

## Assessment in the Competency-Based Approach in Teaching English at Algerian Secondary Schools

Mounira KRIMAT<sup>(1)</sup> Pr.Sarah MERROUCHE<sup>(2)</sup>

1-Frères Mentouri Constantine 1 University, moon.dje@gmail.com

2-Oum El Bouaghi University- Oum el Bouaghi , saramerrouche@gmail.com

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### Abstract

The concern of the present paper is to see to what extent is assessment in the Algerian secondary schools compatible with competency-based requirements. It explores the methods used to assess EFL learners and unveils some practical problems faced by EFL teachers when it comes to assessing their learners. The findings of the questionnaire demonstrated that though teachers are aware of how to assess their learners' performance within the CBA framework, they still rely on traditional means of assessment. A set of suggestions are provided to help teachers to assess EFL learners regarding the CBA assessment system requirements.

**Keywords:** CBA, competency, assessment, portfolio.

### التقويم في إطار المقارنة بالكفاءات في تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في المدارس الثانوية الجزائرية

#### ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة مدى توافق نظام التقويم الحالي مع أسس التقويم الخاصة بالمقارنة بالكفاءات، كما تحاول هذه الدراسة أن تكون وجهة نظر على الوضع العام لتعليم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مرحلة التعليم الثانوي مع التركيز على الطرق المنتهجة لتقويم التلاميذ في إطار التدريس بالمقارنة بالكفاءات. تقوم هذه الدراسة بإمطاة اللثام عن بعض المشاكل التطبيقية التي يواجهها أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية عندما يتعلق الأمر بتقويم أداء المتعلمين. يتم تقديم مجموعة من الاقتراحات لتقديم طرق مفيدة للأساتذة لتقويم تلامذتهم في إطار المقارنة بالكفاءات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مقارنة بالكفاءات، كفاءة، تقويم، بورتفوليو.

### L'évaluation dans l'approche par compétences dans l'enseignement de l'Anglais dans les établissements secondaires algériens

#### Résumé

Cet article vise à déterminer dans quelle mesure le système d'évaluation est compatible avec le programme d'évaluation de l'approche par compétences (APC) dans les établissements secondaires algériens. Il explore les méthodes et les problèmes d'évaluation au sein de l'APC. Les résultats obtenus à l'aide d'un questionnaire montrent que, bien que les enseignants sachent comment évaluer dans le cadre de l'APC, ils s'appuient toujours sur des méthodes d'évaluation traditionnelles. Une série de suggestions est fournie pour offrir des moyens d'évaluation correspondants aux exigences du système d'évaluation en APC.

**Mots-clés:** APC, compétence, évaluation, portfolio.

Corresponding author: Mounira KRIMAT, moon.dje@gmail.com

**Introduction:**

Part of the development of countries is now measured by the development of their educational systems. The developments which are seen in education in general and in research of teaching methodologies in particular urge Algeria to take some steps to cope with the huge developments of high technologies and fast-growing economic conditions. Even though English has a relatively small number of speakers compared to the other languages, it was able to occupy the fore in various domains. It is now the language of international trade and global informational technology. Algeria has acknowledged the growing importance of this language and thus planned for innovation in English language education. In this quest, Algeria adopted a new teaching method, namely the competency-based approach or CBA in short, that would enhance learners' competency and allow for fruitful learning to take place. The introduction of the CBA into teaching English at the Algerian secondary school required a change in many aspects of teaching practices: one of these aspects is assessment. Hence, along with the change in the teaching method in Algerian secondary schools, a change in assessment should have taken place. Instead of grades, competency-based assessment programmes focus on the real-world aspect of applying the knowledge, rather than just on the ability to recall the knowledge. The last educational reform introduced the CBA as a method of instruction and neglected an important aspect of this methodology which is the competency-based assessment. The latter should focus only on students' competence rather than grades or completed credit hours to determine the successful completion of an academic course or programme. In other words, assessment must be designed to effectively measure competencies and determine that a learner has mastered them; therefore, assessment within the CBA aims to distinguish between those who mastered the targeted competency and those who did not. In short, the assessment of competence must be transparent which means that learners will easily know what is expected from them. Second, it must be observable and measurable so that teachers will be able to judge whether or not the competency has been mastered.

**1. Definition of Assessment:**

Language assessment is an important stage in the process of language teaching and learning as it helps monitor students' educational progress and evaluates the quality of school systems. Assessment provides information about the achievements which allow teaching and learning activities to be changed in response to learners' needs and recognizes the huge benefits that feedback can have on learning <sup>(1)</sup>. Assessment in traditional classes is done through testing and correct answers; however, in constructivist classes, it includes students' works, observations, points of view, as well as tests. Assessment involves much more than measurement and stresses that process is as important as the product when assessing performance. That is, in addition to systematically collecting and analyzing information, assessment also involves understanding and acting on information about learners' understanding and performance in relation to educational goals <sup>(2)</sup>.

It is important to clarify the distinction between evaluation and assessment. Burke <sup>(3)</sup> sees the latter as a process of getting hold of evidence by one or a number of means and making judgments of the evidence in order to make inferences about an individual's competence. Assessment, then, is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving students' learning. It provides both teachers and students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work products for elevating future performances and learning outcomes. The aim of assessment should be to educate and improve student performance, not merely to audit it <sup>(4)</sup>. Evaluation refers to the interpretations of the data to determine how well the student has grown towards the goals and instructional objectives, i.e., how well he has performed <sup>(5)</sup>. In short, by taking the assessment, teachers try to improve student learning while evaluation focuses on grades and may reflect classroom components other than course content and mastery level. For more precision, differences between assessment and evaluation are displayed in Table 1.

**Table1: Differences between Assessment and Evaluation according to Angelo and Cross <sup>(6)</sup>**

Dimension of Difference	Assessment	Evaluation
<b>Content:</b> timing, primary purpose	<b>Formative:</b> ongoing, to improve learning	<b>Summative:</b> final; to gauge quality
<b>Orientation:</b> Focus of measurement	<b>Process-oriented:</b> how learning is going	<b>Product-oriented:</b> what has been learned
<b>Findings:</b> uses there of	<b>Diagnostic:</b> identify areas of improvement	<b>Judgemental:</b> arrive at an overall grade/score

**2. Teaching EFL and the Algerian Secondary School:**

The teaching of English in Algeria cannot be taken out of its historical context. In fact, the present educational system is the result of the interaction of several factors. The French colonization had its deepest impact on the Algerian educational system <sup>(7)</sup>. Benrabah <sup>(8)</sup> points out that despite the presence of a linguistic variety that created a language crisis, either political or educational, post-independent Algeria had to reconstruct and re-establish itself. After gaining its independence, post-independent Algeria resorted to the Arabization policy that aimed mainly at restoring the Algerian lost identity <sup>(9)</sup>. However, because Classical Arabic was at that time cut off from contemporary intellectual, technological and scientific developments, it failed to develop the flexibility and vocabulary needed in current affairs, and its relevance in these fields was constrained <sup>(10)</sup>. Bellalem <sup>(11)</sup> states that, after the independence, English teaching was marked by two main events: the first in 1969, when a General Inspectorate of English was established and the second in 1972 when the government decided to “Algerianise” <sup>(12)</sup> the English teaching textbooks and methods <sup>(13)</sup>. In September 1993, the Ministry of Education published a decree that gave pupils' parents the right to choose the first foreign language their children would learn. The advocates of Arabization preferred introducing English rather than French as the first foreign language for the fourth grade. However, only (0.33) of parents chose English and this amendment was later withdrawn <sup>(14)</sup>. By 2002, there had been a total Arabization of the school system; all subjects were taught in Arabic, and French was introduced in the third grade of the primary school. Within this era, English was gaining more and more interest, thus time allocated to English sessions increased. Within the scope of the same year, a reform reintroduced French into the second grade of the primary school. English was also taught in the first year of middle school, two grades earlier than before while it stood as a compulsory school subject until the third year of secondary education.

The new language reform is grounded in a novel approach based on competencies, known as the Competency-based Approach (CBA). The major and broadest aim of applying the CBA in the Algerian schools is to improve the system by integrating the newest and modern technological instruments of media and communication. The CBA, according to the Algerian Ministry of Education, aims at establishing three competencies in learners:

- To interact orally in English.
- To interpret authentic, oral, or written documents.
- To produce simple, oral, or written messages.

In addition to the three targeted competencies, the last educational reform led to the re-definition of the aims and objectives of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the Algerian school. Table 2 summarizes the aims of the CBA reforms of Algerian schools.

**Table 2: Aims and Goals of 2002 Reforms** <sup>(15)</sup>

<b>The First Aim:</b> Enhancing the quality of compulsory education	
	Enhancing the plan of the continuous teachers' training Developing the syllabi and improving the educational tools.
<b>The Second Aim:</b> The reconstruction of the compulsory education	
	The reconstruction of compulsory education streams Enhancing the competencies and abilities of pedagogical and administrative management
<b>The Third Aim:</b> Enhancing the system of orientation	
<b>The Fourth Aim:</b> Implementing the new technologies	
	Transferring the (TICE) experience to the field of education in Algeria

The objectives of teaching and learning English in secondary schools rest upon the general objectives of the CBA reform introduced in 2003. These objectives can be divided into four interrelated categories: linguistic, methodological, cultural, and socio-professional <sup>(16)</sup>.

**- Linguistic Objectives:**

- Provide the learner with a solid linguistic basis of grammar, vocabulary, syntax, and pronunciation
- Allow the learner to understand and communicate easily in the target language
- Allow the learner to pursue successfully studies at the university or in a professional milieu

**- Methodological Objectives:**

- Promote the learner's strategies of autonomous learning to allow him to deepen and expand his knowledge
- Develop the learner's mental and intellectual abilities of analysing, synthesising, and evaluating through a number of pertinent activities
- Prepare the learner for professional life through learning the rational use of English texts
- Enable the learner to use ICTs because of their importance in the learning process

**- Cultural Objectives:**

- Raise the learner's intercultural awareness by exposing him to diverse civilizations and cultures
- Stimulate the learner's curiosity and open-mindedness
- Encourage interdisciplinary learning by bringing themes studied in other subject matters
- To integrate all the acquisitions together

**- Socio-Professional Objectives:**

- Allow the learner to be an active participant in life after finishing his studies.

**3. Competency-Based Language Teaching:**

Competency-Based Language Teaching is the application of the principles of Competency-Based Education to language teaching. It focuses more on the outputs rather than the inputs. Therefore, it is a performance-based instruction with which the goal is to address what the learners are expected to do with the language <sup>(17)</sup>.

A performance outline of language tasks then becomes important in this approach as it may lead to a demonstrated mastery of the language associated with the specific skills and the realization of traits, which are necessary for the learners to function in real-life settings. Learning outcomes, thus, underpin the curriculum framework and syllabus specifications, teaching strategies, and reporting. Accordingly, the quality of teaching and testing, as well as student learning, will be enhanced by the clear specification of the expected outcomes <sup>(18)</sup>.

Competencies, according to Richards and Rodgers<sup>(19)</sup>, comprise essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours required for the effective performance of “a real-world task or activity”. A unit of competency can be realized in the form of a task, a role, a function, or a learning module. These will vary from context to context. Therefore, this sort of competency may include specific knowledge, thinking processes, attitudes, and both perceptual and physical skills. All of these may be linked to any domain of life in the field of work and social survival in a new environment<sup>(20)</sup>.

From the analysis of its basic features, it is evident that CBLT is based on the functional and interactional perspective of the nature of language. It seeks to teach language in conjunction with social contexts in which it is used. Consequently, CBLT changes its emphasis from what the students know about language to what they can do with it.

Apart from being practical and applicable, CBLT has been criticized for not having a valid procedure to develop competency for most programmes<sup>(21)</sup>. Many of the areas for which competencies are needed in a community are impossible to operationalize. Others argue that dividing activities into sets of competencies is simplistic in that the sum of the parts differs from the complexity of the whole. CBLT is, therefore, seen as prescriptivist in that it prepares the students to acquire sets of language performance rather than to develop thinking processes and skills.

#### **4. Competency-Based Assessment:**

Today, we see increasing demands from educators as well as policymakers to prepare citizens for 21st-century skills and to measure achievement of, or performance on them. In language teaching in general and in the CBA in particular, these skills include critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem-solving, and communicating. In the competency-based approach to education which has emerged in the 1990', assessment reform has been seen as a vehicle with which to address a wide range of educational issues which extend beyond the classroom<sup>(22)</sup>.

Competency-based assessment is at the heart of a competency-based approach to teaching. Jessup<sup>(23)</sup> suggests that not only does a competency-based to education require new forms of assessment but: “assessment takes a more significant role, becoming an integral part of the learning process as well as a means of evaluating it”. Therefore, evaluating the learners' gained competency is a key element in CBA as the demand goes beyond simply knowing and includes applying knowledge to everyday problems and tasks. That is, the demand is for both knowing and being able to use that knowledge in everyday activities and decisions<sup>(24)</sup>. The following definition summarises all the major features of competency-based assessment as currently advocated

Competence-based assessment is a form of assessment that is derived from a specification of a set of outcomes; that so clearly states both the outcomes-general and specific-that assessors, students and interested third parties can all make reasonably objective judgments with respect to student achievement or non-achievement of these outcomes, and that certifies student progress on the basis of demonstrated achievement of these outcomes. Assessments are not tied to time served in formal educational settings<sup>(25)</sup>.

Harris *et al.*<sup>(26)</sup> describe assessment as both an ongoing process and a final step in competency-based teaching or CBT in short. He suggests that competency-based assessment can be broken and analysed through a seven steps process that includes:

- Defining the competencies for assessment
- Describing standards under which the previous competencies are selected
- Identifying the competency profile which encompasses the competency level, the components of standards which are crucial to judging the competency, and what knowledge people are interested to know
- Developing an assessment plan which accompanies the instructed curricula development
- Selecting a testing process that goes with the nature of instruction
- Using and refining those testing techniques

- Managing the assessment process by evaluating results, i.e., how the results are recorded and reported.

Wolf <sup>(27)</sup> points out that assessing competence should be importantly characterized by an emphasis on clear and transparent outcomes. However, the emphasis on outcomes and "transparency" is not peculiar to the competence-based context. It is also a defining characteristic of a rather broader theory of measurement, that of "criterion referencing". In Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), assessment is criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced. Criterion-referencing is similarly concerned with clearly specified outcomes and with assessments that address these outcomes separately rather than dealing with pass marks or norms. In criterion-referenced assessment, scores are interpreted with respect to a specific level or domain of ability, while in norm-referenced assessment; scores are interpreted in relation to the performance of a particular group of individuals <sup>(28)</sup>. Criterion-referenced testing is diagnostic. Nunan <sup>(29)</sup> points out that learners can obtain useful diagnostic feedback on their progress and achievement since explicit criteria are provided against which they can compare their performances.

It is necessary to decide what constitutes a valid assessment of competency to be acquired. Competence is a holistic judgment that incorporates knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are demonstrated in the context of practice and are influenced by the context of practice and learning. The complexities of CBE assessment and the practical and theoretical implications are receiving greater attention from educators, researchers, and psychometricians <sup>(30)</sup>. From these analyses emerge several assessment issues that should be carefully considered by any CBE programme:

- Assessment data need to be collected frequently, even continuously.
- Assessments should be work-based whenever possible and need to reflect the complexity of performance in the discipline.
- Assessment methods and tools must meet minimum requirements for quality but can range broadly on this dimension.
- Both qualitative and quantitative data are useful and multiple measurement methods are essential.
- The same assessment data can be used to make both formative and summative decisions.
- Criteria (standards) and group decision-making procedures are necessary for judging competence.
- Standardization of assessments is not compatible with the individualized philosophy of CBE and complex performances <sup>(31)</sup>.

Assessing learners' performance is a cornerstone of the CBA. Thomson <sup>(32)</sup> maintains that the most important element of a competency-based system is the final decision-making process. That is the decision as to whether or not competence can be inferred from the performance evidence that has been collected. He wondered if evidence of learning is gained by assessing products or processes or the knowledge which underpins these, or by assessing all three. How much evidence is needed is another important assessment issue. For instance, if we choose to assess by observing somebody do something, then how many observations must we make to infer competence? Assessing the knowledge which underpins performance also brings problems.

#### **4.1. Assessment within Constructivist Classes:**

On the one hand, the purpose of assessment in traditional environments is to identify whether or not, and to what extent learners are able to retrieve previously memorized information. On the other hand, the CBA puts high emphasis on assessment methods and strategies which are described as formative not summative, and thus provide learners with the opportunity to practice the authentic activities that they might encounter in real life <sup>(33)</sup>. Table 3, based on the work of O'Connor <sup>(34)</sup>, summarizes the differences between assessments and grades in traditional classes and those in competency-based classes.

**Table 3: Traditional Versus Competency-Based Grading Style**

<b>Traditional Classrooms</b>	<b>Competency-Based Classrooms</b>
One grade is given per assignment. An assignment may be a quiz, a test, homework, project, or anything the student must complete.	One grade is given for each specific competency. Students may be assessed throughout the process but these formative assessments will not typically be considered in the final evaluation.
Assessments are based on a percentage system. Criteria for success may be unclear.	Standards are criterion or proficiency-based, specific criteria and standards are made available to students ahead of time.
Traditional grades may rely on a mix of assessment, achievement, effort, and behaviour to determine the final grade and may include late penalties and extra credit.	Grades measure only achievement. Information about effort and behaviour may be reported but it is not part of the competency assessment. There are no penalties or extra credit.
Everything goes in the grade book regardless of the purpose. Every assessment score is included in determining the final grade no matter when it was collected during the module. The final grade determines whether the student advances to the next level.	Students advance only in terms of competency.

In short, competency-based assessment is the measurement of a student’s competency against a standard of performance. It is a process of collecting evidence to analyze the student’s progress and achievement. Among the various assessment methods, some are relevant to CBA and can better serve the purpose of assessing the transfer of skills and knowledge. These methods include instruments of questioning, direct and indirect observation, and evidence of learning through examination by relying on portfolios or examining reports.

The process of assessment covers activities of grading, examining, and certifying. In addition to written exams and formal tests, assessment in constructivist environments may take several forms such as assessing learners’ portfolios, research reports, project works, essays, and term papers. It may include the evaluation of performance in group or class discussions, debates, or plays. Besides, a teacher may evaluate his learners’ participation, and rely on peer evaluation, self-evaluation, and group evaluation<sup>(35)</sup>.

**5. The Study:**

**5.1. Research Questions and Purposes:**

The research in this study explored to what extent the current assessment system adopted by EFL secondary school teachers is compatible with the CBA. The teachers’ questionnaire was designed with the purpose to collect as much information as possible about assessment within the CBA in the context of secondary schools. It was intended to investigate three main issues:

1. The means of assessment used by secondary school teachers to assess their learners’ performance in the language within the CBA.
2. The extent to which the current assessment system is competency-based.
3. Problems faced by Algerian teachers when it comes to assessing their learners’ performance in English.

**5.2. Methodology:**

Since the research aims to examine the adopted assessment system in secondary schools in the framework of the CBA reforms, the descriptive method seems to be appropriate. In order to achieve the previously stated objectives, the teachers were asked to fill in a questionnaire that was used to collect data concerning the assessment of competencies; the adopted means and forms of assessment; as well as their purposes of use.

**5.3. Population and Sample:**

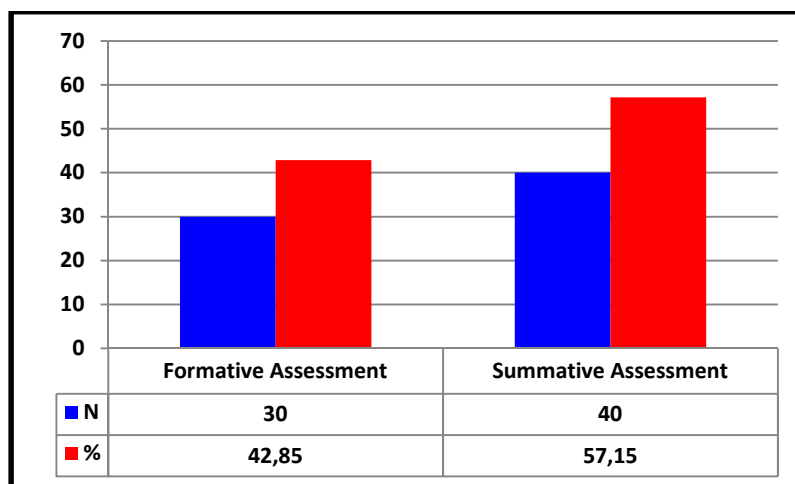
This study was conducted with EFL secondary school teachers in the region of Jijel during the school year (2017/2018). The target population consists of seventy in-service EFL teachers who work in the different secondary schools of Jijel; thus, the surveyed population is composed of different educational backgrounds, ages, gender, and teaching experience.

In order to achieve the previously stated objectives, the teachers were asked to fill in a questionnaire that was used to collect data concerning the assessment of competencies; the adopted means and forms of assessment; as well as their purposes of use. The collected data were then analysed and studied to see to what extent is the current assessment system adopted by EFL secondary school teachers compatible with the teaching method, i.e., with the CBA.

**6. Results and Discussion:**

Any shift to a new approach requires the shift to new means of assessment. Griffith <sup>(36)</sup> asserts that, on the one hand, most types of assessment within the CBA will be formative assessment. He adds that summative assessments, on the other hand, are designed to determine whether or not the student has mastered the competency. Thus, there must be a distinction between the assessment that promotes learning (formative) and the assessment that certifies learners (summative).

**Figure 1: Assessment Forms Used by Teachers**



The results of Figure 1 show that 57.15% of the questioned teachers rely on different forms of summative assessment while 42.85% of them rely on formative assessment in assessing the learners’ performance in the language.

When asked about the different assessment tools used to assess their learners as well as the purpose of using each assessment tool, teachers mentioned exams, tests, continuous evaluation, projects, and portfolios.

**Table 4: Assessment Tools Used by Teachers**

Tools	N	%
Exams	70	100
Tests	70	100
Continuous Evaluation	41	58.57
Projects	42	60
Portfolios	1	1.42

The results of Table 4 show that all the questioned teachers use written exams as an assessment tool in response to the requirements of the educational authorities. All the teachers use exams for assessing and evaluating their learners' performance in the language in terms of level, acquisitions, weaknesses, and strengths. In addition to this, some teachers argue that exams allow to grade and mark learners and give remedial work.



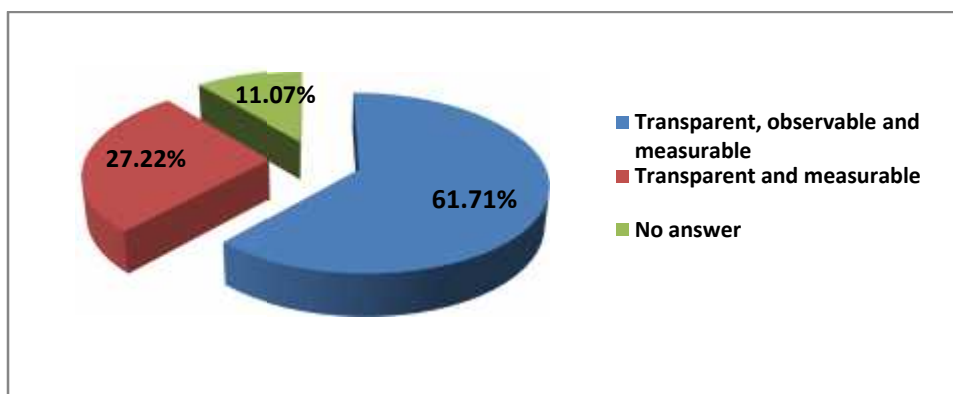
All the questioned teachers without exception use tests in assessing their learners and the majority of them see that tests allow them to check learners’ understanding and acquisitions. However, if compared to the purposes of using exams, tests have more specific purposes as they are related to units as well as lessons.

The results of Table 4 show that 58.57% of the questioned teachers use continuous evaluation to assess their learners. This tool makes learners constantly engaged in the learning process because it motivates learners and creates competition between them, especially during the lesson presentation.

Project-based methodology stands as one of the foundations of teaching a second language with the CBA. The Algerian educational syllabus defines the project as a creative way for learners to apply what they have learned in class <sup>(37)</sup>. The results of the questionnaire reveal that 60% of the teachers use projects as a means of assessment. Teachers point out that the use of projects allows learners to cope and work collaboratively but they express their regrets as projects are drawn from the net directly by the learners without bothering themselves to make the least effort in constructing authentic projects. This situation urges the teachers to change the topic of the project that is recommended in the syllabus and make it related to their everyday life so that they cannot bring a copy-paste project from the net. Some teachers require that the project should be written in hand rather than typed and ask their learners to present the project in front of their classmates and allow for asking questions and class discussion.

Only one teacher of the questioned population reported using portfolios as a means of assessment. His choice was justified by improving his learners’ writing skills. Richards & Schmidt <sup>(38)</sup> point out that the portfolio is a learning as well as an assessment tool. They help identify the students’ strengths and weaknesses in their work <sup>(39)</sup>. The non-reliance on the portfolios and the other assessment tools such as journals and observation may be attributed to the time and efforts such assessment tools require from teachers who often work with large classes of 30 to 45 students.

**Figure 2: Characteristics of Assessing a Competency**



The obtained results show that 61.71% of the questioned teachers were able to make judgments whether or not their learners have mastered the targeted competency as they stated that the measurement of competence must be transparent, observable, and measurable. 27.22% of the questioned teachers asserted that it must transparent and measurable. Surprisingly, 11.07% of the questioned teachers did not know what the criteria for assessing competence are. Despite the variance in the teachers’ answers, teachers seem to be aware of how to assess the mastery of a competence.

**7. Suggestions and Recommendations:**

Teachers should assess their students in order to help the teaching and learning process; thus, teachers need to take steps to improve the assessment system. Here are some suggestions for EFL teachers on how to assess their learners following the CBA:

• The teacher should use a variety of assessment techniques that clearly reflect the learner-centered pedagogy and the CBA to second language learning. The selected means of assessment may vary to include different aspects of language and different types of learners.

• To classify learners according to their entrance profile and categorize them according to their level.

• Assessment should take place in the context of meaningful activities.

• The percentage of the final mark allotted to each competency should reflect the amount of time that the learners spend on that competency.

• Though teachers are the primary assessors of their learners' performance; both peer and self-assessment are considered effective means of assessment.

• To rely on different methods of assessment.

• To select the most effective means of assessment according to the targeted competency since assessment aims mainly at improving instruction and learning.

• Because learners' knowledge and many of their skills, strategies, and attitudes are internal processes, teachers need to be part of learning and progress by regularly and systematically observing students in action, and by interacting with them during instruction.

• Different kinds of learning outcomes should be evaluated in different ways.

• To train teachers in how to teach with the CBA in general and how to assess their learners in particular. Assessment criteria, nature, and means of assessment should be published to trainees as well.

• To take into consideration all aspects of the Algerian educational context. Adopting a CBA teaching model may constitute a risk if the decision does not entail a vigorous debate and full discussion of both the conceptual issues underpinning CBE and the practical problems involved in the educational system.

• To make learners aware of the importance of studying English so they stop concentrating on marks and start focusing on improving their proficiency in the language.

### **Conclusion:**

This study was set to investigate the way EFL learners are assessed in the Algerian secondary school within the framework of the CBA. The literature review demonstrated that the Algerian educational system adopted the CBA as an approach to teaching English at secondary schools as part of the latest reform. Therefore, EFL teachers needed to change not only the way they approach teaching but also how they assess their learners' performance within the CBA. The analysis of the teachers' responses to the questionnaire indicated that despite their awareness of how to assess their learners' performance within the CBA, they still rely on traditional means of assessment: these include mainly tests and exams. Although the currently used means of assessment are required by the Ministry of Education, it is the teachers' responsibility to find practical solutions to this problem. The need to realize that testing is not a simple operation of assigning scores, but it is an ongoing process that requires test design and development stages and that the outcomes involve building a logical case in support of a particular interpretation. They can opt for a variety of other means of assessment in addition to tests and exams as they are the primary assessors of their learners. It is worth mentioning that, teachers should have opportunities for adequate training in teaching with the CBA throughout pre-service as well as in-service training.

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