

Recovering Learning in EFL Classrooms: Kuwait Teachers' Evaluations of an Educational Loss Compensation Program

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Abstract

This study evaluates Kuwait's educational loss compensation program from EFL teachers' perspectives, focusing on content appropriateness and program implementation. A 16-item validated questionnaire (two domains: curricular fit of loss-recovery materials; general program design and delivery) was administered electronically to a national sample using a descriptive-analytical approach. Teachers rated the program's overall effectiveness as high, citing strengths in targeted remediation and perceived learning gains. Implications include prioritizing teacher training on evidence-based remedial strategies, aligning materials with curricular progressions and language proficiency bands, and institutionalizing blended delivery through purposeful integration of educational technologies. Policy recommendations emphasize data-informed monitoring (diagnostic assessments, progress tracking), differentiated supports for diverse learner profiles, and continuous feedback loops between schools and the Ministry to iteratively improve learning recovery at scale.

Keywords: Educational Recovery; Remedial Education, EFL Teachers, Kuwait, Blended Learning.

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

Education plays a foundational role in national development, shaping economic, social, political, and cultural progress. It provides students with crucial knowledge, values, and technical skills essential for adapting to the changing global and local environments. In Kuwait, the education system plays a pivotal role in achieving the nation's strategic objectives of promoting innovation and transitioning toward a knowledge-driven economy. Within this framework, teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is particularly important because of its key role in higher education, international communication, and entry into global job markets.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to unprecedented disruptions in education systems globally, affecting over 1.6 billion students at the height of the crisis (Giannini, 2021). Kuwait experienced similar impacts. In response, Kuwait's Ministry of Education swiftly introduced emergency remote teaching solutions to maintain educational continuity. Nevertheless, the sudden transition to online learning revealed significant issues, including inadequate digital infrastructure, insufficient training for teachers, and uneven student engagement levels (Haider & Al-Salman, 2020; Al-Salman et al., 2022). These difficulties contributed to significant educational loss, described in this research as the quantifiable drop or stagnation in students' academic performance and language skills due to prolonged school closures and inadequate learning environments (Giannini et al., 2021; Fraihat & Fraihat, 2022).

To mitigate this issue, Kuwait's Ministry of Education initiated a focused compensation program targeting educational loss across four primary subjects: Arabic, Mathematics, Science, and English. This initiative aimed to rebuild core knowledge, revisit overlooked concepts and realign instruction with national curriculum standards. The strategy emphasized student-centered learning approaches, including formative assessments, differentiated teaching methods, and cognitive enhancement activities. This nationwide strategy aligns with international recommendations for post-pandemic educational recovery, highlighting equity, evidence-informed planning, and digital integration (Giannini, 2021).

This study specifically examines the perspectives of EFL teachers, who are crucial stakeholders in this initiative. Their viewpoints hold significant value for multiple reasons. Primarily, most Kuwaiti students do not use English in daily interactions, making school instruction their main source of exposure to the language. Second, EFL acquisition relies heavily on cumulative, skill-based progression—an area particularly vulnerable to long-term disruptions. Third, EFL teachers were directly responsible for implementing the compensation material in classrooms, making them well-positioned to assess the effectiveness of the program—defined here as the degree to which the compensation materials and methods addressed students' language deficits and aligned with intended learning outcomes.

Moreover, as English proficiency is increasingly viewed as a prerequisite for academic advancement and professional mobility in Kuwait, the success of EFL instruction has far-reaching implications. Without sufficient intervention, gaps in English language development may hinder students' ability to participate in future academic programs or compete in an increasingly globalized labor market. Understanding how EFL educators evaluate the government's response is essential for improving both remedial instruction and long-term curriculum planning.

While global and regional research has proposed a variety of strategies for overcoming learning loss—such as remedial programs, targeted assessments, and community engagement (Kim & White, 2011; Deribe et al., 2015; Al-Anazi, 2021; Akkas & Ocak, 2021)—there is a lack of subject-specific and locally contextualized studies that evaluate these interventions in practice. This gap is particularly evident in relation to foreign language instruction within the Gulf region.

Accordingly, this study seeks to evaluate the educational loss compensation program in Kuwait from the perspective of EFL teachers. It aims to assess both the appropriateness of the English material content and the general implementation mechanisms of the program. By foregrounding the insights of those delivering the instruction, this research contributes to informed policymaking, improved program design, and deeper understanding of effective, context-specific strategies for educational recovery in Kuwait.

1.1.1 Previous Studies

Kim and White (2011) also analyzed summer break compensatory education loss. By their research, they proved that the programs had the ability to maintain reading comprehension level over time. For example, where a student progresses to the next grade level without sufficiently grasping the outcome of the previous year's learning, he or she might struggle with maintaining the requirements of the new grade level. This issue, sometimes referred to as the "learning gap," can translate into reduced academic motivation and self-assurance, and this in turn may inhibit future academic growth. To correct it, the researchers suggested the idea that retaking some of these key grade years—such as the first year of elementary school, fifth year of junior high school, or ninth year of secondary school—might be the ticket in some cases. Their conclusion highlighted the necessity of early intervention and targeted instructional intervention to prevent cumulative learning loss in the long term.

Building on this, Deribe et al. (2015) examined the extent of educational loss in Lanfort and Reed's basic schools. With a descriptive approach, they assessed the situation at hand, giving priority to the high extent of learning loss. They used five of their schools as samples with (280) students, (46) teachers, and (5) school administrators. Findings indicated that the overall learning loss was explained by socio-economic status and student school-related variables. For instance, students from low-income families were likely to lack educational resources at home, such as books, internet, and parental academic support. Moreover, poor schools or poorly equipped schools had less to provide in terms of remedial classes or qualified instructors. These factors were ranked as the primary causes of low primary school internal efficiency. It was concluded by the researchers that addressing these root causes would require comprehensive reform in order to successfully minimize losses in education. Suggestions involved increasing education funding, quality teacher education, and implementing community-based support initiatives.

In another study, Al-Anazi (2021) explored teachers' and educational supervisors' attitudes towards means to reverse educational loss. A semi-structured interview was used as a data collection instrument, and (17) participants were purposefully selected. The research revealed that learning loss compensation can be achieved through various means including the utilization of supportive teaching programs, flexible academic scheduling, increasing teachers' and students' performance, implementation of evidence-based evaluation, and integration of technology in teaching. The study underscored the need for context-bound solutions suitable to the distinct needs of each learning environment. For example, while some of the participants pointed out the necessity to create individualized learning plans for students who were very behind in core subjects, others indicated peer tutoring programs as a tool to enhance participation and reinforce learning through peer guidance.

Similarly, Akkaş and Ocak (2021) investigated teachers' perspectives concerning learning loss and interventions needed to respond to it. The sample consisted of (50) educators across various disciplines and level of education using a maximum variation sampling strategy. Data were collected by applying a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide and analyzed by content analysis. According to the participants, the subjects most affected by learning loss were Turkish, Mathematics, Science, Physics, Chemistry, and English, whereas other subjects such as Social Studies, Biology, Geography, History, Music, and Art were reported to be least affected. This may be due to the cumulative nature and hierarchical structure of the former subjects, where each new concept often builds directly on prior knowledge. Teachers also suggested that learning loss could be reduced through measures such as promoting reading activities and enhancing parental

involvement. These findings echo previous research emphasizing the interconnected role of families, schools, and communities in supporting academic recovery.

A review of these previous studies reveals that most employed descriptive analytical methods and used a variety of data collection tools, including questionnaires and interviews. Together, these studies have laid an important foundation for understanding educational loss across different contexts and educational levels. However, most of the existing literature has focused on general education or specific national settings, often overlooking how subject-specific or cultural factors may influence the success of compensation strategies. What sets the current study apart is its focus on the Kuwaiti context, potentially making it the first to examine educational loss compensation from the specific perspective of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Kuwait. Given Kuwait's unique linguistic and cultural setting—where English plays a vital role in higher education and professional development—understanding how EFL educators perceive and address learning loss is essential for informing national educational policy and ensuring student success in a globalized world.

2. Study Problem and Questions

The world faced the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly disrupted education systems worldwide. In response, the Kuwait Ministry of Education established educational platforms to ensure continuity of learning across all regions. Recognizing the importance of compensating for the educational losses caused by the pandemic, the Ministry launched a compensation project aimed at reinforcing education for all students. This project focuses on key subjects: Arabic, Science, Mathematics, and English, to help students recover critical concepts lost during the pandemic.

2.1 Study Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is the content of the educational loss material appropriate for Kuwaiti students according to EFL teachers' perspectives?
2. How effective are the general aspects of the educational loss compensation project in Kuwait according to EFL teachers' perspectives?

3. Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study aims to evaluate the educational loss compensation project in Kuwait from the perspective of EFL teachers by answering the research questions. Their insights are especially important because EFL teachers were tasked with recovering lost language skills—skills that require continuous, guided instruction and are difficult to reinforce without regular classroom interaction. As such, their evaluations offer an informed and subject-specific assessment of the compensation initiative's effectiveness. The findings may contribute to informed decision-making regarding the development and improvement of educational programs. Additionally, this study can serve as a foundation for future research, providing a basis for similar or complementary studies in the field. It may also guide policymakers in designing contextually appropriate remediation strategies and foster greater collaboration between educators, administrators, and curriculum developers to support sustained academic recovery efforts.

4. Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms are used with the associated meanings throughout the study:

Educational Loss Compensation

The initiative by the Kuwait Ministry of Education to help students recover critical English language concepts that were missed due to distance learning during the Corona pandemic.

Effectiveness Degree

The extent to which the intended outcomes are achieved and the lost concepts are successfully compensated.

5. Limitations of the Study

- The study focuses only on EFL teachers, other subjects may yield different insights.
- Generalizability is limited due to purposive sampling.

6. Methodology and Procedures

6.1 The Participants of the Study

The sample of the study was purposefully selected and consisted of (91) male and female EFL teachers. Among them, (84) teachers were from six governorates of Kuwait: Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Al-Ahmadi, Al-Jahra, Al-Asimah, Hawally, and Al-Farwaniyah, representing a diverse cross-section of educational environments and school types within the public education system.

6.2 The Instrument of the Study

The instrument used in this study was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. It consisted of (16) items derived from the literature review, designed to evaluate the effectiveness of educational loss compensation according to teachers' perspectives. These (16) items were classified into two domains:

- Appropriateness of the educational loss material content.
- General aspects of the educational loss compensation program.

The questionnaire aimed to capture both the content quality and the practical implementation of the program, ensuring a comprehensive assessment. Additionally, the items were carefully worded to reflect key factors influencing the success of compensation efforts, such as material relevance, instructional support, and administrative collaboration.

6.3 Validity of the Questionnaire

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of (4) educational supervisors and (3) experienced EFL teachers. Their feedback led to the revision of item wording, removal of redundancies, and improvement of item clarity to ensure alignment with the study's objectives. The panel's suggestions were carefully considered and incorporated into the final version of the instrument to enhance its clarity, relevance, and validity in evaluating the compensation program.

6.4 Reliability of the Questionnaire

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the internal consistency method to determine the extent to which the items measure the intended attribute. The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample of (20) male and female EFL teachers who were not part of the main study sample. The total correlation coefficient for the instrument was found to be (0.83), indicating a high level of reliability.

7. Findings and Discussion

First Research Question: To what extent is the content of the educational loss material appropriate for Kuwaiti students, according to EFL teachers' perspectives? To answer this question, the study analyzed responses from the domain titled *Appropriateness of the Educational Loss Material Content*. This section of the questionnaire contained (11) items assessing whether the content addressed students' needs, curriculum standards, cognitive development, and pandemic-related learning gaps. The results are presented in Table (1) below.

Table (1): Means, Standard Deviations, Levels, and Ranks of the Statements in the Domain of Appropriateness of the Educational Loss Material Content

Domain	No.	Statement	Options					Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
			Very low	low	Moderate	High	Very high			
Appropriateness of the Educational Loss Material Content	1	The educational loss material is based on basic concepts and outcomes of the English language subject.			14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	33.333	17.790	2
	2	The educational loss material is presented in a clear and sequential way.			7.1%	42.9%	50%	33.333	18.774	2
	3	The material of educational loss is appropriate for the students' level according to their grades.			42.9%	35.7%	21.4%	33.333	8.935	2
	4	The content of the educational loss focuses on critical concepts			50%	21.4%	28.6%	33.333%	12.146	2
	5	The content of the educational loss material focuses on the cognitive aspect of the students			21.4	64.3%	14.3%	33.333%	22.087	2
	6	The content of the educational loss material varies				71.4%	28.6%	50%	21.4	1

	according to the topics of the curriculum							
7	Educational loss activities promote self-learning among students	21.4%	50%	28.6%	28.6%	12.146	3	
8	Educational loss material employs learning strategies	14.3%	35.7%	50%	33.333 %	14.670	2	
9	The educational loss material contains topics that students lost during the Corona period	7.1%	14.3%	64.3%	14.3%	25 %	22.879	4
10	The educational loss material responds to the student's interests	35.7%	42.9%	21.4%	33.333%	8.935	2	
11	The educational material addresses the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)	21.4%	42.9%	35.7%	33.333%	8.935	2	
	Means	0.645%	22%	48%	29.22 %	24.966%	16.948	
Total Mean	3.99							

As shown in Table (1), the overall mean score for the domain of appropriateness of the educational material content was (3.99), indicating a high level of agreement among EFL teachers regarding the suitability and relevance of the provided content. Notably, Item (6), which addressed the variation of material according to curriculum topics, received the highest mean score of (4.50). This suggests that teachers value the program's adaptability in aligning with different areas of the curriculum. Similarly, Items (5), (8), and (9) achieved high ratings, reflecting teachers' recognition of the material's cognitive focus, the implementation of learning strategies, and its alignment with key content missed during the pandemic. These results underscore the perceived effectiveness of the material in targeting specific learning gaps.

However, moderate ratings were observed for Items (3), (10), and (11), which pertained to the grade-level appropriateness, student interest, and coverage of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), respectively. These scores indicate areas where further refinement may be needed to enhance the relevance and inclusivity of the material across different proficiency levels and learner preferences.

These findings are consistent with previous studies by Kim and White (2011) and Al-Anazi (2021), both of which emphasized the importance of content relevance, developmentally appropriate instruction, and targeted remediation in effectively addressing educational loss. Their research reinforces the idea that effective compensation programs must be responsive to learners' needs and closely aligned with curriculum standards to ensure meaningful academic recovery.

Second Research Question: How effective are the general aspects of the educational loss compensation program in Kuwait, according to EFL teachers' perspectives? To address the second question, the study examined teacher responses in the domain titled *General Aspects of the*

Educational Loss Compensation Program. This section covered administrative support, parental involvement, time allocation, evaluation methods, and Ministry resources. Results are summarized in Table (2) below.

Table (2): Means, Standard Deviations, Levels, and Ranks of the Statements in the Domain of General Aspects of the Educational Loss Compensation Program

Domain	No.	Statement	Options					Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
			Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high			
General Aspects of the Educational Loss Compensation Program	1	Pre- and post-tests were conducted for English Language subject that undergoes the educational loss compensation.		7.1%	21.4%	42.9%	28.6%	25%	12.910	2
	2	The time given to conduct the educational loss compensation program is sufficient.	7.1%	21.4%	28.6%	21.4%	21.4%	19.98%	7.017	4
	3	parents are invited to participate in the learning process	14.3%	35.7%	28.6%	21.4%		25%	7.982	2
	4	The school administration collaborates with the teacher during compensating the educational loss by providing the requirements of the appropriate environment for education			14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	33.333 %	17.790	1
	5	The Ministry of Education has provided teachers with special guide and leaflets for compensating the educational loss	21.4%		21.4%	7.1%	50%	24.975 %	15.583	3

Loss among the students						
Means		8.76	18.55	27.14	24.28	31.42
Total mean	4.85					

As illustrated in Table (2), the overall mean for this domain was (4.85), reflecting a very high level of perceived effectiveness of the program's general implementation. The highest-rated item was (4), related to the school administration's cooperation with teachers, which scored (4.33). This finding emphasizes the crucial role of administrative support in creating an effective learning environment, as school leaders facilitate implementation logistics, motivate staff, and ensure alignment with broader educational goals. The Ministry's provision of guides (item 5) also received strong ratings (3.83), reflecting the value of structured instructional tools in supporting consistent teaching practices. However, items related to time sufficiency (item 2) and parental involvement (item 3) scored lower (2.98 and 3.21, respectively), suggesting these are areas requiring further attention. Limited instructional time may hinder effective content delivery, while minimal parental engagement could reduce reinforcement at home. These outcomes align with Deribe et al. (2015) and Akkaş and Ocak (2021), who emphasized administrative and parental involvement as key factors in mitigating learning loss. Addressing these gaps may enhance the overall success of such programs, particularly in ensuring equitable access and sustained student progress.

To interpret the means obtained from the teachers' responses in both domains—Appropriateness of the Educational Loss Material Content and General Aspects of the Educational Loss Compensation Program—the researchers applied a proportional scaling model. This model categorizes mean scores into qualitative levels (very low to very high) based on predefined numerical ranges. Table (3) presents this classification scale.

Table (3): Proportional Scaling Statistical Model Results

Means	Degree
Less than 1.00	Very low
1.00 - 2.33	Low
2.34 - 3.67	Moderate
3.68 – 5.00	High
more than 5.00	Very high

Based on Table (3) and the findings shown in Table (1), it is concluded that the degree of appropriateness of the educational loss material content for Kuwaiti students, from the teachers' point of view, is high overall, with a total mean of (3.99). This indicates that the materials were seen as relevant, well-structured, and suitable for addressing the learning gaps caused by pandemic-related disruptions. Additionally, Table (2) indicates that the general aspects of the educational loss compensation program are also highly evaluated by EFL teachers, with an overall mean of (4.85). These results reflect the teachers' satisfaction with the educational loss compensation experience, highlighting the Kuwait Ministry of Education's commitment to implementing and ensuring the success of this project through careful planning and teacher collaboration.

The findings suggest that the remedial interventions focused on several key aspects, particularly the critical concepts that contribute to enhancing the quality and efficiency of education. These include reinforcing essential language skills, providing clear instructional objectives, and ensuring coherence with the national curriculum. This aligns well with Al-Anazi

(2021), who found that addressing educational loss effectively requires supportive teaching programs, flexible study schedules, improved teacher and student performance, scientific evaluation methods, and the integration of technology in teaching. The Kuwaiti initiative appears to reflect these principles in practice. Therefore, the positive evaluation by Kuwaiti teachers supports the idea that a comprehensive and well-supported approach can successfully compensate for educational losses caused by disruptions such as the Corona pandemic.

8. Conclusion

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Kuwait's educational loss compensation program from the perspective of (91) EFL teachers. The findings indicated a high level of satisfaction among teachers regarding both the appropriateness of the content (mean = 3.99) and the general implementation aspects (mean = 4.85). Teachers particularly highlighted the variation in materials aligned with curriculum topics, the cognitive focus of content, and administrative support during implementation.

However, items such as parental involvement and time sufficiency received lower ratings, suggesting the need for improvement in these areas. These results underscore the importance of teacher-informed, responsive interventions, and they align with previous research recommending flexible scheduling, strong leadership, and technological integration.

Rather than overgeneralizing, the study concludes that while the program was largely successful, its effectiveness could be further improved by addressing specific operational weaknesses and expanding the role of all educational stakeholders, including parents.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers propose the following:

1. Training and Support: Conduct regular workshops for teachers focused on implementing effective strategies for educational loss recovery, particularly in language instruction (aligned with items showing a need for methodological improvement).
2. Time Allocation: Reassess the instructional time allotted for compensation activities, as item (2) in the general aspects domain reflected moderate satisfaction regarding sufficiency.
3. Parental Involvement: Develop school-home partnerships to engage parents more actively in the learning process, particularly where item (3) was rated lower by teachers.
4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement formative assessments and pre/post-tests to directly measure student progress and support evidence-based instructional decisions (to complement self-reported teacher data).
5. Technology Integration: Enhance the use of educational technologies and e-learning tools, especially for reinforcement outside school hours.
6. Tailored Interventions: Design content that addresses grade-specific learning gaps more accurately, as item (3) under content appropriateness showed room for better alignment.
7. Cross-subject Evaluation: Expand similar research to other subjects to better understand content-specific differences in learning recovery effectiveness.

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8. Professional Development Access: Provide teachers with online and hybrid development options to make training more accessible and continuous.

Ethics Statement

The ethics statement was approved and is applicable to this research.

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Not applicable.

Data Availability

The datasets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

Not applicable.

Authors' Contributions

- Asma Azemi and Bassmah Fraihat: Conceptualization, writing – original draft.
- Eman Fraihat: Writing – original draft, methodology.
- Zakria Alubasher: Formal analysis, resources.

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