, empowerment is represented by self-efficacy while as an external value, it is based on power relationships and behaviours that influence the interactions between people within a community. Successful functioning and outcomes require smart blending of the dynamics of interdependence between the individuals, organizations, and communities (Tjosvold 1986; Bandura 2002). Such behaviours and interpersonal skills centre on decision-making, problem-solving, and efficacy for influencing the decisions in the community. To a great extent, the empowered person is the one who can visibly demonstrate these attributes within a context, such as exercising decision-making, establishing good cooperative relationships and enhanced engagement in work groups, practicing autonomy at work, or altering some aspects in personal life (Maslow 1954; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, and Checkoway 1992; Bandura 2002; Petesch, Smulovitz and Walton 2005; Diener & Biswas-Diener 2005). Progressively, their professional commitment increases and they function with

direction, concentration, and perseverance (Ryan & Deci 2000; Locke & Latham 2004; Statt 2004).

Empowerment becomes a critical component that leads to achievement, recognition, promotion, and fulfilment (Locke & Latham 2004; Kaliski 2007). Simultaneously the organization culture becomes better with empowered employees who are determined, innovative, and responsible. Contemporary studies strongly correlate empowerment with improved organizational performance indicating the increase of job commitment and satisfaction, and enhanced performance (Armstrong 2006; Ahmed et al. 2010).

Based on the basic principles of self-efficacy, and related to this study, research has connected teachers' sense of efficacy to improved performance by adopting innovative teaching pedagogies and classroom management strategies. Teachers, with high levels of self-efficacy, also perceive themselves as empowered which positively impact student motivation and learning (Ashton & Webb 1986; Woolfolk, Rossoff & Hoy 1990; Guskey 2000).

From another approach, empowerment is described as a psychological process connected with individuals' feelings of self-worth and professional identity (Kreisberg 1992). It influences the individual's choices of type and level of engagement and effort exerted in a particular activity or task. (Ryan & Deci 2000; Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy 2012). The beliefs teachers have about their power and capacity to make changes influence their zeal, perseverance, and commitment to teaching (Milner 2002). Moreover, levels of commitment and efficacy are higher when work is conceived as professional and lower when work is perceived as bureaucratic (Sergiovanni & Starratt 2002).

2.2.2 Empowerment with Education

Global educational reform was incited by factors such as the inconsistency in education standards, the growing dissatisfaction with student achievement, and the need to increase college entrance rate and impact economic growth (Tucci 2009; Vongalis-Macrow 2009; Fullan & Watson 2006). Being a buzzword in corporate and educational domains, many researchers postulates that empowerment is indispensable for learners, teachers, and school managers. It can only have a long-lasting impact if it is considered a means of knowledge and expertise exchange process between responsible stakeholders rather than a source of control and conflicts.

Previously, the educational reform focused on school restructuring; however, with the growing conviction in teachers' critical role, the complex phenomenon, empowerment, factors itself significantly as a key strategy (Leiberman & Miller 1990). Michele and Browne consider it "the foundation stone which radical reform can be built" in any educational reform (2000, p.89). Teachers' empowerment becomes an on-going process that aims at enhancing the professional performance, efficiency, and the academic and social growth not only that of teachers but also of students as means of accomplishing the fundamental goal such as the overall betterment of the organization (Sergiovanni & Starratt 2002).

Empowering teachers manifests itself in many forms: enhancing teacher's autonomy and advancing their engagement through collaborative leadership, furthering their participation in decision-making such as intended with the self-study in the accreditation process. Hoy & Miskel (2001) believe that providing encouragement and professional support develop the autonomy of staff to make decisions and to assume responsibilities for their actions. Studies demonstrate that communities that promote empowerment opportunities enhance the culture of collaboration and reduce teacher alienation. Hargreaves and Fullan state that collaborative

cultures are characterized by appreciation and recognition for teacher's individuality and support for autonomy (1992), stressing on the psychological effect of empowerment (Kreisberg 1992; Milner 2002). McLaughlin (1994) portrays such a culture with confident relationships based on transparency, teamwork, and critical reflection with high professional standards.

Without a doubt, teachers' critical role enables the successful implementation of educational change and reform agenda. The dynamics of power relations and interactions at various levels open up chances and enhance the teachers' skills to exercise a degree of empowerment and to exert a level of influence (Dunst, Trivette & LaPointe 1992).

Nonetheless, teachers have been receiving an inordinate amount of blame for poor school performance. Even though they play the most vital role in students' academic and emotional growth, habitually, teachers have been downgraded and offered minimum decision-making opportunities. In reality, they lack control and power which is not only unfavourable to student growth but the educational reform (Lightfoot 1986; Short & Rinehart 1992). Concerned with teachers' "lack of status, sometimes limited knowledge, and minimal opportunities to make decisions," Maeroff states that exercising empowerment throughout the school becomes "essential if schools are to improve," (1988, p. 473). Teacher empowerment is akin to professionalization thus treating teachers more professionally empowers them (Maeroff 1988). On the other hand, some argue that power cannot be handed to teachers as it must be claimed by enthusiasts who believe in their efficiency (Gruber & Trickett 1987; Narayan 2005).

Nonetheless, empowerment takes place only if school relationships are reconstructed to create opportunities in order to facilitate teacher efficacy (Maeroff 1988; Short, Greer, and Michael 1991; Gibson & Dembo 1984). Fullan (2001) indicates that efficacy lies in the ability of the educational organizations to produce individuals who are characterized as constant learners and able to work in a diverse local and global context.

Recently, school leadership has been stepping away from the authoritarian models of leadership towards distributed leadership and better school climate through enhancing the principal-teacher collegial and social relations (Cole 2002; Mainhard et al., 2011; Spilt et al., 2011; Hulpia et al. 2011; Scribner et al. 2007). As relation dynamics and social interactions are critical to the learning climate, the principal-teacher relations and school climate have become indicators in principal evaluations (Connelly & Bartoletti 2012).

During this reconstruction, several concepts unfold themselves throughout the empowerment process such as the culture of trust and transparency, decision-making, professional development, status, self-efficacy, and autonomy (Rappaport 1987; Maeroff 1988; Short & Rinehart 1992; Zimmerman et al. 1992). A collection of studies investigated the positive relationship between teacher empowerment and school effectiveness; still, creating the system of empowerment remains a challenge (Jacob & Lefgren 2006; Aliakbarin& Amoli 2016).

Concurrently, the lack of empowerment is associated with one's lack of belief in one's self-efficiency. It is stipulated that this leads to a drop in intrinsic motivation and increases teachers' burnout and turnover. Anxiety, de-motivation, absenteeism, lack of interest, and even depression mostly result from the individual's "inability to exert influence over things that adversely affect one's life" (Bandura 1998, p. 2).

With all the various classic and contemporary attempts to define teacher empowerment, a diversity of meanings remains. To summarize, the most prevailing accepted meaning among researchers, educators, and policymakers is: empowerment is a process through which people become powerful enough to be involved and exert influence on circumstances and organizations affecting their lives. Empowerment demands that people gain the knowledge, proficiency, and power needed to influence. Therefore, empowerment becomes the indispensable in any educational reform; schools cannot improve without the active

involvement of teachers, researchers and educators need work to find ways of advancing teacher empowerment (Gomendio 2017).

2.2.3 Empowerment within UAE Educational Context

Realizing that societal future growth and welfare heavily relies on youth, there has been a national urge to establish a firm framework to enrich students' learning and improve attainment and influencing school members to progress towards that professionally. Therefore, educational reform in UAE has been more top-down approach and prioritized the development of human capital, especially teachers, to better equip them as they are the key agents in the country's efforts towards a knowledge-based economy.

Ministry of Education (MoE) education strategy 2010 – 2020 sets off the implementation of the licensing program of all educational workforce and accreditation system to enhance the quality of private and public education and professional competence (MoE 2010-2020). For a decade, KHDA led further quality assurance requirements and initiatives intoned with the international standards and practices to improve efficacy, the positive practices of high-performing school governance and leadership and strategic decision-making process central to which is acquiring international accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) by the international and US-curricula schools in Dubai (KHDA 2018). Much has been achieved, but there is a deep awareness that much more needs to be done.

As teachers' professional growth and empowerment are two main factors which contribute to educational reform, and for the purpose of this study, empowerment was regarded as a multi-dimensional concept consisting of three broad aspects: subjective psychological aspect which is related to the growth of self-efficacy, motivation, power and self-confidence. An objective aspect that is related to opportunities and exposure to practice the challenges of leadership, decision-making, professional growth; and competence aspect which is about

training and developing of knowledge, skills and experience (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2003). Responsibility rests on school management to create and sustain conditions under which teachers and learners can exercise leadership and become empowered.

Nonetheless, even though there might be many actions aiming at transformation and accountability in the school setting, change might be slight and does not necessarily transform the core. A question forces itself: to what extent is empowerment filtered down through the organizational hierarchy in schools during accreditation?

2.3 Accreditation: Terminology and Operational Definition

As the quality and the compatibility of education systems has recently become crucial particularly with the spread of technologies and globalization, the increase of the mobility of students, academics, alumni and educational institutions, further measurements and instruments were added to ensure the quality of education. The focus has been directed towards the aspects that shape that quality such as accreditation, teachers' efficacy, and empowerment as part of the broader transformative accountability movement.

Since the base of this study is accreditation, it is a necessity to set the most comprehensive operational definition for it. Accreditation is the quality assurance mechanism process through which requirements in accordance to specific standards and against national or international benchmarks are fulfilled aiming at "evaluating educational quality, assuring institutional accountability, achieving and maintaining high standards, making education more responsive to students and society's needs, and offsetting the danger of government control of education" (Young et al. 1983, p. xi). Even though international accreditation is a voluntary quality assurance system, yet schools adopting an international program seek it to achieve academic recognition as it enhances not only the school's reputation within the complex market of educational providers but also graduates chances to better academic and work future (Birnbaum & Eckel 2005; Schwatz & Westerheijden 2007).

2.3.1 Conceptual Framework

Commonly, accreditation has a set of standards for evaluation, a self-evaluation report, site visit, followed by the external committee report and accreditation decision. The accreditation standards may differ depending on the accrediting agency or country. Nonetheless, it is still possible to talk about basic accreditation standard categories to be. (Figure 1).

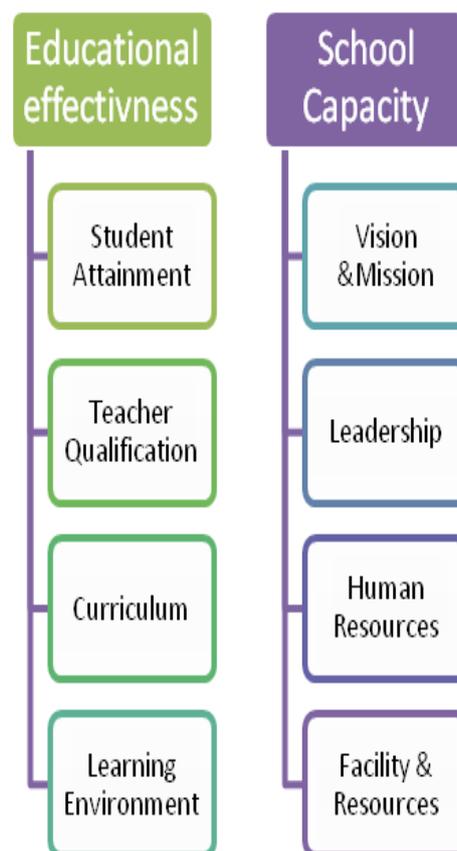


Figure 1: Basic Accreditation Standard

Accreditation significantly impacts students' academic attainment and the professional growth and perceptions of the staff of their school, profession, and programs. Also, it enhances the social and professional dynamics by creating communication partnerships with all stakeholders, graduates, professionals, and the community. Both students and their families consider accreditation as an assertion of a recognised degree, while companies tend to hire

graduates of internationally accredited schools and programs. Accreditation is not a rating system nor does it provide a stamp of approval on teachers. It does not aim at establishing a policing culture (Young et al., 1983; Prendergast et al. 2001).

Eventually, accreditation has emerged to be more than a procedural mechanism of educational quality into a mechanism that widens the horizons and provides opportunities for members across the school and even the community to engage in the quality assurance and the decision-making process about learning and performance in the school environment.

Contemporary researchers on organizational behaviour consider accreditation as an interesting method of problem-based learning activities as school's management and leadership face various multileveled challenges that require strategic planning and perseverance to reach to improvement recommendations driven from peer reviews, internal auditing, or external team visits (Alstete 2004; Senge 2006).

2.3.2 Accreditation and Dubai Educational Landscape

Being perceived central to socio-political and economic development, education in UAE has been a rapidly growing sector. The U.A.E private school sector constitutes 60 percent of the country's schools and offers a wide range of curricula to approximately 500,000 students of its Emirati and expatriate population (Export.gov 2018).

Considered a prominent international business hub in the Middle East, Dubai witnessed a booming economy, particularly after the 'Arab Spring'. This led to a growth both in its expatriate population and the distinctive educational landscape and making it home to students from 182 different nationalities studying in its 194 private schools (Davidson 2008;

Wellman 2013; Hvidt 2013; KHDA 2018). The National Curriculum of U.K is tops the list of curriculum followed by the US and Indian curricula (KHDA 2017). (Figure 2).

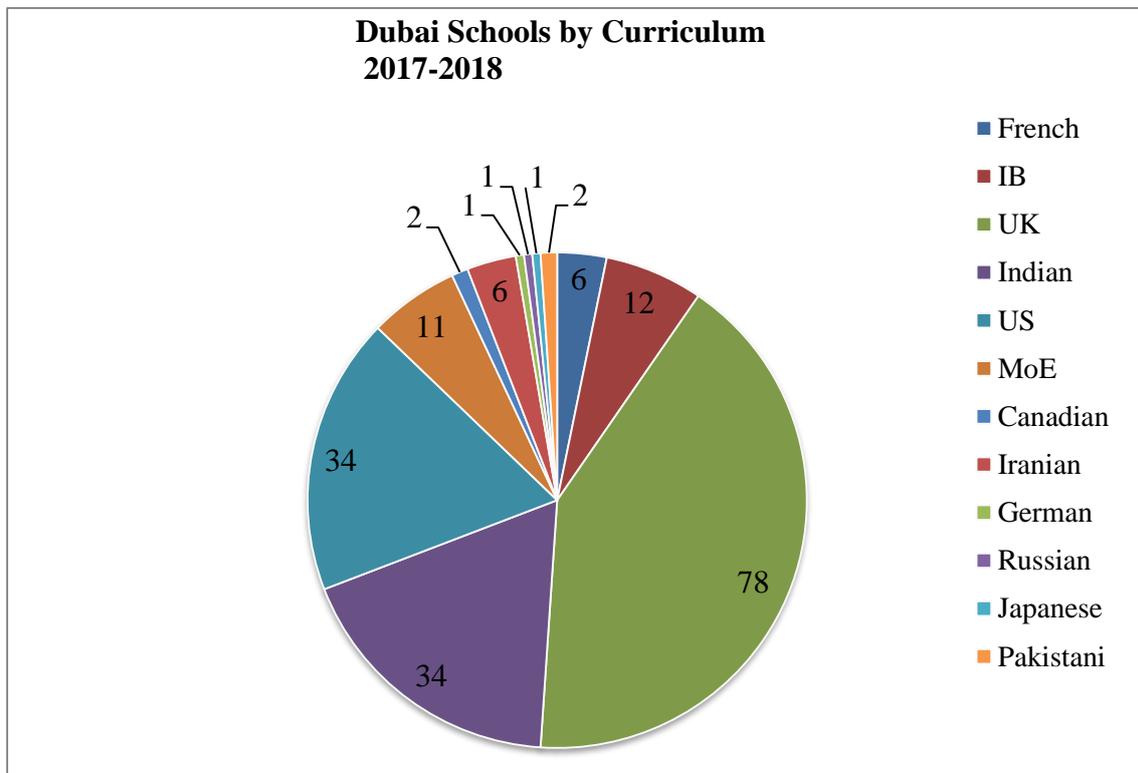


Figure 2: Dubai Schools by Curriculum

Continuous educational improvement occurs when the status quo does not hold, but when there is change; therefore, accreditation gives a picture of the state of the school and the causes of no changes or improvements. However, shifting from previous patterns of school management and teaching pedagogies is hard especially if the schools were wrapped in layers of tradition and non-reactivity. KHDA quality assurance and accreditation played a vital role to build an environment in which the culture of accountability, self-analysis, and knowledge-sharing towards academic betterment exist.

2.3.3 US-curricula Schools

Private schools in Dubai must undergo KHDA inspection; still, they usually choose other international accreditation and inspections associated with their curricula home country. For example, British schools seek accreditation and inspection from the British Schools Overseas. French curriculum-based schools must affiliate with the French Ministry of Education. Besides paving the way to internationalization of education in UAE, such international process provides both the school leadership and teachers with the exposure to different quality assurance, evaluation mechanisms, and the best educational trends and practices, extend their professional connections, preparation, and engagement in the process of accountability and decision-making.

The 2014 KHDA's report revealed the lack of progress and international affiliation the US-curriculum schools were making compared to other nationalities schools (KHDA 2014). With the presence of 34 US curriculum-based private school serving up to 45,862 students, KHDA has mandated the completion of the accreditation of NEASC where the academic standards and attainment are benchmarked against American standards to ensure the quality of the academic programs and students' learning environment. Dubai US curriculum-based schools must fulfill some requirement that cover fundamental areas such as US curriculum standards, academic and non-academic personnel, and graduation requirements.

In this study, accreditation refers to the approval certification given by an independent external entity such as NEASC that approves and authorises the adequacy of the US school's standards and programs against international benchmarks. For the research purposes, specific attention is given to the operationalising application of the evaluation process, the self-study. Its participatory nature intends the engagement of most stakeholders thus implies teachers' empowerment (Rebien 1996; Gokturk & Mueller 2010).

Self-study, a primary part of the accreditation, is an exploratory process within the entire school to assess the effectiveness of the school based on its stated mission. The process must include peers from outside the school who will evaluate the institution (Young et al. 1983).

The following section posits the main approaches that use the process of evaluation to promote teachers' development, autonomy, and empowerment in specific and the organizational and social betterment in general. Despite the extensive use of the evaluation process, still there remains little evidence supporting the rationale behind using any approach of evaluation to empower teachers.

One of the questions the study seeks to explore is: Can the involvement of most if not all teachers in NEASC self-study process strengthen their autonomy and decision-making skills? Therefore, researcher viewed the self-study process in relation to the contemporary evaluation approaches of participatory nature, notably Deliberative Democratic Evaluation (House & Howe 2000) which uses the evaluation process as a learning experience in an attempt to understand the mechanisms underlying the link between teachers' involvement and activities in the process and possible consequences such as professional growth and empowerment. After briefly synthesizing the literature on the known components of participatory evaluation theory, the research will provide theoretical and empirical evidence to support its hypotheses. The following section explores various evaluation theories and dynamics, which aim not only at enhancing academic outcomes but leads to a holistic social and academic betterment.

2.4 Evaluation: Concepts

Evaluation is a broad-spectrum term, with a mission and process classically intended at systematically analysing and assessing the value of aspects against specific guidelines and standards or internally achieved objectives. However, every action has un-purposely planned consequences (Fetterman 1996). Gradually, evaluation matured from being a method of

ranking into a powerful mechanism and experience expected to boost the social and academic betterment at a broader scale. As it integrates various workgroup dynamics such as the educators, evaluators, consultants, leadership and management strategies and community partnership, the learning scopes of the process enhance the culture of cooperation and accountability leading into a community of learners with increased collaboration, inquiry, and reflection (Patton 1997; Devos & Verhoeven 2003; Davidsdottir & Lisi 2007; McNamara & O’Hara 2004; Short, Greer, & Michael, 1991; Potthoff et al. 2001).

Evaluation is also an essential marketing tool for promoting success publicly. It showcases a performance scale and evidence of successful efficiency and credibility to financiers and stakeholders (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen 2004). In response to various challenging issues, paradigms and philosophies for evaluation moved away from autocratic and bureaucratic systems. Evaluation has grown to offer more innovative and less conformist theories and mechanisms such as transformative participatory evaluation (MacDonald 1996) which has many models, with a slight difference, that promote democratic values and practices such as Elitist Democratic Evaluation (EDE), Participatory Democratic Evaluation (PDE) and Deliberative Democratic Evaluation (DDE). Table 1 includes the main characteristics of these approaches adopted from Hanberger (2004, p.13).

Democratic Evaluation Model	Function	Focus	Inclusion	Dialogue	Evaluator’s role
EDE- for the people	accountability	aims at outputs & outcomes, goal, achievement	policy & program makers	not important	expert
PDE-by the people	self-determination, empowerment, learning	goal development, process learning and progress	program implementers, focused group, clients	very important	Advocate, facilitator
DDE- with the people	practical knowledge ,learning, accountability, debating	Stakeholders, criteria, learning, outcomes	all legitimate groups	very important	Mediator, counselor
Key: EDE =Elitist Democratic Evaluation; PDE = Participatory Democratic Evaluation; DDE =Deliberative Democratic Evaluation					

Table 1 Characteristics of Three Democratic Evaluation Models

The three main components of Deliberative Democratic Evaluation are:

- Inclusion which entails the involvement of groups of similar interests in the evolution process such as most if not all the “stakeholders” in the evaluation of a program or policy in a school
- Dialogue which advances into critical discussions conducted through rational exchange and examination of views with evidence-based
 - Deliberation which is a cognitive learning mechanism largely depends on the credibility of the dialogue. It can be external-collective deliberations with internal-reflective one.

Collaboratively participants and evaluators engage in this dialogical process. The most sensibly sound decisions and conclusions are reached by reasoning (Davidsdottir & Lisi 2007; Rostbøll 2008; Fetterman 2001; Lehtonen 2006; Short, Greer, & Michael 1991). DDE minimises the gaps and the inequalities within the school power imbalance and moves beyond the restricted decision-making process conducted without the sufficient contribution from those who are involved, and this is not the essence of democracy (House & Howe 2000). Being participant-oriented, self-evaluation, also known as a self-study in American accreditation, is highly recommended when improvement is sought (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen 2004, p. 129). DDE manifests itself strongly in the self-study with the empowering factors of engaging stakeholders and providing opportunities for intense observation, clear communication, and collaboration which is crucial to the success of the evaluation (Dryzek 2009). Consequently, the self-study does not only support the inspection and accreditation process but aims to develop and sustain a self-efficient community which the deliberative democratic theory holds strongly.

2.4.1 Self-study

Described as an internal “dialogic process,” if conducted genuinely, the ongoing process of self-study becomes “at the core of a school’s educational life” (MacBeath 2004, p. 90). The complex process includes regular reflection, communication, researching, collecting and producing a considerable amount of data and evidence to make the final written product which is “far more important to the institution as a focus for future growth than it is to the accreditation bodies as an aid to their evaluation” (Rosenbloom 1981, p.14).

Cognitive mental mechanism underpins the operational paradigm of the self-study process. In deliberation, a great value is placed on the product that results from dialogue as well as the process that delivered that product (Abelson et al. 2003). Reflection, a necessary component, is the written experiences “about the problems and issues” and encourages “insight and interpretation” (Bullough & Pinnegar 2001, p. 16-17).

Because self-study is not a ranking tool, it targets to boost teachers’ professional growth thus their students’ academic progress as it implores the mental synthesis of awareness, reasoning, assessing and constructively arriving at a conclusion which leads to making decisions that end in improvement (Hamilton & Pinnegar 2000). With such process and components, the self-study is set away from any internal authoritative structure especially with the minimal involvement of the evaluators (House & Howe 2000).

With this approach, the evaluators or facilitators also interfere in the power dynamics as they might actively support a less powerful or prominent group. Themessl-Huber and Grutsch (2003), while facilitating evaluation of an Austrian social-benefit association, reported the various roles they had to undertake as evaluators, advocates, trainers, or expert consultants during the different phases of the process.

Usually, evaluators aid with prioritising objectives, provide insights and strategic planning for a set of key long-term goals. In the context of schools, this includes specific improvement with great impact such as improving student attainment. Open dialogue and the process of evidence collection and documentation are established to build a culture characterized with transparency, documentation and inquisitive learners (Fetterman 1994; Schnoes, Murphy-Berman, & Chambers 2000). Imperative to the success of self-study is the organization's motivation to change and transform (Glasman, Cibulka, & Ashby 2002).

NEASC stresses that “self-study is at the heart of accreditation, serving both external and internal purposes: quality assurance and institutional improvement through rigorous self-analysis” (NEASC 2013, p. 4). NEASC self-study is both situational and contextualised evaluation as it conducted the evaluation in the typical work environment during school visits and based on the school's conditions and requirements (Kells 1995; MacBeath 2004).

2.4.2 Self-study and empowerment

Many researchers claim that participating in a self-study promises an empowering effect as it facilitates opportunities bottom-up for empowerment, problem-solving and decision-making. These opportunities enhance teachers' engagement, inquiry, and exploration capacity leading to improving their professional self-efficacy. They broaden their perspectives not only about their school but also about their profession and themselves as members of the larger society (Bandura 1998; Themessl-Huber & Grutsch2003; Kerr & Cleaver 2004; Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen 2004).

With the weakened impact of authoritarian model of the self-study process, power dynamics within the school setting shifts as communication and reflection reveal the interests of the participants and their values in relation to their personal and professional identity in an unbiased way (Short, Greer, & Michael 1991; Fetterman 1994; House & Howe 2000). Based on what is discussed, in a school, the level of teachers' involvement in the dialogue reflects

their empowerment (Davidsdottir & Lisi 2007). As it is an on-going process, the process itself results in a learning experience for the participants turning them into life-long learners.

Within the culture of reform and quality, reflection becomes an important practice in school as it stimulates the decision-making and professional interpersonal skills within the school's dynamic such as among teachers themselves and with school management and strengthens teachers' professional reality beside their knowledge (Schön 1987; Sergiovanni 2001). Teachers with opportunities for dialogue and reflection can reveal new realities, acquire new learning, and make informed decisions. Steadily, they gain security, confidence and become self-efficient and intrinsically motivated as they continue to learn and become able to predict the outcome of their actions whether on a personal or professional level (Bandura 1998).

Self-study leads to teachers' self-efficacy which is an important aspect of their empowerment according to Diener and Biswas-Diener (2005). Ultimately, the aim is not just collecting evidence or passing judgments but rather encouraging individual's awareness, participation and dynamic interaction within a cultural, educational, and organizational transformative change (Brunner & Guzman 1989; Whyte 1991).

NEASC's self-study, which can take 12-18 months, is based on the school reviewing its current situation against the standards set forth by NEASC's commission and reporting back to NEASC through the Self-Study Report. This reflective process involves a body of teachers, parents, students, and administration.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Methodologies

3.1 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the research methodologies used. This includes the research design, sources of data, data gathering procedure and the treatment of data.

The study's main intent is twofold: to gain better understating of the impact of self-study process on teachers' empowerment from the perspectives of those who worked on it, and to accentuate teachers' voices (Moustakas 1994), taking into account the unique organizational and cultural characteristics of Dubai's educational context.

Therefore, to give meaning and explore the impact of self-study on teachers' growth and empowerment and the larger picture of the professional and social betterment, it would seem appropriate to use a multiple method design: a phenomenological approach using postmodern and complexity-based methods. The approach is also supported by a qualitative study to deepen our understanding of how the process of empowerment is shaped and described and to recognise and assess which factors contribute more to teachers' empowerment (Denzin 2009; Creswell 2013). The thesis title has attempted to capture the essence of this academic pursuit. Following is a description of the methodology.

3.1.1 Theoretical framework

In the quest to studying the impact of the self-study process on empowering teachers and to give meaning to the research, while considering the complex reality of the organizational dynamics with its entwined web of rich leadership approaches combined with a rigorous accreditation process and a growing empowerment process in workplace, the researcher chose to employ postmodern and complexity-based methods for exploring, analysing, and meaning-making of teachers' lived experience (Doll 2012; Doll 1993; Moustakas 1994; Feinberg &

Soltis 2004) to highlight the significant and extrinsic value of this phenomenon and further the reader's understanding of the process of empowerment.

Integrating the frameworks of complexity theory and interpretivism guide to a better comprehension of the process of empowerment rather than restrictively presenting biographical accounts of teachers and self-study process. Thus our interpretation turns us into active participants as Doll (1993) implies.

In a postmodern framework, the multifaceted interactions combined with various internal and external factors are key aspects of chaos and complexity theory method (Doll 1993). For Moustakas (1994) each creates his/her own understanding of a particular situation within the organizational dynamics, and these perceptions become the "primary source of knowledge, the source that cannot be doubted" (p. 52).

Therefore, incorporating the phenomenological reduction method by Moustakas for data collection and analysis, and Doll's framework for educational research enable the researcher to continually revisit individual experiences as new factors would emerge to establish connections and form an understanding of the whole phenomenon. To better study organisational dynamics, Tsoukas and Hatch (2001) encourage using narrative analysis relying on complexity theory. Therefore, the results are presented in an interpretive and metanarrative framework.

Oxford English Dictionary defines metanarrative as "an overarching account or interpretation of events and circumstances that provide a pattern or structure for people's beliefs and gives meaning to their experiences." Metanarratives go beyond generalizations about findings as they mirror the vivid descriptions that surface through a conversation with or revealed within a text done by an individual and blended with sociocultural and psycho-historical analysis. This is why metanarratives are significant for their own sake. They construct

the meanings needed for understanding teachers' perceptions of experiencing the self-study and of empowerment (Irving & Klenke 2004).

Complexity theory recognises the presence of numerous external and internal variables which are dynamically and changeably connected within the educational context (Stacey 2003). Chaos theory reasons that within and despite a nerve-racking challenges or perplexing circumstances, strands of order are formed in what is described as "edge of chaos." This is where change takes place. Therefore, several studies indicated the crucial need for strengthening the collaborative relations between teachers during serious rapid changes to facilitate their coping and prosperity (Smyth 1992, Hargreaves & Fullan 1992; Southworth 1993).

To summarize, in the quest to meaning-making, each source is regarded as a separate component interlaced within a complex one, relationships are established through the revisiting repeatedly the experiences when richly portrayed through metanarrative, they lead to the full picture. Concerning the study, linking the notion complexity with the phrases 'teacher empowerment' and 'self-study' makes sense as teacher empowerment is intrinsically complex (Opfer & Pedder 2011). Furthermore, the use of the term points to the number of theoretical tools drawn to explore the relationship.

Teachers' insight and observations that outline their perceptions of the rigorous self-study process and its impact become central to their construction of meaning. Their daily stories, routine and challenges in school, classrooms and subcommittees' environments during the self-study process, influence their practices, beliefs, and endurance. All cannot be grasped through surveys as every insight provides new and valuable meanings in the descriptions of teachers and empowerment (Moustakas 1994; Valli & Buese 2007).

The researcher commenced the study using Moustakas' epoche stage (1994) by exploring a huge selection of quantitative and qualitative studies of leadership, policymaking,

and organizational dynamics. The first biases were paused but not removed initially. To obtain further options to research bias and hypothesis, Doll's rigor (1993) has been included and followed by data coding to recognize relevant experiences. This is where Moustakas (1994) identifies that with every revisit of the original set of data, the possibility of new findings increases; still he dictates that the researcher should be conscious that each has its independence, value, and worth. The process also rises "Layers of meaning . . . and multiple possibilities or interpretations" as Doll describe (1993, p. 176).

The process of data coding and thematic clustering were not definite nor followed a linear course (Osberg & Biesta 2004). It was cycles of creating and recreating which makes sense with the various methods used in this study and the combination of phenomenological reduction with complexity theory with interpretivism.

Starting with the broad coding of the literature, the researcher conducted sorting and grouping of data either in new categories or existing ones and frequently employed phenomenological reduction. Several categories were created; data were coded and recorded to correlate with predetermined ones or to categorise the data that were not recognised in the first set (Moustakas 1994). Doll (1993) described a similar process of frequently revisiting the original set to produce new meanings based on relationships while Bently (1975) described it as specifications.

During these cycles, personal reflections, which articulate new personal meanings that were different from previous perceptions, guided the creation also. Then these phenomena were developed into themes that were included in the empowerment narratives.

Using metanarrative and the multiple methods that furthered the creation and flow of data made the approach all-inclusive enabling the researcher to provide descriptions of the shared meaning and still grounding them on the methodological frameworks of main theories. Hopefully, this would eliminate or lessen personal and contradictory opinions and provides a

more rounded perception of the nature of organizational dynamics during the self-study process.

3.1.2 The Role of the Researcher

Personal goals in conducting this research project were to expand knowledge and understanding of teachers' empowerment issues in relation to the self-study process, not to advocate for or against internal institutional practice nor the accreditation. Being the sole investigator, the researcher's practice was partially programmed by the guidelines of case study methods.

The researcher's roles as an administrator, a NEASC active member of the Steering Committee and Chairing a subcommittee is double-edged. It enabled practicing 'lived experience', conducting observation, taking notes, and facilitated document access. However, it can also shed on the researcher's bias and objectivity. Being aware of that and to combat it, the researcher conducted self-training to separate professional and academic roles and detach personal beliefs and opinions. Knowing that teachers' voices should be presented without seizing or limiting their voices due to researcher's roles and as an author while consciously realizing that there are always more meanings, objectivity was strengthened through the theoretical framework.

Throughout the months, the researcher continued with the observations and unstructured interviews with other teachers as new events emerged which contributed to the identified themes. Adapting Bakhtin's (1981) stance of having a parallax of discourses, and like the camera lens, the researcher would zoom in closely to identify the meanings of events or step aside to maximize the range to capture the impact these events or actions made to the whole. Then the critical observer with a multisensory approach during a tense period of times will emerge. Other times, the researcher would allow the confused observer and learner to be in 'I wonder' instances and suspend any subjective positions as researcher and school/NEASC

member. This is what Somerville explains “being uncertain; not proving, but wondering” (2007, p.225).

3.2 Design and Instrumentation

This section reviews the design features and is followed by discussions on the four units of analysis: survey instrument, principal and teachers’ interview, and document review.

3.2.1 Case Study Design

The case study design has been progressively acquiring popularity, particularly when inspecting a real-life, contemporary context characterized with multi-variable conditions about a person or group of people using one or several methods (Yin 1989; Creswell 2013; Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift 2014).

The nature and the questions lead to an exploratory, descriptive case study employing mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data within the phenomenological design and statistical study. A single case, based on one school, can be employed in this investigation with the rationale that the school is representative or typical as Siggelkow (2007) indicates with the existence of the phenomenon. Surely, multiple cases would have allowed wider investigation of research questions and theoretical evolution (Eisenhardt & Graebner 2007); yet they are costly and consume resources and time to execute (Baxter & Jac 2008). As the intention is illustrative, focusing on discussing a certain phenomenon within a context and across different situations rather than confirmable or comparative, single case studies are more advantageous to advance a theory (Dyer & Wilkins 1991; Yin 2003).

Choosing a single case study also provides more time to observe the participants and synchronize the theoretical relationships and explore comparative ones which lead into cross-case analysis with the presence of subunits existing within the main one (Yin 2003). The cross-

case analysis is important because they increase the generalisability of the findings and trace conditions in which findings occur (Miles & Huberman 1984).

The multiple elements of data analysis (Yin 2009): observation, teachers' and principal's interview, KHDA and NEASC documents. Data from each case were compiled separately before the cross-case synthesis was presented and analysed and conclusions were drawn. The analysis and findings are presented in a descriptive manner, organized by research questions.

In this investigation, a Dubai-based private US-school that had recently completed its NEASC self-study and visiting committee site visit in 2017-2018 was studied. The recently conducted self-study process was the main factor for choosing this school for information retrieval especially teachers' perceptions which might weaken with the passing of time to get the best results (Willis 2005).

3.3 Document Collection Procedure

Resources that include empowerment indicators as identified in the literature and recommended by professional educators were sought such as the Self-Study reports, NEASC Visiting Committee Reports, and KHDA reports on US-private schools and the participant school. According to Yin conclusions and assumptions can also be deduced from the documentary evidence. The researcher's aimed to "corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin 2009, p. 103). The data were elaborated on descriptively in order to give a sense of the school, but not identify the school that is in the study. NEASC Final Report was not shared. When asked, none of the Senior Leading Team (SLT) received the final report either till the moment of finalizing the study. The school's public database does not give details either.

3.3.1 Survey Instrument

Fink (2006) recommends using a survey instrument when collecting information from people about people. Hence, quantitative data was obtained through a web-based survey which is favourable for its confidentiality and ability to reach and engage with wider-scope of well-defined participants and offers swift data collection (Rea & Parker 2005; Reynolds et al. 2007; Brace 2008). A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix E. The survey report can be found in appendices K and L.

Including the demographic data section, there were 10 sections, sections A through J, which scaffold to one or more elements of the three research questions. The statements on the survey were featured in Likert scale format and closed (yes/no and, in some cases, does not apply) format. The Likert scale is recognized for “generating reliable scales of individual differences” (Crano & Brewer 2002, p. 286). The choices were: strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree; and in some cases, no opinion/not applicable.

3.4 Target Population

Building out the pools of participants was challenging as the number of teachers actively participating in NEASC self-study sub-committees was also purposely selected by the school’s management. The researcher knew about this during the initial non-formal discussions with teachers and realized that even the participating teachers would only be able to share part of the whole picture (Rubin & Rubin 2005).

Undoubtedly such management's choice suggests the issue of compartmentalization of knowledge and information and poses as a potential limitation to the research, but it is also related to the theme the study examines. Therefore, the target population was a purposive sampling of convenience: teachers and the principal.

As the aim is in-depth understating, the smaller sample size is advantageous (Merriam 2009). Participants were approached personally then invited by e-mails. Each was provided with a letter of potential participants and was informed with the researcher's interests and goals, as well as my plans for confidentiality (Appendix A). Confidentiality was highlighted to the participants in the introductory presentation and the consent form. Anonymity is protected by the use of pseudonyms for all the participants and the school. While conducting the study, and considering the legal and ethical considerations, the researcher adhered to the guidelines in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association to ensure the well-being of the participants which were explained in the consent form. Those who chose not to participate were and will be respected (American Psychological Association 2001). The consent form was approved by the Supervising Professor for the study at The British University in Dubai. Four participants have earned a master degree in their subject specialty; one has a master of education. Only the necessary demographic information was requested from the participants. (Appendix B)

3.5 Interviews

The semi-structured-scheduled face-to-face interview protocol was adopted as it allows for more interaction to offer prompts and follow-up on new ideas or correct misunderstandings in a way that is just not possible with other methods. Even though in-depth interviews may be time-consuming and cannot be generalisable; however, they are valuable for comparability particularly when there is data from various people and sources and when the focus is on subjective human experience (Taylor & Bogdan 1984).

Interviews were conducted in the school in private offices and by telephone. Prior to each interview, the researcher explained the consent document, questions, and the general purpose of the research. Participants also were informed in advance that there would be main

and detailed follow-up questions to allow propping (Paton 2002). Request to record was denounced by some participants.

Using a mixture of open-ended and brief questions to allow the interviewee's perceptions and opinions to surface with minimum influence, allows probing for more responses, or clarifying vague statements (Crano & Brewer 2002; Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle 2006). During analysis, the researcher took into consideration that the information provided through the interviewees' lenses would be overshadowed by their different experiences, relationships, personal concerns, and interpretations and that may have influenced the responses (Bradburn et al. 1979).

The line of questioning was designed to focus the conversation on the experiences of the participants during and after the self-study process. Influenced by Rubin and Rubin model (2005), I used "open the lock" and the thematic clustering of questions described as the "tree and branch," which offered ample opportunities to incite the participants' account and descriptions to surface and unexpected threads to be followed questions. Several initial prompts eventually led to a "river and channel" style of interview (Rubin & Rubin 2005, p. 146).

Both English and Arabic languages were used depending on the participants' preference to allow the conversations to move interactively and collect rich descriptions. Even though this requests particular attention during translation to maintain the essence of responses, but being aware of cultural variation and linguistic expressions eases the process.

Generally, the questions drew upon the literature review. Starting with the teacher's educational background, years of experience. Other questions targeted teachers' operational involvement and activities in NEASC self-study process to delve into their perceptions of the process, its impact on personal and professional levels such as engagement, their preference of certain activities, available resources, school leadership and their colleagues' influence and

support, which all come to sketch the indicators of empowerment. Except for one participant, none of the participants, whether in the online survey or in the interviews, have been in a cross-campus initiative similar to NEASC self-study. The single participant had a similar experience with a different international accrediting body in the home country. The teachers' interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

3.5.1 Principal Interview

The interview with the principal was conducted at his office in the school in June and lasted about 40 minutes. The principal was provided with a letter of participation and was informed with the researcher's interests and goals, as well as plans for confidentiality (Appendix D). The interview targeted the school leader's viewpoint on teachers' empowerment, improved instruction, and efficiency, opportunities provided for teachers to develop their decision-making and deliberation and the self-study process. The principal's answers were used as an element of fact-checking for triangulation purposes. The principal's Interview Coding Matrix and Thematic Coding Analysis can be found in Appendices F and I.

3.6 Data Analysis

Personal field notes, reflections and participants' written responses were included in the analysis which was recursive and ongoing throughout the process (Creswell 2013). The constant reading of various literature sources and personal memos aided in outlining predicted notions and themes at the early stages (Rubin & Rubin 2005). This enabled forming an initial list of temporary codes before the first round of interviews (Miles & Huberman 1994).

Codes' refining and expanding continued with the ongoing exploration of further notes, transcripts, and documents. Each interview transcript and document was reviewed as a whole and not instantly segmented into the emergent coding structure to ensure that key data were not overlooked or have false attribution.

This tolerance of an emergent coding structure was important; entering into the first set of interviews, the basic codes at the beginning of the study were aimed directly at bringing out influences of the self-study and examples for teachers' empowerment. Once it became clear that a different story or theme was emerging, the coding structure shifted towards getting a better understanding of what actually happened and why. Some of the initial codes survived through to the final structure: communication, collegial relationships and hints of reflective practice. There also juxtaposed with themes of empowerment that were identified from teachers' interviews such as teachers sharing leadership roles, sharing knowledge and decision-making, demonstrating confidence in self and others and making initiatives, sense of belonging which developed into a community.

Once the case investigation was done separately, the cross-case analysis was conducted not only to get broader key notions but to establish internal validity and a full sense of the "story" within each case before looking at whether the themes could, in fact, be extended across the cases.

Data coding also illuminated themes and revealed evidence of the research questions and the conceptual framework. The categorical coding followed this. Codes were developed based on the research in the literature review, the research questions, and the conceptual framework. To organize the interview data, a table was created for the principal's interviews and a separate table for teachers'. Quotations were organized by code. A matrix of which codes were found in each of the data sources was developed (Appendix J). It demonstrated that most of the codes were used in the teacher interviews, principal interviews, surveys, but fewer were applied to the document review, which was expected because the topics in the documents are less far-reaching than the interviews.

The cross-case synthesis was descriptive and attended to the research questions. The case description (Yin 2009) referred to the elements that fall within of Deliberative Democratic

Evaluation. The descriptive case was supported by both qualitative data from the interviews and documents and quantitative data developed through the survey instrument and gathered in the documents. The intention was to put forth a description of the extent of teacher empowerment in the schools due to the completion of the NEASC self-study. The result was an argumentative interpretation supported by the data (Yin 2009). The description of the current situation in this school may be illuminating to other researchers of these topics.

3.8 Study Limitations

Focus on a specific context with a limited choice of participants, unavoidably limit the scope of usefulness of any findings. However, this study was intended to provide a deep and rich description of the effects of common practice on teachers, not to generate any prescriptive instructions for other schools regardless of type. Nonetheless, the cases remain helpful to researchers interested in the influences and impacts of large-scale self-study processes at schools, as well as for administrators as they consider their goals and preparations for the reaccreditation process.

Discovering that school management already had limited the number of self-study participants was also an unexpected challenge. Currently, several teachers who had been involved with the original process in 2016-2017 departed the school. Others were unwilling to participate, despite the researcher's best efforts. Another overarching challenge was the effects of time and responsibilities on individual and institutional memory—much of the details of the process could not be recalled immediately and required several side discussions and interviews to bring most of them out.

3.9 School Overview

Located in Dubai, the K-12, KHDA-licensed school operates since 1998 in parallel with other schools under one governing board, which was officially established in 2007. It is privately owned by four shareholders who are its Board of Directors (NEASC 2016). Daily operations are conducted by the Principal and School Leadership Team such as Head of Sections. Emirates students constitute the majority with 672 students; others come from different regions but mostly from Middle East. Similarly, the majority of the academic staff is from the MENA region (NEASC 2016). The school has a trilingual program in English, French, and Arabic. The medium of instruction is English. The key rationale behind choosing this school is that it was experiencing NESC self-study process and preparing for a joined KHDA/NEASC visit. The school has been granted the accreditation in May 2018 from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) for a two-year cycle.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Findings

The findings are presented by research questions. Within each research question, the data mined from the sources are provided in the following order: survey instrument, the principal's interviews, the teachers' interviews, and the document reviews which include KHDA reports and the Self-Study Reports Booklet, written by the participating teachers in subcommittees, members of SLT team and school administration and the Visiting Team reflections and recommendations.

4.1 Survey Data for Research Question 1

How and to what extent are these elements of teacher empowerment evident and promoted in the NEASC self-study evaluation process for a private US school in Dubai?

The question tackles the extent to which the NEASC self-study process empowers teachers to improve their practice. It also guides the investigation of indicators which attribute to teachers' efficiency, empowerment and improved practice such as instructional improvement, the practice of deliberative reflection, opportunities of decision-making and collegial relation. The survey included items associated with these topics. Many notions can be generated such as transparency, trust, deliberation, and decision-making. Several are described below. Survey report is found in Appendix K.

4.1.1 In Relation to Teaching and Learning

Most participants positively agree on the self-study's impact to practice reflection and to enhance discussion opportunities on pedagogies, curricula, and assessment. Practicing decision-making is shown through curricula modifications (Items 5-23). 78.95% of participants agree on having the opportunities to learn from each other during the subcommittees' meetings. 63.16% of participants indicate the self-study's positive impact on teachers' professional

growth. 57.89% of participants agree of becoming more confident with their teaching knowledge and skills while 52.63% indicates that their colleagues improved instructional practice. 84.21% indicates the self-study's impact on modifying curriculum and 78.95% agree on the self-study's influence to modify methods of instructions and assessments. These sections have the least passive or negative response.

4.1.2 In Relation to Reflection and Efficiency

In overall, there are positive teachers' responses to feeling more professional and empowered due to the NEASC self-study (Items 24-30). 84.21% of participants believe to be more effective. There is a high positive response rate to practicing reflection on teaching methods, curriculum, and assessments and recognising its impact. 73.68% of participants indicate becoming more reflective, and 78.95% positively report improved students' attainment.

73.68% of participants report the positive impact of the subcommittees' meetings on staff efficiency and collaboration while 63.16 % approve the meetings' impact on increasing independence. This consolidates the hypothesis that empowered teachers to act with autonomy leading into a strengthened learning-teaching process in the classroom (Gibson & Demob 1984).

4.1.3 In Relation to Decision-making

Responses on the inclusion of all stakeholders received low agreement rate (Items 31-39). 42.11% of participants agree on teachers' total involvement compared to 63.16% who strongly indicate the administrators' involvement. Responses on students' and parents' involvement are low.

89.47% of participants negatively report that teachers had involvement opportunities in the essential phase of forming the mission and guiding statements process. 47.37% approve

that the mission and guiding statements were communicated effectively. (Items 40-45). A high rate of disagreement about practicing reflective deliberation on important practices among teachers and administrators: for example, item 46, 73.68% of participants negatively report on being engaged in discussion opportunities on the school's programs, processes, and performance (Items 46-49).

83.33% of participants disagree that teachers received adequate training to practice discussion, analysis, and assessments to aspects such as programs or process (Item 50). This resonates with the interviewees' general agreement that there has not been enough time to practice the self-study process genuinely.

While 88.89% of participants report the lack of open dialogue and decision-making among teachers and administrators regard the effectiveness of some school aspects, 61.11% positively indicate teachers' deliberation, evaluation, and recommendation practice during the sub-committees' meetings (Items 51 & 53). 58.82% approve that teachers' voice was heard through proposals and recommendations (Item 55). This resonates with the positive responses on decision-making opportunities limited to the daily work routine or with teachers' curriculum and instruction and the positive impact of meeting with colleagues (Items 18, 20 & 22).

4.1.4 In Relation to Administration- Teachers Communication

Even though 54.55% of participants believe that the self-study provides teachers with opportunities to practice decision-making (Item 59); however, there are some negative responses indicating the weak deliberation and decision-making engagement in some phases in the process such as teacher-administration joined efforts in forming the school mission, planning school goals, or evaluating the school's programs. 75% of participants affirmatively expressed lack of knowledge about the extent of teachers' involvement (Items 40-48; 56-58). However, 68.42% agree on the positive impact of the subcommittees' meetings, which joined

teachers and administration, on improving their efficiency. 53.85% affirm receiving clear communication (Items 44 & 45).

4.2 Principal Interview Data for Research Question 1

Addressing the issue of empowering teachers to develop their practice, the principal indicated the impact of self-study on the school's professional development program and highlighted the continuous efforts to improve teachers "to differentiate and plan more engaging lessons for students."

When asked if the self-study provided teachers with opportunities to learn directly from each other in terms of instructional methods or assessment, the principal confirmed having such opportunities besides other contexts such as the weekly department's meetings, section meetings, and the professional developments workshops and continues learning opportunities. "Instructional improvement is basic because it leads to student change and growth," the principal confirmed.

The principal stressed the importance of building trust between him, his SLT and teachers to encourage them to be innovative and resourceful. It is possible that this makes teachers feel effective and empowered if they are allowed to experiment and try new ways to teach because they are trusted. He indicates that "when teachers feel trusted, they can be innovative. This is empowering".

4.3 Teacher Interview Data for Research Question 1

Discussions about empowering teachers to improve practice led to specific instructional changes that teachers made due to the NEASC self-study process. The interviews uncovered several interrelated topics which are considered empowerment indicators such as professional and personal growth, confidence, high expectations, collegial and administrative communication and support, and learning community. Teachers' Interview Coding Matrix

can be found in Appendix H. Thematic Analysis for teachers' coded comments can be found in Appendix G.

4.3.1 In Relation to Pedagogies and Methodologies

In their interviews, participants indicated enhanced efforts and improved quality of instruction to meet students' different needs and the learning expectations as rooted in UAE National Agenda and the school's mission. P5 asserted that the "instructional changes were in response to NEASC's standards that made them [teachers] change their methods of teaching and become more creative towards creating a student-centered learning approach." P2 cited the "school-wide change in the learning outcomes to raise students' expectations."

Teachers also traced the influence of the self-study process on them which enabled them to become familiar with NEASC standards, as P1 stated, "Certainly, it did help me to evaluate my instruction and change it." All pointed out of becoming more reflective about their instructional strategies and collaborative to improve "student achievement and encourage student's accountability" as P1 concludes.

4.3.2 Growth & knowledge

Another aspect of efficiency and psychological empowerment is how P1 described the experience of being in the vertical alignment sub-committee as an "eye-opening. Without a doubt, it made me look at my instruction and change it for the better". Other participants delivered similar perceptions about themselves and their colleagues.

P3 established a cause-effect relation while talking about professional growth and the self-study process. "After a while, some members in our committee used to share their latest ways of teaching and even bring samples of students' work. This shows how they have grown and changed because of experiencing the self-study and the other activities." Other participants concurred such observation.

Even though P2's felt positive in overall about the participation by indicating, "I felt I was a source of knowledge to my committee with my creative ideas of teaching math," but, shades of frustration and disappointments can be traced when describing the "whole process is not directed towards learning new teaching skills. It's not aimed towards improving each teacher. It's sort of managerial task aimed towards collecting evidence and reporting. And that's what we did. We reported; there was no time to really interact or learn or investigate a lot. It was strictly a pretty long process of answering questions and gathering examples". All participants, except one, were disgruntled for not getting recognition for improved instructional practice and professional growth.

P1, who has chaired a subcommittee, enthusiastically spoke about the opportunity to successful planning and proper delegation and collaboration within the sub-committee. P1 reported that the principal has personally thanked him for all his efforts to fulfill the tasks linked to that specific standard. He stated that due to his efforts he was assigned a managerial post for the coming year.

4.3.3 Confidence & Self-efficacy

Efficacy is linked to teachers' confidence in their abilities. Accordingly, gaining knowledge, focusing the efforts, observing personal and professional growth and working in a collaborative environment can boost a teachers' belief in their abilities and improve performance.

P1 articulated, "Reading the standards and discussing with my colleagues enabled me to learn more and gain more ability to guide my students to success." P5 noted the importance of teachers having "confidence to handle so many tasks" but stressed the added learning value and organizational skills resulting from engaging in the self-study process "teachers became more confident not only in ourselves but also with the students and with our co-workers."

All participants expressed growing more confident due to the process of deliberation which allowed them to voice their opinions and recommendations. This is also associated with what they have described administrative support, which is discussed in the following theme, to establish transparency and trust to express and to act accordingly during the subcommittees' meetings.

Studies explored the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement. Research suggests that teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to be more organized, more resilient, and supportive with students.

When participants were asked whether the self-study and the accreditation process enhance collective efficiency or individual one all of them highlighted the heightened collective efficacy more than an individual one. P5 said, "I think NEASC aims to get us all together, to work together; just like group work is important as we teach our students."

4.3.4 Collegial and Administrative Collaboration

Participants indicate that the collaboration became essential as they joined their group efforts whether in sub-committees' meetings or department meetings. Collaboration chiefly intended towards easing the process of the self-study, collecting evidence and sharing best practices and suggestions to enhance the learning process and community. Some stories gave rise to the concept of school as a community. Therefore, the self-study process does foster a sense of community school-wide.

P1 affirmed the impact of the self-study, "Yes I can say it [the self-study process] improved my ideas about teamwork and enhanced our [teachers] communicative skills and networking. We would discuss, suggest, approve, disapprove so many issues, and listen to each other, and at the end of the meeting we had to agree on tasks and proposals that are realistic and then send feedback."

P3 reflected saying, “Part of being in the process is being able to work together as part of a team even with people I have never met or even knew. This certainly gave me a chance to know more not only about NEASC or the school but also about each other. There were respect and commitment.” P3 continued, “yes it was serious and so hectic, but to some extent it was fun. It was a new experience which excited me a lot and actually, I felt part of the school community.”

The notion of building a culture of trust and transparency was sensed through some participants. P3 reflected on the added sense of confidence too, “there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which sometimes admins. [Administration] do not really know about or ignore. So through some sub-indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels.” P4 also emphasised the importance of administrative support, “you feel that whatever you comment is taken so seriously and it might be even listed as a proposal and that makes you feel supported and more alert to things around you and link them to the NEASC Standards.”

P4 considered the interaction with the administrators in the sub-committees a beneficial learning experience by stating, “I learned a lot about so many issues which I was not aware of. For example, how difficult it is to initiate an interdisciplinary link or conducting extra-curricular events. This made me experiment embedding the interculturalism themes across all the subjects in a certain level I am teaching and work with teachers to make it successful. Teachers began to trust my methods and plan and work together to accomplish great things.”

P5 indicated how networking with other teachers and administrative increased “even through Whatsapp we would discuss things NEASC meetings, students, or we would solve problems together. The HoS would listen to our suggestions especially if I say I read something

about that in NEASC booklet or provide us with the evidence we are missing. They took us seriously.”

After being asked directly, “Has the self-study offered opportunities for teacher collaboration on instruction, assessment, or curriculum?”

P1 explained “students’ emotional and academic success in the classroom was almost everything we talked about. And I know it is happening also in KG section just like it is happening in grade 5 or grade 12. We had to put our efforts to not only achieve this standard but to keep it going on.”

Participants in Teaching and Learning Standards positively agreed that the meetings provided them a place and time for interdisciplinary and cross-campus collaboration. P1 recalled “there were teachers from different departments and sections ... a lot of discussion and information sharing happening there.”

P1 and P5 indicated that recent professional development workshops were about topics related to pedagogies and ICT integration which they have discussed with their sub-committees. This resonates with the high approval results in the online survey.

P3 detailed that, “there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which sometimes admins. [Administration] do not really know about or ignore. So through some sub-indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels.”

4.3.5 Communicative Skills

Whether written or spoken, communicative skills form the basis of any human activity. Improving communication skills builds and sustains reliable social interactions, directs teachers to have better instruction and mentoring. Participants indicated seeing improvement in the quality of social and collegial relations, as well as mentioned earlier increased confidence in engaging with others. These benefits can be essential tools for increasing job satisfaction

and securing lasting relationships. Effective communication takes those involved to be satisfied and feeling accomplished. P2 indicated that she “felt confident when I used to share my opinions and ideas...as if I was a source of knowledge. I felt that my voice is being heard and I would also listen to my co-workers.”

P3 mentioned how a new language “professional and related to accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission.” While P4 affirmed that such involvement with the self-study promoted communication and critical thinking as the members needed to “find evidence” to support their work. “Leadership qualities are very important, and I looked at it as training for an administrative position in the school.”

Participants enjoyed being involved in the process of ‘an open dialogue’ discussing the strength and weakness in their school and being guided by NEASC standards. They felt they owned the moment by pointing out and passing recommendations and suggestions. P2 said, “Were encouraged to bring up anything that goes in our head and see how it can improve the learning process.”

The researcher questioned whether participants were comfortable bringing up challenges to improvement. P3’s explained, “At the beginning, we were passing lots of criticism and suggestions, and then we learned to see things from two sides of a coin.” “There were some heated discussions that had to take place,” P2 explained.

However, P5 considered how the implementation of NEASC self-study process did not empower teachers to improve teachers’ practice and made a strong distinction between teachers’ collaborative work and the teamwork in NEASC self-study subcommittees. Explaining teachers’ role in the self-study, P5 did not consider it “focused on good teaching” but more as a mechanical process of producing “booklet” by “getting everything together, collecting, and writing answers” for the standards. P5’s frustration extends into doubting if

much change has taken place and insisted on the negative impact of lack of time. “Do I wish for more time and more in-depth inquiry, of course!”

P5 explained the situation said, “I have finished my master degree and career-wise, I was interested to participate because I thought I could make a change on so many levels that we teachers know they should change, but here I was just writing reports.”

On the other hand, P3 indicated that growing mature since reading the standards and practicing the process but “it seems to me that we put a lot of efforts and hours reporting and making a booklet that just organizes what we already have rather than coming up with new skills and new ideas and actually having an opportunity.” All participants expressed dissatisfaction with ‘time’ as they consider that the self-study was rushed to get things done within the allocated time.

4.3.6 Decision-making

Decision-making and empowerment go hand in hand. P1 described the self-study as “a driving force”. Even though teachers’ decision-making was limited such as curriculum modifications, but it provided them with “feeling of control,” “critical reflection” and “dialogue.” All indicated that they felt empowered to open up topics and discuss extensively because of brainstorming and finding supportive evidence to strengthen their claims. In relation to deliberation, transparency, and dialogue, participants indicated that the self-study has been “very significant” and “positive” and boosted their growth and confidence.

The online survey reported negative responses in relation to teachers’ engagement with the administration in key stages. Item 47 56 questions the joined efforts to plan ahead school goals received 82.35% negative responses.

4.4 Survey Data for Research Question 2

What aspects of the self-study process contribute to improving teacher self-efficacy?

The second research question aims at exploring the aspects of the self-study process which contribute to improving teacher self-efficacy. This leads to an investigation of teachers' reflection, decisions to make changes, effectiveness, respect (opinion was valued, was listened to), professionalism and isolation. The survey included items related to these topics. Several are described below.

87.95 % of participants agree that they had reflected on their instruction while 84.21% indicate becoming more active (Items 20; 27).

A combination of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' was reported with 41.11% and 15.79% of participants of feeling less isolated than before (Items 15&17). This resonates with the high views on collaboration among staff.

However, at some stages, such as forming the school mission, teachers' involvement was minimum. Teachers were isolated from having an input into the mission of their schools. The following questions such as items 63-66 dig deeper into more specific aspects and received negative responses regarding teachers' decisions –making. Still, 61.11% responded affirmatively that they felt empowered due to participation in a committee (Item 68).

4.5 Principal Interview Data for Research Question 2 Research

During the interview, several topics related to teachers' efficacy came to surface such as teacher's growth, professionalism, collective/group pride, and the group/collaborative efficacy of departments. According to the principal, the self-study "definitely reduces teacher isolation" because teachers "have to be part of the process." However, as a principal, he thinks not just of individual teachers, but departments and sections "the collective mind."

He reported teachers to practice “more collaboration,” and acquiring “academic behaviour.” The principal sees the academic behaviour in terms of teachers’ engagement and considers that collective efficacy increased due to the interdisciplinary subcommittees.

Explaining which elements of the self-study had an impact on teachers, he believed that gathering the evidence and classifying them in the reports was rewarding and “was the most valuable process” of the self-study as it “would be driven from their work, their students’ work.” The principal also sees the self-study process as a learning opportunity. “As a principal, I know about the efforts that we have been making, but I do not think the teacher really knew: how well our school would meet the standards. They needed to learn, and they needed to reflect on the valuable role that they played in making the school as good as a whole.” According to him self-efficacy and collective efficacy would not be possible if individuals and the school did not feel pride.

4.6 Teacher Interview Data for Research Question 2

P4 reflected saying, “we're on the right track, and we can keep on going now. I think we all felt good coming out of it because we felt that the things we were doing well were recognized by NEASC.”

As mentioned earlier, the teachers spoke highly of teachers’ increased “effectiveness” “knowledge” and “confidence” due to the self-study. They were speaking of individual teacher’s self-efficacy. They attribute this improvement to the more structured planning taking place in each department, the self-study, and the new culture of quality assurance and learning happening in the school.

P1 spoke of the strong wave to integrate the school’s mission in almost every aspect in the students’ life in the school within the curriculum and co-curriculum.”

P3 spoke about the more refined “language” and “the culture of accreditation” and the “new techniques and improved skills” to respond to the students’ different learning profiles.

P3 classically links teachers' satisfaction and improved self-efficacy with improved students' attainment.

P4 appreciated the increased support and confidence from administration with the "open-door policy," "to facilitate quick discussions and problem-solving."

When asked about which was the driving part of the self-study that mostly affected teaching, P4 explained that in seeing "the paperwork" from other teachers, "Oh, I kind of do that, but I like the way they presented it better." While P4 may have learned something from another teacher, it was coincidental to collecting evidence.

P5 noted that "the self-study gave recognition to teachers as a force to make things happen." The teachers believed that there is a new form of leadership taking place "and we are part of that," and to most teachers, this is key to their effectiveness. Even though some teachers felt more confident, they also felt less recognized as individuals within the system. Four participants echoed their sense of disappointment at the end of the process. Several reasons were provided such as not being formally informed either by the Chairs of their sub-committees or by the principal. They did not get financial compensation for the added workload such as co-authoring and typing the reports.

4.7 Survey Data for Research Question 3

To what degree does the self-study process engage teachers in reflective deliberation?

The third research question addresses the degree to which the self-study process engages teachers in reflective deliberation. This leads to an investigation of teacher activities of learning and improvement; staff and administration collaboration; decisions to change due to reflection and dialogue; deliberation; goal setting. Data from the survey indicate that reflection and discussion occur in the context of the self-study around specific tasks.

A high agreement rate clustered in teachers' practicing reflection on their methods of the curriculum, of instruction and assessments (Items 17-22). 78.95% of the participants agree that the NEASC self-study process offered the opportunity for teachers to learn from each other with 63.16% agreeing about their colleagues improved techniques (Items 8 & 11).

However, a set of high disapproval about teacher-administration mutual efforts of brainstorming and reflecting regarding critical aspects such as school goals or the effectiveness of the school's programs, practices, processes, and performance (Items 46 & 47).

4.8 Principal Interview Data for Research Question 3

The principal described several modes of teachers' deliberation and collaboration, with administrative such as Subject Coordinators. He indicated that the self-study pushed both "teachers and I [the principal] to reflect on the expectations of the NEASC," and this has been part of "the ongoing process of goal setting," as he described how the school has "witnessed the growth of a culture that requires critical thinking and meaningful discussions backed up by evidence" because of self-study.

"At the present time the end results might seem to be minor changes, but it strengthens long-term collaborative culture. He explained. He highlighted that "teacher's input anymore" is being considered and strengthened. His perception reinforces the impact of NEASC self-study as a process-use to enforce change. Teacher-administration, represented by subject coordinators or Steering Committee, the relation is defined by "strong collaboration" by the principal.

4.9 Teacher Interview Data for Research Question 3

Reflective deliberation is a tool that yields decision-making and an essential step toward empowerment. It includes dialogue, reflection, and collaboration. Teachers reported various

perspectives and sometimes tricky nature of dialogues, especially in the first subcommittees' meetings. However, they all indicated that eventually things changed and teachers alongside the administration were able to engage in thoughtful discussions and looking critically at their practices because of NEASC. Teachers felt that they were heard, and several issues were resolved.

P1 explains that even though it was hectic but the self-study “pushed changes forward in a non-threatening manner.” P1 recalled how teachers felt “uninformed” and “uncomfortable” at the beginning but then “they get wrapped up with the discussions and the process, and it is more or less a joined effort.”

P3 identified the outcomes as “improving our approaches [teachers’], helped me to understand that it is going towards creating educated, responsible citizens; to understand my part in it, [my] role in teaching the students.”

P4 recalled the growing culture resulting from the standards wave which led to “looking carefully at their [teachers] own practices inside the classroom.” P4 explained that decision-making during the discussions was hard sometimes with “challenges they [teachers] face” but gave the opportunity to discuss “this isn't working; what should be working?” According to P4 efforts were directed towards establishing “student-centered” learning.

P5 considered that those meetings refined teachers' skills of thinking and formulating opinions. “Before some teachers would object or negatively criticize certain things happening in the building, but now they look at it as a whole process. They would consider the standards.”

P5 acknowledges that there can be learning during the self-study although P5 indicates that the learning is uneven and not necessarily reflective, but informational. P2, who felt the self-study process was less about reflection and more of managerial tasks, admitted that the evidence collection process exposed her to “the inside world – what goes inside the offices [administration]. When we would discuss evidence’ to support our inputs, we would consider

the best samples and where we can get them from. So that's a couple of things right there”.

Reflective deliberation requires time and opportunities during the self-study for dialogue and discussion. Almost all participants indicated that there was not enough time; this is why they felt they could have learnt more.

When participants were asked what would they do differently in the next self-study? P3 said “surely demand more time to talk about things. I do not want to know just the surface of things; I want to know and learn more about how, when, why, and where. These small details that fill in the gaps for me.”

When asked about communication and collaboration between the teachers and the administration P2 said, “They were absolutely drawn in the whole process especially bringing together information and data and discussing things, and they provided the needed support and facilitation to us to do our work. But I think they also tried to direct a lot of the outcomes though, too. I am not sure of that or even because they also have a different perspective and have the whole picture; not like us with one committee.”

P 4 noted that the “level of collaboration between administration and teachers was different during the self-study. The self-study improved the exchange of information, “increased teachers’ knowledge.” that led to changes in instruction in their school.

4.10 Document Review Data for Research Questions

The key points shared by official reports were about improved instruction, collaboration towards students’ social and academic betterment, teachers’ efficacy and growth and their involvement in decision-making. NEASC’s report (2016) highlights the “culture of shared responsibilities for the social and emotional well-being and protection of students by the school leadership and teachers,” (p.61) and good learning happening with the visible “impact of accreditation to promoting it” (p.77). Specifically, the report confirmed the “effective horizontal and vertical communication,” (p.63) with “good working relationships exist between

the individuals and groups,” (p.78) and improved professional skills and expertise of staff to collaborate and discuss curriculum development and assessment practices to give students “opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.” (p.78).

KHDA notices further collaboration among teachers which “offers students an appropriate level of challenge” (KHDA 2017, p.9). KHDA positively considered the school's self-evaluation as “accurate as a result of a year-long, in-depth study and review of the Organization performance,” and that it “involved all staff” (2017, p.23) indicating teachers’ involvement in the decision-making process.

Endicott survey results affirm this with the 93.7% of staff’s responses indicating regular meetings, 98.9% reporting using database analysis of students’ attainment to improve their teaching and curriculum while 94.9% reporting that the school’s leadership encourage them to pilot new courses or techniques (2016, p.39).

Instructional development is traced with 94.9% of staff reporting horizontal and vertical articulation in the curriculum which provides students with meaningful connection among subjects and structured learning. KHDA observe that teachers “are provided with training to meet the learning needs of different groups of students,” (2017, p.21) which enhances their professionalism and self-efficacy. This resonates with 92.7% of staff reporting the professional development workshops relevant to their needs and the school’s goals.

NEASC report indicates that the leadership works toward all improvement to be “SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound” (NEASC 2016, p.2). Similarly, KHDA reports for the years 2016-2018 indicate progress by significantly reducing gaps in student academic performance, with a significant rise in English, Math, and Science, and promoting a positive and engaging learning environment in serious attempts to meet National Agenda targets. (See figure 3).

However, both KHDA and NEASC indicate that there are “no formal representations of sectors such as parents, teachers or students on the top management body,” and recommend inclusion of representatives, so “broad community opinions are heard” (NEASC 2016, p.41). Participants spoke about ways how they and their colleagues became more effective and more confident. The report also recommends further support for teachers “in taking risks” to improve their pedagogies and “acknowledge efforts in these areas” (NEASC 2016, p.37).

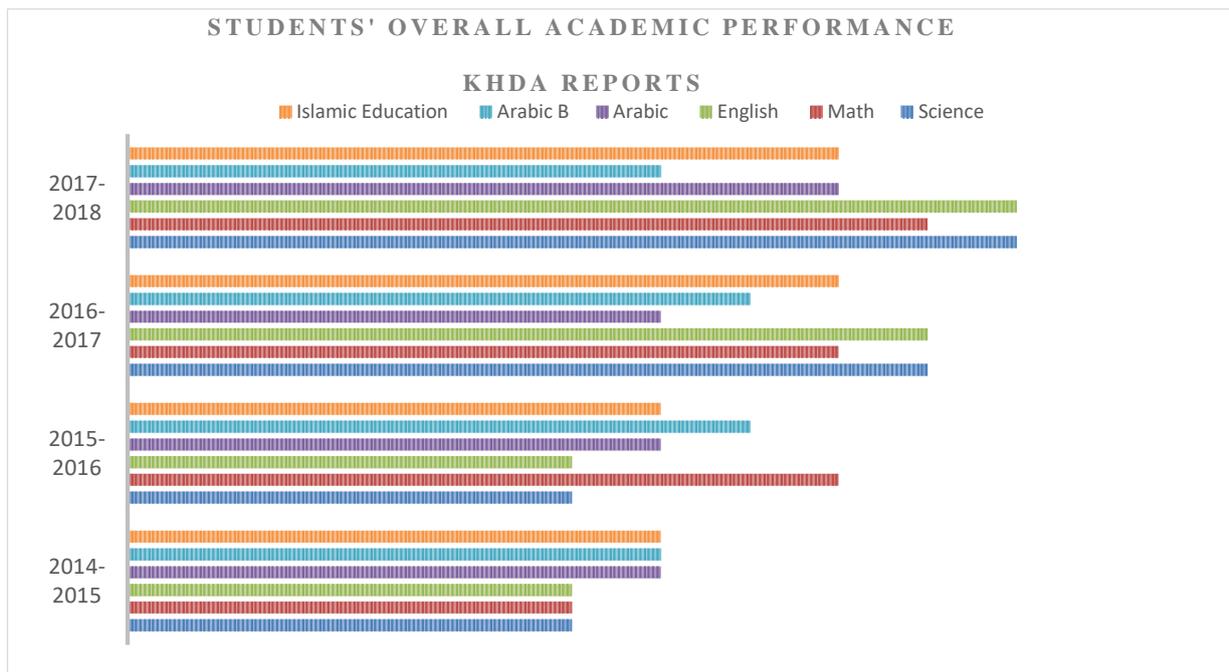


Figure 3: Students’ Overall Academic Performance

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Overview of the Findings and Discussions

It is important to understand that empowerment and instructional improvement are a complicated process with intertwined psychological and organizational dynamics such as building capacity, advancing performance, and enhancing personal and professional attitude and self-identity. Bandura insists that teachers need to be given the opportunities to learn and grow (1998) while Heslin (1999) stresses that participating in school-based activities is a process of learning and growing which empowers them.

Even though NEASC self-study is not designed as an empowering tool, but aims at general improvements such as collaboration, communication, and efficacy as confirmed by data analysis; however, within its process and standards some elements do act as contributing factors to teachers' empowerment, efficacy, and growth. The following section presents the most prominent opportunities and obstacles for NEASC self-study and its impact on teachers. Several issues interrelate with this process such as power dynamics, the culture of debate, data collection and implementing and maintaining dialogue and deliberation.

Data analysis reported that teachers feel more reflective and empowered and felt their voice being heard. This is consistent with Dewey (1910) who said that reflective thinking includes growing and moving forward and resonates with Boud and Walker (1998), Moon (2004), Sergiovanni (2001), who approves with Schön (1983) in emphasizing the importance of reflective practice in education.

Considering NEASC self-study as a process which engages participants with other stakeholders in open dialogue, reflective deliberation, and decision-making resonates with Duke and Gansneder's (1990) concept of empowerment through practicing school-wide decision which they consider its implication is of greater worth than just in one classroom. From a Democratic Deliberative Evaluation perspective, teachers may change their ideas about

where their interests lie after indulging in “careful, reasoned discussion of issues, values, and findings” and after being better informed (House 2005, p. 3). Thus the process enables them to practice decision-making and reaching a conclusion.

This is what Plowright’s integrative model emphasized “The learning school is a reflective school and, consequently, a self-evaluating school” (Plowright 2007, p. 389). Because once the school begins implementing changes and reaches to the desired improvements, the reflective and evaluative cycle, with new goals and more refined objectives, must begin again no matter where in the accreditation process a school is (Leitch et al. 1996).

However, NEASC self-study evaluation process has had a moderate impact on reflective deliberation, which is an important factor in teacher empowerment and the creation of a learning community too in this case study. The self-study process does promote reflective deliberation by requiring work to be done in interdisciplinary standards subcommittees, but it goes no further it. It does not offer opportunities for the participants to solve problems or make decisions, only to reflect and report on the state of the school. There is room for reflective deliberation among the teachers; there is room for reflective deliberation between teachers and administration, but there is no assurance that the power differential between the two groups will not interfere.

Teacher surveys, interviews, and principal interview indicated that many individual teachers reflected on their practice, collaborated and accordingly made changes. They made decisions about staying with their practices or changing. Although they reflected and dialogued, there was an instance where teachers were not comfortable with the power gap, and the discussion was not necessarily open and honest. Teachers report that they discussed, questioned and offered recommendations about some organizational process, student-teacher ratio, or students’ numbers in class. The teacher surveys indicated that teachers had virtually no input into issues of working conditions. It is clear that the power gap causes such

imbalances. To better define the context, reflective deliberation does not lead to teacher involvement in decision-making with the administration, but rather teachers ended up practicing ‘negotiation’ for decision making. This could leave the school with long term negative undertones which can affect the next accreditation cycle for example.

Concerning inclusion, which can be active or passive, here it was straightforward and mainly included those with important practice and input to the self-study’s success. Selected teachers were chosen to participate in the discussions and allocated in the sub-committees. Still, this does not deny the participation of the other teachers in different degrees or forms such as in filling the NEAC Endicott survey or assessing in providing evidence from their students’ work and indulging in the many department meetings. Nonetheless, passive participation is not sufficient to ensure that the opinions are genuine nor all voices to be heard particularly as Fetterman’s (1994) views the self-study as a community engaged “in the art and science of evaluating themselves” (p. 8).

Schoes, Murphy-Berman and Chambers (2000) question the empowering ability of the self-study because participants are not taught about becoming empowered at the beginning of the process. This leads to the next point about the management and leadership need and purpose as it shapes their perception of the self-study and sets out their mechanism for implementation process within the suggested NEASC framework.

In the case of a school that already considers itself professional, well-functioning, and not in need of the self-study’s influence, or a quest for the accreditation as a stamp of approval, the focus will be directed solely to implementing the operational procedures. Such a choice may hold the school back from the substantial learning experience and reveals the power gap between the administration and the teacher. In this case, study, even though opportunities for improved practices are offered; however, decision-making practice was limited to academic topics, and in-depth teacher-administration deliberation at key phases were not that promoted.

This strongly corresponds with data analysis about teachers' lack of engagement and collaboration with the administration to form the school mission or plan goals for example. These incidents shade over the process of deliberative dialogue and decision-making. Gary Fenstermacher (1994) states that teachers' reflection is inseparable from the school's framework and it must start from there with a clear sense of purpose about goals, practices, and contexts and in relation to the learners. On the other hand, the work of Duke, Showers, and Imber (1980) concludes that teachers need certain types and amounts of decision-making especially that this is the first school-wide NEASC self-study conducted by the school. Therefore, one seems to approve the management's choice to academically direct teachers' focus and efforts by setting specific channels of collaboration, communication, discussion, and decision-making to enhance their competency and school's professional culture (Dunst, Trivette, and LaPointe 1992; Gruber & Trickett 1987; Lightfoot 1986; Rappaport 1987).

Considering learning community as an indicator of growth and empowerment is also related to the self-study and its implementation. A base for the learning community is forming a diverse committee which means that discussions will be wide-ranged to enhance knowledge development through dialogue and idea exchange based on specific criteria. Little (1990) described a variation of collegiality that forms a range from independence to interdependence. When the members of different power dynamics and values engage, opinions turn into theories which advance into action in the form of possible alternatives and solutions. Note-taking is documenting, and reporting enhance both individual and group efficacy leading to a culture of reliability and validity. Recognition exhibits itself indiscreetly too.

Data analysis presented positive responses to this process which mirror the huge potential NEASC self-study can offer to create a learning community and the emerging dynamics the school community has developed so far. However, also based on all of the participants' stories, they were placed in sub-committees, with no direct communication with

others. Most participants also indicated that they did not read the final draft of their sub-committee draft nor the final draft of the whole self-study report which indicate that the nature of the process was in a compartmentalized method. Again implementation poses as a setback to the long-term goals of the reflective and collaborative model.

Self-efficacy is also an indicator of teacher internal empowerment (Biswas-Diener & Vittersø 2005). Participants indicated an improved self-efficacy. It is a valuable quality as it impacts the teacher's personal and professional identity and growth. It helps in shaping many concepts such as organization, self-assurance, motivation, determination, and resiliency (Petesch, Smulovitz, & Walton 2005).

To Bandura (1998) "perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3, italics original). Those with low self-efficacy may feel insecure or lack of control over their work life. This is demotivating and will negatively impact resiliency. In this case study, teachers and the principal felt successful due to the self-study process which "having to respond to standards, or "do the self-study reports with the specific indicator." Collecting evidence and producing the data is an aspect NEASC self-study process promote and is highly important for organizational and individual levels as it includes researching, practicing decision-making and providing analytical feedback on standards. These enhance collegial relation, knowledge exchange and collaboration leading to improve self-efficacy which becomes a driving force for empowerment (Johnson & Short 1998; Katz-Navon & Erez 2005). Empowerment here is presented as a performance and as a perception when viewed as indicators of the outcome of a process (Dunst, Trivette, and LaPointe 1992).

The other aspect which the process promoted is the new nature of communication with administrations and teachers and the positive reflections on their experience of discussions and voicing out proposals during the sub-committees mirror both the school's recognition of

teachers' role and teachers' enhanced self-identity as empowered teachers. In this context, teachers' self-efficacy is enhanced by the validation they receive through their communication with authority figures (Heslin 1999). Individual and organizational affirmation and collective efficacy result from engaging in the self-study process. It comes from the conversations with the Visiting Committee and implementing the procedures that NEASC encourages; it comes from being acknowledged for recommendations.

NEASC standards played an important factor to enhance individual and collective efficacy through instructional improvement for teachers' pedagogies, deliberation, and decision-making process during meetings and reporting. Teachers became more organized and focused just like the administration. Here successfully implementation led to the feelings of efficacy. Furthermore, studies indicated that with the increased expertise and proficiency, teachers need more to sense that their efforts, competency, and endeavours are noticed, valued and appreciated. Delegating some challenging tasks and involving them in distributive leadership reflects that recognition (Gruber & Trickett, 1987; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, and Checkoway 1992; Short & Rinehart, 1992; Heslin 1999; Rappaport 1987; Hughes, Ginnett & Curphy 1995; Ryan & Deci 2000; Locke & Latham 2004).

Going back to the first orientation visit team, documents show that all participants in the sub-committees were invited to the orientation team visit while all teachers were informed by NEASC accreditation through a general meeting held by the principal. This reflects the school's management of treating the teachers with professionalism and respect and resonates with Maeroff (1988) emphasise that teachers must sense respect to increase their self-esteem. In conclusion, reflective deliberation happens and is supported by the self-study process. It is a by-product of the process rather than the goal.

The self-study is an influencing evaluation instrument. It encourages instructional improvement, but it is not guaranteed if isolated from other factors and procedures. Reflective

deliberation, decision making, and empowerment to a certain extent occur, but in the case of this school, it is focused if not limited. NEASC process could positively impact instructional improvement and knowledge exchange by adding opportunities for teacher empowerment starting with pushing teachers to achieve the standards and to improve their practice but not ending by collecting evidence.

A prominent challenge reported by participants is related to the school's operational procedure which is the limited time as it did not allow them to benefit more thus expectedly become more empowered. This observation is important in two ways. The first one, it indicates the participants' continues practice of reflection on the learning aspect of the self-study process as they all mentioned it in the interviews and their willingness to exert more efforts in order to learn more. Another point is that the process was mainly intended to and was used as functional rather than an empowering or even learning process (Schnoes, Murphy-Berman and Chambers 2000). Participating teachers were mostly following directions for gathering information, and were less working with the information and learning from the self-study process thus losing what Moon's (2004) identifies as experiential learning. Teachers were eagerly ready to understand and embrace the role and responsibilities of teachers in NEASC self-study system and pursued improve their contributions to overall school success. Apparently the contexts of schooling limit opportunities for thoughtful practice.

If the members of the school community see the personal and collective value in the self-study process and if the school needs the specific instructional changes that the self-study promotes, the school will likely move in that direction. There is an instructional improvement and increased efficacy by teachers. On the other hand, if the members of the school community do not see perceive personal and collective value in the self-study process and/or if the school does not need the specific instructional changes that the self-study promotes, the school will not be likely to embrace the changes. They will go through the motions, but may not gain

substantially from experience. Furthermore, influencing teachers to change their teaching may be psychologically empowering for some, but it is not politically empowering.

Furthermore, if the members of the school community see the personal and collective value in the self-study process, and if the school needs the specific instructional changes that the self-study promotes, the school will likely move in that direction. There is an instructional improvement and increased efficacy by teachers. On the other hand, if the members of the school community do not see perceive personal and collective value in the self-study process and/or if the school does not need the specific instructional changes that the self-study promotes, the school will not be likely to embrace the changes. They will go through the motions, but may not gain substantially from experience. Furthermore, influencing teachers to change their teaching may be psychologically empowering for some, but it is not politically empowering.

Whether NEASC self-study encourages reflective deliberation, impacts efficacy and improves teacher practice; whether it is truly empowering it cannot be confirmed based on this study alone as it needs further studies. However, the fact remains that teacher empowerment is not a goal of the NEASC self-study process. These are mostly by-products of the self-study process and do not happen purposely. NEASC self-study process can influence teachers and schools to make positive changes in instructional improvement but does not lead teachers to be fully empowered psychologically and politically. Nonetheless, considering the positive perceptions reported by the participants, the self-study process has the potential to strengthen the growth of empowerment into the system, rather than turning it to be a by-product of NEASC self-study; teachers would have become more efficient and less frustrated. (Taylor 2000).

In conclusion, NEASC self-study verified that even the entire accreditation system was worthwhile and participants perceived it both affirmative and useful. The respondents approved that the accreditation process increased community awareness of the challenges, strengths, and

needs. They indicated that the process provided information on where to construct smart educational changes.

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

The self-study has been adequately produced to NEASC to demonstrate the school's credibility and dedication to their educational mission. Yes, teachers have gained a valuable experience with positive impacts both on personal and professional levels, but the opportunity to consider and make the self-study process as a momentarily integral part of the whole organization towards a transformative change of an isolated administrative task that has to be finished was greatly missed. Placing a sense of urgency on completing it with time limitations also jeopardizes the proper formation of many valuable opportunities and ideas. Teachers, individually and collectively, want to learn and grow instead of only completing it and moving on. Even the naturally and incidentally acquired partial learning that happened during the self-study process was not sustained. Apparently, schools' management, especially during the current economic environment, resolve to low-cost data-driven resolutions to conduct the self-study process to satisfy the requirements of the accrediting body instead of combining the requirements with enhanced empowering learning experience, especially for their teachers.

School culture needs time to develop and be governed by trust and transparency. Based on this study it is maturing due to the impact of the self-study process. This presents several implications. First, it increases the value of NEASC self-study as influencing evaluation which is most successful in a school that is attitudinally prepared such as this one.

The other one is that the school leadership should make the best use of it as it has been developed. The skills of deliberation, reflection, negotiation, researching which are subdued within the standards can be used first to strengthen the school's transformative leadership style to make conscious attempt to generate a low-risk setting to enable the teachers to safely review and critique the school (House & Howe 2000).

It is possible for so many reasons teachers may not be open to the next self-study process. One reason is that considering that the self-study is not a teacher-directed, and it does not focus on leadership, the power gap, which is also not attended to in the NEASC process, hinder teachers' decision-making. Also due to feelings of demotivation and frustration of the intense labour and lack of recognition, misunderstanding and misinterpreting the process, or because they do not want the skills promoted.

Teachers will learn best if they are genuinely engaged in the process especially that they are motivated by the goals of accountability, quality, and instructional improvement. One way is to design an individualized framework with strategies, activities, tools, and resources, guided by the Deliberative Democratic Evaluation concepts, to support teacher empowerment as the main goal rather than just fulfilling the standards. This will encourage teachers to be devotedly involved again. Teachers' experience with NEASC self-study presents many questions too. Are there elements of different participatory evaluation that can be added to the self-study process? How and to what extent does the self-study an influencing evaluation tool centres on instruction but it neglects or gives minimum effort to influence leadership?

5.3 Conclusion

This study aims to give voice to the teacher through sharing their own perceptions and narratives of their experience with NEASC self-study which has translated into their accounts of teacher empowerment and efficacy. The researcher's inquiry falls within the national movement of theory and application towards programming teachers' transformation as a voluntary process. Teachers' empowerment remains a keystone to reform and improvement, and without the proper support and well-structured guidance, school reform efforts might be less sustainable (Aliakbari & Amoli 2016).

The self-study has great exploratory value beyond satisfying the requirements of the accrediting body as it anchors itself to the participative evaluation philosophy and turns to

present a learning potential for participants rather than an intensively stressful impediment process. It surely raises the school's community awareness of the strengths and needs while its process enables the harnessing and channelling of information from different areas and levels which aids to make proper changes in the school. The self-study should be a starting point for an on-going and self-sustaining change process leading towards a community of learners (Fetterman 1994; Schnoes Murphy-Berman and Chambers 2000).

Nonetheless, the success of any empowerment tool is not disconnected from the prevailing organisational leadership norms that should seek to promote and sustain teacher growth and empowerment. School leadership through implementation should be motivated by the goal of fostering the common good, rather than engaging teachers in strategic procedures. Self-study process should be taken as a learning tool to enhance teachers' capabilities to push changes and extent of success. Echoing such a belief, Sergiovanni (1989) writes, "It is to this end that teachers need to be empowered to action; to be given the necessary responsibility that releases their potential and makes their actions and decisions count" (p. 220).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Participants Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of the Research Study: The Impact of NEASC Self-Study on Teachers' Empowerment

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Supervised by: Professor Christopher Hill
British University in Dubai

You are being cordially requested to join in a research study. Your participation is voluntary which means you can choose whether on or stop participation. If you decide to participate or not to participate there will be no loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Before you make a decision you will need to know the purpose of the study, the possible risks and benefits of being in the study and what you will have to do if decide to participate. The researcher is going to talk with you about the study and gives you this consent document to read.

If you do not understand what you are reading, do not sign it. Please ask the researcher to explain anything you do not understand, including any language contained in this form.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and a copy will be given to you. Keep this form, in it you will find contact information and answers to questions about the study. You may ask to have this form read to you.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to learn more about the impact of NEASC self-study on teachers' growth and development. Therefore, teachers' perception and interpretation to self-study experiences cannot be overemphasized.

Why was I asked to participate in the study?

You are being asked to join this study because you were an instrumental participant in your school's recent NEASC self-study of the accreditation process.

How long will I be in the study?

The study will require your input/perception through semi-structured interviews. You may be also asked to clarify or confirm a statement by phone or email. This is the extent of your participation.

Where will the study take place?

It will be on your campus; either an individual interview or a focus group with your colleagues, as is appropriate and/or feasible.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to discuss your impressions of and experiences with the self-study process, either in an interview or focus-group setting. These will be recorded by exactly one digital voice recorder. If you wish no recording, you can inform the researcher.

AFTER the interviews, you will be receiving the transcripts to confirm.

How will I benefit from the study?

There are many benefits for participation, on an individual level, as it will allow those involved to reflect on their roles within a multifaceted work dynamics, to reflect on the growth that the school may have experienced, and to process the experiences in a way which may reveal areas of strength and challenges in the NEASC self-study process.

The study will shed lights on the difficulties many teachers are confronted with while conducting self-study process joining these initiatives that are meant to enhance opportunities of empowerment and the quality of accountability and transparency.

Your participation could help us understand the individual and institution-level effects of the self-study process, which can benefit you indirectly. In the future, this may help other people and universities to have productive and generative accreditation-related self-studies.

How will confidentiality be maintained and my privacy be protected?

The researcher will do her best to make sure that the personal information obtained during the this research study will be kept private. However, we cannot guarantee total privacy. Your personal information may be given out if required by law. **If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name and other personal information will not be used.**

Confidentiality – In my dissertation, I will use pseudonyms for individuals and for the school.

Confidentiality in your work place –It would be preferable for all involved, if you do not discuss the interview questions and process with people who are not involved. I want to encourage unbiased open dialogue. I am confident that you will use your best judgment regarding what you share/communicate.

Will I be paid for being in this study?

You will not be compensated for participation in the study. You will be offered a copy of the final product once it is completed.

Who can I call with questions, complaints or if I'm concerned about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions, concerns or complaints regarding your participation in this research study or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you should speak with the Principal Investigator listed on page one of this form.

When you sign this document, you are agreeing to take part in this research study. If you have any questions or there is something you do not understand, please ask. You will receive a copy of this consent document.

Signature of Subject
Print Name of Subject
Date

Appendix B
Individual Interview Participants Sheet

Individual Interview Participant Sheet

Section A: Demographics - Thank you for your participation in this individual interview regarding the NEASC self-study in your school.

Please fill out this brief informational sheet upon arrival.

Name _____

E-mail address _____

I will sent a copy of the transcript for you to review for accuracy.

If you are here, then you filled out the consent form when you participated in the survey.

Do you have any questions regarding this process or how the information will be used? After collecting these sheets, the researcher will address any issues that are noted.

Explain your questions here: _____

Gender: F/M

Degree:

Years of teaching:

Course of teaching:

Have you ever participated in a NEASC self-study before this one? Yes/No

If Yes can you indicate which years: _____

Appendix C

Individual Participants Questions

Individual Participants Questions

Dear Participant,

Thank you in advance for taking the time to go over these questions and to reflect upon your lived experience with NEASC self-study process. There are many benefits for participation, on an individual level, as it will allow those involved to reflect on their roles within a multifaceted work dynamics, to reflect on the growth that the school may have experienced, and to process the experiences in a way which may reveal areas of strength and challenges in the NEASC self-study process.

Kindly notice that I will e-mail you a copy of the interview. I'll ask you to let me know if there are any errors or changes that you would like made. The deadline will be two weeks after the day I send it. If there are substantive changes, I'll send it out again for everyone's approval with a one week deadline.

Confidentiality – In my dissertation, I will use **pseudonyms** for individuals and for the school.

Confidentiality in your work place –It would be preferable for all involved, if you do not discuss the interview questions and process with people who are not involved. I want to encourage unbiased open dialogue. I am confident that you will use your best judgment regarding what you share/communicate.

Sincerely,

Razan B. Nweiran

1. Could you describe the initial roll-in/ roll-out of the self-study process, from your perspective? How clear was the end goal?
2. What in particular attracted you to assist on your particular subcommittee?
3. What experiences did you have working on cross-campus initiatives before the self-study process?
4. During participating in the self-study process and/or being part of the subcommittee, what interesting things did you come across that were useful but not completely related to your committee work? How did you pursue it, either within the context of the committee or externally? Why? What has come of it? *(It can be of from a personal perspective).*
5. What have you learned from your **participation** in this process?
6. What would you do differently, if given the opportunity?
7. Did the self-study process encourage you to reflect on your own teaching?
(You may wish to reflect upon possible changes/ or increased related to knowledge, skills, confidence, instructions, curriculum.)
8. In your opinion, what aspects of the self-study process contribute to improving teacher self-efficacy?
(You may reflect upon daily interactions/ culture of evidence-collection to support standards, quality communication/ frequent communication \further open discussions between teachers and administration during and after the self-study, culture of a learning community...)
9. Having participated in this study with these questions, do you feel like someone is recognizing your role in school improvement?
10. Do you feel empowered as a teacher due to participation in the self-study?
11. To what degree does/did the self-study process engage teachers in process of reflection and discussion and/ or decision making? Do you have evidence to prove your opinion?
12. Do you think accreditation enhance educational quality and innovation? Can you give an example?
13. Based on your experience with the self-study and the accreditation process, do they enhance collective efficiency or individual one?
14. Looking back At NEASC self-study, do you feel more professional?

Appendix D

Principal Interview Protocol

Sample Letter to Principals

Dear Principal,

I am in M.Ed. program in: Educational Management, Leadership, and Policy at British University in Dubai. For my dissertation, I am studying the NEASC self-study process for public secondary school accreditation and investigating its impact on teacher empowerment leading to improved teacher effectiveness.

I am contacting you in the hopes that you will consider participating in my study. There are benefits to the school, the staff, and the principal. Participation in this investigation, after a recent NEASC site visit, will allow those involved to reflect on their roles, to reflect on the growth that the school may have experienced, and to process the experiences in a way which may reveal areas of strength and weakness in the NEASC self-study process. While I cannot guarantee that my study will impact the NEASC process, the possibility does exist that your school could be a part of a study which may be considered by those interested in accreditation.

I hope that this investigation is of interest to you. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, (Signed with address, telephone, e-mail address)

Appendix E

Online Survey

SECTION B: Communication/Dialogue / Reflection	
Communication, dialogue and reflection on curriculum, instruction, and assessment	
<hr/>	
.NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss curricula .5	No Opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
.NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss teaching methods and instructions .6	No Opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
.NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss assessments .7	No Opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
.NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to learn from each other .8	No Opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
.I believe that my colleagues have improved their curricula because of NEASC self-study process .9	No Opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
I believe that my colleagues have improved their instructions/teaching methods because of NEASC self- .10 study process	No Opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	

.I believe that my colleagues have improved their assessment because of NEASC self-study process .11

No Opinion Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.I believe that my colleagues have improved their techniques because of NEASC self-study process .12

No Opinion Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Compared to the time before NEASC self-study process, there is now more collaboration among teachers .13

No Opinion Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.I feel less isolated than before because of my involvement in NEASC self-study process .

No Opinion Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

I believe that my subject department, as a group, feels more confident in their teaching knowledge and skills because .15
of the self-study process

No Opinion Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.I believe that participation in the NEASC self-study process improves teaching and learning .16

No Opinion Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Next

Previous

SECTION C: Personal reflection

Personal reflection on one's curriculum, instruction, assessment, knowledge, and skills

.Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my curriculum .17

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have adjusted or changed one or more elements of my .18
.curriculum

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my methods of instruction .19

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have adjusted or changed one or more of my methods of .20
.instruction

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my methods of assessment .21

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have adjusted or changed one or more methods of .22
.assessment

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my own teaching effectiveness .23
.(knowledge, skills, and/or implementation

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Next

Previous

SECTION D: Teacher's perceptions/ feelings about self-efficacy

Teacher's perceptions/ feelings about self-efficacy of one's curriculum, instruction, and assessment knowledge and skills

.Because of NEASC self-study process, I believe that I am a more reflective teacher .24

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Becuae of NEASC self-study process, my students achieve more than before .25

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Because of NEASC self-study process,I am a more effective teacher .26

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Being a member of a sub-committee in the self-study made me a more effective teacher .27

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Because of the self-study, I had the opportunity to meet often with my colleagues and that made me a more effective .28
teacher

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

I became a more effective teacher because of NEASC self-study meetings with department and administration to .29
.discuss the self-study

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.NEASC self-study meetings with department and administration helped teachers to help themselves .30

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Next

Previous

SECTION E: Involvement of all stakeholders in the NEASC self-study process

SECTION E: Involvement of all stakeholders in the NEASC self-study process - Deliberative Democratic Evaluation concept

Teachers were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process .31

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Administrators and management -like Head of Sections and Subject Coordinators- were extensively involved .32
throughout the entire NEASC self-study process

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Students were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process .33

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Parents were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process .34

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Teachers were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process .35

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Administrators and management -like Head of Sections and Subject Coordinators- were suitably involved .36
.throughout the entire NEASC self-study process

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Students were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process .37

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

.Parents were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process .38

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

The amount of stakeholder (teachers, administrators, students, parents) involvement was exactly as it should .39
.be involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process

No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Next

Previous

SECTION F: Develop a mission -Empowerment Evaluation concept

During the recent NEASC self-study process, all stakeholders who were involved (teachers, administrators, students, 40 parents) worked equally to develop the school's mission and expectations

No Yes

During the recent NEASC self-study process, all teachers, worked equally to develop the school's mission and 41 expectations

No Yes

During the recent NEASC self-study process, all teachers had opportunities for input into the school's mission and 42 guiding statements

No Yes

During the recent NEASC self-study process, I felt that my opinions were listened to during the discussions of the 43 school's mission and guiding statements

No Yes

During the recent NEASC self-study process and when the mission and guiding statements were developed and 44 agreed upon, they were clearly communicated to the teachers

No Yes

During the NEASC self-study process, when the mission and guiding statements were developed and agreed upon, 45 (they were clearly communicated to the to all the stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students, parents

No Yes

Next

Previous

SECTION G: Reflective deliberation and communication

The focus is on the reflective deliberation and open dialogue based on transparency and trust to reveal the truths of the situation -
Deliberative Democratic Evaluation concepts

At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met, brainstormed and .46
.reflected together on the situation of the school's programs, processes, and performance

No Yes

At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators discussed the of the .47
school's operation, programs, actions, and performance. Then, together, they reached particular goals for future of the
.school

No Yes

Once the mission was developed and written, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met, .48
.brainstormed, and reflected on school's operation, programs, actions, and performance

No Yes

?If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room .49

No Yes

Next

Previous

SECTION I: Teacher & decision making

This section focuses on teacher involvement in decision making on future goals - Empowerment Evaluation concept

As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a short- .56
?term (6 month) goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices

No Yes

As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out .57
?together a medium (1-year) term goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices

No Yes

As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a long- .58
?term (5 years) term goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices

No Yes

Do you believe that the self-study process offers you more chances and opportunities for decision making .59
?related to school goals

No Yes

Next

Previous

SECTION J: Teacher empowerment

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions related to .60
?your daily schedule

No Yes

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how the .61
?day is organized

No Yes

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on .62
?topics/workshops of Professional Development

No Yes

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how .63
?students are assigned in sections

No Yes

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on what .64
?the yearly plan/ scope and sequence include

No Yes

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how .65
?discipline in the school system is structured

No Yes

Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on the non- .66
?(teaching tasks that you have (hall, cafeteria, bus duty, etc

No Yes

Reflecting on my experience with NEASC self-study process, I feel more professional than .1
.before because I was part of the self-study subcommittee

No Yes

.I feel empowered by my participation in the NEASC self-study .1

No Yes

Submit

Previous

Appendix F

Principal Thematic Coding

Codes	“Quotes”	Interpretation
Process-use	<p>-was the most valuable process” of the self-study. having to respond to standards; having to do the self-study reports with each specific indicator. So they had to find data to support the standards, and most of the data would be driven from their work, their students’ work.</p> <p>-As a principal, I know about the efforts that we have been making, but I do not think the teacher really knew: how well our school would meet the standards. They needed to learn, and they needed to reflect on the valuable role that they played in making the school as good as a whole.</p> <p>-of the school is that they are more effective than they believed that they were before the self-study.</p> <p>-This way teachers would be able to grasp as groups or as a full as department what the process would be realizes that improvements have been made. For example, more and more departments integrate elements that are linked to NEASC and KHDA such as interculturalism or but they needed to be pushed through the self-study to realize they could do it.</p> <p>-we witnessed the growth of a culture that requires critical thinking, and meaningful discussions supported by evidence because of NEASC. We don’t make a lot of decisions without teacher input anymore.”</p> <p>-Pushed for changes such as curriculum and enhanced deliberation</p>	<p>-What was the most influential part in the self-study? -He believes that gathering the evidence and putting it in the standards’ reports was rewarding and “was the most valuable process” of the self-study.</p> <p>-According to the principal, the collective mind of the school is that they are more effective than they believed that they were before the self-study. -Gratitude about teachers’ efforts; encouraging self-learning -Instilling pride/group mainly Problem solving method -Building culture of evidence and inquiry gradually</p>
Collaboration among administration	<p>-Self-study definitely reduces teacher isolation because teachers have to be part of the process.</p> <p>-strong collaboration was taking place especially in the subcommittees related to learning and teaching as I saw through the subject coordinators, Steering Committee, The chairs of the sub-committees</p> <p>-Modes of deliberation</p>	<p>-as a principal, he thinks not just of individual teachers, but of departments and sections.</p> <p>-administration and teachers working together</p>

Learning- community	strong collaboration was taking place especially in the subcommittees related to learning and teaching as I saw through the subject coordinators, Steering Committee, The chairs of the sub-committees we witnessed the growth of a culture that requires critical thinking, and meaningful discussions supported by evidence because of NEASC. We don't make a lot of decisions without teacher input anymore.	Governance and Leadership standard in Endicott survey received high positive recognition from all stakeholders. 97.7% of staff participants describe the leadership as reflective, collaborative, and establishes a constructive dialogue mainly but best teaching practices. 86.5% of parents approve that leadership provides sound direction and effective support (Endicott, p.61).
Collaboration among staff COLEFF	subcommittees related to learning and teaching -teachers and I [the principal] to reflect on the expectations of the NEASC.	
Collaboration in Department COLDEP	-more and more departments started to integrate elements that are linked to NEASC and KHDA such as interculturalism	
	-the self-study pushed both the “teachers and I [the principal] to reflect on the expectations of the NEASC.	
Collective Efficacy COLEFF	-I think so. It [teaching] is a progressive endeavour. But yes they are mostly as a group. we witnessed the growth of a culture that requires critical thinking, and meaningful discussions supported by evidence because of NEASC. We don't make a lot of decisions without teacher input anymore.” -At the present time the end result might seem to be minor changes, but it strengthens long-term collaborative culture.	-I asked if he thought that the teachers felt that they were teaching better and if he thought that they were more effective as a group. - The principal discussed better collective efficacy whether through subject departments or sections or phases. He views the self-study process as a way for teachers to know how effective they are. That efficacy happened because the result is teachers' claiming that they are improved and effective. Empowerment here is presented as a performance and as a perception when viewed as indicators of the

		outcome of a process (Dunst, Trivette, and LaPointe 1992).
Individual Efficacy INDEFF	-self-study definitely reduces teacher isolation because teachers have to be part of the process.	
Communication COM	-Communicate regularly and I have an open door policy I try to know what struggles they have and how to make the process of self-study easier such as collecting the needed evidence	
deliberation	-witnessed the growth of a culture that requires critical thinking, and meaningful discussions supported by evidence because of NEASC. We don't make a lot of decisions without teacher input anymore. -examine the patterns of curriculum development of a local primary school and how they had evolved over the span of four years.	Instructional development
STWK Strength/Weakness/Critique	-We're helping teachers to use school-wide rubrics and to use them for assessment. That came out of the self-study. -develop instructional strategies that make connections across disciplines -We don't make a lot of decisions without teacher input anymore -the growth of a culture that requires critical thinking, and meaningful discussions supported by evidence	to instructional changes in response to
Decision Making DM	Curriculum development	
IMP Improvement Growth & knowledge	-Yes. I think it comes from the self-study and other things such as KHDA and our constant mission to improve. There are a couple of places. First, the self-study has had an impact on our professional development program. -We're trying to teach teachers how to differentiate, how to be more engaging and plan more engaging lessons for students. We're helping teachers to use school-wide rubrics and to use them for assessment. That came out of the self-study -Instructional improvement is basic because it leads to student change and growth	that teachers have changed their curriculum, methods of instruction, and/or assessments due to the self-study
Confidence & self-efficacy	-when teachers feel trusted, they are able to be innovative. This is empowering -I think so. It [teaching] is a progressive endeavour. But yes they are mostly as a group. -I think that their behaviour and their	-The principal sees the academic behaviour in terms of teachers' engagement and considers that collective efficacy

	achievement is responding in a better manner, academic behaviour, to more collaboration, more student-centered, more opportunities for them to take on the content and the skills that we're trying to get across rather than it being as teacher-directed. So I think that has increased their achievement. Definitely, I think of their academic behaviour in terms of their engagement.	increased due to the interdisciplinary subcommittees. It is true that a confident person inspires and motivate others to be confident regardless of the tension or challenges
Open Dialogue OD transparency and honest	-This awareness has an impact on the students. So if you were going to pinpoint what part of the self-study process has contributed to the changes the most, can you mention a part of the self-study that really you think pushes – well let's start with the teachers”	-All indicated that they felt empowered to open up topics and discussions usually stretched beyond because of brainstorming, evaluating and finding supportive evidence to strengthen their claims. Still, their opinions of its value in improving teacher practice were substantially different.
Mission and Expectations MIS	-Yes. I think it comes from the self-study and other things such as KHDA and our constant mission to improve. -School-wide rubrics -more mission-driven. -We pay much more attention to what we identified and developed in school-wide culture. If there's ever a doubt about whether or not we need to go in a direction or do something, ---we go back to the mission of the school -There was a strong feeling of pride among the teachers themselves as individuals and as a department, and it also stands in relation to the KHDA report.”- referring the ‘very good’ rating on 2017/18.	P’s perceptions about collective collaboration He emphasizes that school’s mission is applied through action rather than just communicating it. He described and explained thoroughly that knowing that specific actions and initiatives were successful leads the individual or the group to feel effective.
More empowered MOEMP	-Knowing that specific actions and initiatives were successful leads the individual or the group to feel effective. He explained that after the long process “there was a strong feeling of pride among the teachers themselves as individuals and as a department, and it also stands in relation to the KHDA report.”- referring the ‘very good’ rating on 2017/18.	
Self-Efficacy SEF	-I think so. It [teaching] is a progressive endeavour. But yes they are mostly as a group.	Steyn (2001) states that for schools to manage the changes that arise from socio-economic, political and technological development, they need to fully

		utilize their human resources potential.
STCH Student Change	-Better attainment and more dedication to self-learning; they are learning to take hold of their own learning. Lots of focus on international assessments students are driven towards that. -Things have changes. They are much mature and developed and more involved in community activities.	
STWK Strength/Weakness/Critique	-Knowing that specific actions and initiatives were successful leads the individual or the group to feel effective. He explained that after the long process -There was a strong feeling of pride among the teachers themselves as individuals and as a department, and it also stands in relation to the KHDA report.”- referring the ‘very good’ rating on 2017/18.	
Teacher Isolation TI	-Self-study definitely reduces teacher isolation teachers have to be part of the process.	However, as a principal, he thinks not just of individual teachers, but of departments and sections. boost department morale by eliminating isolation of teachers within their own departments and be increasing interdepartmental cooperation and decision making provide professional development activities that allow for collegial sharing, action research, modeling, practice, and feedback on critical issues”
Teacher Professionalism TP	Teachers articulated it very clearly about how much they learned and how much they are incorporating the school mission.”	His focus was on Collective prof.

Appendix G

Teachers' Thematic Analysis

Codes	"Quotes"	Interpretation
process	<p>P1 "Certainly, it did help me to evaluate my instruction and change it." the self-study "pushed changes forward in a non-threatening manner". P2 NEASC made everyone alert and more focused. All departments were improving their level and rubrics of assessments and rubrics</p> <p>P3 indicated that she has matured since reading the standards and practicing the process but according to her "it seems to me that we put a lot of efforts and hours reporting and making with a booklet that just organizes what we already have rather than coming up with new skills and new ideas and actually having an opportunity...but we don't get a chance to share that information with one another very often."</p> <p>P4: I found it a pretty efficient process. You know, I went into it thinking oh my God, this is going to be really difficult. This is going to be really difficult. And I found it to be, because I think there was a lot of transparency in it and there was support that I found it pretty fluid and pretty easy. I felt the deadlines were acceptable. P4 explained that in seeing "the paperwork" from other teachers, "Oh, I kind of do that, but I like the way they presented it better."</p> <p>P5: It was very enlightening to read the standards. It made me look at my own style and methods and try to improve. P5 Reading the standards and discussing with my colleagues enabled to learn more and gain more ability to guide my students to success." P5 noted the importance of teachers having "confidence to handle so many tasks" but stressed the added learning value and organizational skills resulting from engaging in the self-study process "teachers became more confident not only in ourselves, but also with the students and with our co-workers".</p> <p>P5 noted that "the self-study gave recognition to teachers as a force to make things happen." The</p>	<p>the department collaborates and shares current literature and common practices to improve instruction</p>

	<p>teachers believed that there is a new form of leadership taking place “and we are part of that,” and to most teachers this is key to their effectiveness.</p> <p>the self-study “pushed changes forward in a non-threatening manner”.</p>	
<p>Collaboration with administration</p>	<p>P4 recalled “Having the admins. there [referring to administrators in the sub-committees] really helped. I learned a lot about so many issues which I was not aware of. For example, how difficult it is to initiate an interdisciplinary link or conducting extra-curricular events. This made me experiment embedding the interculturalism themes across all the subjects in a certain level I am teaching and work with teachers to make it successful. Teachers began to trust my methods and plan and work together to accomplish great things.”</p> <p>P5: To explain the teacher’s role in the NEASC self-study, she said, “Well, the subcommittees gathered teachers and SLT members from across departments and sections, so we were all together and talking, but it wasn't really focused on good teaching; it was focused on getting everything together and collecting answering all the questions on the sheet from across the whole school. It seemed to be, to me, it was like a process. It's a booklet that we produced, but we did not read it all. Do I think it's changed much of anything around here? No. Do I wish for more time and more in-depth inquiry, of course!” I have finished my master degree and career-wise, I was interested to participate because I thought I could make a change on so many levels that we teachers know they should change, but here I was just writing reports. Yes, it was so enlightening to read the standards and learn the process but there are so many things I need to learn, and there are so many things our staff needs to learn about inclusion and international assessment and all these things that are coming down on our shoulders and we have to deal with them inside our classrooms with our students”.</p> <p>P3 indicated that growing mature since reading the standards and practicing the process but “it seems to me that we put a lot of efforts and hours reporting and making with a booklet that just organizes what we already have rather than coming up with new skills and new ideas and actually having an opportunity...but we don't get a chance</p>	<p>P5’s point of view makes a strong distinction between the collaborative work of teachers in and the teamwork of teachers in the NEASC self-study subcommittees.</p>

	<p>to share that information with one another very often.”</p> <p>I think that, yes, it did make me think about teaching. I think that any time that you have people from inside or outside of the school looking at what you're doing it causes you to think harder about what you're doing in the classroom. They were coming in, knowing to look for certain things, understanding what the standards the key points that they were looking for – at least for me personally, to reflect on what I was doing.”</p> <p>“the inside world – what goes inside the offices [administration]. When we would discuss evidence’ to support our inputs, we would consider the best samples and where we can get them from. So that's a couple of things right there”</p>	
Learning-community	<p>P2: There was a school-wide change in the learning outcomes; they stopped being simple because we wanted to raise students’ expectations. P2 reflected saying, “Part of being in the process is being able to work together as part of a team. This certainly gave me a chance to know more not only about NEASC or the school but also about each other and to some extent it was fun.”</p> <p>P3 mentioned how a new language “professional and related to accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission”.</p> <p>P 5 who chaired a subcommittee for the operational mechanisms and procedures indicated that there were not much of discussions about instructions and pedagogies, but members grew to learn more about the function of so non-academic departments.</p> <p>P5 mentioned how a new language “professional and related to accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission”. While P4 affirmed that such involvement with the self-study promoted communication and critical thinking as the members needed to “find evidence” to support their work. “Leadership qualities are very important and I looked at it as training for an administrative position in the school”.</p>	<p>-the self-study process does foster a sense of community school-wide.</p> <p>- As educational reform triggered changing the manner of school management and culture</p> <p>-one strength was “a department deeply involved in the process of developing, revising, and implementing curriculum”</p> <p>- The self-study turns to become a learning potential for participants rather than an intensively stressful impediment process</p>

	<p>P3NEASC made everyone alert and more focused</p> <p>P1 stated “It was a new experience which excited me a lot and actually I felt part of the school community”.</p> <p>P3said, “I think NEASC aims to get us all together, to work together; just like group work is important as we teach our students”.</p> <p>Visiting Committee was writing comprehensively about the entire school climate</p>	
<p>Collaboration among staff COLEFF</p>	<p>pretty efficient process, but there is no time</p> <p>P1 recalled “Teachers from different departments and sections met, and it was about teaching and learning. I think there was a lot of discussion and knowledge exchange happening there.</p> <p>P1 affirms the impact of the self-study, “Yes I can say it [the self-study process] improved my ideas about teamwork and enhanced our [teachers] communicative skills and networking. We would discuss, suggest, approve, disapprove so many issues, and listen to each other, and at the end of the meeting we had to agree on tasks and proposals that are realistic and then send feedback.”</p> <p>P3 reflected saying, “Part of being in the process is being able to work together as part of a team even with people I have never met or even knew. This certainly gave me a chance to know more not only about NEASC or the school but also about each other. There were respect and commitment.” P3 continued, “yes it was serious and so hectic, but to some extent it was fun. It was a new experience which excited me a lot and actually, I felt part of the school community.”</p> <p>“Students’ emotional and academic success in the classroom was almost everything we talked about. And I know it is happening also in KG section just like it is happening in grade 5 or grade 12. We had to put our efforts to not only achieve this standard but to keep it going on,” P4 stated.</p> <p>P3said, “I think NEASC aims to get us all together, to work together; just like group work is important as we teach our students”.</p> <p>“Well, the subcommittees gathered teachers and SLT members from across departments and sections, so we were all together and talking, but it wasn't really focused on good teaching; it was focused on getting everything together and</p>	<p>-P5’s point of view makes a strong distinction between the collaborative work of teachers in and the team work of teachers in the NEASC self-study subcommittees. To explain the teacher’s role in the NEASC self-study, she said, process –Ref.to Patton’s process-use</p> <p>-one strength was “a faculty deeply involved in the process of developing, revising, and implementing curriculum”</p> <p>there is no formal mentoring program</p>

	<p>collecting answering all the questions on the sheet from across the whole school. It seemed to be, to me, it was like a process. It's a booklet that we produced, but we did not read it all. Do I think it's changed much of anything around here? No. Do I wish for more time and more in-depth inquiry, of course”?</p> <p>P5 continued to express her frustration with how NEASC self-study process was implemented and her perception that it did not empower teachers to improve their practice. She said, “I have finished my master degree and career-wise, I was interested to participate because I thought I could make a change on so many levels that we teachers know they should change, but here I was just writing reports. Yes it was so enlightening to read the standards and learn the process but there are so many things I need to learn, and there are so many things our staff needs to learn about inclusion and international assessment and all these things that are coming down on our shoulders and we have to deal with them inside our classrooms with our students”.</p> <p>P3 indicated that she has matured since reading the standards and practicing the process but according to her “it seems to me that we put a lot of efforts and hours reporting and making with a booklet that just organizes what we already have rather than coming up with new skills and new ideas and actually having an opportunity...but we don't get a chance to share that information with one another very often.”</p> <p>P3: some members in our committee used to share their latest ways of teaching and even bring samples of students’ work.</p>	
<p>Collaboration in Department COLDEP</p>	<p>P1: Of course! During these meetings we shared teaching strategies and personal experiences...we talked about how to improve student achievement and encourage student’s accountability.</p> <p>P3said, “I think NEASC aims to get us all together, to work together; just like group work is important as we teach our students”.</p> <p>P3 indicated that she has matured since reading the standards and practicing the process but according to her “it seems to me that we put a lot of efforts and hours reporting and making with a booklet that</p>	<p>-Collaboration was coined with team work which was mentioned</p> <p>-focus on collaboration among the faculty</p> <p>-provide common planning time for collaborating teachers to more</p>

	<p>just organizes what we already have rather than coming up with new skills and new ideas and actually having an opportunity...but we don't get a chance to share that information with one another very often.”</p> <p>Visiting Committee was writing comprehensively about the entire school climate</p>	<p>effectively plan, monitor, and assess instruction and assessment formally structured scheduling in addition to departmental meetings for teacher collaboration to review student work, to share assessments strategies, and analyze test data</p> <p>-instructional needs of teachers</p> <p>-the development and fostering of a sense of empowerment among faculty members to assume leadership essential to school and student success</p> <p>-the Steering Committee recommended that the school empower teachers by including “teachers in instructional decisions” and by providing “time for coordination”</p>
<p>Collective Efficacy COLEFF</p>	<p>P3said, “I think NEASC aims to get us all together, to work together; just like group work is important as we teach our students”.</p> <p>Visiting Committee was writing comprehensively about the entire school climate develop instructional strategies that make connections across disciplines”</p> <p>P1 explained “students’ emotional and academic success in the classroom was almost everything we talked about. And I know it is happening also in KG</p>	<p>Develop and deliver interdisciplinary learning activities and improve curricular coordination and articulation across and within departments” (p. 26) and “meet regularly with sending school’s (vertical</p>

	<p>section just like it is happening in grade 5 or grade 12. We had to put our efforts to not only achieve this standard but to keep it going on.”</p> <p>P1 recalled “there were teachers from different departments and sections met, and it was about teaching and learning. I tell you there was a lot of discussion and information sharing happening there.”</p> <p>P5’s point of view makes a strong distinction between the collaborative work of teachers in and the teamwork of teachers in the NEASC self-study subcommittees. To explain the teacher’s role in the NEASC self-study, she said, “Well, the subcommittees gathered teachers and SLT members from across departments and sections, so we were all together and talking, but it wasn’t really focused on good teaching; it was focused on getting everything together and collecting answering all the questions on the sheet from across the whole school. It seemed to be, to me, it was like a process. It’s a booklet that we produced, but we did not read it all. Do I think it’s changed much of anything around here? No. Do I wish for more time and more in-depth inquiry, of course!”</p>	<p>alignment)” (p. The most striking positive change that impacted teachers improving their practice was in opportunities for collaboration through the institution of</p>
<p>Individual Efficacy INDEFF</p>	<p>P3: expanded collaboration with “teachers of the SEND [Special Education]” and learned more about “modified personal plans.</p> <p>P4 said, “So for me, that [standards and rubrics] was something that organized my lesson planning. Certainly, it did help me to evaluate my instruction and change it. For the better.”</p> <p>P2 indicated that she “felt confident when I used to share my opinions and ideas...as if I was a source of knowledge. I felt that my voice is being heard and I would also listen to my co-workers.”</p> <p>P 1 stated, “I think that, yes, it did make me think about teaching. I think that any time that you have people from inside or outside of the school looking at what you’re doing it causes you to think harder about what you’re doing in the classroom. They were coming in, knowing to look for certain things, understanding what the standards the key points that they were looking for – at least for me personally, to reflect on what I was doing.”</p> <p>“the inside world – what goes inside the offices [administration]. When we would discuss evidence to support our inputs, we would consider the best</p>	<p>All Participants confirm that all departments have adopted newer sets of rubrics to guide and assess students’ learning process based on NEASC’s standards.</p> <p>Experiencing achievement prompts motivation and satisfaction which leads to higher levels of commitment and performance (Herzberg 1966; Sergiovanni 1992).</p> <p>Additionally, where a teacher starts in terms of teaching</p>

	<p>samples and where we can get them from. So that's a couple of things right there”</p>	<p>expertise, competence and attitude are based on individual perception and gains from any process. Where the department or section starts in terms of competency and mindset is a function of school culture.</p>
Communication COM	<p>P3: “yes I can say it [the self-study process] improved my perception about team work and enhanced our [teachers] communicative skills and networking. We would discuss, approve, disapprove so many issues and suggestions and listen to each other but agree on proposals that will succeed then send reports.”</p> <p>One participant mentioned how a new language more of “professional and related to culture of accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision and mission,” P3 reflected.</p> <p>P3 some members in our committee used to share their latest ways of teaching and even bring samples of students’ work.</p> <p>P5 indicated that she, “felt confident when I used to share my opinions and ideas...as if I was a source of knowledge. I felt that my voice is being heard and I would also listen to my co-workers.”</p>	<p>Affirmative responses about the impact of the self-study Inter-committee dialogue was fairly strong compared to participants’ communication with the steering committee.</p> <p>All indicated that it allowed for collaboration among the staff and enhanced communicative skills.</p>
Networking	<p>P3: “yes I can say it [the self-study process] improved my perception about team work and enhanced our [teachers] communicative skills and networking. We would discuss, approve, disapprove so many issues and suggestions and listen to each other but agree on proposals that will succeed then send reports.”</p> <p>P5 “even through Whatsapp we would discuss things related to the meetings, students, or we would solve problems together. Yes, this was good. The HoS would listen to our suggestions especially if I say I read something about that in NEASC booklet or provide us with the evidence we are missing. They took us seriously.”</p>	<p>Networking with other teachers (even virtually) and solving problems together will only lead to success.</p> <p>Increased networking with other teachers and administrative increased- this leads to more collaboration and less teachers’ isolation.</p>

deliberation	<p>P 1 stated, “I think that, yes, it did make me think about teaching. I think that any time that you have people from inside or outside of the school looking at what you're doing it causes you to think harder about what you're doing in the classroom. They were coming in, knowing to look for certain things, understanding what the standards the key points that they were looking for – at least for me personally, to reflect on what I was doing.”</p> <p>P2 indicated that she “felt confident when I used to share my opinions and ideas...as if I was a source of knowledge. I felt that my voice is being heard and I would also listen to my co-workers.” P2 said that they “were encouraged to bring up anything that goes in our head and see how it can improve the learning process.”</p> <p>P3: “there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which sometimes administration does not really know about or ignore. So through some sub-indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels.”</p>	
STWK Strength/Weakness/Critique	<p>P1 recalled “there were teachers from different departments and sections met, and it was about teaching and learning. I tell you there was a lot of discussion and information sharing happening there.” rushed to get things done</p> <p>P2 “Were encouraged to bring up anything that goes in our head and see how it can improve the learning process.” P2 added that “there were some heated discussions that had to take place.” P3’s response was “At the beginning, we were passing lots of criticism and suggestions, then we learned to see things from two sides of a coin”. P3 detailed that, “there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which sometimes administration does not really know about or ignore. So through some sub-indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels.”</p> <p>P5 the self-study “led to instructional changes in response to NEASC’s standards that made them [teachers] to change their methods of teaching and</p>	Improvement is likely because the topics are analyzed and worked through by the people who are involved in the organization and understand the issues intimately and it becomes naturally integrated within the organizational dynamics.

	<p>become more creative towards creating a student-centered learning approach”.</p> <p>“develop instructional strategies that make connections across disciplines”</p>	
Decision Making DM	<p>Two participants connected the 2016/17 and 2017/18 professional development workshops were about topics they have discussed in their sub-committees related to pedagogies and ICT integration which echoes the high approval results in the online survey.</p> <p>P1 responded, “Yes, this [the self-study] was a driving force; definitely –It gave us with this feeling of control and making decisions in terms of curriculum or assessment other than just planning lessons and we were able to provide suggestions about students-teacher ratio or the needed workshops and blended teaching... You know, it was a place to have those conversations”.</p> <p>P2 said that they “were encouraged to bring up anything that goes in our head and see how it can improve the learning process.”</p>	Participants felt that the self-study provides many decision making opportunities
IMP Improvement Growth & knowledge	<p>P1: to improve student achievement and encourage student’s accountability.</p> <p>P1 described the experience of being in the vertical alignment sub-committee as an “eye-opening. Without a doubt, it made me look at my instruction and change it for the better”.</p> <p>P3: expanded collaboration with “teachers of the SEND and learned more about “modified personal plans.</p> <p>P3: After a while, some members in our committee used to share their latest ways of teaching and even bring samples of students’ work. This shows how they've grown and changed because of experiencing the self-study and the other activities.</p> <p>P1 recalled “there were teachers from different departments and sections met, and it was about teaching and learning. I tell you there was a lot of discussion and information sharing happening there.”</p> <p>P 1 described the experience of being in the vertical alignment sub-committee as an “eye-opening. Without doubt, it did make me look at my instruction and change it for the better”. Other</p>	<p>How is it related to UAE National Agenda?</p> <p>Reflective approach</p>

	<p>participants delivered similar perception on how they modified their teaching and assessments to deliver the required expectations against NEASC standards</p> <p>P1 has chaired a subcommittee and enthusiastically spoke about the successful planning and proper delegation and joined efforts within the sub-committee. However, he highlights that the designated standard was mostly “Leadership qualities are very important and I looked at it as a training for administrative position in the school”.</p> <p>P2 “the whole process is not directed towards learning new teaching skills. It's not aimed towards improving each teacher. It's sort of managerial task aimed towards collecting evidence and reporting. And that's what we did. We reported; there was no time to really interact or learn or investigate a lot. It was strictly a pretty long process of answering questions and gathering examples”.</p> <p>“the inside world – what goes inside the offices [administration]. When we would discuss evidence’ to support our inputs, we would consider the best samples and where we can get them from. So that's a couple of things right there”</p> <p>P3: “At the beginning, we were passing lots of criticism and suggestions, then we learned to see things from two sides of a coin”.</p> <p>P3 spoke about the more refined “language” and “the culture of accreditation” and the “new techniques and improved skills to include all students and their needs within her classroom.” “Teachers feel better about their teaching when they see their students making improvements. Their self-efficacy improves.”</p> <p>P4 appreciated the increased support and confidence from administration, “There's an open-door policy in the administrator’s office. They are willing to facilitate discussions and problem-solving and do all that kind of stuff.” When asked if he remembered a time when being part of the self-study affected his teaching, he explained that in seeing the paperwork from other teachers he may have thought “oh, I kind of do that, but I like the way they presented it better.”</p>	<p>P2 bluntly expressed opinions</p> <p>Lack of sufficient time A focus on the conditions under which empowerment initiatives are optimally effective</p>
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	<p>P4 discussed teachers looking critically at their own practices, “a lot of people started looking very critically at their own practices inside the classroom. They would suggest ways to make learning student-centered but at the same time discussing challenges they [teachers] face. Yes, these meetings gave members a chance to think about well this isn't working; what should be working?”</p> <p>P5 the self-study “led to instructional changes in response to NEASC’s standards that made them [teachers] to change their methods of teaching and become more creative towards creating a student-centered learning approach”. P5 noted the importance of teachers having “confidence to handle so many tasks” but stressed the added learning value and organizational skills resulting from engaging in the self-study process “teachers became more confident not only in ourselves, but also with the students and with our co-workers”.</p>	
Confidence & self-efficacy	<p>P1: “Reading the standards and discussing with my colleagues enabled to learn more and gain more ability to guide my students to success.”</p> <p>P1: “now all efforts are about collaboration and exchanging ideas in response to NEASC standards and becoming creative to do that. This increases knowledge and confidence to try those ideas.”</p> <p>P2: They [referring to teacher] need to have confidence to handle so many tasks and students, but with knowing more about the standards and what is required, I and even other members became more confident not only in ourselves but also with the students and with our co-workers”.</p> <p>NADER</p> <p>P2 indicated that she “felt confident when I used to share my opinions and ideas...as if I was a source of knowledge. I felt that my voice is being heard and I would also listen to my co-workers.</p> <p>P3: After a while, some members in our committee used to share their latest ways of teaching and even bring samples of students’ work. This shows how they've grown and changed because of experiencing the self-study and the other activities.</p> <p>P3: there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which</p>	<p>Teacher’s confidence can help influence others to be a better person?</p> <p>Established a cause-effect relation while talking about the professional growth and the self-study process.</p> <p>Other participants concurred such observation.</p> <p>Details</p> <p>Culture of accountability - language change, different style of</p>

	<p>sometimes administration does not really know about or ignore. So through some indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels”.</p> <p>P3: new language more of “professional and related to the culture of accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission”.</p> <p>P3 “Teachers feel better about their teaching when they see their students making improvements. Their self-efficacy improves.”</p> <p>P5 the self-study “led to instructional changes in response to NEASC’s standards that made them [teachers] to change their methods of teaching and become more creative towards creating a student-centered learning approach”.</p> <p>P5: having “confidence to handle so many tasks” “Teachers became more confident not only in ourselves, but also with the students and with our co-workers”.</p>	<p>communication among staff which indicates positive impact. Others also spoke about their new techniques and improved skills to include all students and their needs within her classroom</p> <p>noted the importance of teachers having confidence but stressed the added learning value and organizational skills resulting from engaging in the self-study process</p>
<p>Open Dialogue OD transparency and honest</p>	<p>“we talked about different things and communicated [via emails] and then throughout the rest of the process, we did participate and democratic.”</p> <p>it was a challenging *****</p> <p>“one person just [took] control of everything. We just had to prepare the supporting evidence”</p> <p>P3: “there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which sometimes administration does not really know about or ignore. So through some sub-indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels.”</p> <p>P4: “you feel that whatever you comment is taken so seriously and it might be even listed as a proposal and that makes you feel supported and more alert to things around you and link them to the NEASC Standards.”</p> <p>“I hadn’t been a part of the previous accreditation</p>	<p>All indicated that they felt empowered to open up topics and discussions usually stretched beyond because of brainstorming, evaluating and finding supportive evidence to strengthen their claims. Still, their opinions of its value in improving teacher practice were different.</p> <p>Emphasizing also emphasized the importance of administrative support</p>

	<p>process... so it was new to me. But, I found it a pretty efficient process. You know, I went into it thinking oh my God, this is going to be really difficult. This is going to be really difficult. And I found it to be, because I think there was a lot of transparency in it and there was support that I found it pretty fluid and pretty easy. I felt the deadlines were acceptable.”</p>	
Mission and Expectations MIS	<p>P2: “There was a school-wide change in the learning outcomes; they stopped being simple because we wanted to raise students’ expectations.”</p> <p>P1 spoke of the strong wave to integrate the school’s mission in almost every aspect in the students’ life in the school within the curriculum and co-curriculum.”</p>	<p>“The degree to which the entire community collaborates to set goals to fulfill the school’s mission & UAE National Agenda.</p>
More empowered MOEMP	<p>P3: there are the everyday challenges, inside and outside the classrooms that we have which sometimes administration does not really know about or ignore. So through some sub-indicators, I was able to bring out some of them openly because I want to reach to a solution for me and my parallels.”</p> <p>P3: professional and related to the culture of accreditation was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission”.</p> <p>P1: “Yes, this [the self-study] was a driving force; – It gave us with this feeling of control and making decisions in curriculum or assessment other than just planning lessons and we were able to provide suggestions about student-teacher ratio or the needed workshops and blended teaching...You know, it was a place to have those conversations.”</p>	<p>and “the initial implementation of rubrics and standards/ data driven approach to focus teachers on curriculum, instruction, assessment, sharing of best practices, and professional culture”</p>
Self-Efficacy SEF	<p>P5: the self-study “led to instructional changes in response to NEASC’s standards that made them [teachers] to change their methods of teaching and become more creative towards creating a student-centered learning approach”. P4 said, “So for me, that [standards and rubrics] was something that organized my lesson planning. Certainly, it did help me to evaluate my instruction and change it. For the better.”</p> <p>P1: “Reading the standards and discussing with my colleagues enabled to learn more and gain more</p>	

	<p>ability to guide my students to success.”</p> <p>“We’re on the right track, and we can keep on going now. I think we all felt good coming out of it because we felt that the things we were doing well were recognized by NEASC.”</p>	
STWK Strength/Weakness/Critique	<p>P2: “Were encouraged to bring up anything that goes in our head and see how it can improve the learning process.” P2 added that “there were some heated discussions that had to take place.”</p> <p>P3: “At the beginning, we were passing lots of criticism and suggestions, then we learned to see things from two sides of a coin”.</p> <p>P5 the self-study “led to instructional changes in response to NEASC’s standards that made them [teachers] to change their methods of teaching and become more creative towards creating a student-centered learning approach”.</p> <p>P3: professional and related to the culture of accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission”.</p>	
Teacher Isolation TI	<p>All participants, except one, were disgruntled as they did not receive encouragement for improving their practices due to their professional growth.</p>	<p>were decreased teacher isolation and improved school climate. Did???</p> <p>boost faculty morale by eliminating isolation of teachers within their own departments and be increasing interdepartmental cooperation and decision making”</p> <p>“provide professional development activities that allow for collegial sharing, action research, modeling, practice, and feedback on critical issues”</p>

Teacher Professionalism TP	P3 mentioned how a new language “professional and related to accreditation” was spreading; “teachers were using terms such as standards, quality, expectations, vision, and mission”.	<p>All participants, except one, were disgruntled as they did not receive encouragement for improving their practices due to their professional growth. P1 has chaired a subcommittee and enthusiastically spoke about the successful planning and proper delegation and joined efforts within the sub-committee.</p> <p>one strength was “a department deeply involved in the process of developing, revising, and implementing curriculum”</p> <p>and “the initial implementation of rubrics to focus teachers on curriculum, instruction, assessment, sharing of best practices, and professional culture”</p>
Teacher Reflection TR	<p>P1: - Umm... an eye-opening. Without a doubt, it made me look at my instruction and change it for the better</p> <p>P3’s response was “At the beginning, we were passing lots of criticism and suggestions, then we learned to see things from two sides of a coin”.</p>	
Decision making	P1: “Yes, this [the self-study] was a driving force; It gave us with this feeling of control and making decisions in curriculum or assessment other than just planning lessons and we were able to provide	Participating in the same process, they were encouraged to discuss issues in

	<p>suggestions about student-teacher ratio or the needed workshops and blended teaching... You know, it was a place to have those conversations.” Because we were in the same process we thought we can make changes encouraged to discuss issues in relation to their standards and provide proposals. “Critical reflection” and “dialogue”</p>	<p>relation to their standards and provide proposals.</p>
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Appendix H

Teacher Interview Coding Matrix

Code	Explanation	# of affirmative mentions	# of negative mentions
ADRF	Administration Reflection	0	0
COLADM	Collaboration with Administration	6	3
COLEFF	Collective Efficacy	7	1
COLFAC	Collaboration among staff	6	1
COM	Communication	7	2
CONF	Confidence	6	1
DEL	Deliberation	5	0
DIA	Dialogue	8	0
DM	Decision Making	6	2
RT	Teacher Reflection	7	1
GLS	Goals	0	0
IMP	Improvement	8	0
ME	Mission and Expectations	2	0
EMPT	Empowerment for Teachers	4	0
DIA	Dialogue	6	0
SEF	Self-Efficacy	9	0
APP	Appraisal/Appreciation	5	1
TP	Teacher Professionalism	8	1
TI	Teacher Isolation	5	0
STCH	Student Change	9	0

Appendix I

Principal Interview Coding Matrix

Code	Explanation	# of mentions by principal
ADRF	Administration Reflection	2
COLADM	Collaboration with Administration	3
COLEFF	Collective Efficacy	3
COLSTAF	Collaboration among staff	3
COM	Communication	3
CONF/PR	Confidence/Pride	2
DEL	Deliberation	1
DIA	Dialogue	2
DM	Decision Making	2
GLS	Goals	2
IMP	Improvement	4
ME	Mission and Expectations	3
TEMP	Teacher Empowerment	2
DIA	Dialogue	2
SEF	Self-Efficacy	2
SH	Stakeholders	3
STCH	Student Change	3
STKW	Strengths and Weaknesses	4
TI	Teacher Isolation	1
TP	Teacher Professionalism	2
TR	Teacher Reflection	0
APP	Appraisal/Appreciation	1

Appendix J

Matrix of Codes Found in Each Type of Data

Code and explanation	TS	PI	TI	DR
ADRF :Administration Reflection	yes	yes	no	no
COLADM :Collaboration w/ Administration :	yes	yes	yes	yes
Collective Efficacy: COLEF	yes	yes	yes	yes
DEP.COL :Department Collaboration	yes	yes	yes	yes
STAF.COL. Staff Collaboration	yes	yes	yes	yes
COM :Communication	yes	yes	yes	yes
CONF :Confidence	yes	yes	yes	no
DEL :Deliberation	yes	yes	no	no
DIA :Dialogue	yes	yes	yes	yes
DM :Decision Making	yes	yes	yes	yes
GLS :Goals	yes	yes	no	yes
IMP :Improvement	yes	yes	yes	yes

ME: Mission and Expectations	yes	yes	yes	yes
EMP :empowered	yes	yes	yes	no
DIA:Dialogue	yes	yes	yes	yes
SEF:Self-Efficacy	yes	yes	yes	no
STCH :Student Change	yes	yes	yes	yes
STH:Stakeholders	yes	yes	yes	yes
TI :Teacher Isolation	yes	yes	yes	no
TP :Teacher Professionalism	yes	yes	yes	yes
TR :Teacher Reflection	yes	yes	yes	yes
Appraisal	yes	yes	yes	no

Note. TS = teacher surveys; PI = principal interviews; TI = T= teacher interviews; DR = document review

Appendix K

Survey Section B: Communication/Dialogue/Deliberation on Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

#	Survey item Section B	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion
	NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss					
5	Curricula	36.84%	57.89%	0.00%	5.26%	0.00%
6	teaching methods and instructions	26.32%	68.42%	0.00%	5.26%	0.00%
7	assessments	21.05%	73.68%	0.00%	5.26%	10.53%
8	to learn from each other	21.05%	78.95%	0.00%	5.26%	0.00%
	Because of NEASC self-study process, my colleagues improved their:					
9	curricula	21.05%	57.89%	0.00%	10.53%	10.53%
10	methods of teaching/instructions	15.79%	52.63%	0.00%	10.53%	21.05%
11	Assessment	15.79%	47.37%	0.00%	15.79%	21.05%
12	techniques	15.79%	63.16%	0.00%	10.53%	10.53%
13	Compared to the time before NEASC self-study process, there is now more collaboration among teachers.	15.79%	42.11%	0.00%	15.79%	26.32%
14	I feel less isolated than before because of my involvement in NEASC self-study process.	15.79%	42.11%	15.79%	0.00%	26.32%
15	I believe that my subject department, as a group, feels more confident in their teaching knowledge and skills due to the self-study process.	36.84%	57.89%	0.00%	0.00%	5.26%

16	I believe that participation in the NEASC self-study process improves teaching and learning.	36.84%	63.16%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
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Survey Section C: Personal Reflection: Personal reflection on one's curriculum, instruction, assessment, knowledge, and skills

#	Survey item Section C	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opinion
	Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process,					
17	I have reflected on my curriculum	15.79%	73.68%	0.00%	0.00%	10.53%
18	I have adjusted or changed one or more elements of my curriculum.	15.79%	84.21%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
19	I have reflected on my methods of instruction.	15.79%	78.95%	5.26%	0.00%	0.00%
20	I have adjusted or changed one or more of my methods of instruction.	15.79%	78.95%	5.26%	0.00%	0.00%
21	I have reflected on my methods of assessment.	10.53%	73.68%	5.26%	5.26%	0.00%
22	I have adjusted or changed one or more methods of assessment.	10.53%	78.95%	5.26%	5.26%	0.00%
23	I have reflected on my own teaching effectiveness (knowledge, skills, and/or implementation).	10.53%	78.95%	5.26%	0.00%	5.26%

Survey Section D: The section focuses on: Teacher's perceptions/ feelings about self-efficacy of one's curriculum, instruction, and assessment knowledge and skills

#	Survey item Section D	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opinion
	Because of NEASC self-study process,					
24	I believe that I am a more reflective teacher.	15.79%	73.68%	5.26%	0.00%	5.26%
25	My students achieve more than before.	5.26%	78.95%	15.79%	0.00%	0.00%
26	I am a more effective teacher.	5.26%	84.21%	10.53%	0.00%	0.00%
27	Being a member of a sub-committee in the self-study made me a more effective teacher.	5.26%	84.21%	10.53%	0.00%	0.00%
28	Because of the self-study, I had the opportunity to meet often with my colleagues and that made me a more effective teacher.	10.53%	73.68%	15.79%	0.00%	0.00%
29	I became a more effective teacher because of NEASC self-study meetings with department and administration to discuss the self-study.	10.53%	68.42%	0.00%	0.00%	5.26%
30	NEASC self-study meetings with department and administration helped teachers to help themselves.	10.53%	63.16%	0.00%	21.05%	5.26%

Survey Section E: Involvement of all stakeholders in the NEASC self-study process - Deliberative Democratic Evaluation concept

#	Survey item Section E	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No opinion
31	Teachers were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process	5.26%	42.11 %	31.58%	21.05%	0.00%
32.	Administrators and management -like Head of Sections and Subject Coordinators- were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process	63.16%	36.84 %	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
33	Students were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.	5.26%	31.58 %	31.58%	10.53%	21.05%
34	Parents were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process	5.26%	10.53 %	31.58%	5.26%	47.37%
35	Teachers were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.	5.26%	57.89 %	15.79%	21.05%	0.00%
36	Administrators and management -like Head of Sections and Subject Coordinators- were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.	63.16%	26.32 %	5.26%	0.00%	5.26%
37	. Students were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.	5.26%	26.32 %	36.84%	0.00%	31.58%
38	Parents were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.	5.26%	10.53 %	36.84%	0.00%	47.37%
39	The amount of stakeholder (teachers, administrators, students, parents) involvement was exactly as it should be involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.	5.26%	21.05 %	47.37%	15.79%	10.53%

Survey Section F: Develop a mission -Empowerment Evaluation concept

#	Survey item Section F	YES	NO
	During the recent NEASC self-study process,		
40	all stakeholders who were involved (teachers, administrators, students, parents) worked equally to develop the school's mission and expectations.	31.58%	68.42%
41	all teachers, worked equally to develop the school's mission and expectations.	10.53%	89.47%
42	all teachers had opportunities for input into the school's mission and guiding statements.		
43	I felt that my opinions were listened to during the discussions of the school's mission and guiding statements.	10.53%	89.47%
44.	During the recent NEASC self-study process and when the mission and guiding statements were developed and agreed upon, they were clearly communicated to the teachers.	36.84%	63.16%
45.	During the NEASC self-study process, when the mission and guiding statements were developed and agreed upon, they were clearly communicated to all the stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students, parents).	47.37%	52.63%

Survey Section G: Reflective deliberation and communication

The section's focus is on the reflective deliberation and open dialogue based on transparency and trust to reveal the truths of the situation - Deliberative Democratic Evaluation concepts

#	Survey item Section G	YES	NO
46	At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met, brainstormed and reflected together on the situation of the school's programs, processes, and performance.	26.32%	73.68%
47	At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators discussed the of the school's operation, programs, actions, and performance. Then, together, they reached particular goals for future of the school.	31.58%	68.42%
48	Once the mission was developed and written, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met, brainstormed, and reflected on school's operation, programs, actions, and performance.	21.05%	78.95%
49	If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room?	27.78%	72.22%

Survey Section H: Review and Analysis

This section focuses on: Review and analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the school - Empowerment concept.

#	Survey item Section G	YES	NO	I Do Not Know
50	According to your experience, were the teachers trained to discuss, analyse, and evaluate aspects of school's operation, programs, actions and performance?	16.67%	83.33%	Not Applicable
51	At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met together and specifically discussed the effectiveness of the school's operation, programs, actions, and performance. This means they all analysed and criticized these aspects in an honest transparent manner.	11.11%	88.89%	Not Applicable
52	If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room?	11.11%	16.67%	72.22%
53	During the sub-committees meetings, in the self-study process, the teachers discussed and criticized the effectiveness of the school's operation, programs, practices, and performances in an open and transparent manner.	61.11%	38.89%	Not Applicable
54	If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room?	44.44%	16.67%	16.67%
55	. If some aspects of the school were analysed and criticized, was it recognized and included in the recommendations for improvement?	58.82%	17.65%	23.53%

Survey Section I: Teacher & decision making

This section focuses on teacher involvement in decision making on future goals - Empowerment concept.

#	Survey item Section I	YES	NO
56	. As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a short-term (6 month) goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices?	11.76%	88.24%
57	. As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a medium (1-year) term goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices?	17.65%	82.35%
58	As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a long-term (5 years) term goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices?	5.88%	94.12%
59	.Do you believe that the self-study process offers you more chances and opportunities for decision making related to school goals?	52.94%	47.06%

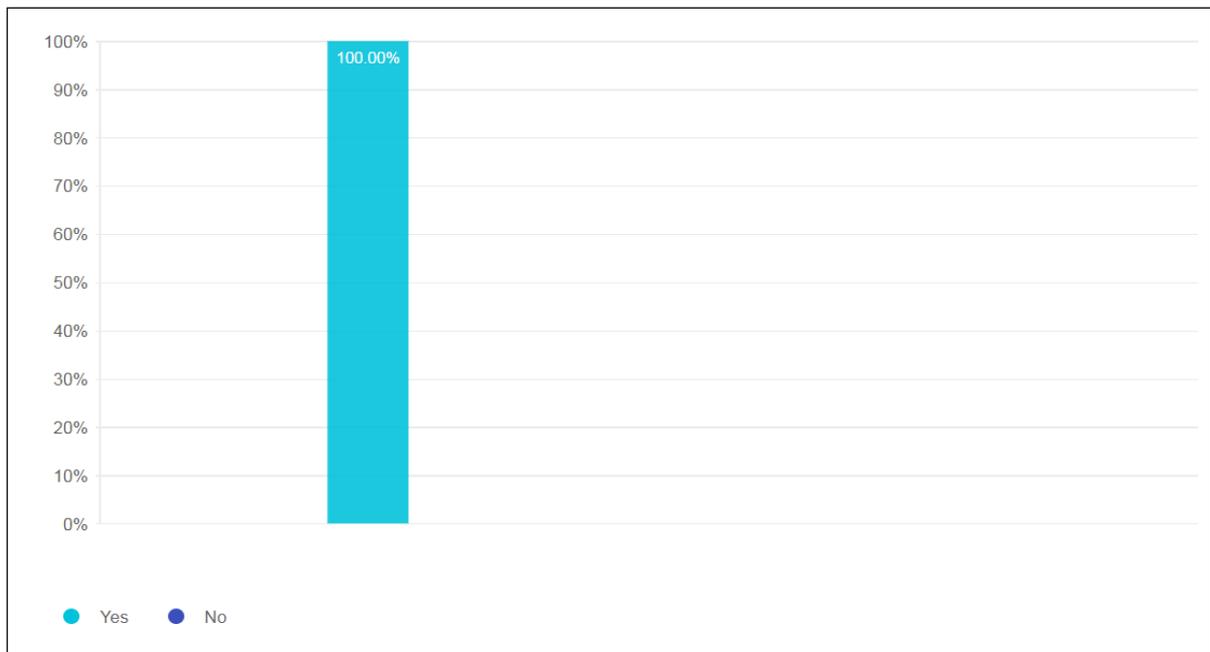
Survey Section J: Teacher empowerment

This section focuses on teacher involvement in decision making on future goals - Empowerment concepts.

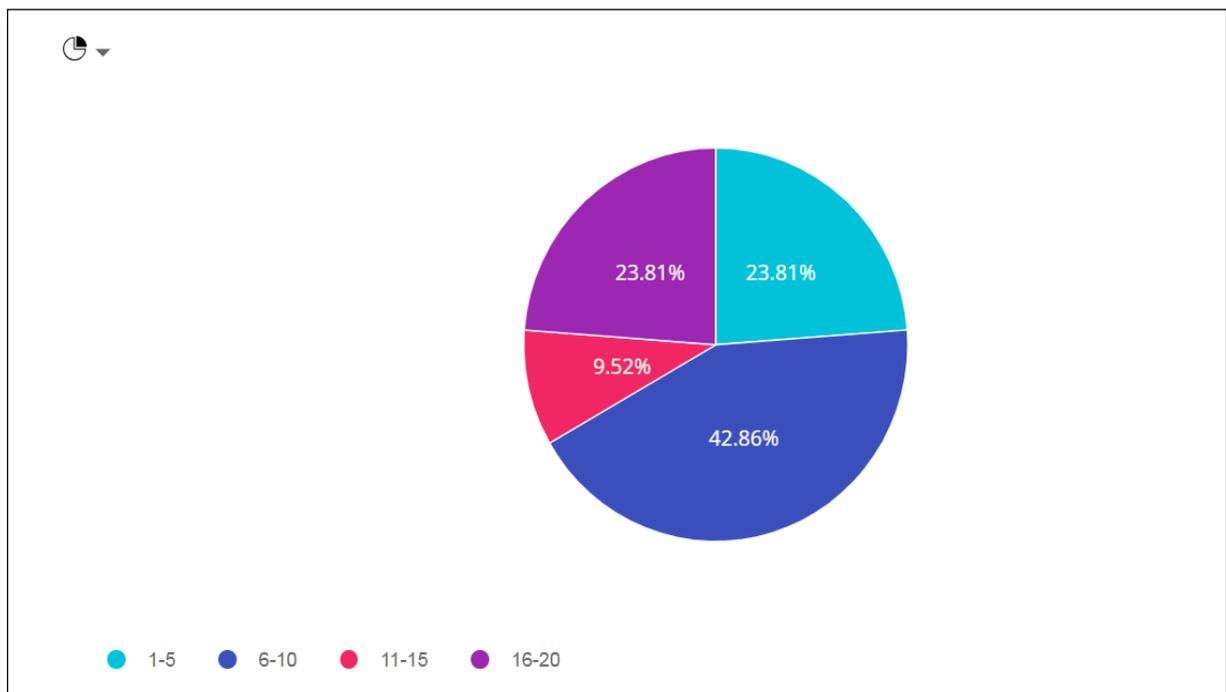
#	Survey item Section I	YES	No
60	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions related to your daily schedule?	44.44%	55.56%
61	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how the day is organized?	22.22%	77.78%
62	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on topics/workshops of Professional Development?	55.56%	44.44%
63	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how students are assigned in sections?	11.76%	88.24%
64	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on what the yearly plan/scope and sequence include?	27.78%	72.22%
65	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how discipline in the school system is structured?	11.11%	88.89%
66	Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on the non-teaching tasks that you have (hall, cafeteria, bus duty, etc.)?	5.56%	94.44%
67	Reflecting on my experience with NEASC self-study process, I feel more professional than before because I was part of the self-study subcommittee.	77.78%	22.22%
68	I feel empowered by my participation in the NEASC self-study.	61.11%	38.89%

Appendix L Survey Report

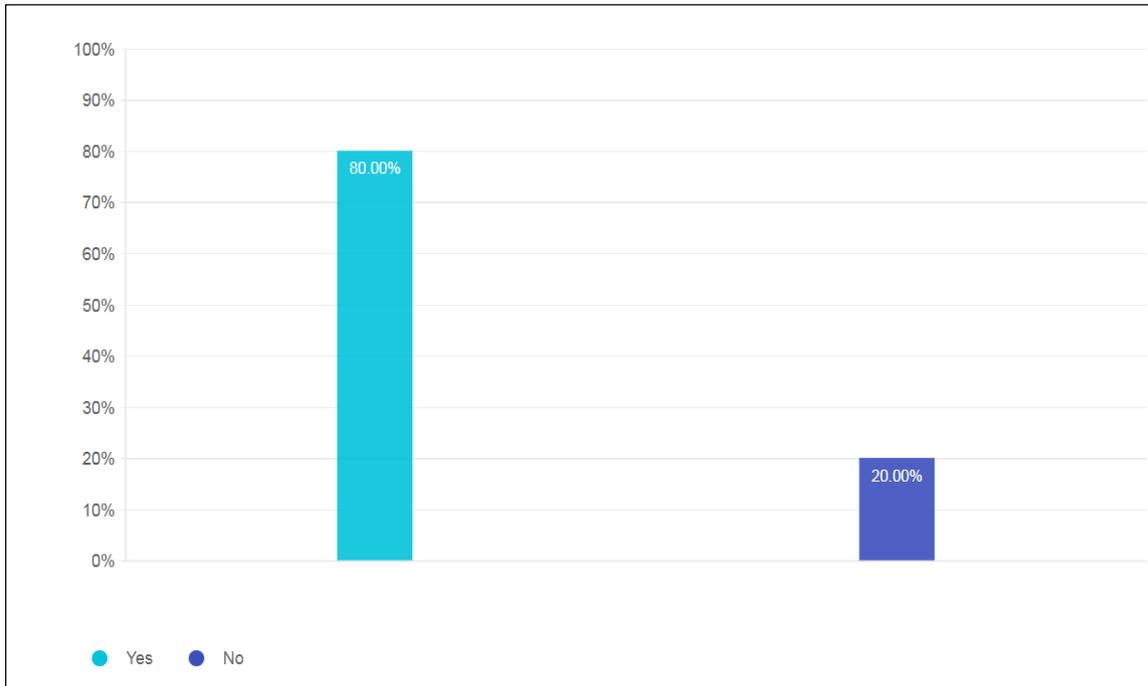
1. I have read the Consent Form and I understand it and I have agreed to participate.
(If you choose “No” and you would like to participate, please contact the researcher at the e-mail address on the Consent Form. She will respond to your questions.)



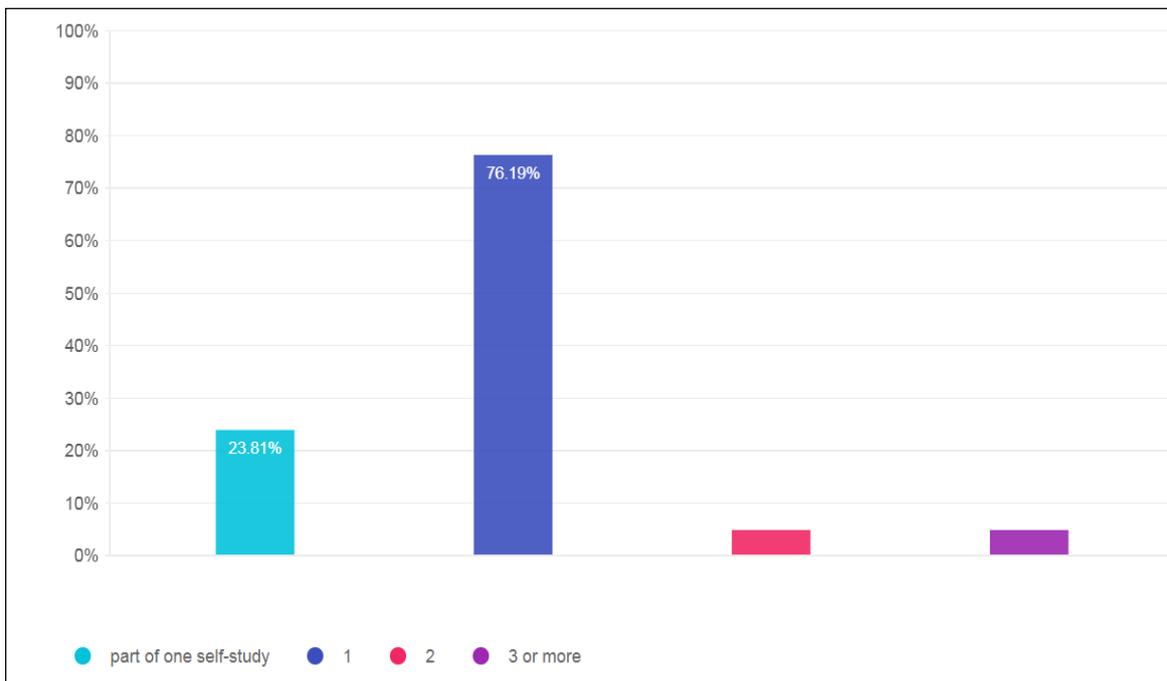
2. How many years have you been teaching?



Did you participate in some portion of the NEASC self-study that ended recently?

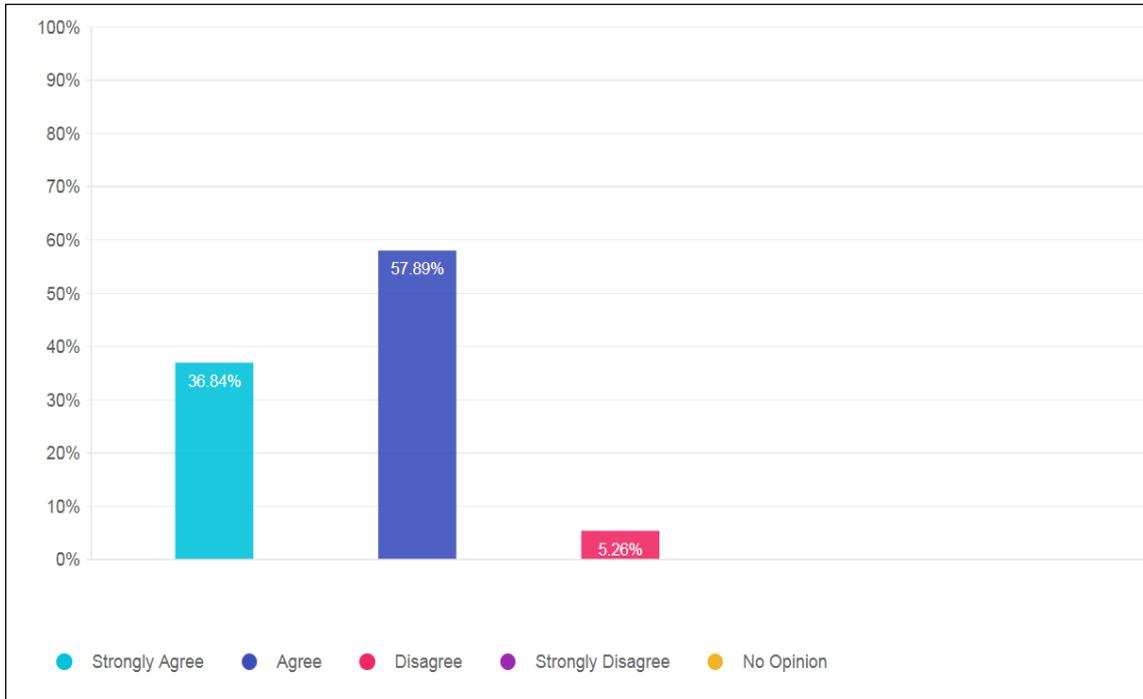


4. How many NEASC self-studies have you participated in, including the most recent NEASC self-study?

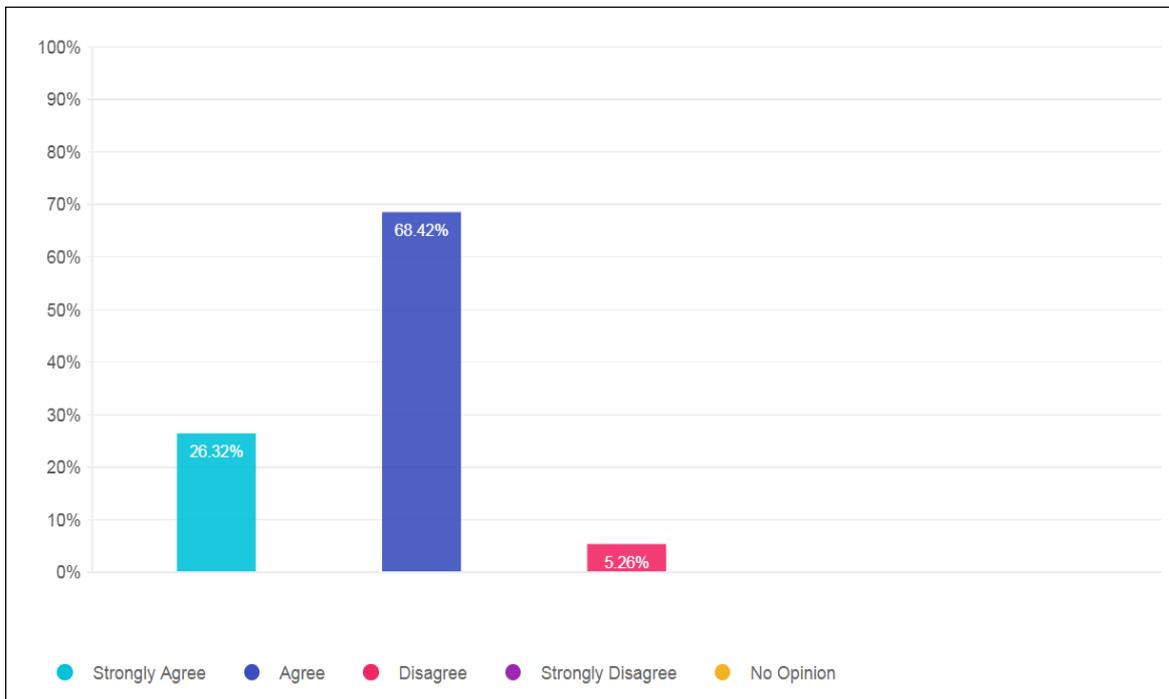


SECTION B: Communication/Dialogue / Reflection

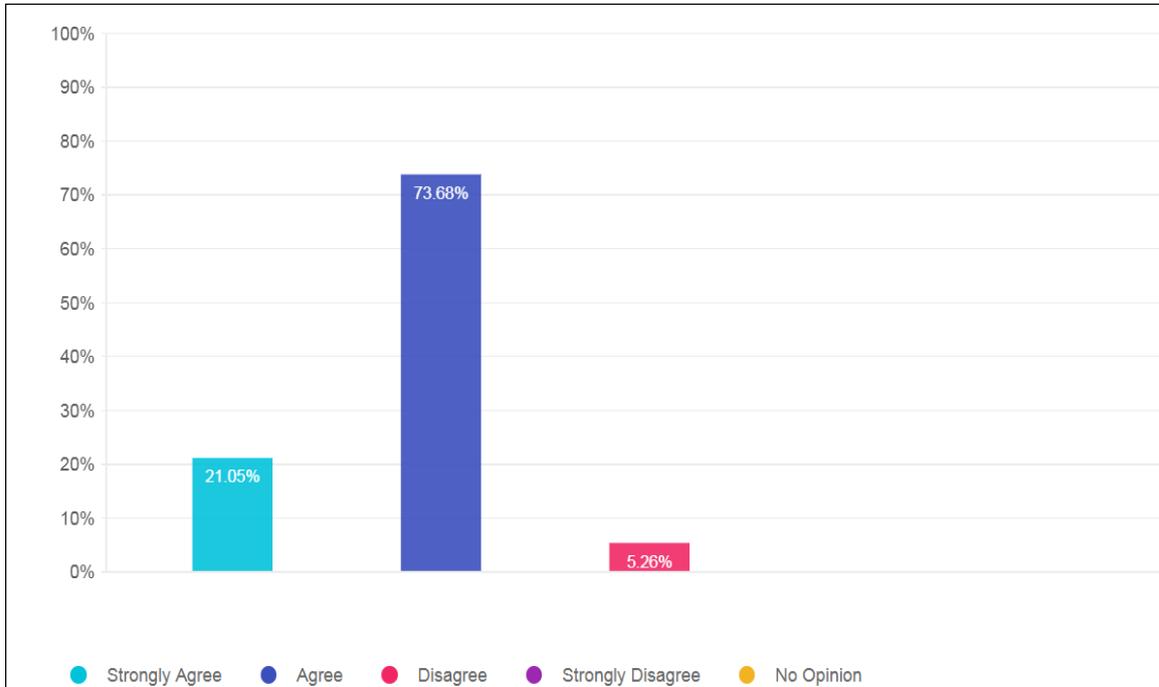
5. NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss curricula.



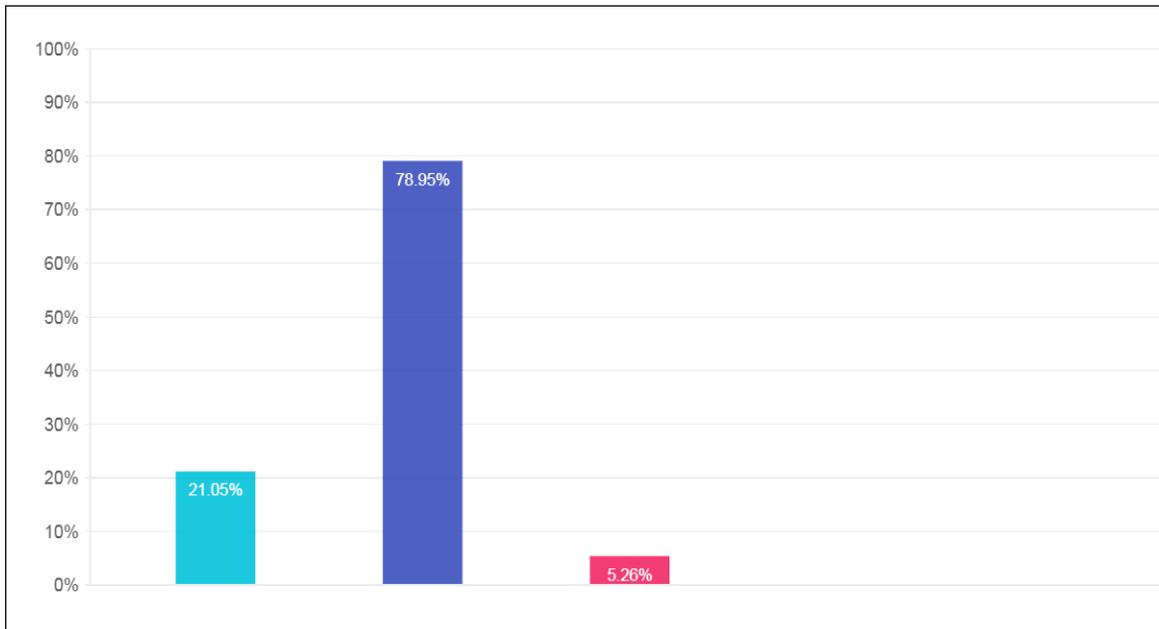
6. NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss teaching methods and instructions.



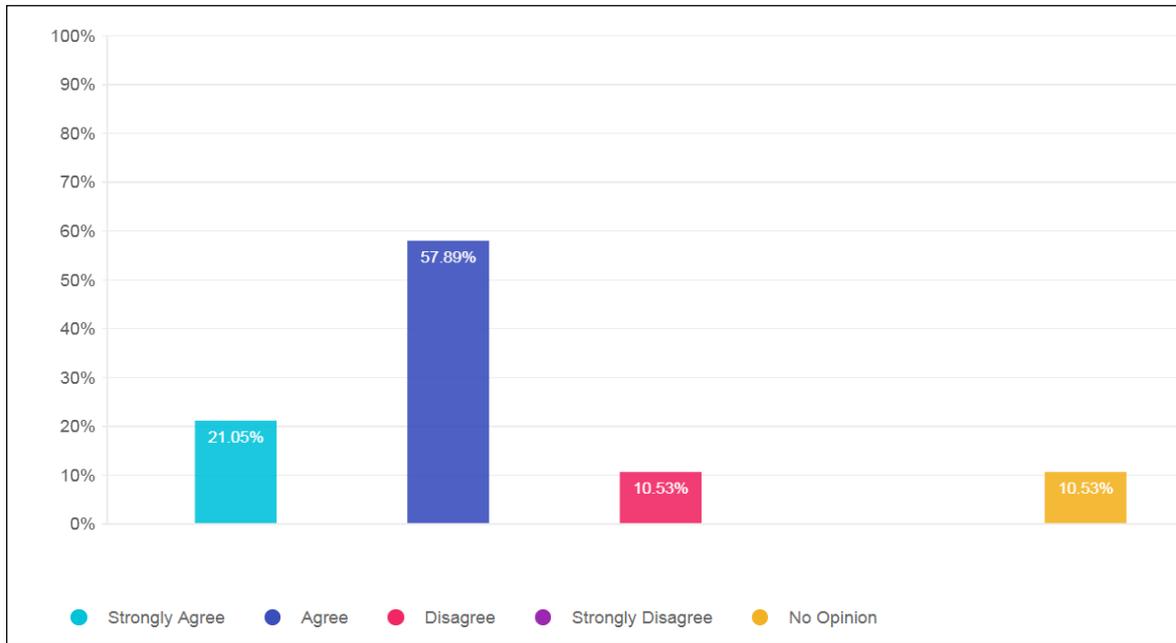
7. NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to discuss assessments.



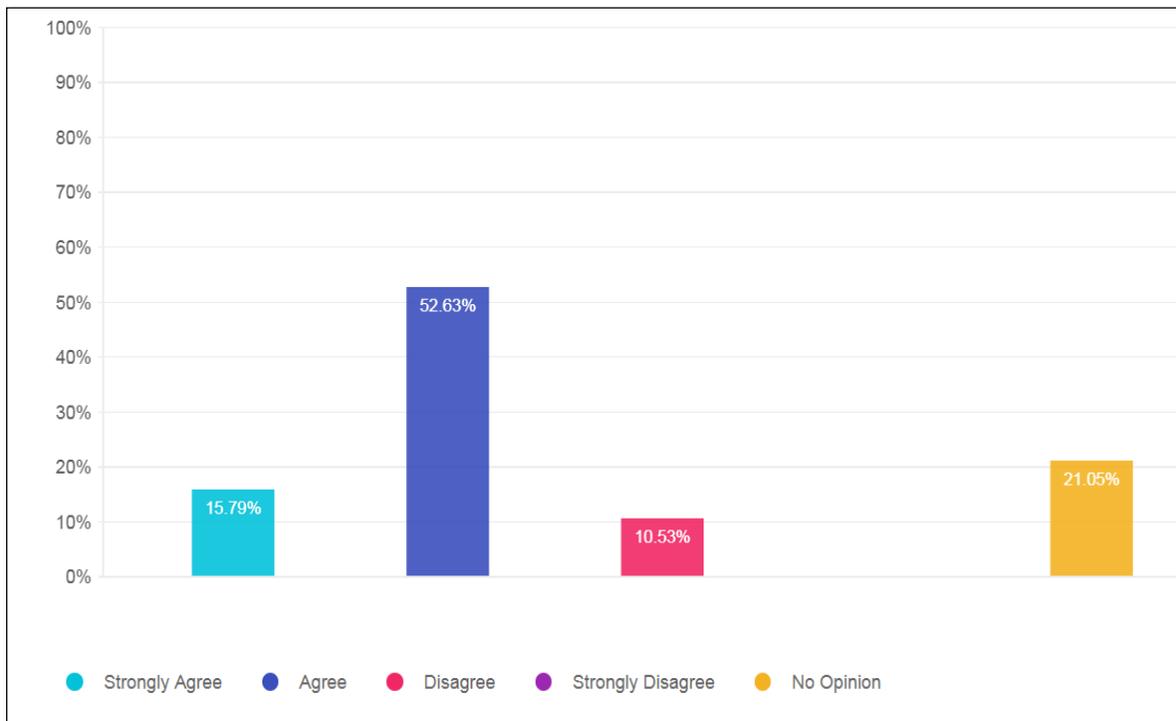
8. NEASC self-study process offers the opportunity for teachers to learn from each other.



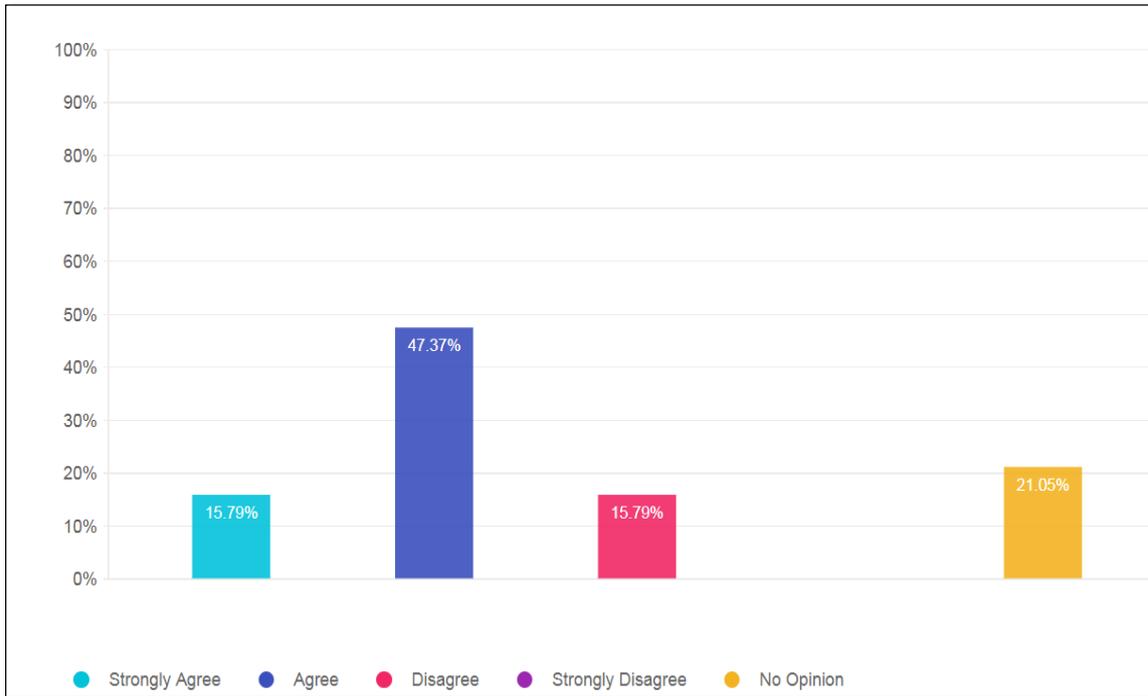
9. I believe that my colleagues have improved their curricula because of NEASC self-study process.



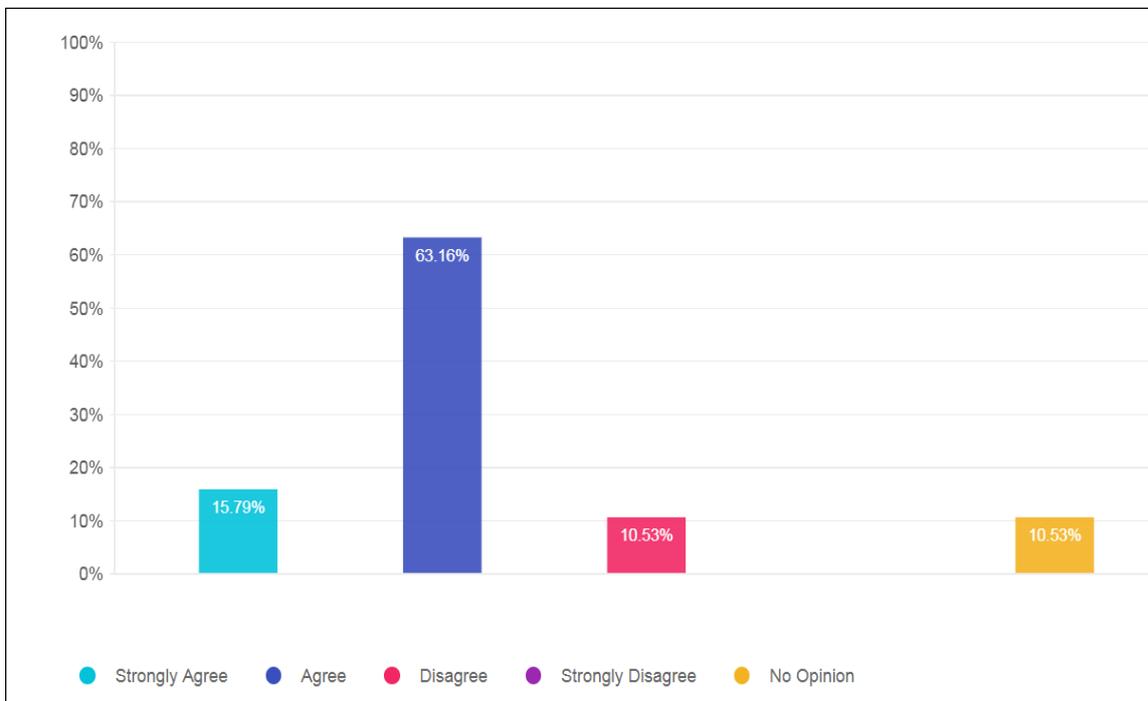
10. I believe that my colleagues have improved their instructions/teaching methods because of NEASC self-study process.



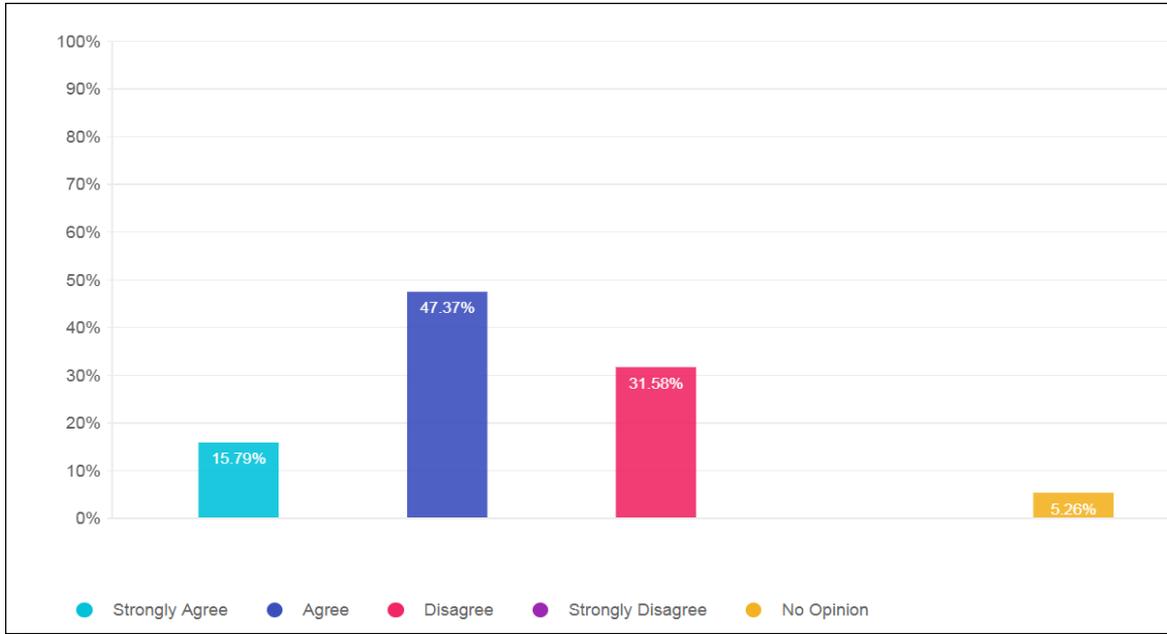
11. I believe that my colleagues have improved their assessment because of NEASC self-study process.



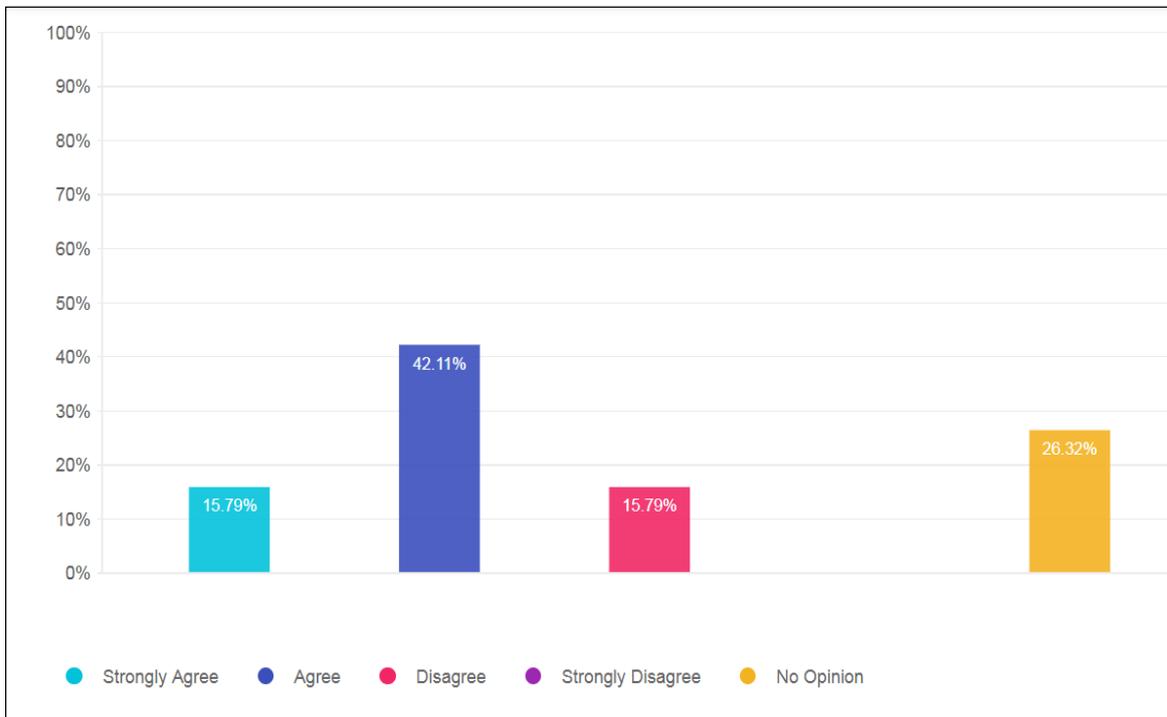
12. I believe that my colleagues have improved their techniques because of NEASC self-study process.



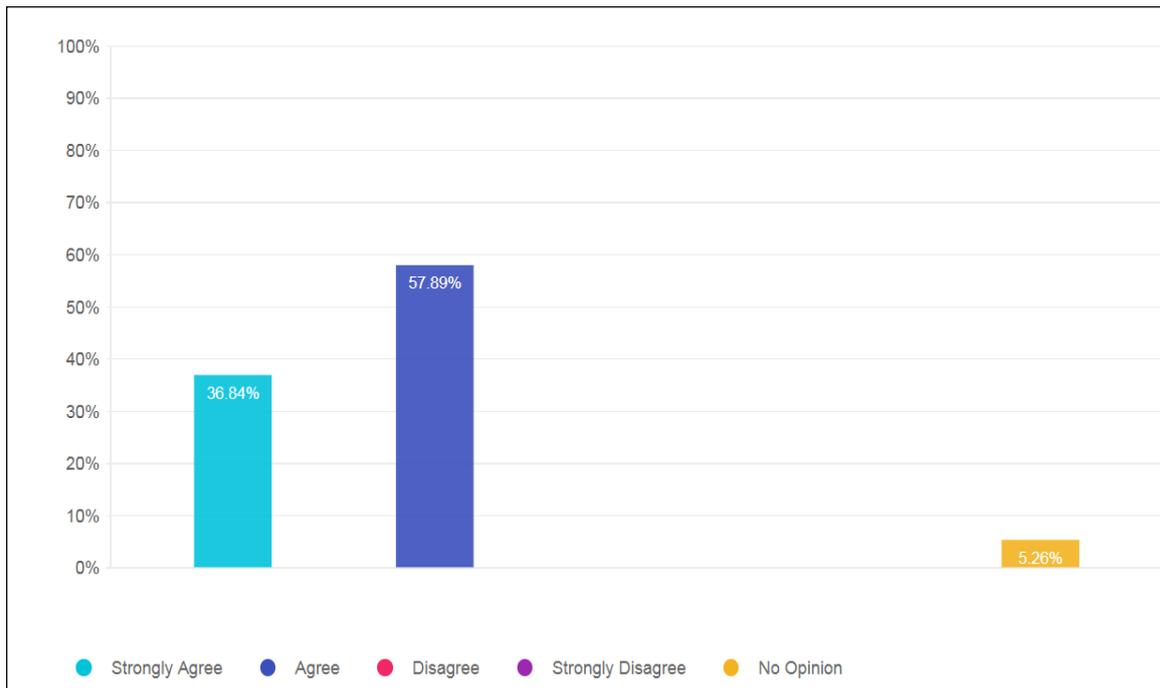
13. Compared to the time before NEASC self-study process, there is now more collaboration among teachers.



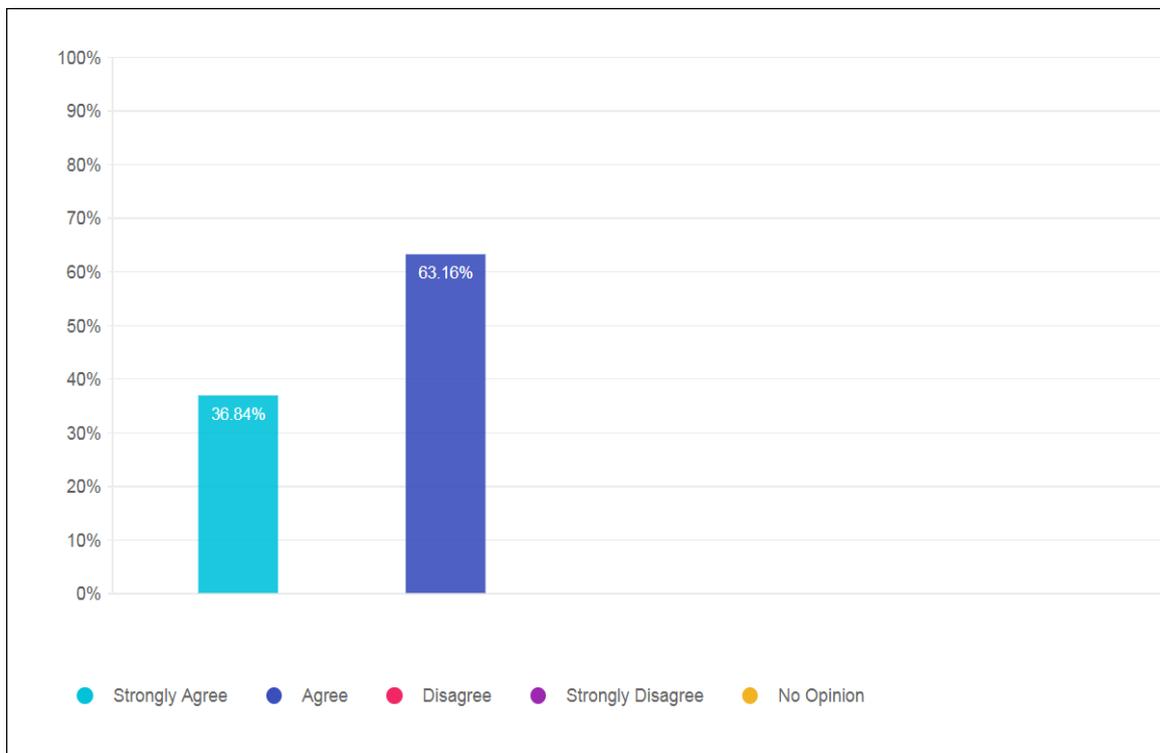
14. I feel less isolated than before because of my involvement in NEASC self-study process.



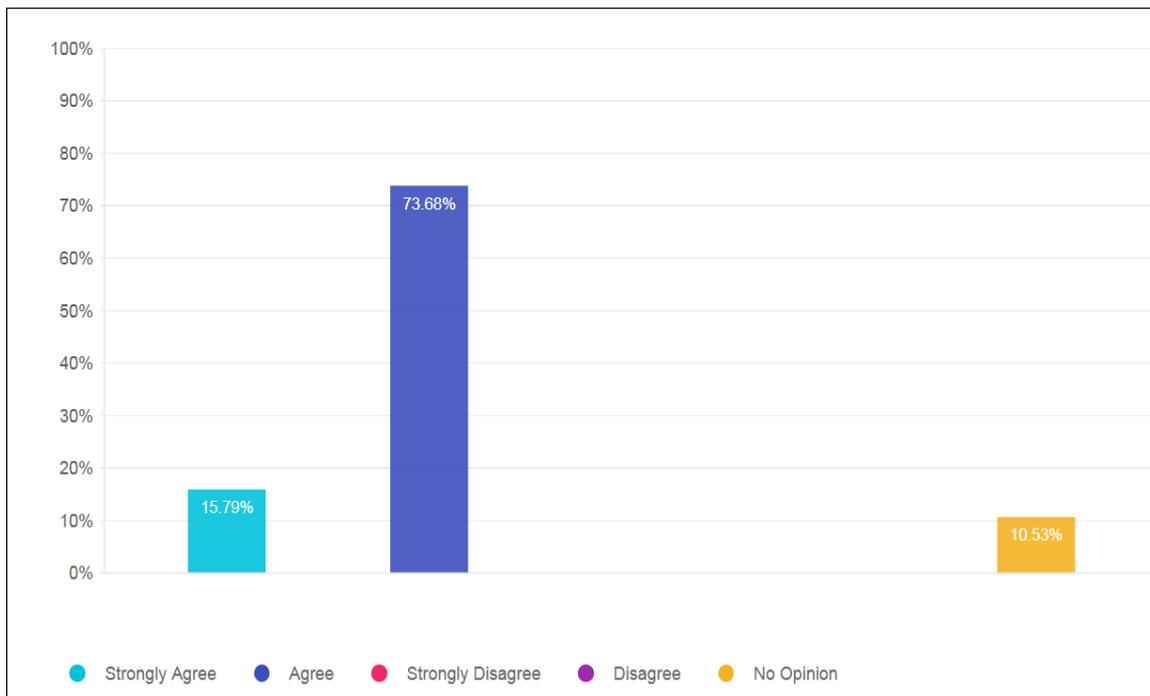
15. I believe that my subject department, as a group, feels more confident in their teaching knowledge and skills because of the self-study process.



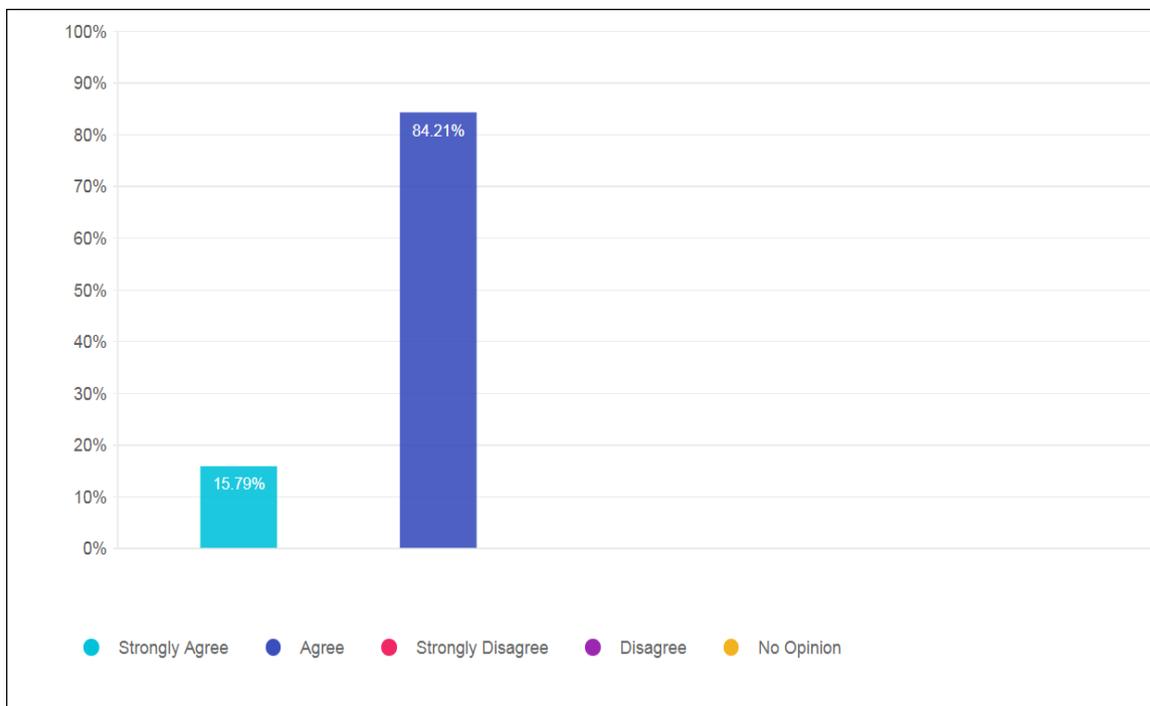
16. I believe that participation in the NEASC self-study process improves teaching and learning.



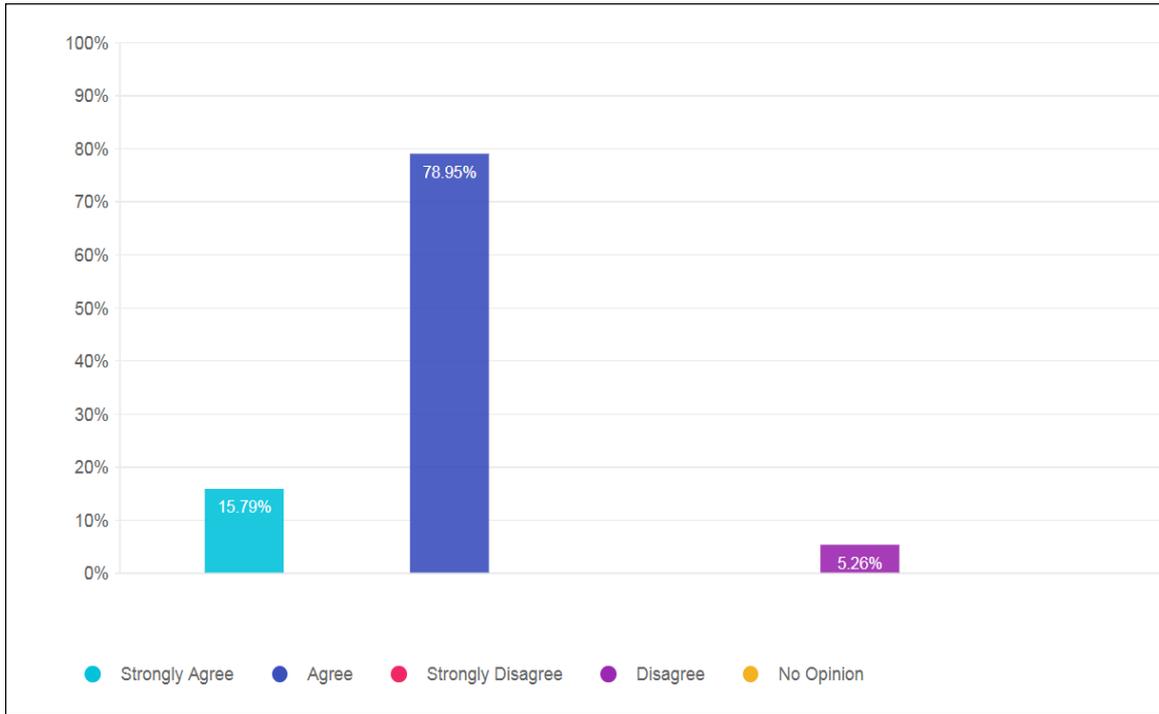
17. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my curriculum.



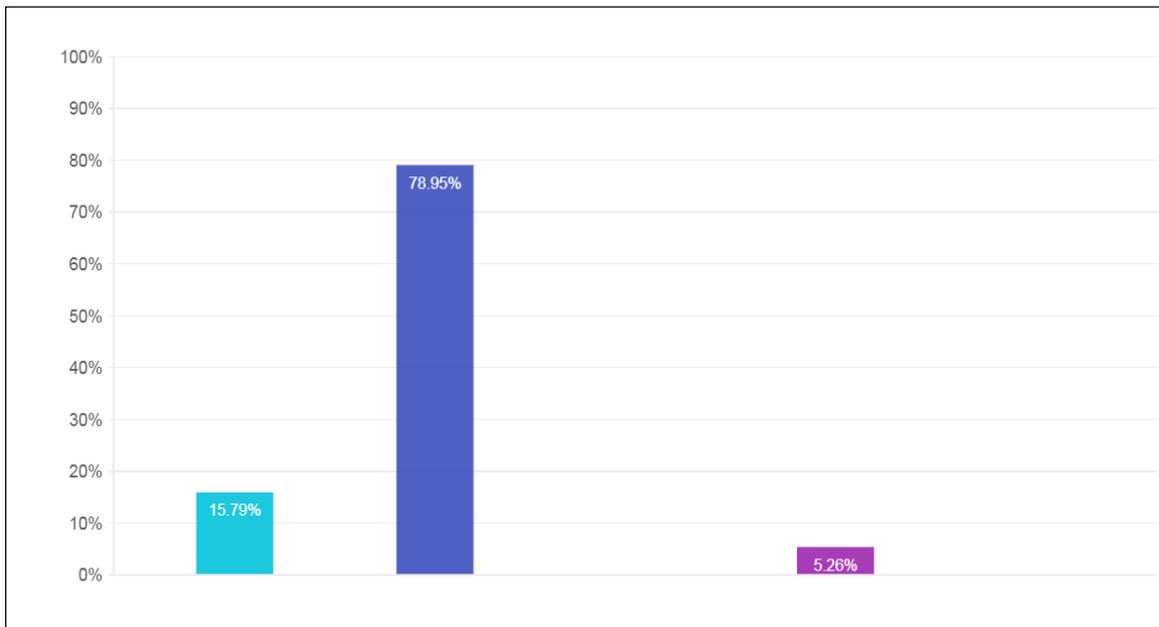
18. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have adjusted or changed one or more elements of my curriculum.



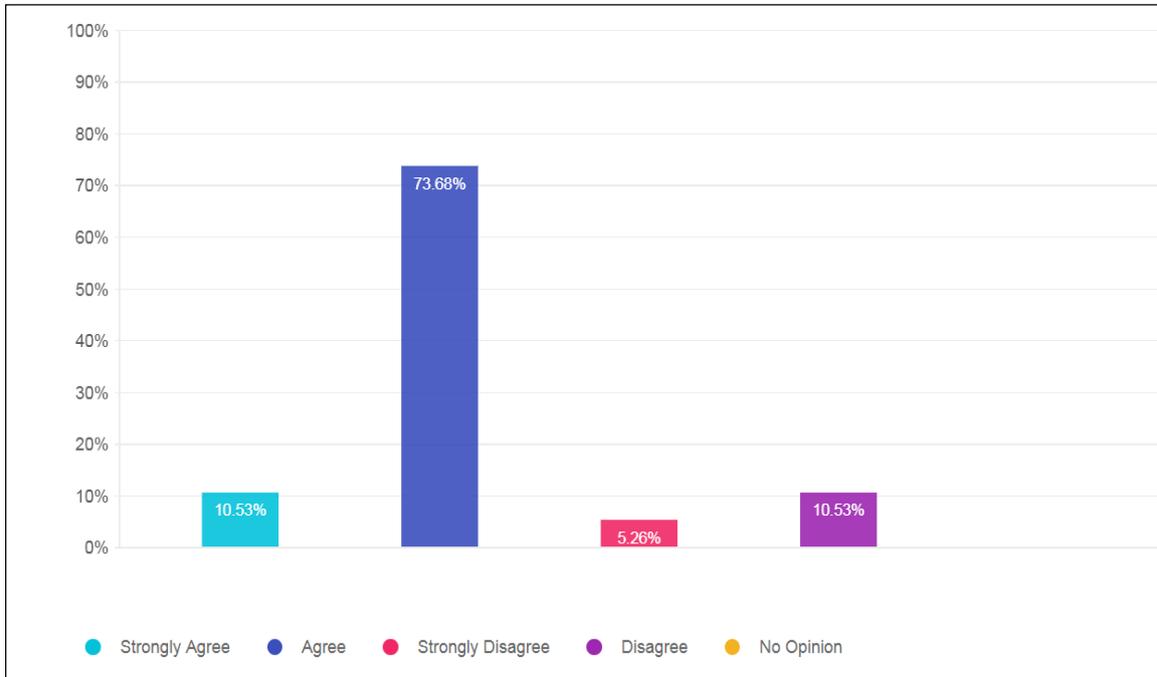
19. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my methods of instruction.



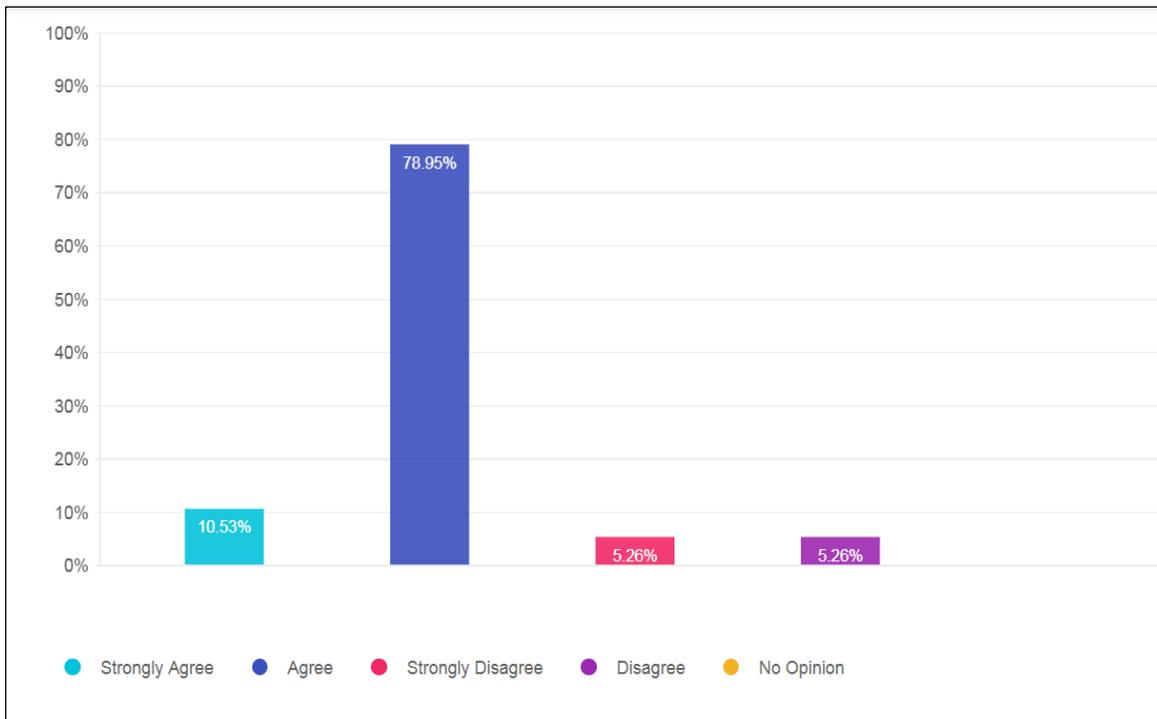
20. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have adjusted or changed one or more of my methods of instruction.



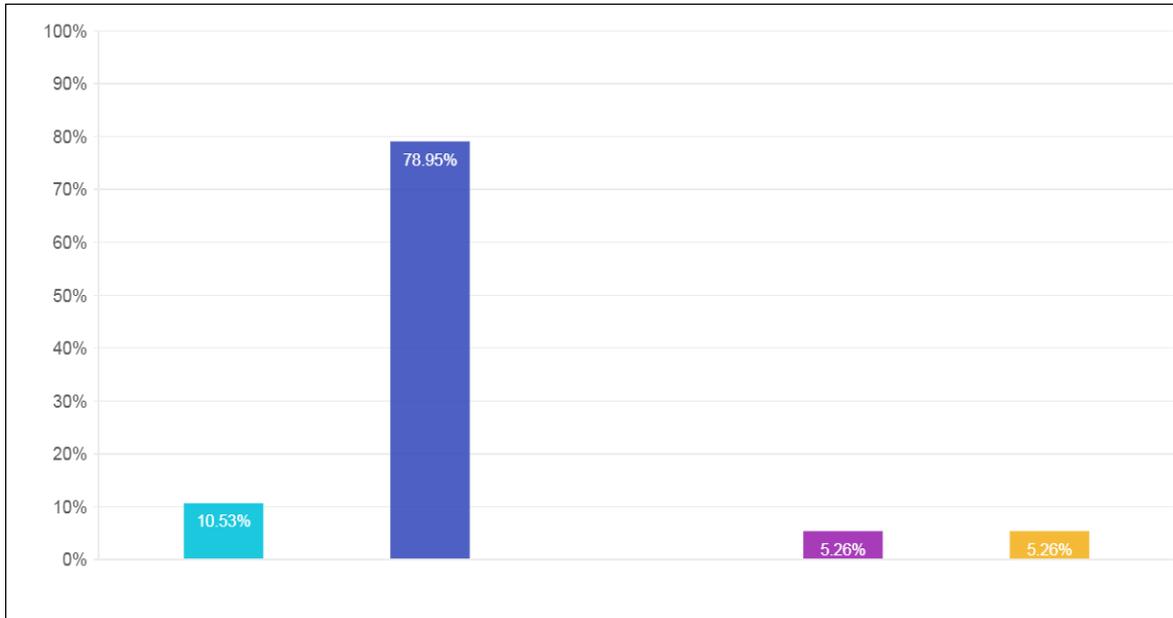
21. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my methods of assessment.



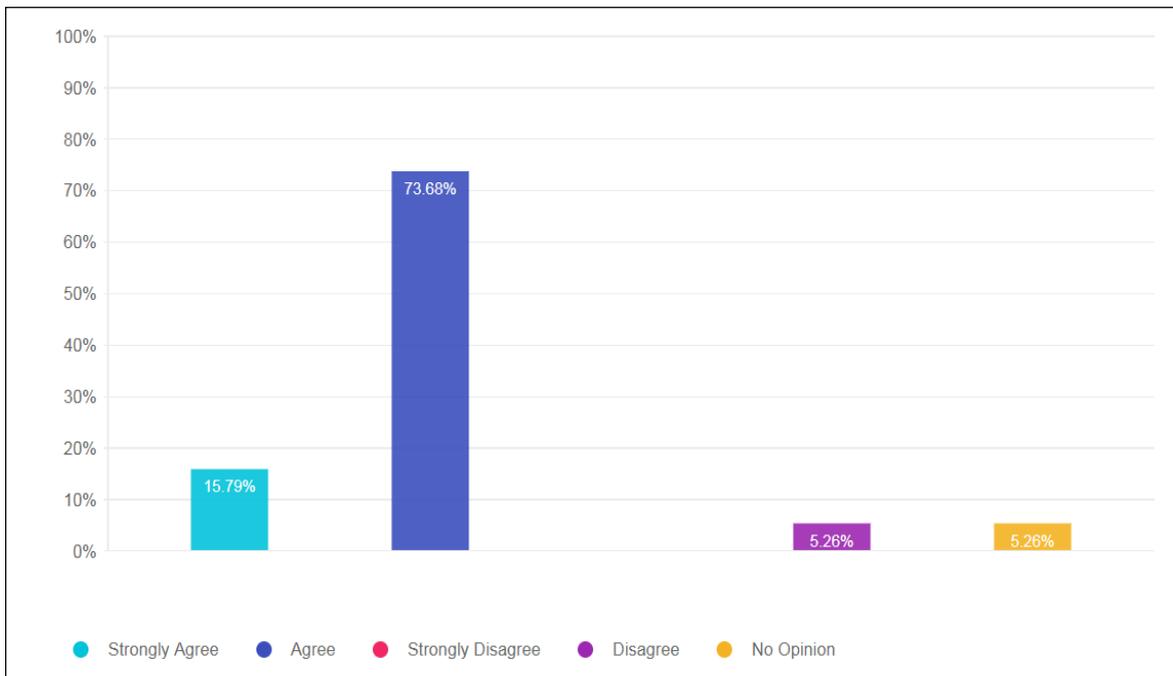
22. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have adjusted or changed one or more methods of assessment.



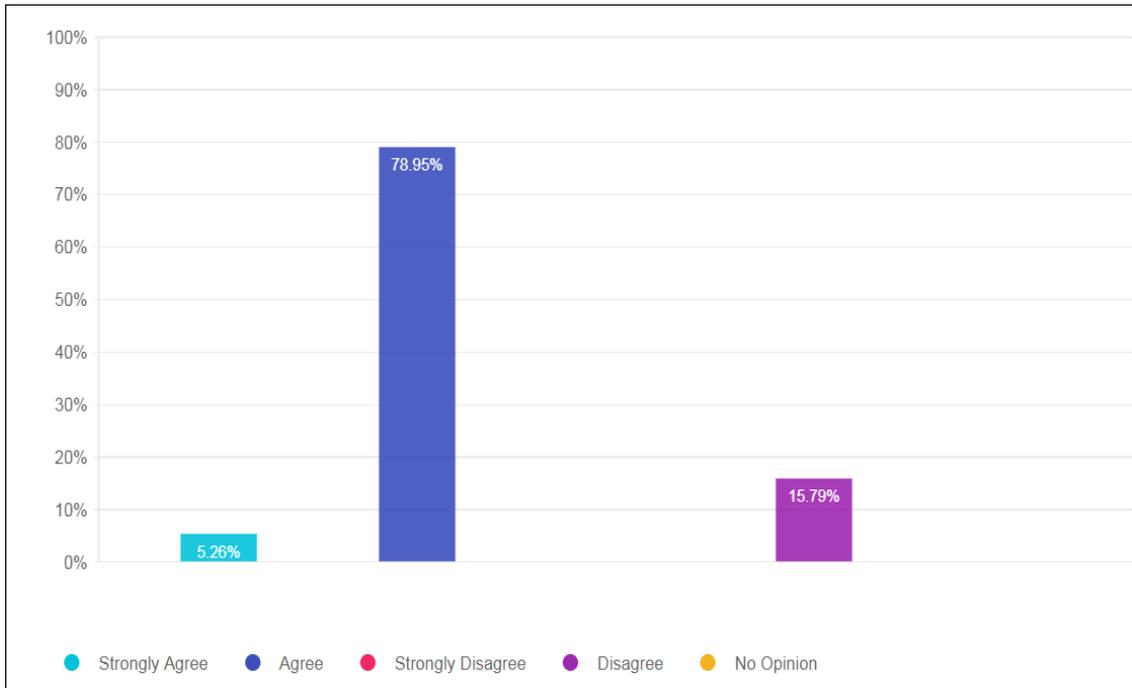
23. Because of my participation in NEASC self-study process, I have reflected on my own teaching effectiveness (knowledge, skills, and/or implementation).



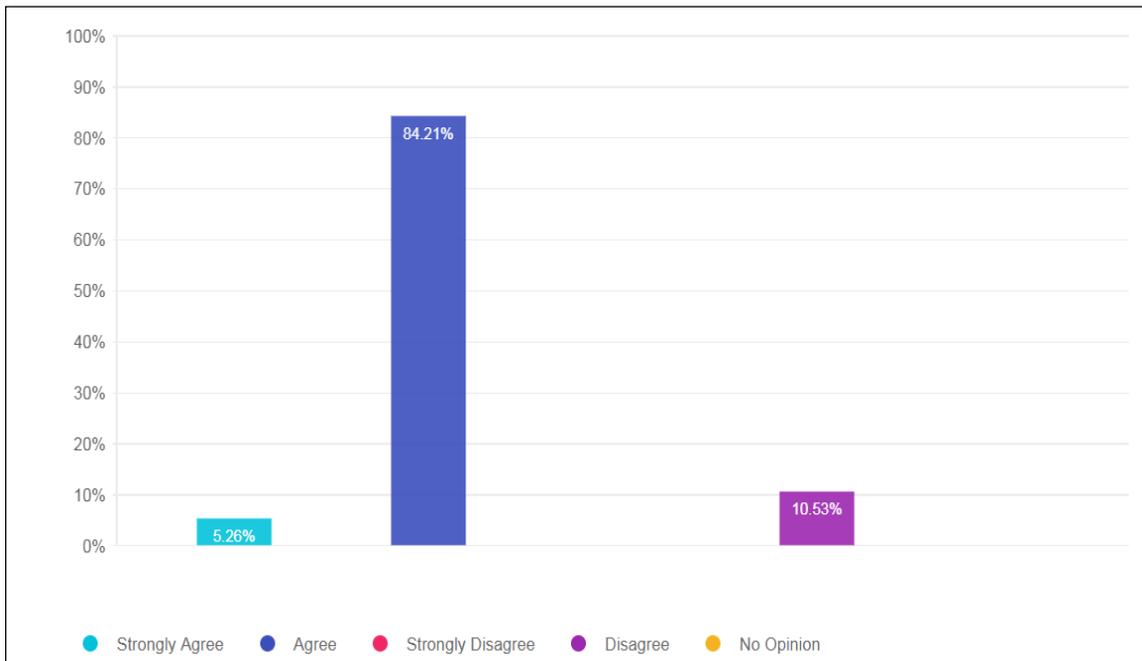
24. Because of NEASC self-study process, I believe that I am a more reflective teacher.



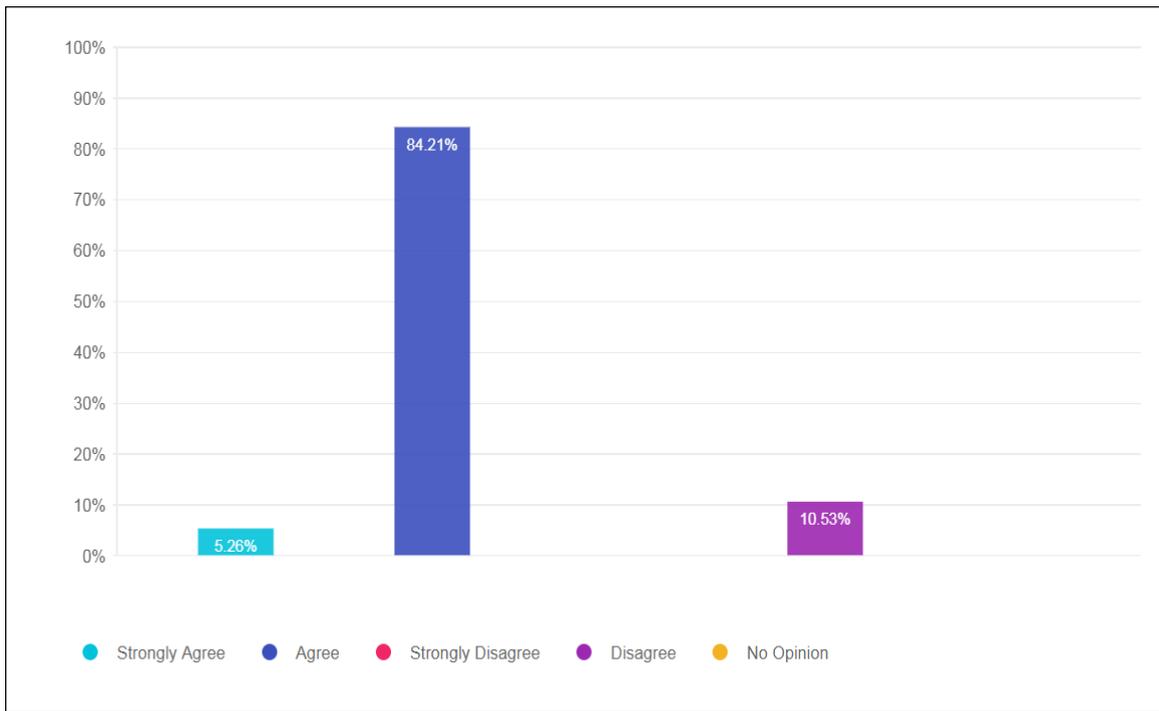
25. Because of NEASC self-study process, my students achieve more than before.



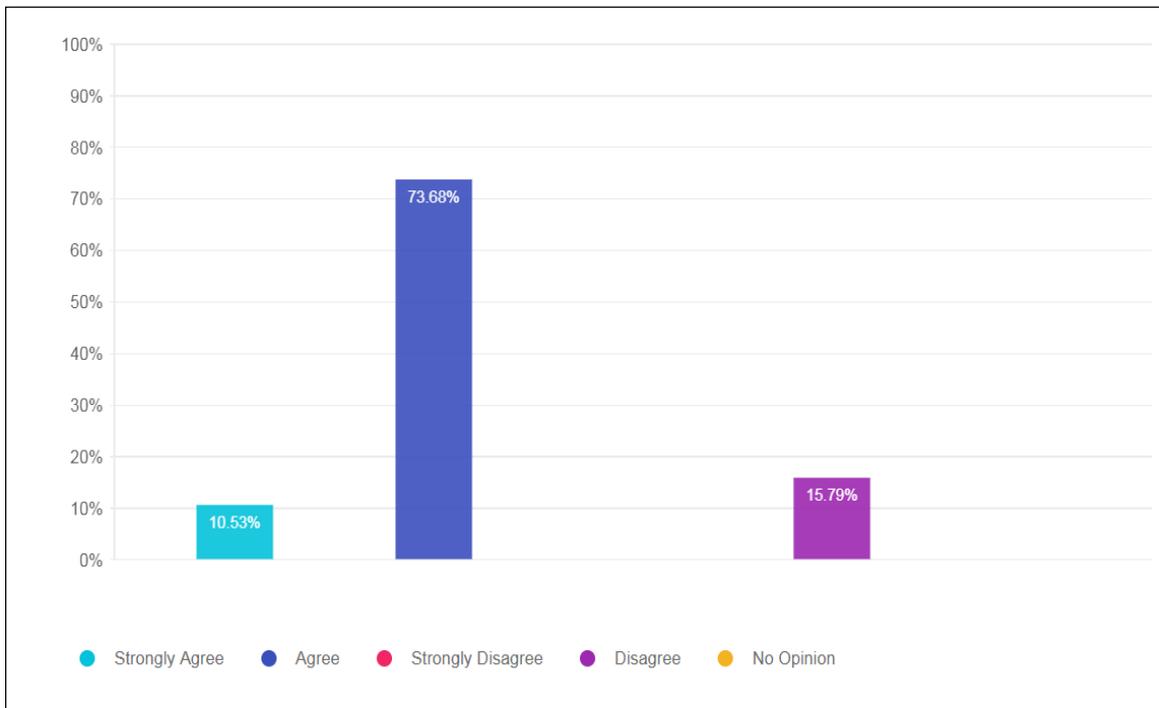
26. Because of NEASC self-study process, I am a more effective teacher.



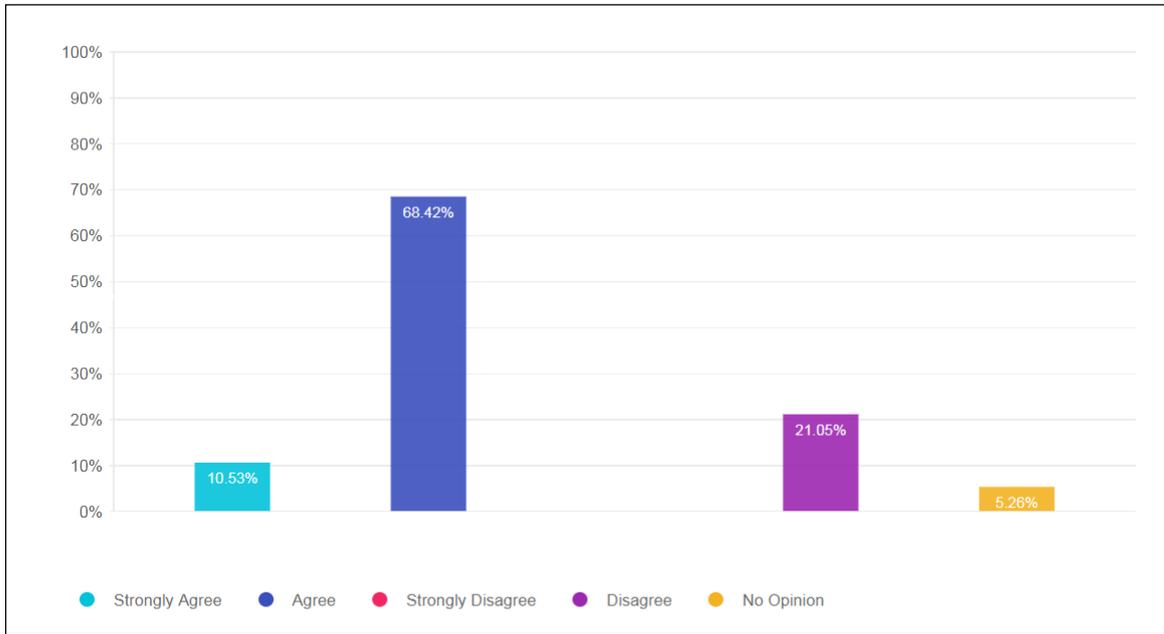
27. Being a member of a sub-committee in the self-study made me a more effective teacher.



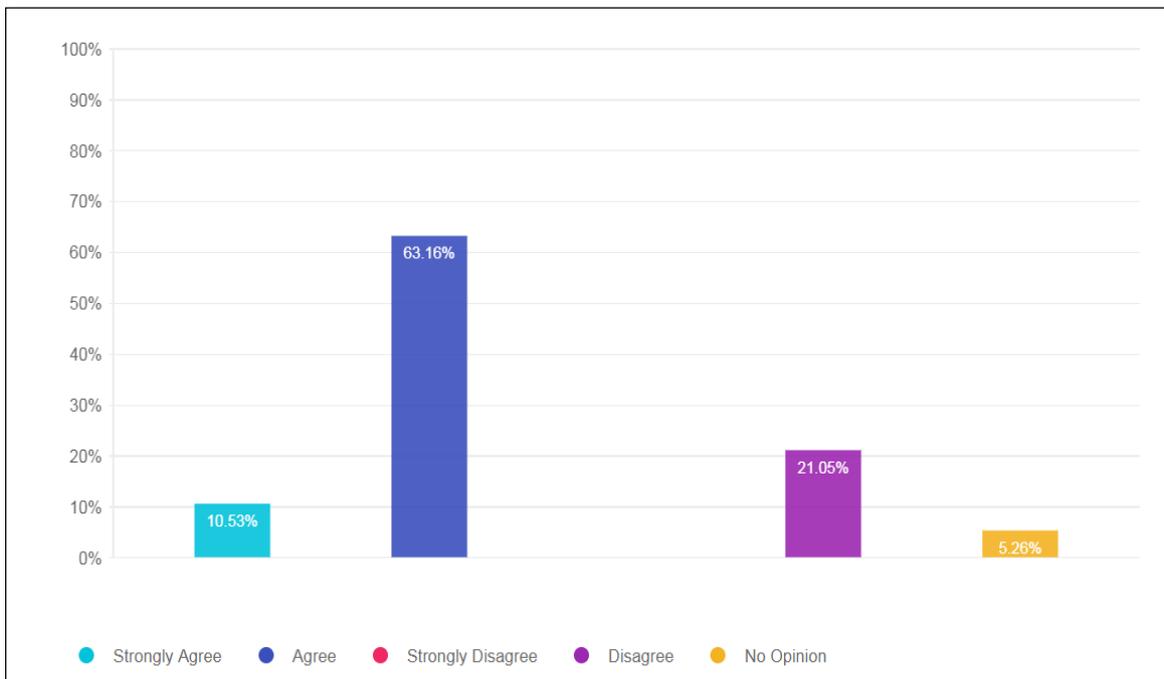
28. Because of the self-study, I had the opportunity to meet often with my colleagues and that made me a more effective teacher.



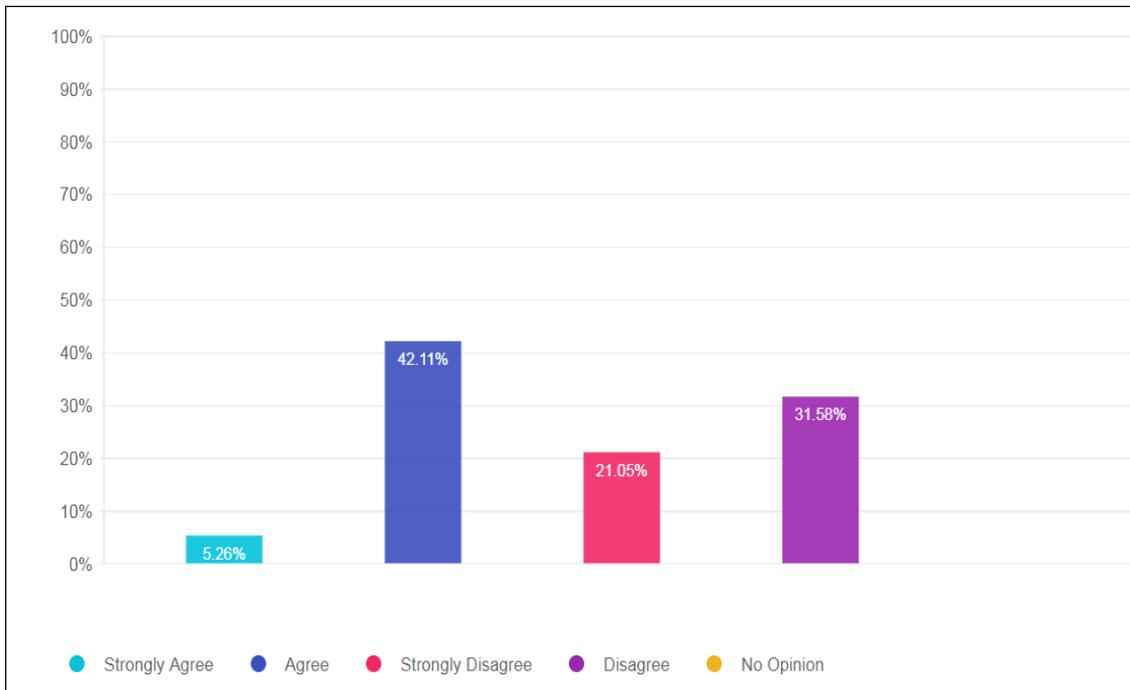
29. I became a more effective teacher because of NEASC self-study meetings with department and administration to discuss the self-study.



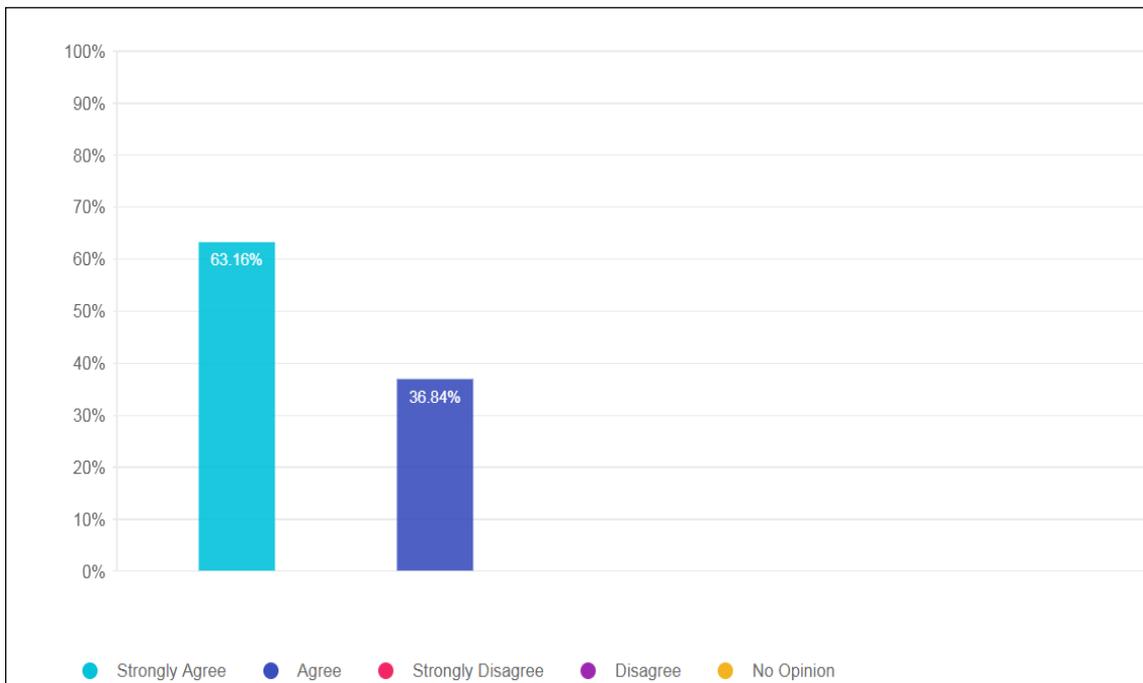
30. NEASC self-study meetings with department and administration helped teachers to help themselves.



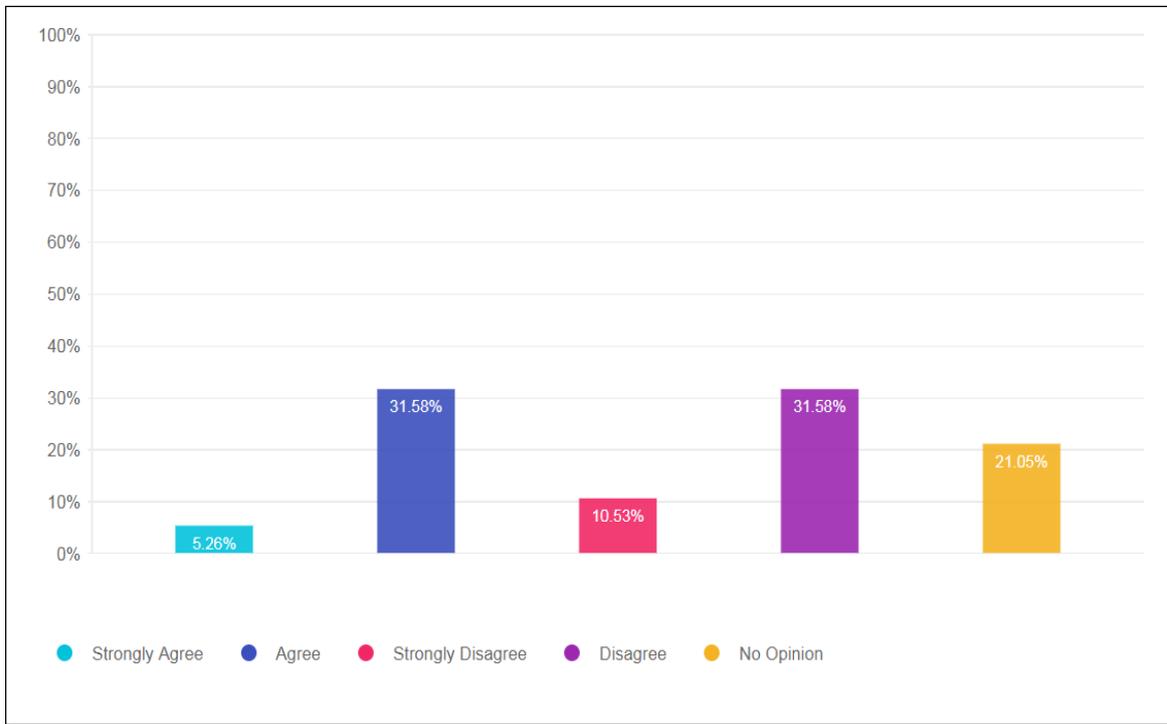
31. Teachers were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



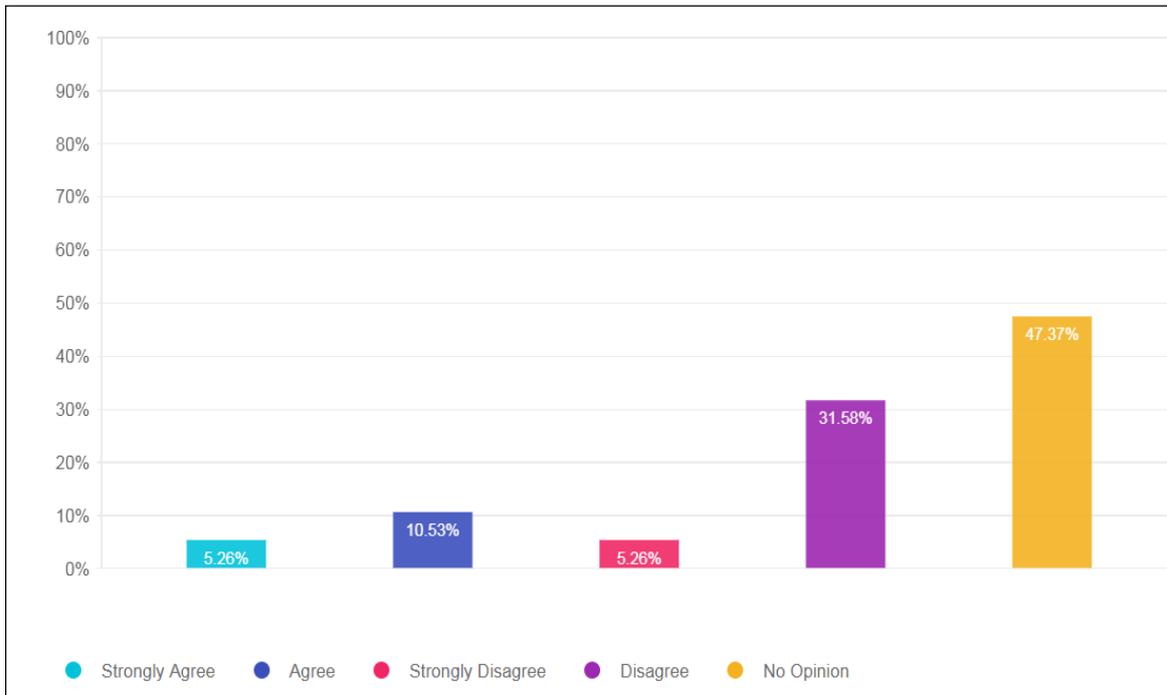
32. Administrators and management -like Head of Sections and Subject Coordinators- were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



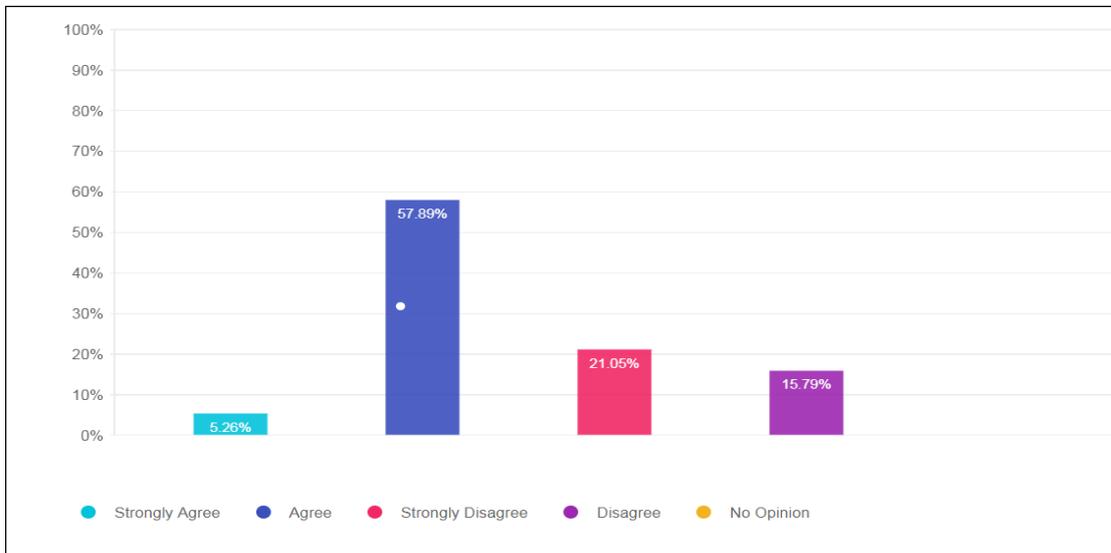
33. Students were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



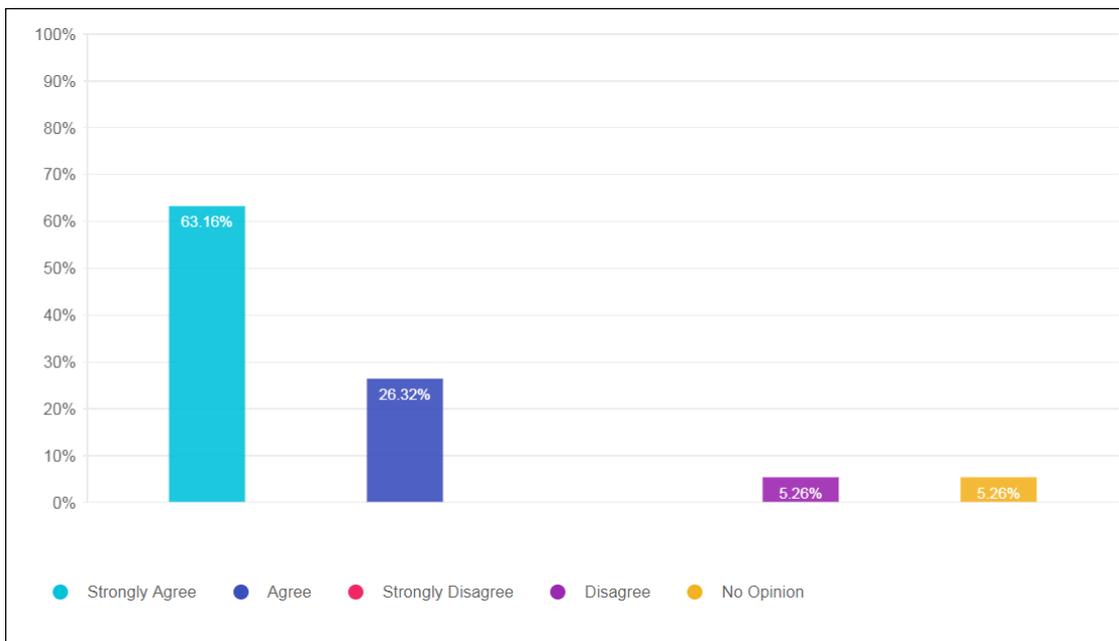
34. Parents were extensively involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process



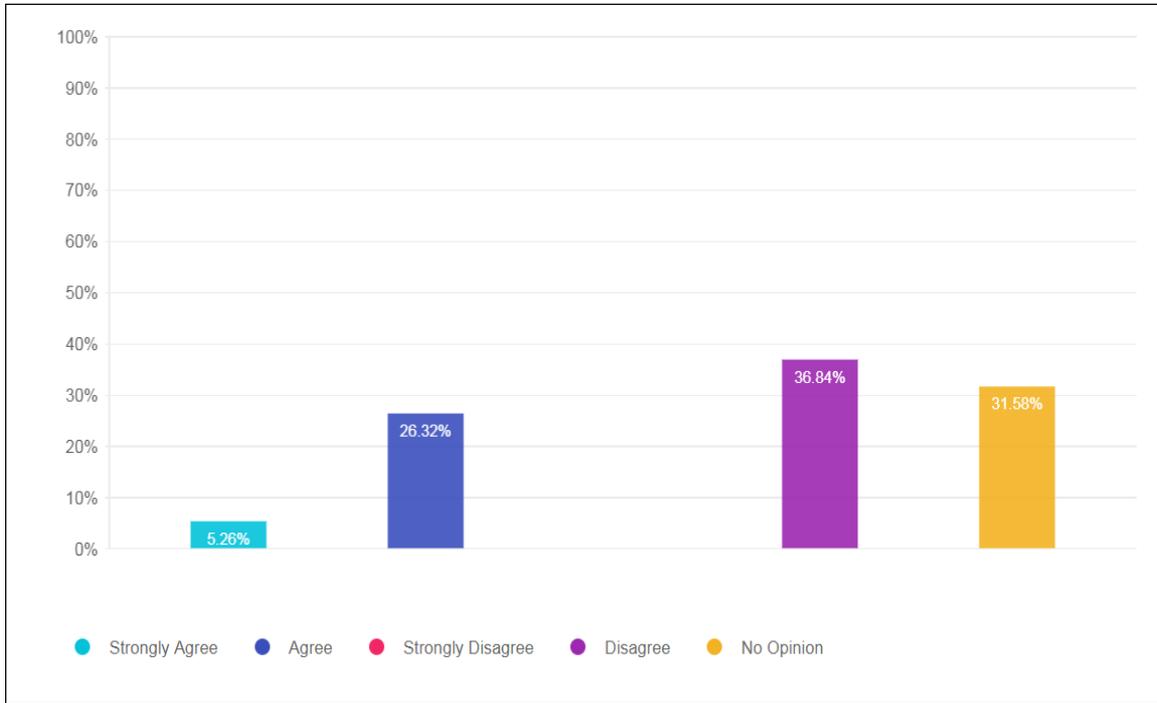
35. Teachers were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



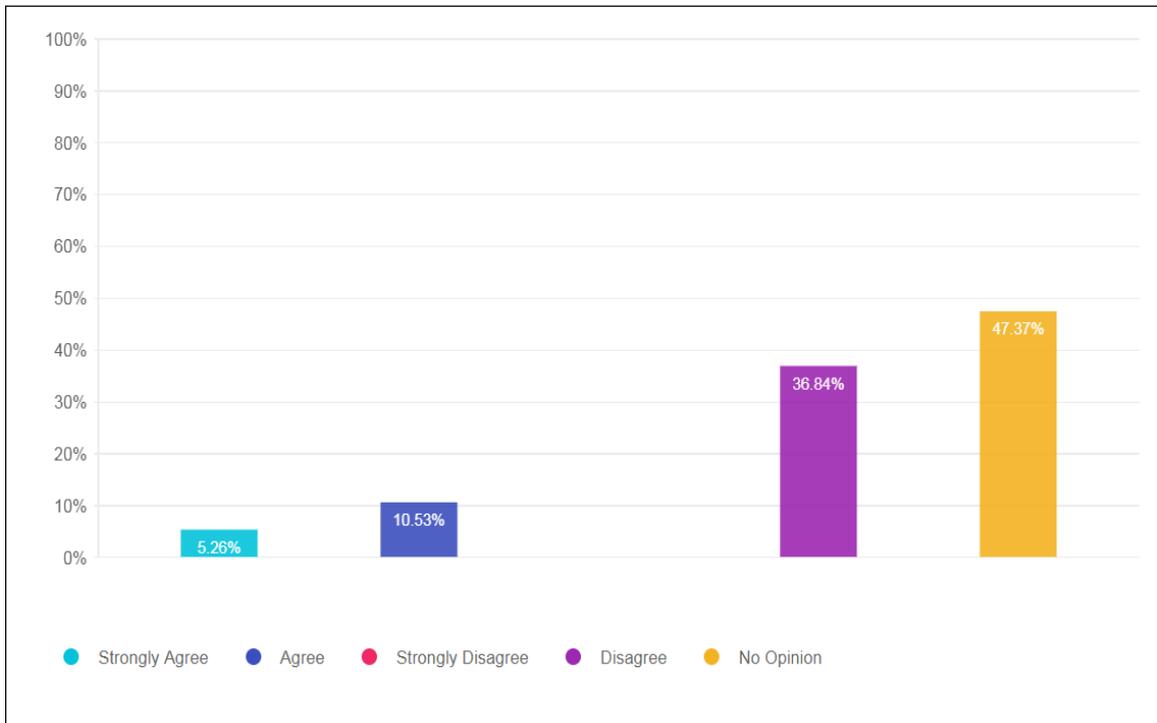
36. Administrators and management -like Head of Sections and Subject Coordinators- were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



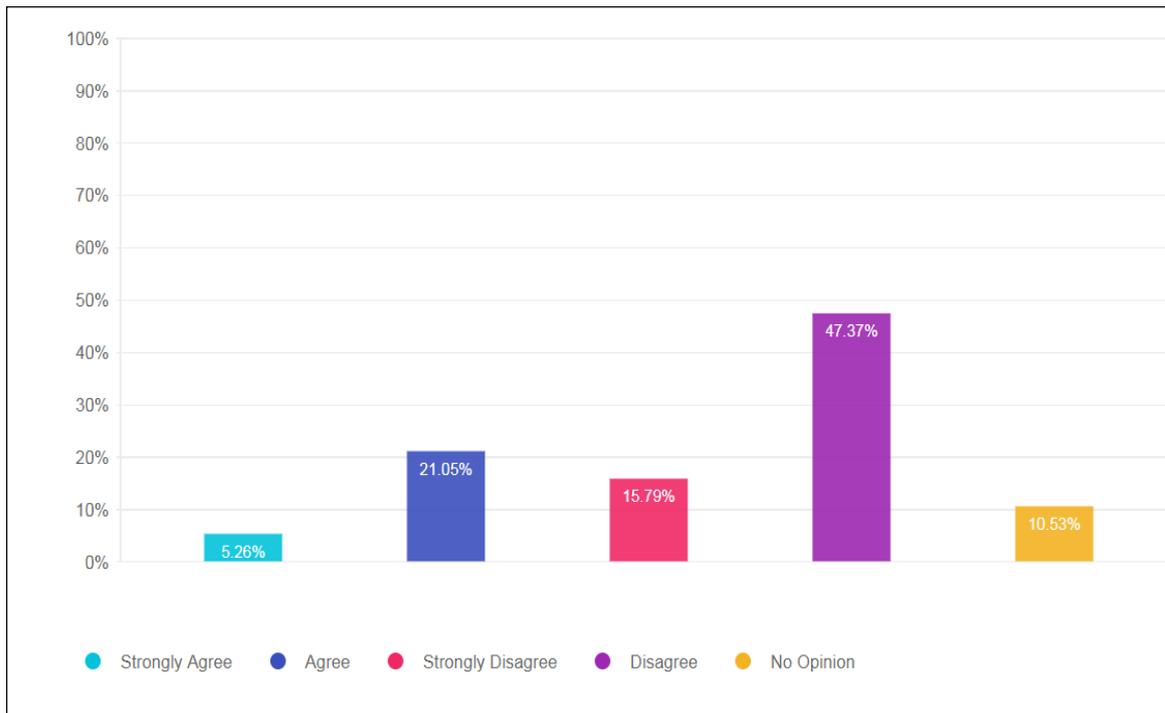
37. Students were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



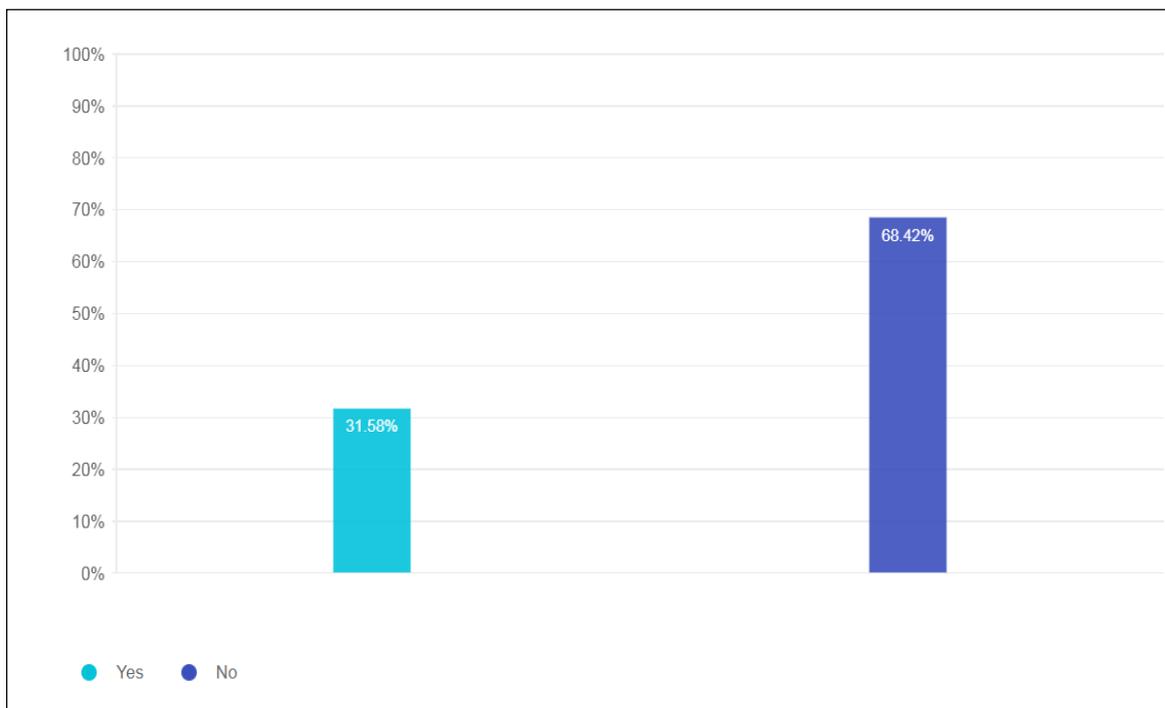
38. Parents were suitably involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



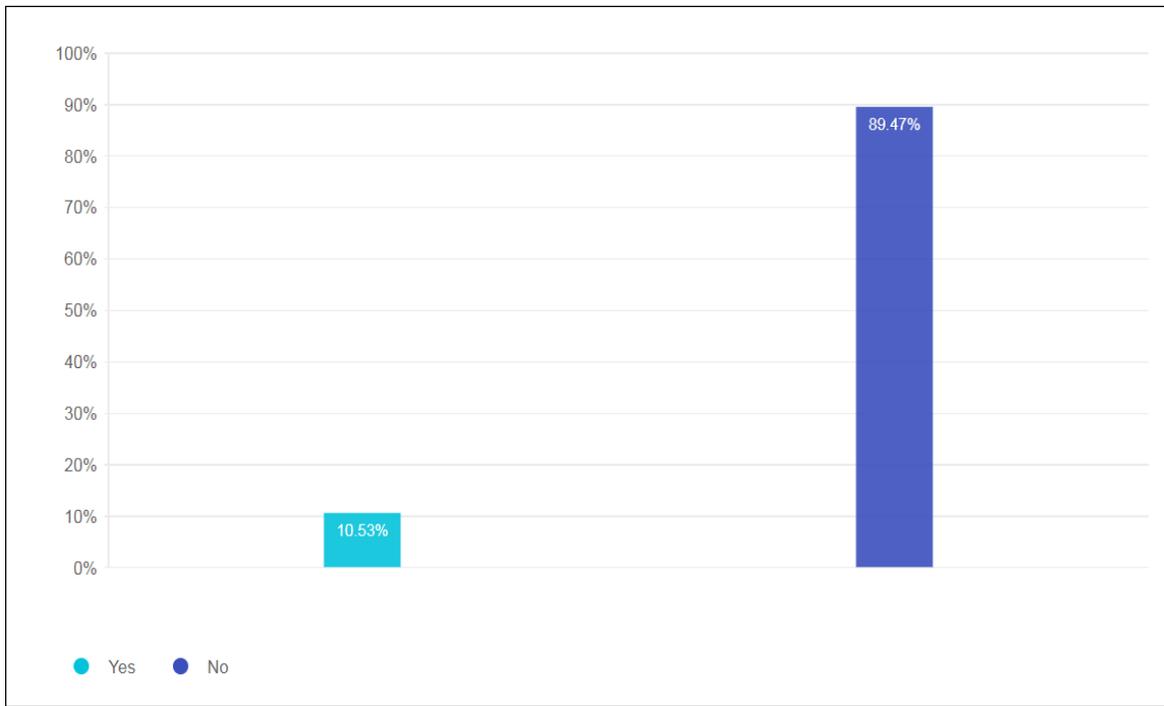
39. The amount of stakeholder (teachers, administrators, students, parents) involvement was exactly as it should be involved throughout the entire NEASC self-study process.



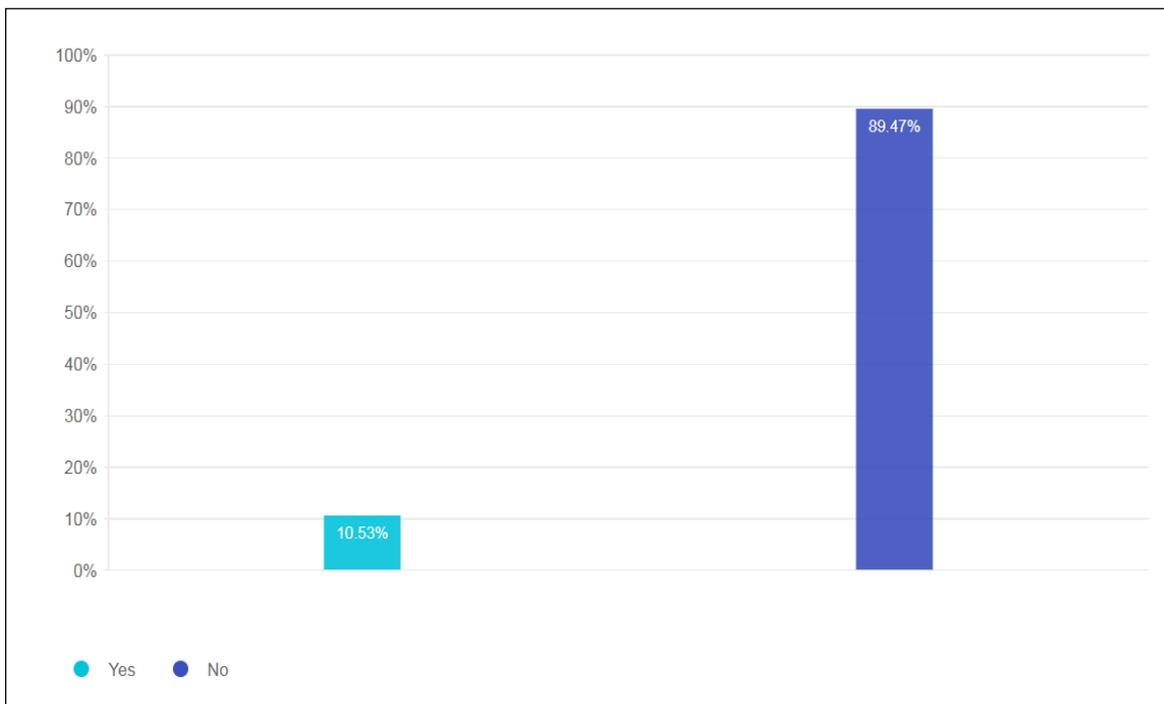
40. During the recent NEASC self-study process, all stakeholders who were involved (teachers, administrators, students, parents) worked equally to develop the school's mission and expectations.



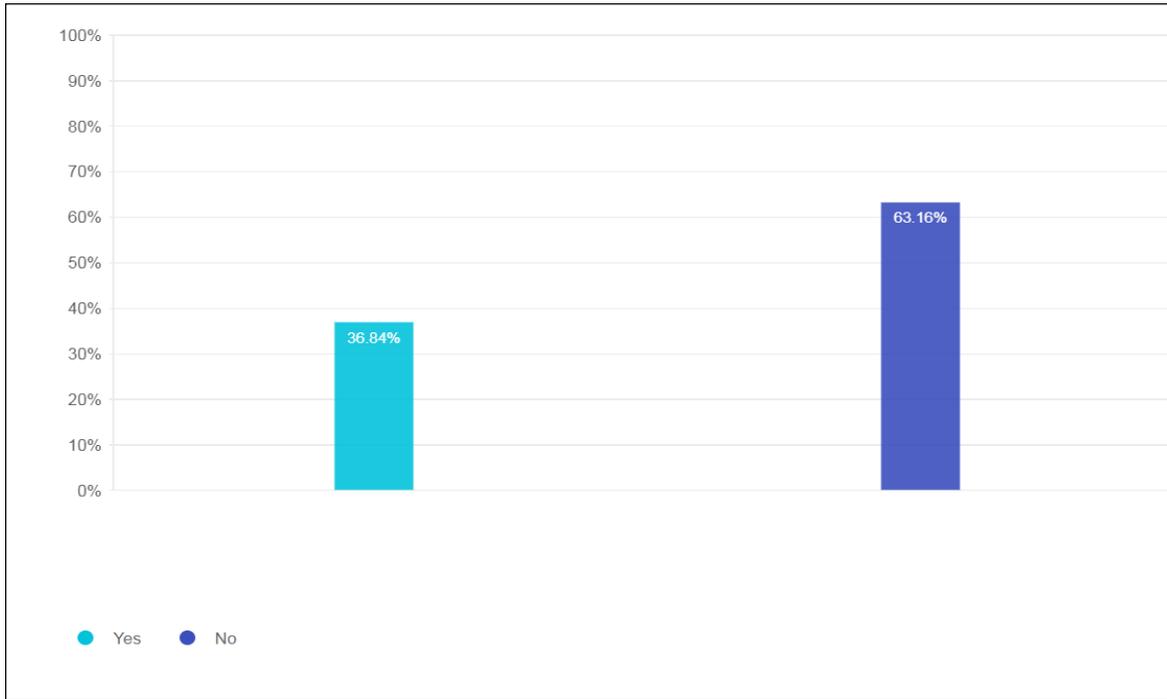
41. During the recent NEASC self-study process, all teachers, worked equally to develop the school's mission and expectations.



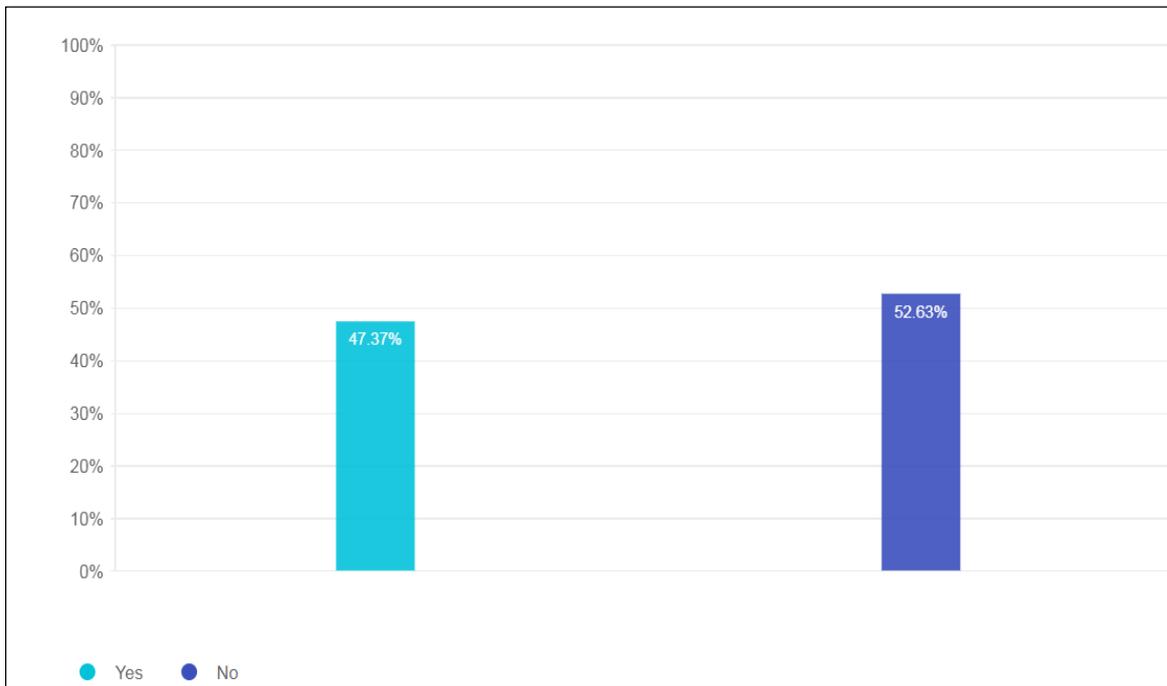
42. During the recent NEASC self-study process, all teachers had opportunities for input into the school's mission and guiding statements.



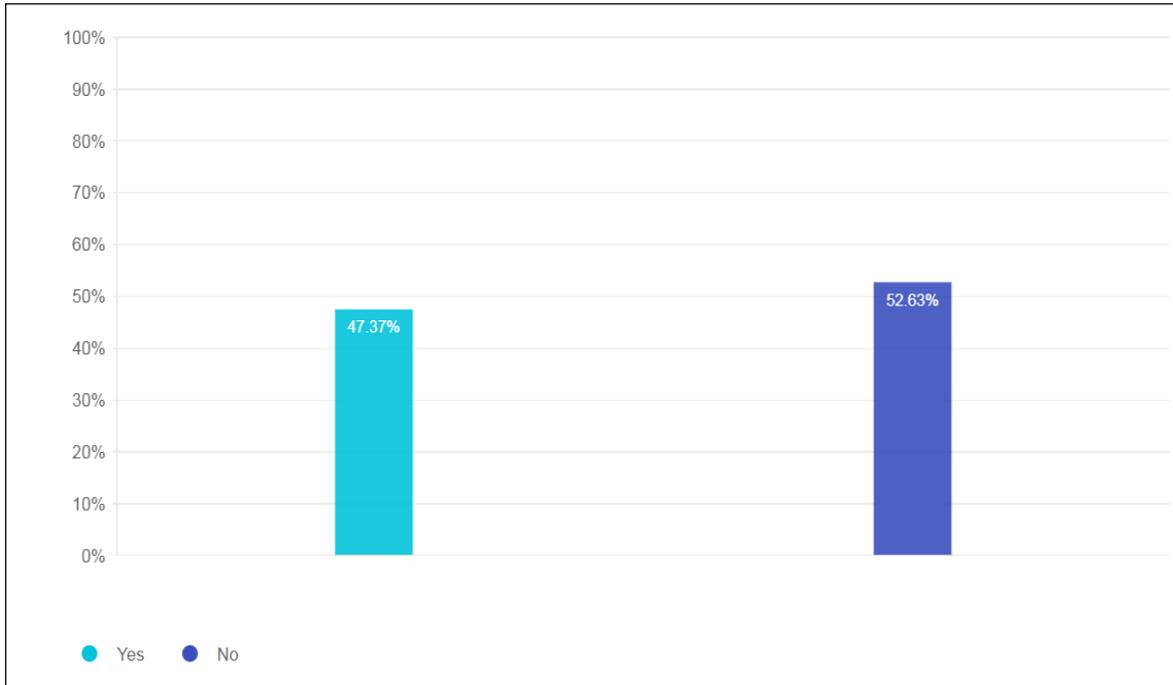
43. During the recent NEASC self-study process, I felt that my opinions were listened to during the discussions of the school's mission and guiding statements.



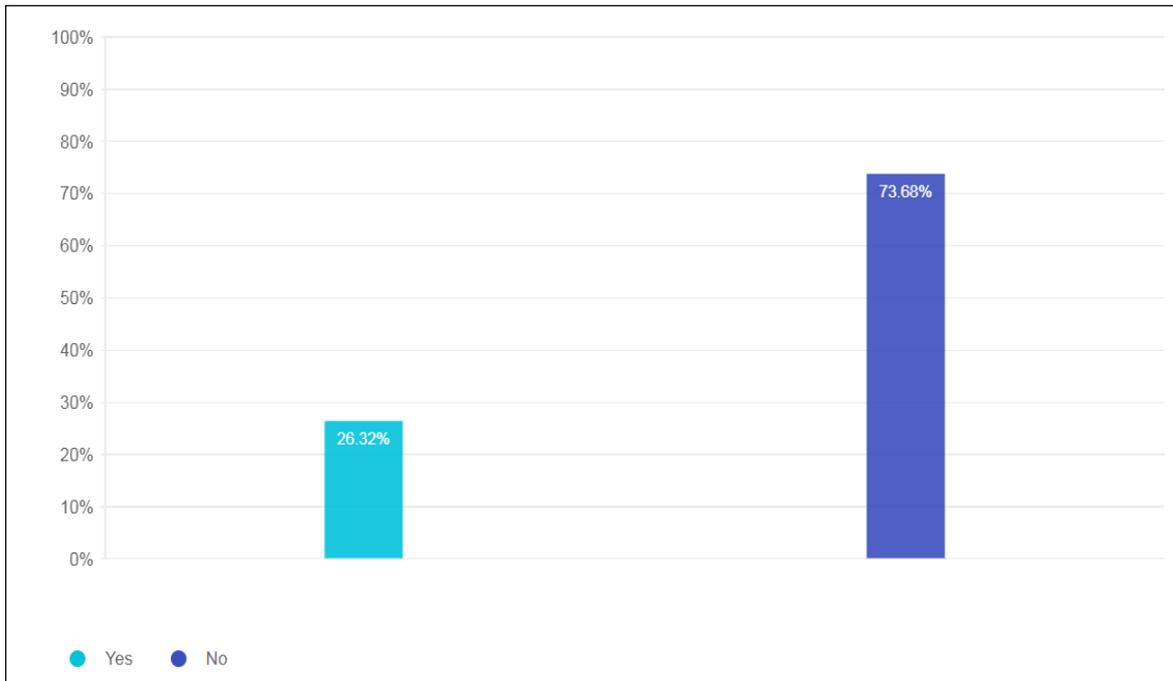
44. During the recent NEASC self-study process and when the mission and guiding statements were developed and agreed upon, they were clearly communicated to the teachers.



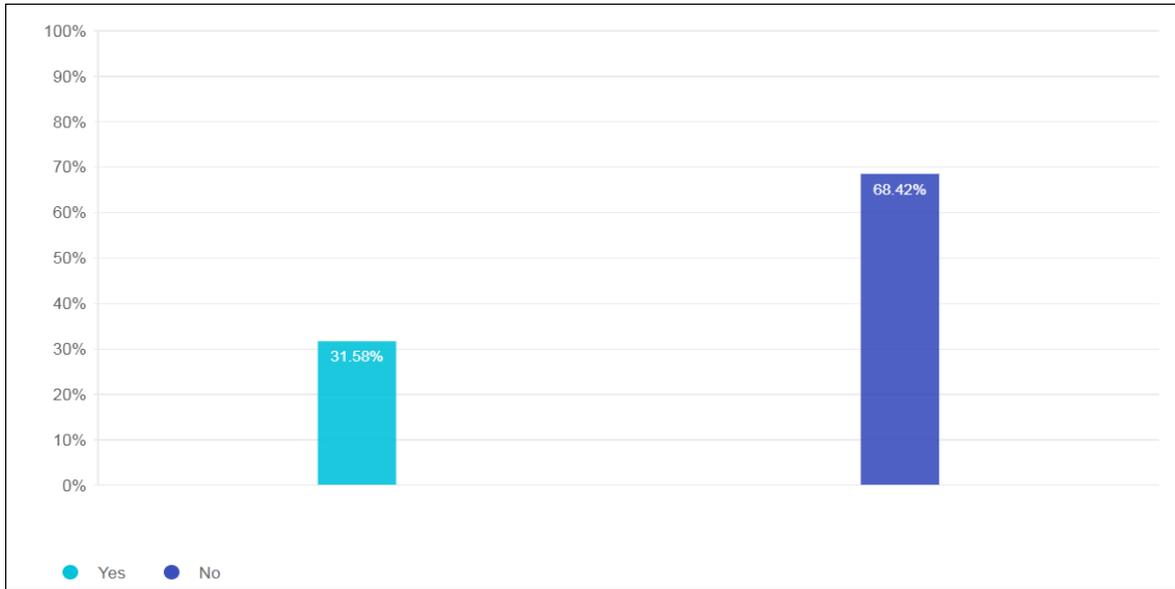
45. During the NEASC self-study process, when the mission and guiding statements were developed and agreed upon, they were clearly communicated to the to all the stakeholders (teachers, administrators, students, parents).



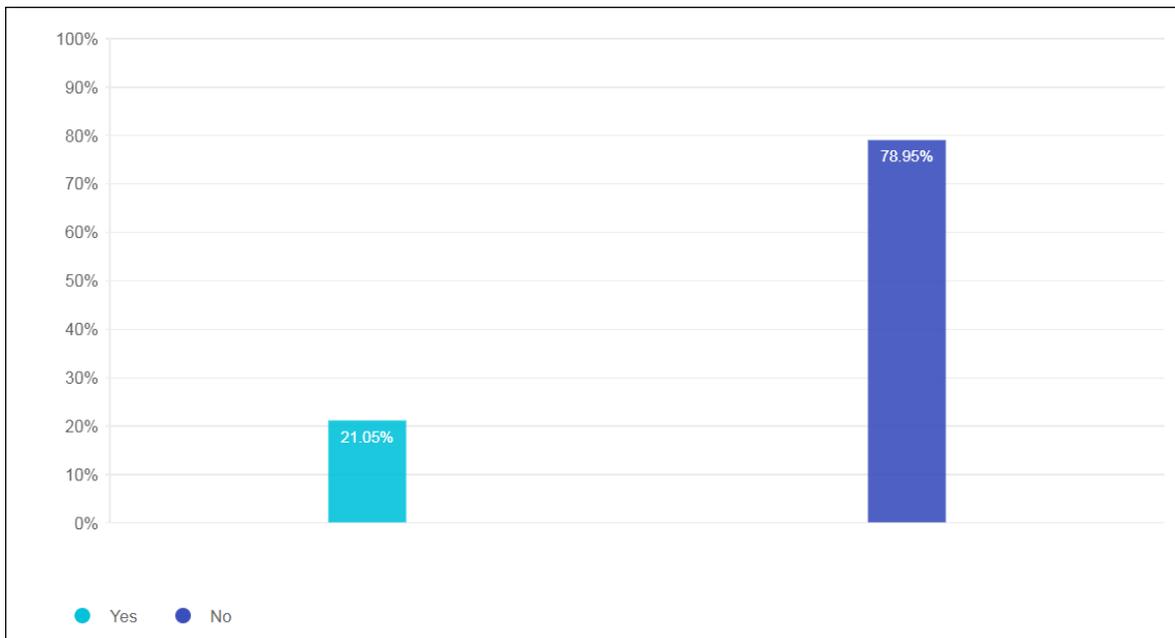
46. At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met, brainstormed and reflected together on the situation of the school's programs, processes, and performance.



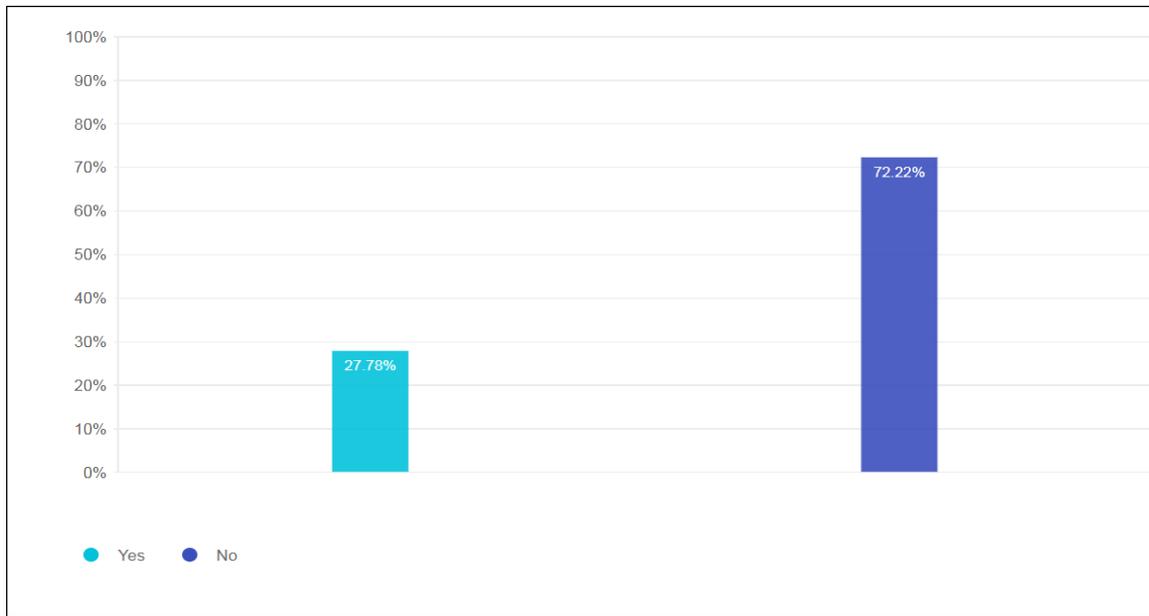
47. At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators discussed the of the school's operation, programs, actions, and performance. Then, together, they reached particular goals for future of the school.



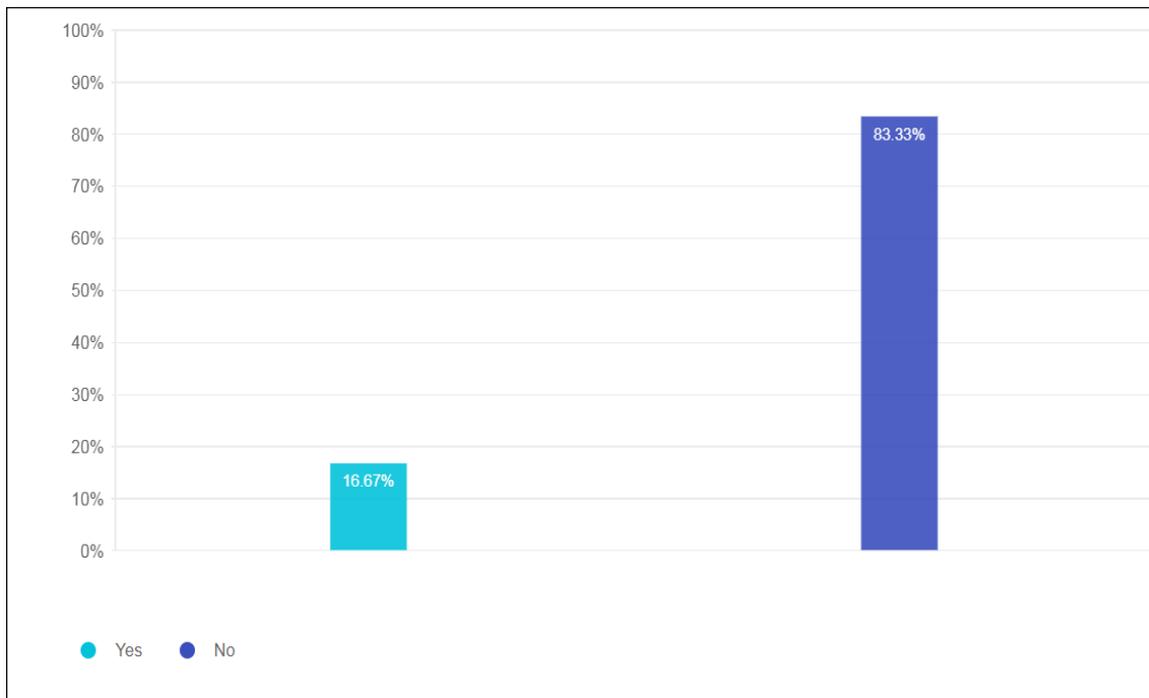
48. Once the mission was developed and written, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met, brainstormed, and reflected on school's operation, programs, actions, and performance.



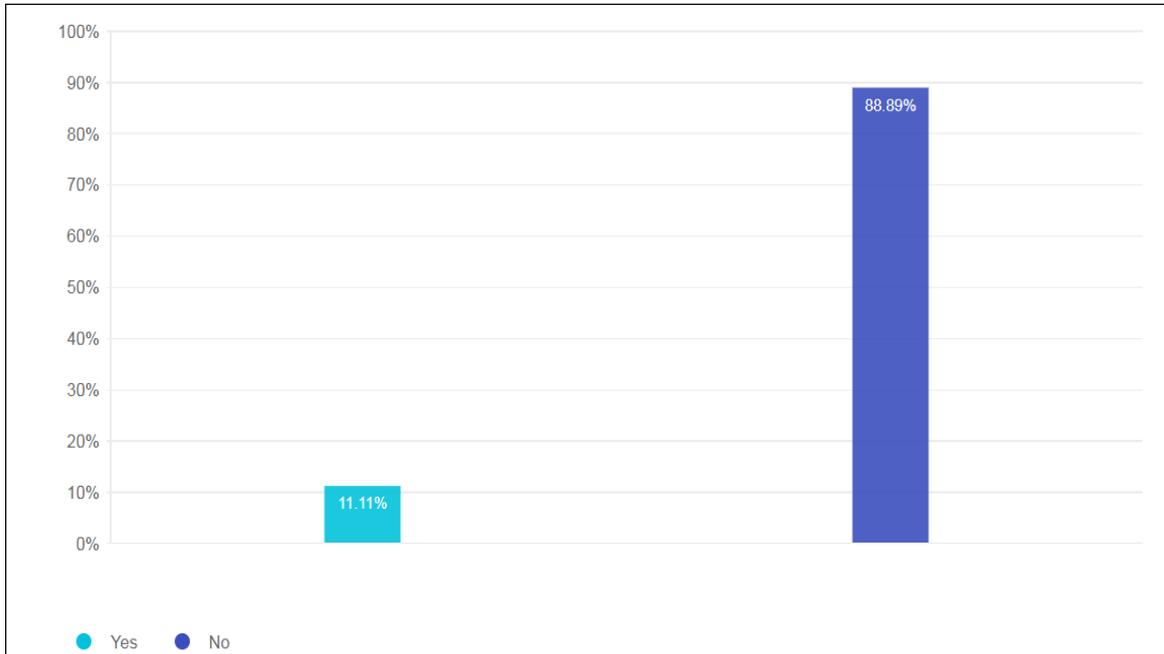
49. If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room?



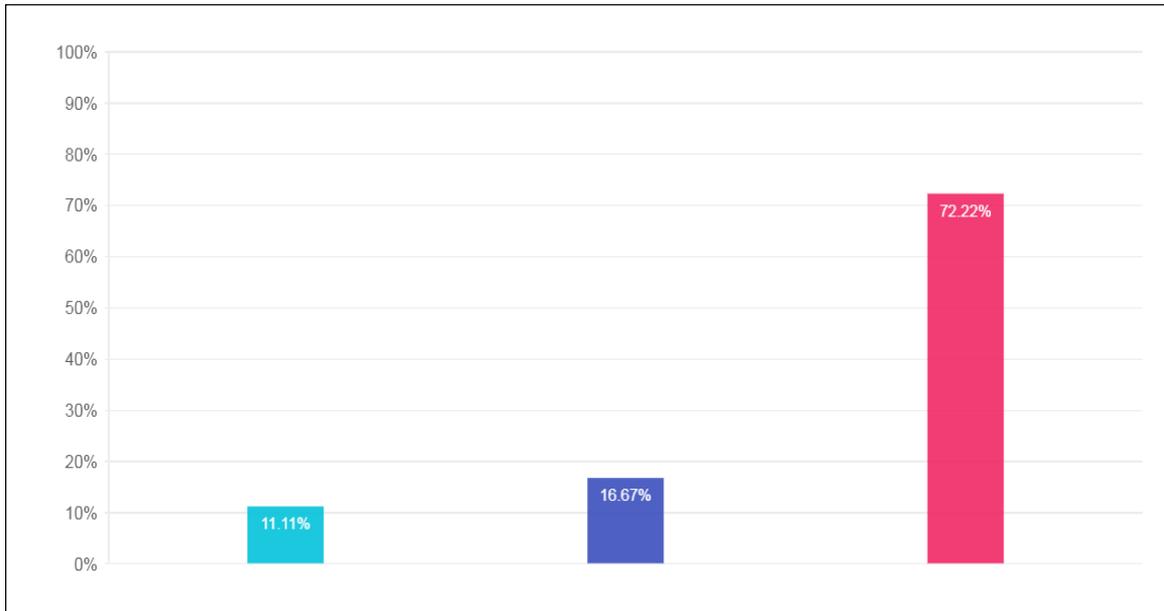
50. According to your experience, were the teachers trained to discuss, analyze, and evaluate aspects of school's operation, programs, actions and performance?



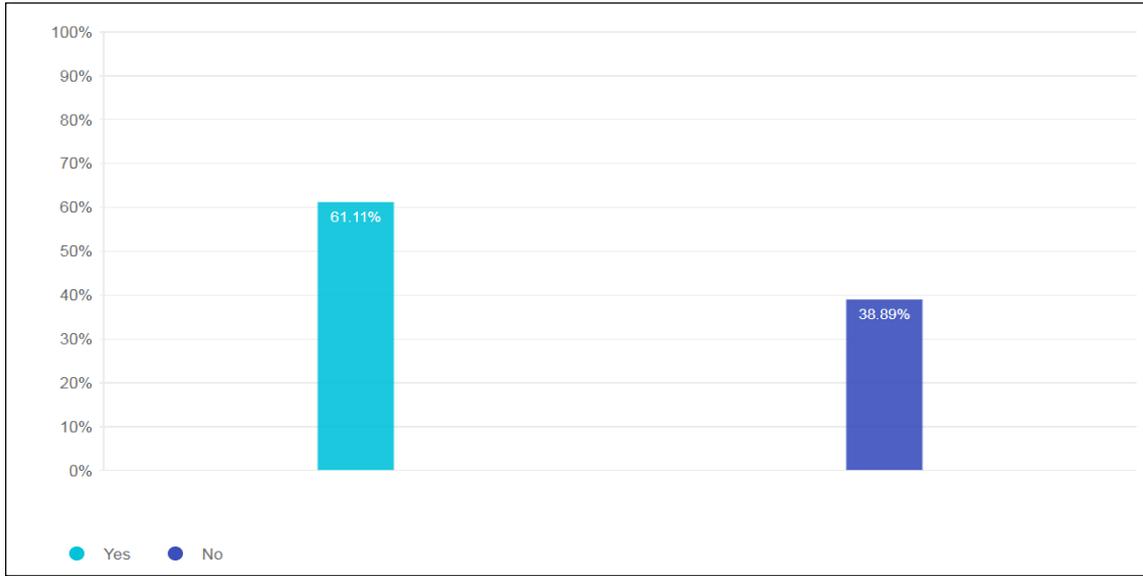
51. At the beginning of the self-study, all the teachers, senior leadership team and administrators met together and specifically discussed the effectiveness of the school's operation, programs, actions, and performance. This means they all analyzed and criticized these aspects in an honest transparent manner.



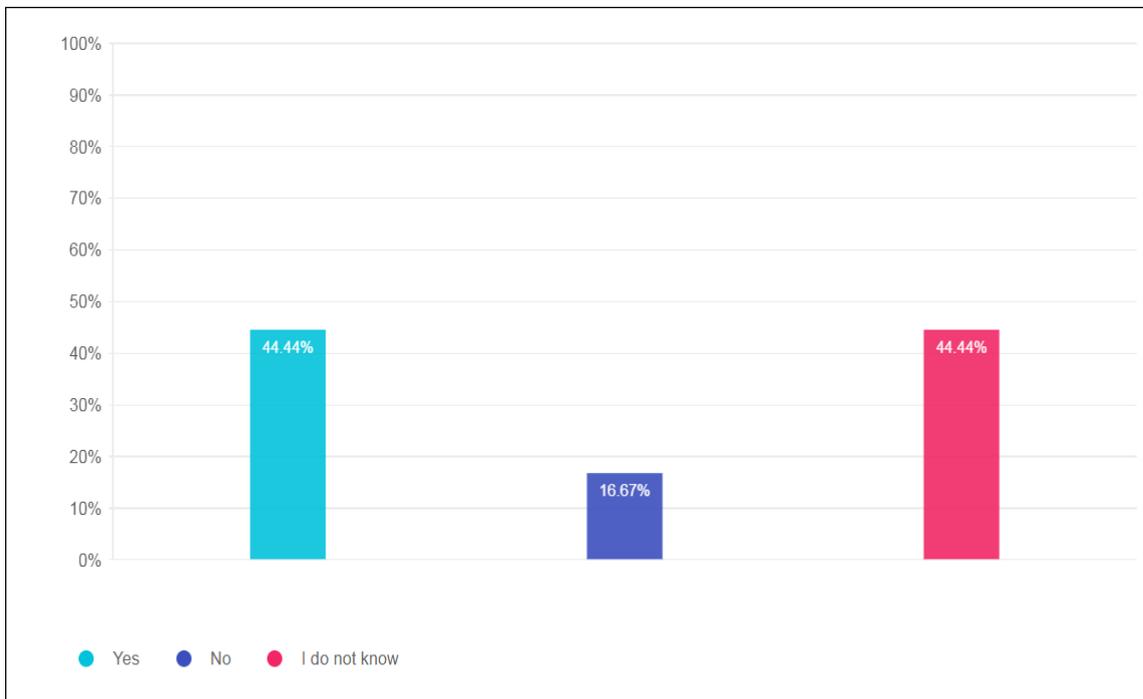
52. If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room?



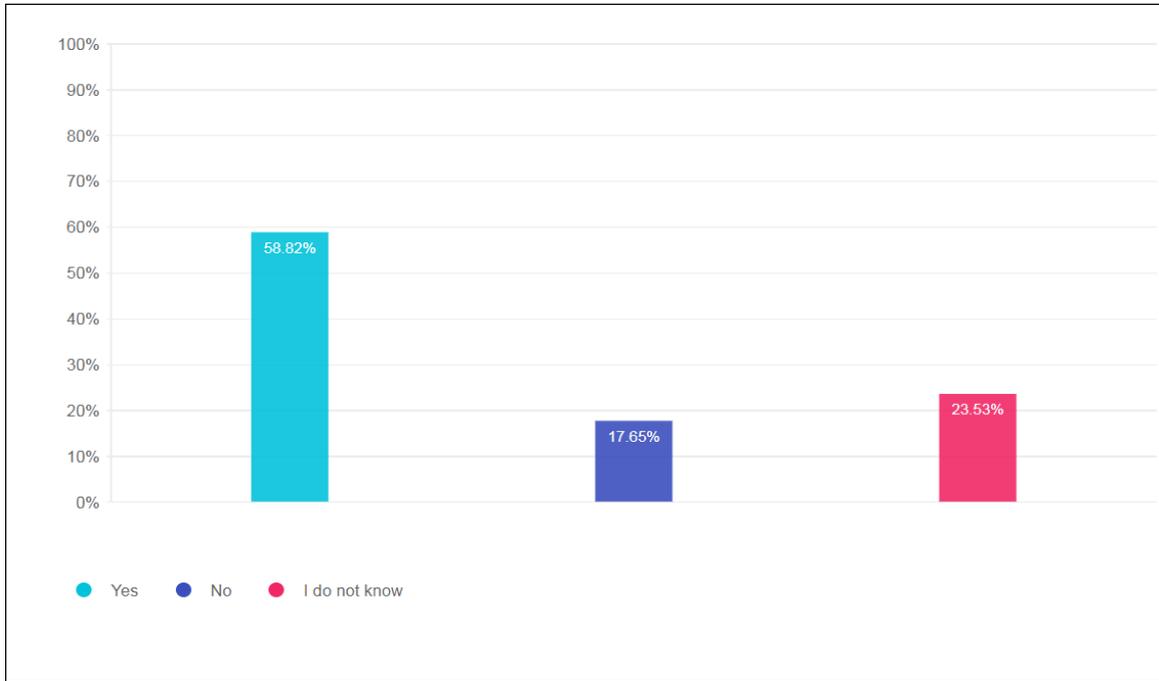
53. During the sub-committees meetings, in the self-study process, the teachers discussed and criticized the effectiveness of the school's operation, programs, practices, and performances in an open and transparent manner.



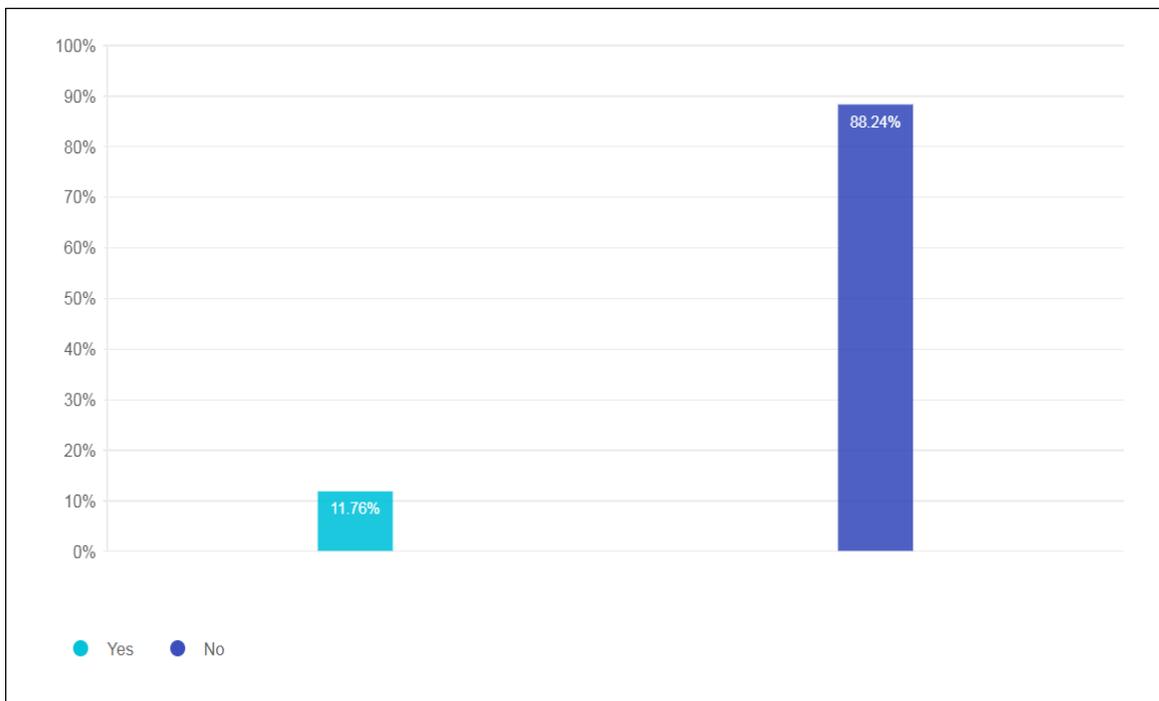
54. If yes, were there efforts to incorporate/ include all participants in the room?



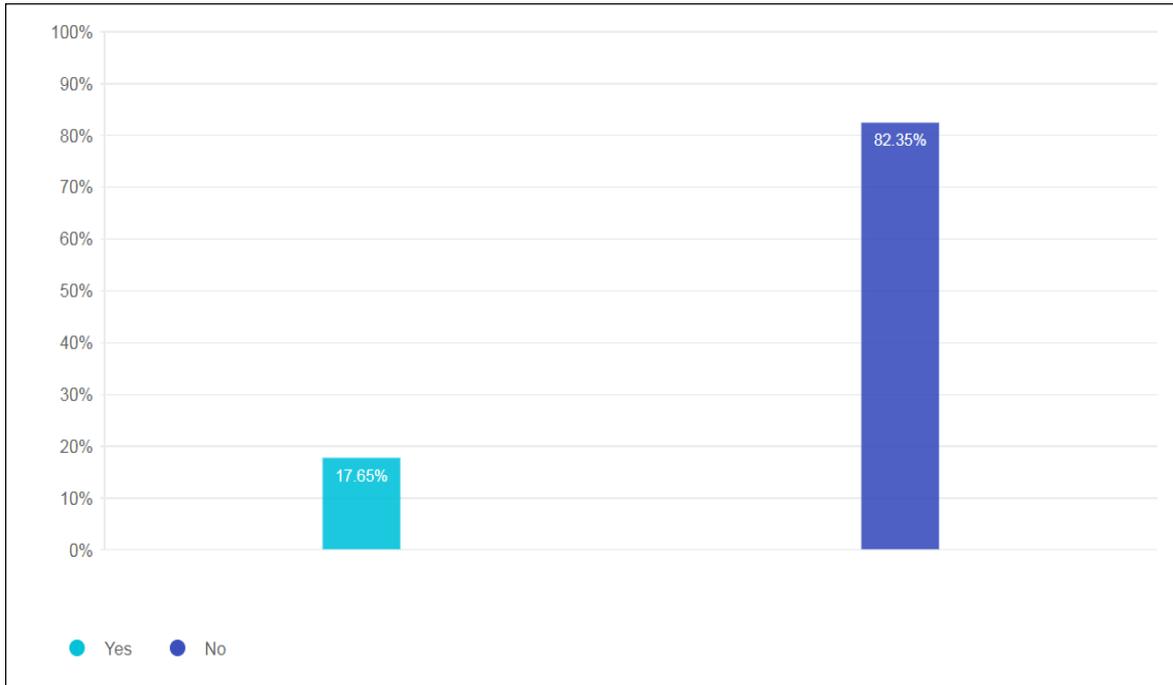
55. If some aspects of the school were analyzed and criticized, was it recognized and included in the recommendations for improvement?



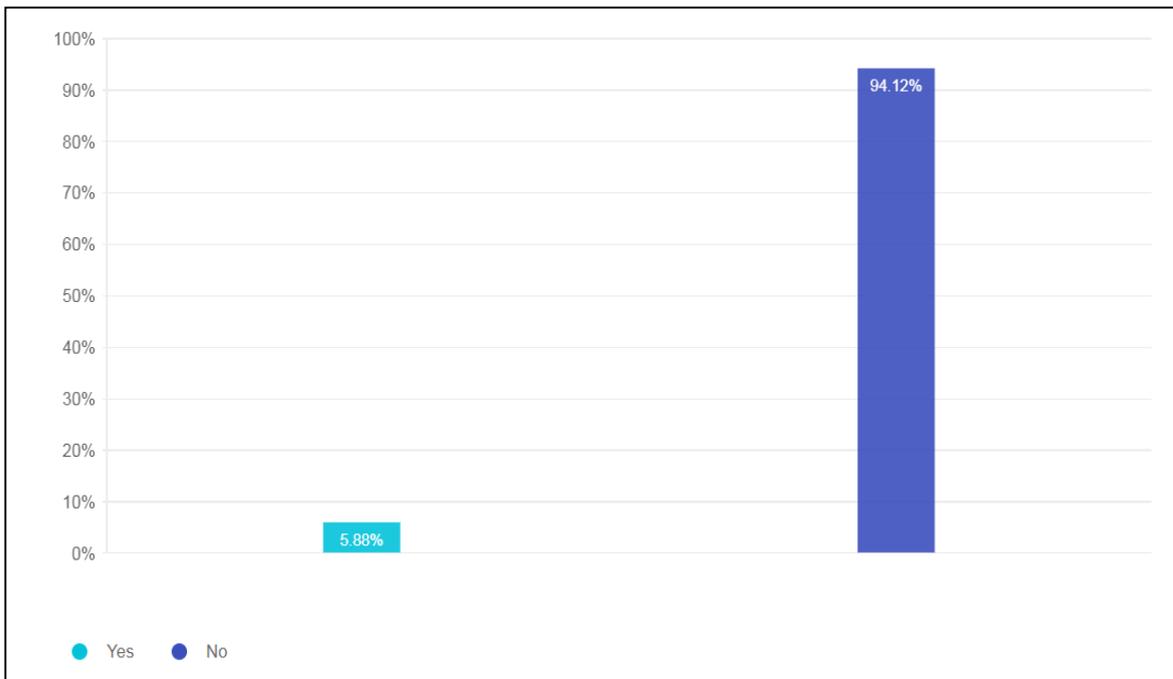
56. As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a short-term (6 month) goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices?



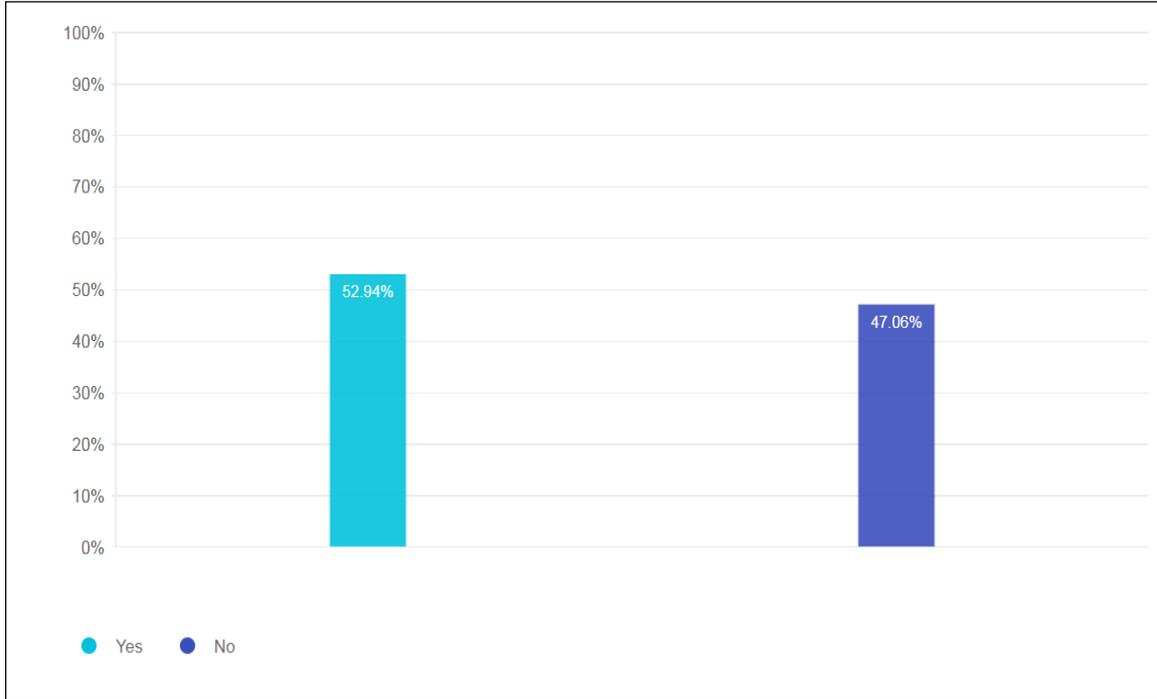
57. As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a medium (1-year) term goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices?



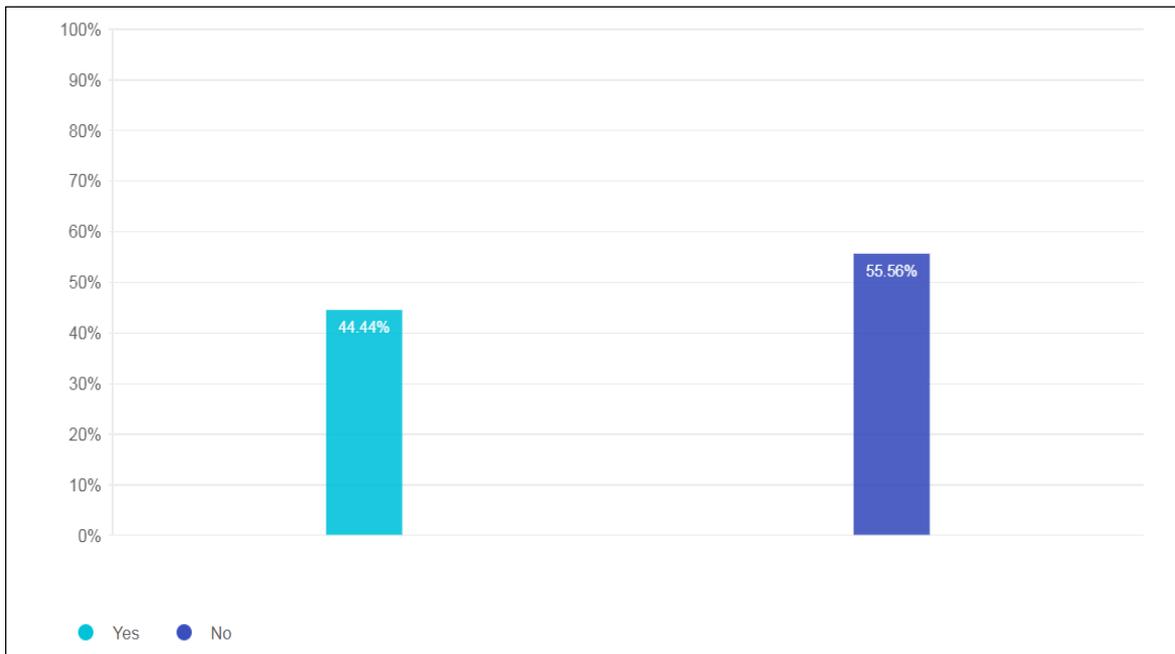
58. As part of the self-study process, did teachers and administrators meet and worked out together a long-term (5 years) term goals for the school's operation, programs, processes or practices?



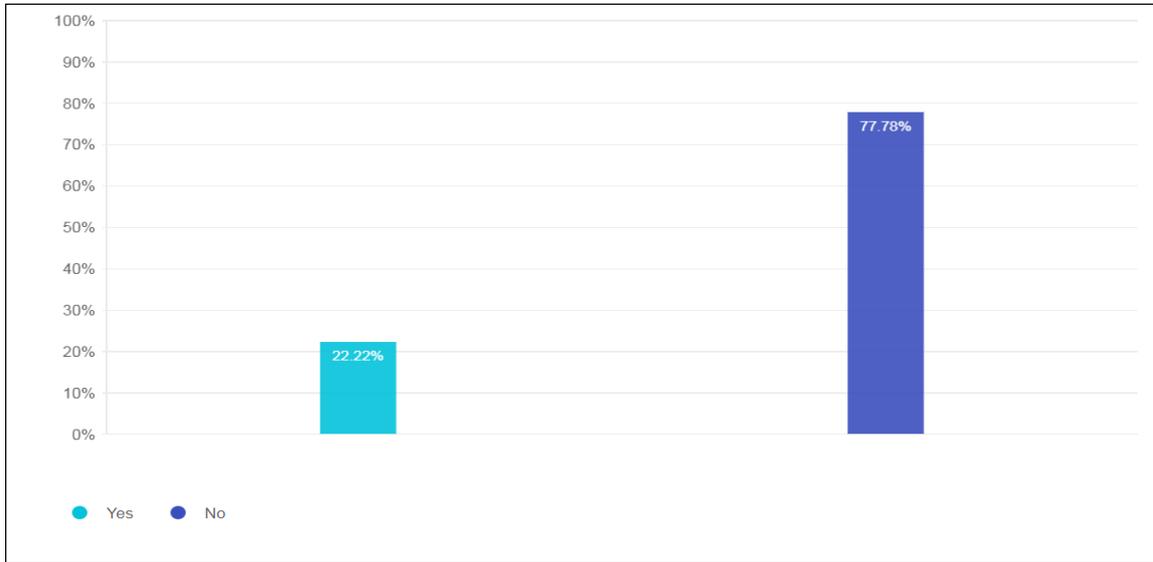
59. Do you believe that the self-study process offers you more chances and opportunities for decision making related to school goals?



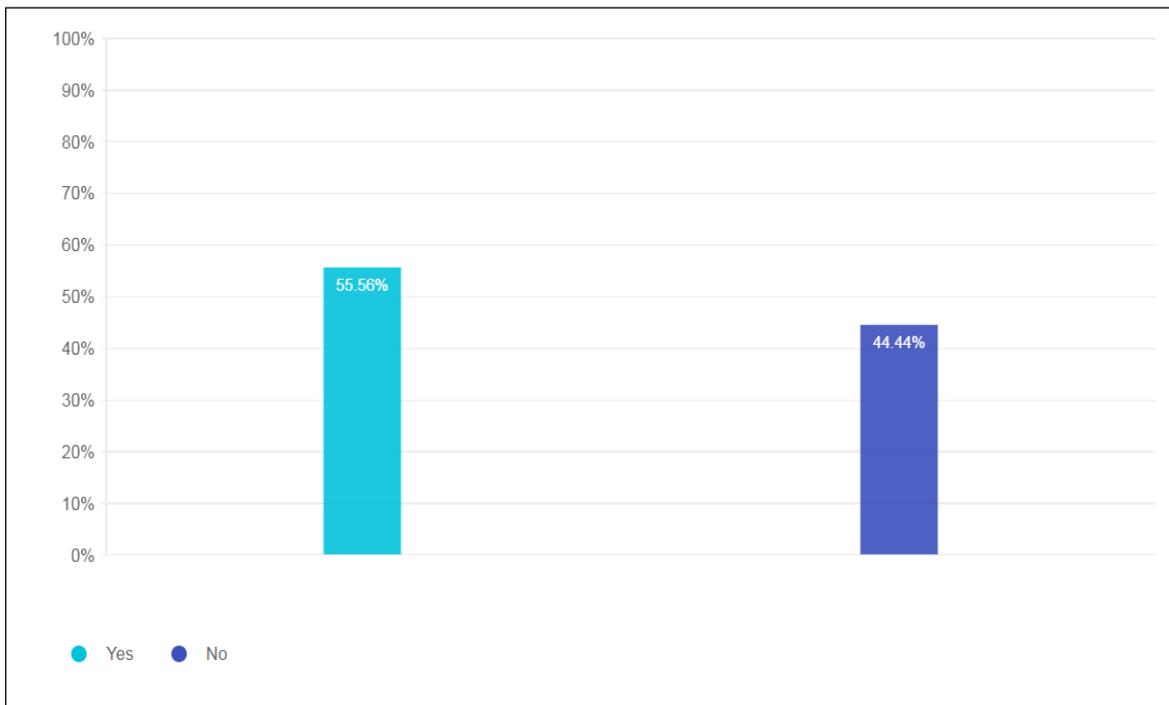
60. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions related to your daily schedule?



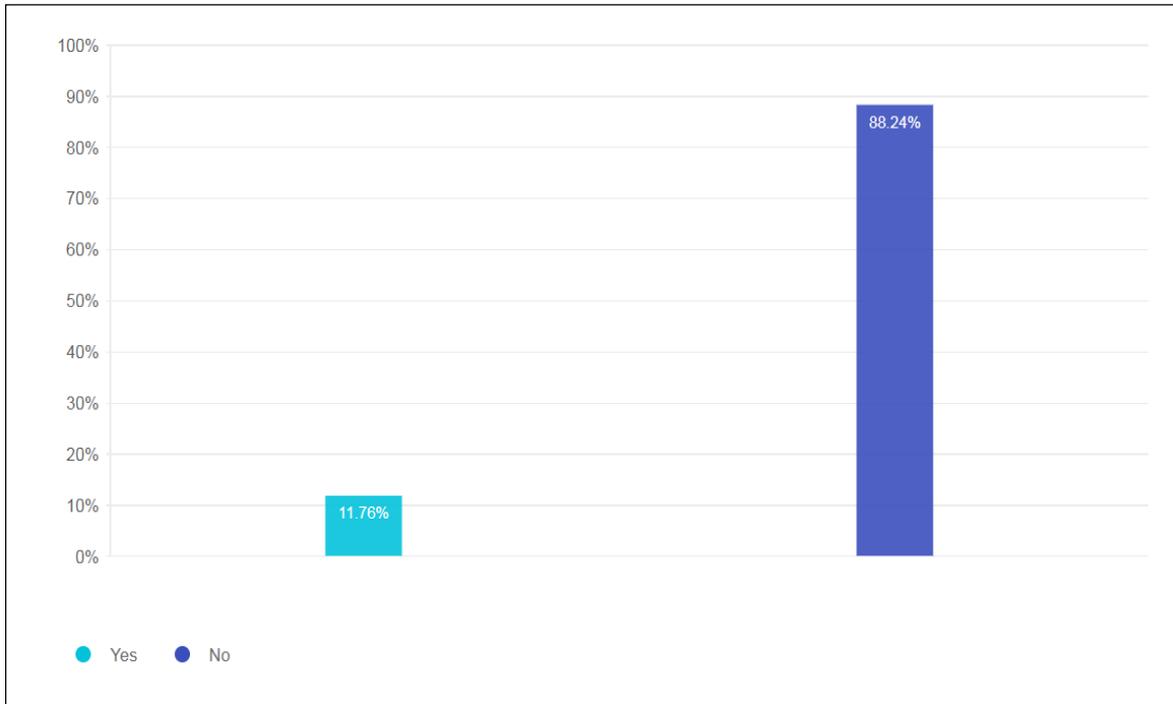
61. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how the day is organized?



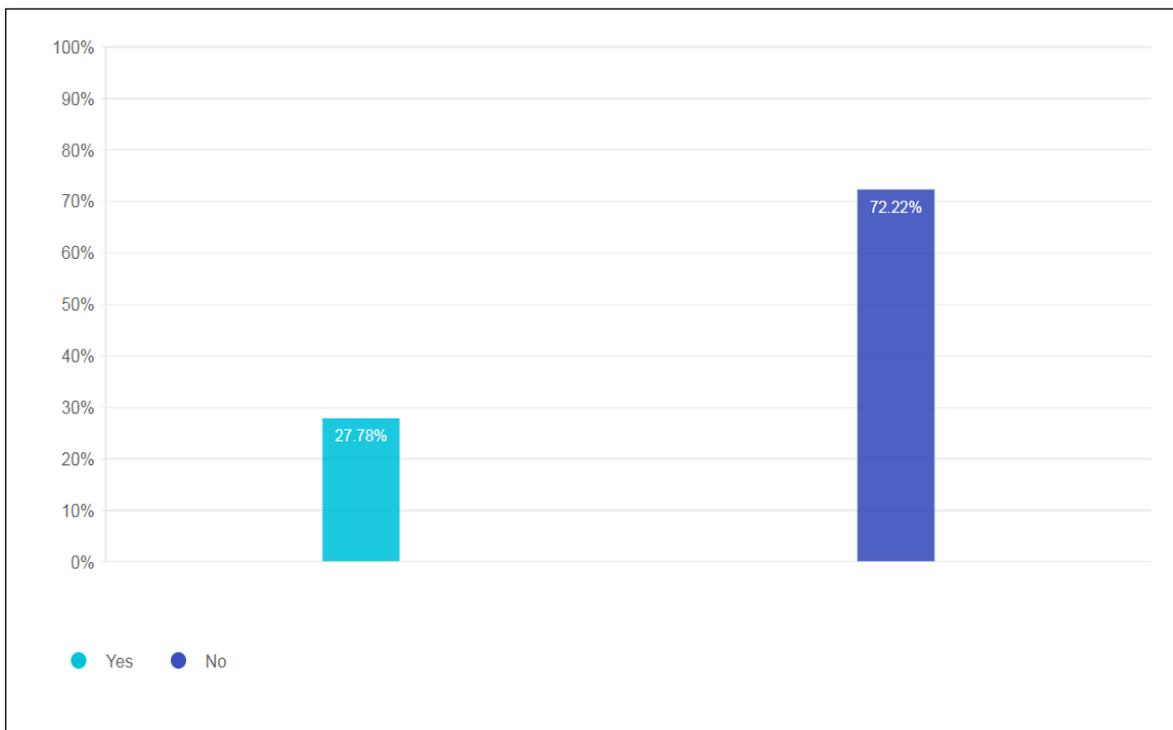
62. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on topics/workshops of Professional Development?



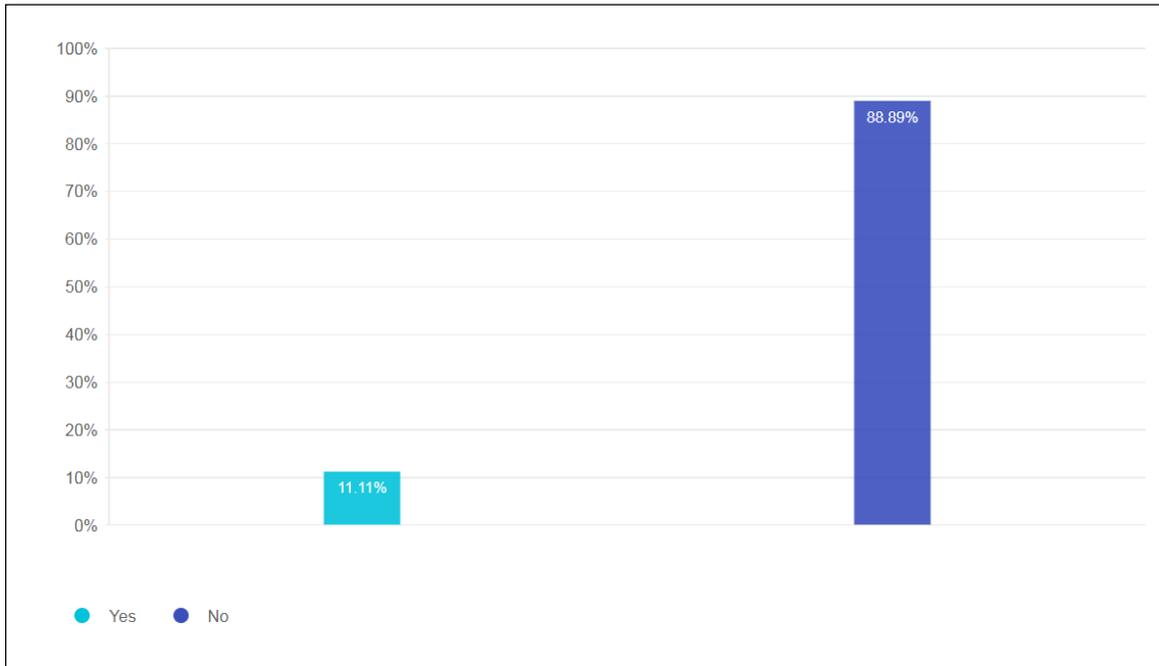
63. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how students are assigned in sections?



64. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on what the yearly plan/ scope and sequence include?



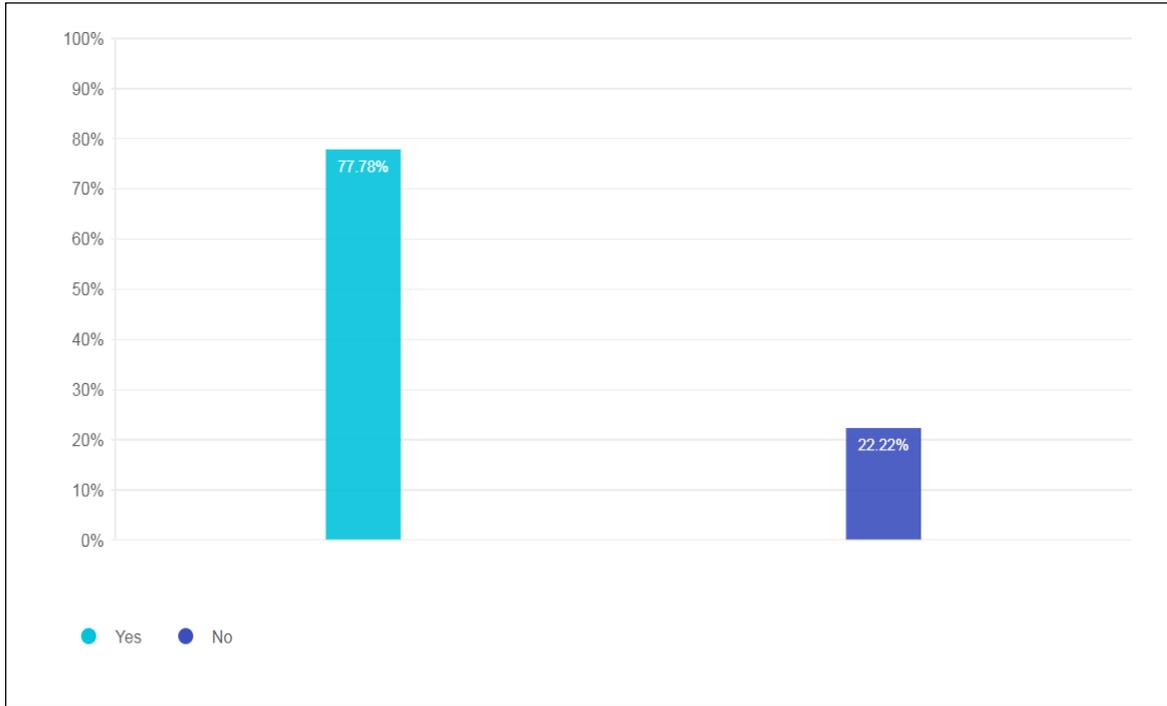
65. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on how discipline in the school system is structured?



66. Through your participation in NEASC self-study, did you have opportunities to make decisions on the non-teaching tasks that you have (hall, cafeteria, bus duty, etc.)?



67. Reflecting on my experience with NEASC self-study process, I feel more professional than before because I was part of the self-study subcommittee.



68. I feel empowered by my participation in the NEASC self-study.

