

Exploring Algerian EFL University Instructors' Understanding and Practices of Learning-Oriented Assessment

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Abstract

The quality of assessment practices in higher education profoundly influences students' learning experiences and academic outcomes. A recent trend gaining popularity is Learning-Oriented Assessment, which tailors assessment practices to enhance student learning. This study explores Algerian EFL University teachers' comprehension of Learning Oriented Assessment and the extent to which their practices align with it. Through an online mixed questionnaire administered to 56 EFL teachers from different Algerian universities including Batna 2 University, M'sila University, University of Constantine 1 and Eloued University, the research uncovered a range of assessment practices. While some educators embrace some principles of Learning Oriented Assessment, others adhere to conventional assessment methods. Teachers also reported significant factors influencing their assessment choices, including class size and resource constraints. Given the recent shifts, proficiency in contemporary assessment methodologies is imperative for effective teaching and learning. By exploring how EFL instructors in Algeria view assessment, their practices, and the challenges they face, this paper highlights the need for pedagogical innovation in assessment and its practical application in the context of higher education.

Keywords: Assessment practices, EFL university teachers, innovation, learning, learning-oriented assessment

ملخص

تستكشف هذه الدراسة واقع الممارسات التقييمية في مؤسسات التعليم العالي نظرا لتأثيرها في عمليتي التعليم و التعلم. و قد ظهر تيار مؤخرا يجعل من التعلم محورا في دراساته و بحوثه، أبرز ما يعرف ب"التقييم الموجه نحو التعلم". نظرا لهذا التحول البارز تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية الى استكشاف فهم أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في الجامعات الجزائرية لهذا النوع من التقييم ودرجة توافق ممارساتهم معه. لتحقيق هذا، أختير المنهج الوصفي المسحي، حيث تتكون العينة من 56 أستاذ من مختلف الجامعات الجزائرية و أستخدم استبيان في شكل أسئلة لجمع البيانات. أظهرت النتائج تبني نسبة من الأساتذة للتقييم الموجه نحو التعلم وعزوف البعض الآخر عنه تماما و تمسكهم بالطرائق التقليدية، وفي كل هذا توضيحات و عوامل متحركة في اختياراتهم. يخلص البحث إلى رؤى جديدة حول تبني التقييمات الحديثة كفرصة لتعزيز التعلم و إعطاء المتعلمين أولوية في صناعة المعرفة و تقييمها على مستوى مؤسسات التعليم العالي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية، تعلم، تعليم عالي، تقييم الموجه نحو التعلم، ممارسات تقييمية

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Introduction

In higher education, universities serve as the primary institutions responsible for enhancing a country's workforce and preparing graduates to address the challenges of the contemporary age. Like many other countries, Algeria has recognized the importance of English language education as a means to connect with the global community and enhance both academic and economic prospects (Beddiaf & Bensafi, 2018). In this pursuit, EFL instructors within Algerian universities should provide students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in their chosen fields and contribute effectively to their society and economy. This preparation of graduates extends beyond technical expertise to include essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and adaptability, which are crucial for navigating the challenges of the modern world. By aligning instruction and assessment with these demands, universities can nurture students' holistic development and prepare them to succeed in their academic, professional, and personal endeavors. Learning and success in an ever-changing world, therefore, cannot be easily gauged through conventional tests relying on simplistic formats that assess basic knowledge. There is a pressing need to rethink the current approach to assessment, identify contemporary competencies, and devise effective strategies for evaluating them (Shute & Becker, 2010). Such an imperative entails the shift towards innovative methods that capture the complex abilities required for thriving in diverse contexts. Unsurprisingly, the concept of assessment has transcended mere evaluation, assuming a more dynamic role in shaping the learning process. As pedagogical paradigms have evolved to center around students' learning, the significance of what is known as the learning-oriented assessment has earned heightened scholarly attention (Leung, 2020; Salamoura & Morgan 2021; Baker et al., 2021).

Effective assessment practices are crucial in enhancing learning outcomes. Research has shown that teachers' assessment skills and practices in higher education have a significant impact on students' learning (Coutts, Gillard & Baglin, 2011). Summative assessments, for instance, have always been associated with a negative washback. Although they continue to retain importance within educational frameworks, such types of assessments often modify the students' behavior. Instead of embarking on actual learning, students find themselves revising for the examinations. This issue is particularly evident in Algerian universities where the learning environment is primarily exam-driven and highly systematized. Despite their awareness of the need for assessment reform, teachers still adhere to traditional forms of assessment, thereby failing to promote learning in any possible way (Benettayeb-Ouahiani, 2016). Scholars, however, point to a framework that has gained considerable attention lately: Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) (Carless, 2007; Jones & Saville 2016; Turner & Purpura; 2016). It is an approach to assessment that prioritizes students' learning in all types of assessment activities, whether formative or summative. According to Gebril (2021), LOA serves as a means to reconcile both the processes of assessment and instruction. This transformation of assessment from a mere summative judgment to an incentive for learning has emerged as a pivotal discourse, promising to enhance learning and refine the educational experience.

Amidst this backdrop, this paper undertakes a comprehensive exploration into the understanding and practices of learning-oriented assessment among Algerian EFL university teachers. Drawing on the foundations laid by other studies in the same field (Alsowat, 2022; Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2022; Jalilzadeh & Coombe, 2023; Al Kamli and Almalki, 2023),

the voices of EFL instructors stand at the heart of this study, offering insights that would contribute to the broader conversation on effective assessment practices. By exploring their understandings, beliefs, and practices of LOA, we seek to illuminate the opportunities and challenges of using assessment as a tool to foster meaningful learning experiences. To achieve these objectives, we addressed the following questions:

Q1: How do Algerian EFL teachers comprehend and conceptualize learning-oriented assessment?

Q2: To what extent are the Algerian EFL teachers' practices compatible with the principles of LOA?

Q3: What challenges do Algerian EFL teachers encounter while implementing LOA in their classes?

Literature Review

At its core, learning-oriented assessment embodies three essential features. According to Careless (2007), each feature is crucial in promoting impactful learning experiences. Firstly, assessment tasks are designed not only to evaluate learning but also to actively facilitate it. Secondly, students are encouraged to engage actively in the assessment process through self-evaluation and peer evaluation, promoting deeper reflection and understanding. Lastly, feedback plays a significant role, providing learners with strategies to enhance their performance and advance their learning journey. These three pillars serve as the guiding framework for exploring the literature, explaining the versatile ways in which learning-oriented assessment can enrich educational practices and improve student learning.

LOA: Aligning Learning and Assessment Practices

It is essential to recognize that assessment and learning are not separate entities. For assessment to effectively serve educational goals, it should be closely aligned with learning theories (Baird et al., 2017). The significance of assessment lies not in the practices themselves but in what instructors do with the obtained data to effectively serve the learning process. Indeed, while data provide valuable insights into students' understanding, it is the actions taken by instructors that truly impact growth. By drawing upon assessment data, teachers can understand where each student stands regarding curriculum objectives and, most importantly, can address any learning gaps. This personalized approach facilitates tailored instruction and nurtures a learning environment where no student is left behind.

In this context, learning-oriented assessment has emerged to reinforce the synergy between assessment and learning processes, thereby promoting a meaningful educational experience for students. Carless et al. (2006) propose that assessment tasks work as learning tasks when the process to complete both is identical. In other words, when the steps used to complete an assessment task mirror those instructors use for learning, assessment becomes an opportunity for students to engage with the material to reinforce their understanding actively. For this active engagement to happen, expanding teachers' assessment knowledge and skills is necessary (Imsa-ard & Tangkiengsirisin, 2023). Instructors should align the assessment tasks with curriculum objectives and ensure that these tasks exhibit authenticity and cooperation. The idea of authenticity in assessment focuses on assessment that has applicability beyond the classroom and stands in contrast with the traditional tests and essays that simply reinforce surface learning (Kearney & Perkins, 2014). Additionally, in designing assessment tasks, teachers should prioritize promoting the learners' higher-order thinking skills. To achieve this,

sharing learning goals and criteria for success with the students is critical to promoting learning and student engagement (Fazel & Ali, 2022).

The Importance of Students' Active Engagement

Students are far from being passive recipients of examinations. When they actively engage in assessment, students contribute to their own learning and academic development. Active engagement of learners in assessment is a powerful strategy to enhance learning, foster critical thinking, promote self-awareness, and give them insights into the assessment process (Ashraf & Mahdinezhad, 2015). Students need to be given opportunities for active involvement in both self and peer assessment to achieve deeper and higher levels of learning (Rezai et al., 2021). Both self-assessment and peer assessment place the responsibility of evaluating performance and learning progress in the hands of the students, enabling them to take ownership of their education.

Self-assessment and peer assessment are valuable methods to encourage active student engagement. Wanner and Palmer (2018) highlight them as integral components of student-centered assessment processes in higher education. When learners are invited to assess their performance, they are encouraged to critically evaluate their work, identifying strengths and areas needing improvement. This process not only deepens students' understanding of the subject matter but also develops their ability to reflect on their learning, which aligns well with modern learning theories such as self-regulated learning, student-centered education, and autonomous learning (Butler, 2023). When learners evaluate their performance, they gain a sense of responsibility for their learning. They become more self-aware, able to set goals, monitor progress, and make necessary adjustments, all of which are essential real-life skills. Peer assessment, on the other hand, involves students assessing the work of their peers. This method encourages collaborative learning and develops important analytical and critical thinking skills. When students assess the work of their peers, they not only gain insights into different perspectives and ways of thinking but also learn to provide constructive feedback. Engaging in peer feedback cultivates a sense of shared responsibility within the learning community and has been found to positively impact the development of teamwork skills (Diaz-Vicario, Duran-Bellonch & Ion, 2024). Encouraging a collaborative approach in the classroom promotes a supportive learning environment, where students are actively participating in the evaluation of their own and their peers' performances.

Importance of Feedback in Promoting Learning

Effective feedback is a crucial element in LOA. Although scholars acknowledge the effectiveness of feedback in monitoring, improving, and regulating students' learning, it remains a complex area because it "carries implications of well-being and self-esteem" (Carless, 2022, p.10). That being said, it is not easy for teachers to implement. Feedback that is either overly critical or non-supportive has detrimental effects on students' self-esteem, leading to feelings of inadequacy. Other types of feedback that lack specific details on how to improve are equally detrimental as they lead learners to miss valuable development opportunities (Meftah, 2020). Some surveys, in a higher education context, pointed to the students' dissatisfaction with the feedback they receive on their course works (Buckly, 2020; Nicol, 2010). Yet, when feedback is thoughtfully delivered, it can boost self-esteem by creating a positive emotional connection to the learning experience. Although what constitutes appropriate feedback has not been defined, consensus exists on several good practices (Meftah, 2020). Effective feedback makes learners feel valued, leading to a positive impact on their

overall well-being. For feedback to be effective in an LOA framework, it has to be constructive and actionable. Another distinctive feature of learning-oriented feedback is feedforward (Carless, 2020). It involves students using feedback not only as a tool for evaluation but also as a means to progress their learning.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

A study that concerns itself with gathering information about a present phenomenon or a population to describe its characteristics, attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or previous experiences is called a survey research design (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the adoption of survey design provides a comprehensive method for investigating the current state of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) adoption among Algerian EFL university teachers. Survey research methodology enables the exploration of teachers' familiarity with, understanding of, and practices related to LOA methods in their classrooms. Given the expansive scope of the study population, encompassing EFL instructors across various universities and institutions, a survey design offers an efficient means of data collection to garner diverse perspectives and insights and enhance the richness of the findings.

Participants

The participants in this study were 56 Algerian EFL university teachers from different universities in Algeria (Batna 2 University, M'sila University, University of Constantine 1, and Eloued University) during the academic year 2023/2024. The study employed a self-selection sampling method to allow the voluntary participation of teachers from various institutions who were interested in sharing their perspectives and experiences regarding LOA. Information about the participants is presented in (Table One). The participants belong to various fields, including didactics, applied linguistics, and literature. The majority of teachers also have work experience ranging from five to ten years.

Table 1. *EFL Teachers' demographic information*

Demographic Information	No. (%)
University Degree	
Master	6 (11%)
Magister	23 (41%)
PhD	27 (48%)
Field of Study	
Didactics of English	17 (30%)
Applied Linguistics	34 (61%)
English Literature	5 (9%)
Years of Teaching	
One year to five years	20 (36%)
Five years – Ten years	23 (41%)
More than ten years	13 (23%)

Research Procedures

To conduct the study, a mixed questionnaire that included closed-ended and open-ended questions was administered online via Google Forms and sent to the teachers via email. The questionnaire was chosen for its accessibility, allowing for widespread participation without geographical constraints, and its provision of anonymity. It is a time-efficient tool for both researchers and participants, allowing the instructors to contribute at their convenience. The

questionnaire consists of four sections. The first section deals with the teachers' profile, the second entails two questions to gain insights into their understanding of LOA, Section Three includes five questions that address teachers' practices of LOA, and the last section examines the challenges facing LOA implementation.

Quantitative analysis techniques were employed to examine the responses provided by the participants for closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. The survey data were organized and categorized, allowing for the identification of patterns and variations in teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and implementation of LOA methods. Through descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages, the study quantitatively gauged the prevalence of LOA practices adopted by the teachers. As for the open-ended questions, the responses were thematically analyzed.

Results

Teachers' Responses to Questions in Section 2: Teachers' Understanding of LOA

Question 1. *What goals do you have when assessing your students? What are you hoping to achieve through your assessment?*

Table Two summarizes the results of the first question.

Table 2. *Teachers' purposes of assessment*

<i>Purposes of Assessment</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Responses (%)</i>
Instructional purposes	-Diagnosis -Evidence of achieving curricular objectives -Evaluation of teaching	68%
Learner-related purposes	-Improve learning -Provide feedback to learners	32%

The results of the first question depict two distinct orientations among participating teachers regarding their purpose of assessment. The first group, comprising (68%) of respondents, predominantly views assessment through the lens of instructional improvement. For them, assessment is a tool to evaluate students' specific competencies, ascertain the attainment of curricular objectives, and refine teaching practices. This perspective aligns mostly with traditional approaches to assessment, where the primary emphasis is measuring student performance and informing instructional decisions. The results also highlighted that (32%) of respondents place relatively less emphasis on assessment for instructional purposes and instead prioritize learner-related objectives. These objectives aim to foster student growth, understand individual learning needs, and promote more profound engagement with the learning process. The notable minority of teachers endorsing these learner-related goals suggests a potential gap in recognizing the intrinsic value of assessment in facilitating student learning and development.

Question 2. *How do university Algerian EFL teachers perceive learning-oriented assessment?*

In terms of familiarity with LOA, the researchers adapted the questionnaire items from Alsowat's (2022) study, which measured the teachers' knowledge of learning-oriented assessment.

Table 3. *Teachers' understanding of LOA*

Item	Mean	SD
1- LOA has the potential to improve student's learning	3.67	1.02
2- Learners must be involved in both their learning and assessment	3.71	0.80
3- I acknowledge synergies between assessment, instruction, and learning	4.37	0.61
4- I recognize the role of interaction (student-teacher/student-student) in mediating learning	4.53	0.50
5- I am familiar with LOA concepts	2.37	1.05
6- I am familiar with concepts such as assessment for learning, alternative assessment, authentic assessment	3.14	0.92
7- I have confidence in my ability to opt for assessment that promotes learning (project work, portfolios, authentic assessment ...)	2.85	1.15

Overall, there is a moderate to high level of agreement among teachers regarding the importance of learner involvement in both learning and assessment (**Mean: 3.7**) and the acknowledgment of synergies between assessment, instruction, and learning (**Mean: 4.3**). Additionally, there is strong consensus on the recognition of the vital role of interaction, both between students and teachers and among students themselves, in mediating learning (**Mean: 4.5**). However, there are areas where consensus is less pronounced. While teachers exhibit moderate familiarity with LOA concepts (**Mean: 2.3**) and related assessment methods such as assessment for learning, alternative assessment, and authentic assessment (**Mean: 3.1**), there is notable variability in their levels of confidence in selecting assessments that promote learning (**Mean: 2.8**). This variability is further evident in the wider standard deviations accompanying these means, indicating diverse perspectives and experiences among teachers.

Teachers' Responses to Questions in Section 3: Teachers' Practices of LOA

Question 1. *Which of the following assessment practices do you commonly use in your EFL classes? (Select all that apply)*

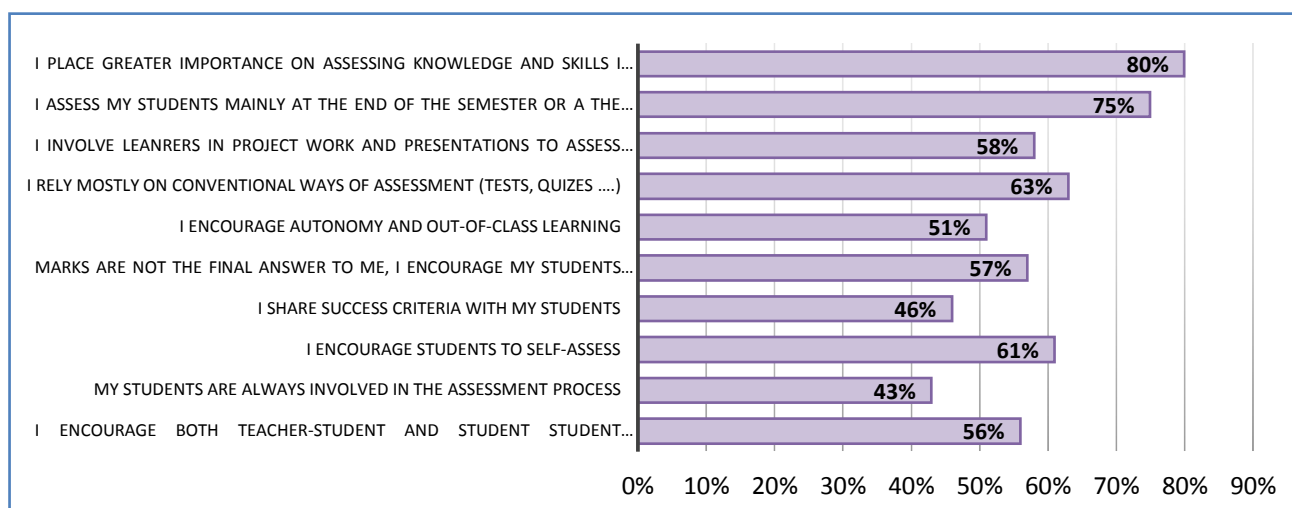


Figure 1. Assessment practices commonly used in the teachers' EFL classes

The analysis of teachers' responses to various assessment practices revealed that most teachers (56%) express a commitment to fostering both teacher-student and student-student interactions, indicating a recognition of the significance of a collaborative learning environment. Additionally, a significant proportion of teachers (43%) report that their students are

consistently involved in the assessment process, demonstrating efforts towards promoting student engagement and ownership of their learning. Moreover, a substantial majority (61%) are willing to encourage student self-assessment.

However, some areas need improvement. A notable percentage (63%) admit to predominantly relying on conventional assessment methods such as tests and quizzes. Although most teachers (58%) involve their students in project work and presentations for assessment purposes, a significant number (75%) indicate a preference for end-of-semester or end-of-course assessments. This tendency towards summative assessments may overlook opportunities for ongoing formative assessment and timely feedback, which are crucial for supporting the learning progress. Most strikingly, (80 %) of the teachers reported placing greater importance on assessing knowledge and skills presented in their courses. While content mastery is undoubtedly essential, this emphasis may inadvertently overshadow the broader goals of fostering critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning skills.

Question 2. *To what extent do you integrate formative assessment practices in your teaching? (Scale: 1 = Never, 5 = Always)*

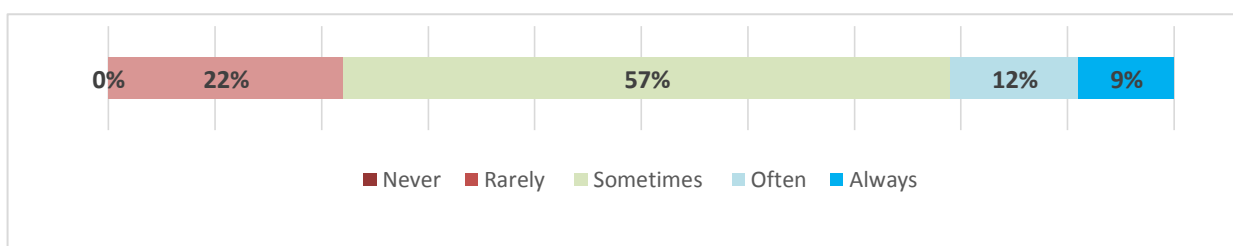


Figure 2. Teachers' integration of formative assessment

Most teachers reported occasionally using formative assessment strategies (57%), indicating a moderate level of integration of these practices into their teaching. However, a considerable proportion of teachers (22%) report rarely incorporating formative assessment, suggesting potential opportunities for increasing the frequency of these practices. Additionally, only a small percentage of teachers (12% often, 9% always) indicate consistent and frequent use of formative assessment strategies.

Question 3. *Do you actively engage your students through feedback? Could you please describe the strategies you employ?*

The teachers overwhelmingly recognize the importance of engaging students through feedback, with all respondents indicating their commitment to this practice. Their approaches to providing feedback vary but generally include verbal and written feedback methods. Verbal feedback is commonly offered during class discussions and activities, aiming to clarify concepts and address misconceptions in real-time. Additionally, written feedback on assignments is common, with teachers frequently offering detailed comments to highlight strengths and areas for improvement. Here are some answers provided by the respondents:

“I believe in the power of feedback to enhance student learning. I provide verbal feedback during class discussions and activities, and the students seem to appreciate it”.

“Giving feedback is something we, teachers, do most of the time. Our job entails offering feedback, be it oral or written, on assignments of students.”

Question 4. *What strategies do you employ in the administration of exams? (Select all that apply)*

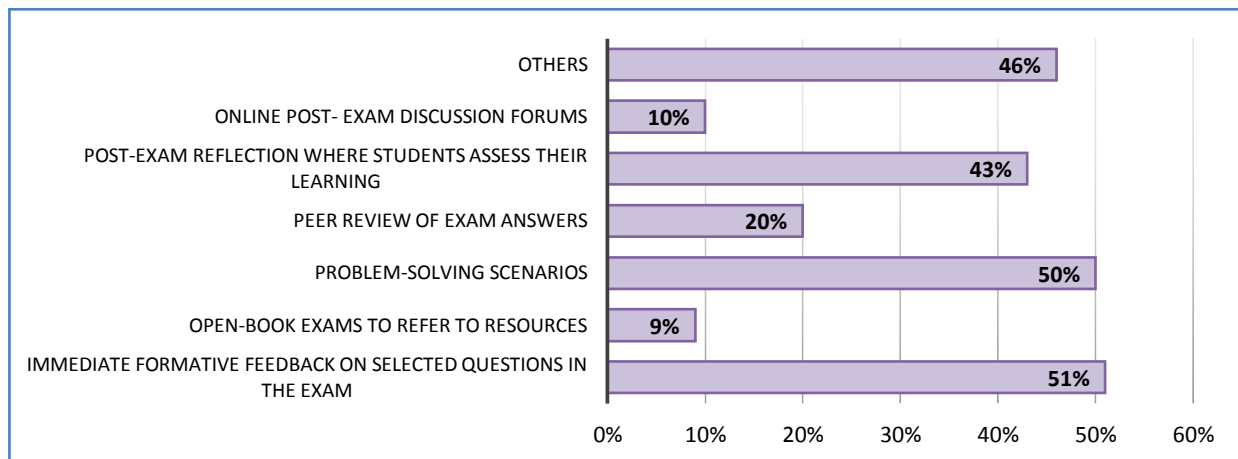


Figure 3. Strategies used by teachers in exams

Exams can serve as powerful learning opportunities when designed to provide constructive feedback, assess higher-order thinking skills, encourage critical thinking, and promote self-assessment. By emphasizing these aspects, educators can transform exams from stressful evaluation tools into valuable learning experiences that contribute to students' overall growth. (51%) of the teachers emphasized the importance of providing immediate formative feedback and incorporating problem-solving scenarios. (43%) used post-exam discussions, (20%) used peer-review exams, (10%) made use of online discussions, and only (9%) used open-book exams.

Question 5. *Could you describe a recent assessment experience in your classroom that had a positive impact on students? What made it effective, in your opinion?*

When asked about successful assessment practices, the survey responses pointed to experiences that typically involved direct student engagement through discussions, journal writing, portfolio development and project work. One of the respondents stated that involving students in “project works and presentations involves different skills such as collaboration with peers, the use of language, integrating technology, and developing students’ oral skills.” These methods were often accompanied by the frequent use of formative feedback. Five participants even referred to their online assessment experience during COVID-19 in enhancing their adaptability and problem-solving skills.

Teachers’ Responses to Questions in Section 4: Challenges in Implementing LOA

Question 1. *What challenges, if any, do you encounter when implementing learning-oriented assessment strategies (i.e., approaches that promote student reflection and support their learning)?*

Several challenges to implementing learning-oriented assessment practices were identified. Most of the instructors cited time constraints, students' fixation on grades as the sole motivation for learning, and the notable lack of student cooperation in an exam-oriented culture as key concerns. One of the participants stated that:

“Many students tend to excessively focus on their grades, leading them to overlook the crucial function of assessment in fostering their critical self-reflection regarding their acquired knowledge.”

Question 2. *Have you received any training or professional development related to learning-oriented assessment? If yes, please describe the nature of the training briefly.*

Table 4. *Training related to LOA*

Yes	No
13%	87%

Remarkably, only 13% of the surveyed teachers reported receiving training on learning-oriented assessment. This suggests the importance of providing comprehensive training to educators in this area. Many teachers strongly desired to attend seminars, workshops, and training programs focused on learning-oriented assessment, highlighting the potential benefits of investing in their professional development.

Discussion

Concerning the first research question, “How do Algerian EFL teachers comprehend and conceptualize learning-oriented assessment?”, the teachers showed a moderate understanding and positive attitudes towards some LOA principles. This understanding, however, remains mainly theoretical without fully embracing it in practice. Addressing the second question, “To what extent are the Algerian EFL teachers’ practices compatible with the principles of LOA?”, the alignment of teachers’ assessment practices with LOA principles varies. While some practices, such as encouraging self-assessment, peer assessment, and providing constructive feedback, are incorporated, traditional assessments still dominate, with innovative techniques being used less frequently. For the third question, “What challenges do Algerian EFL teachers encounter while implementing LOA in their classes?”, the results pointed to several challenges related to the contexts within which the teachers operate and the limited training in this assessment area. The ensuing discussion will provide a detailed examination of the results.

Algerian EFL University Teachers’ Understanding of LOA

First, the fact that most teachers identified goals related to providing practice for students, assessing specific competencies, and improving their teaching practices suggests a noteworthy emphasis on teacher-centered assessment objectives. Assessment is an integral part of both curriculum and instructional improvement. It helps determine whether students have achieved the required goals, which in turn informs decisions about changes in curriculum or instruction (Heywood, 2000). While these goals are undoubtedly crucial for effective teaching, it is imperative to strike a balance by incorporating student-centered goals that prioritize and measure the actual learning outcomes of students. Research has shown that learning occurs best in contexts that give learners choice and control (McCombs & Miller, 2007). When students

have a choice in how they learn and are given control over major aspects of learning like the topics they study, how they study, and how they are assessed, they are more likely to regulate their learning. An overemphasis on teacher-centered goals may hinder realizing the full potential of assessment as a tool for enhancing learning. Moreover, teachers showed a moderate level of knowledge regarding some principles of LOA. Yet, the results of this study support Fazel and Ali's (2022), and Alsowat's (2022) claim that teachers' familiarity with LOA remains theoretical. Although teachers expressed positive attitudes towards some LOA principles and their potential to improve the way assessment is conducted, they lacked confidence in selecting assessments that would promote learning.

Teachers' Practices of LOA

The survey results suggest an agreement among instructors about some LOA practices. Many teachers reported encouraging student and teacher interactions which according to Akhtar et al. (2019) are a priority to assist learners in becoming more motivated and engaged and consequently achieving educational success. Involving the students in both self-assessment and peer assessment was a common practice as well. Employing timely and constructive feedback in assessment practices is another key LOA principle, and giving it a structure that encourages success will increase its usefulness (Davies, 2007). Incorporating formative assessment practices sometimes also aligns with effective assessment practices, as they provide students with actionable insights to improve their performance and increase their self-awareness (Fook & Sidhu, 2013).

Despite their enthusiasm for some LOA practices, the survey findings reveal teachers' reluctance to adopt specific assessment techniques that can promote student learning. This knowledge gap presents an opportunity for professional development and training initiatives to equip teachers with a broader repertoire of assessment tools. By doing so, educators can diversify their assessment strategies, ensuring a more comprehensive and meaningful evaluation of student performance. The prevalence of traditional assessment methods, such as homework assignments, quizzes, and tests, and the relatively low use of post-exam reflections, peer review of exams, online discussions, and open-book exams, suggests a need for greater innovation and variety in assessment practices. Integrating more project work and other experiential learning opportunities into assessment can promote deeper engagement and critical thinking among students.

Challenges Faced While Implementing LOA

The challenges identified, such as overcrowded classrooms, time constraints, and students' fixation on grades, highlight the complex context within which teachers operate. This goes hand in hand with Leung's (2020) study results, which revealed that contextual dynamics and curricular infrastructure affect the implementation of LOA. Encouraging a shift from an exam-oriented culture to an assessment culture that prioritizes meaningful learning would require collaborative efforts. Overcoming these challenges requires a systemic approach that involves not only individual teachers but also educational institutions, curriculum designers, and policymakers (Fazel & Ali, 2022).

The survey also highlighted the limited training received by teachers on learning-oriented assessment. Zeng, Huang, and Yu (2018) argued that LOA functions effectively only through a change in the mindset of teachers. Therefore, instructors should enhance their knowledge and skills to do LOA effectively. Given the apparent interest and desire expressed by teachers to receive training in this area, educational institutions and professional

development organizations should prioritize providing relevant training opportunities. Seminars, workshops, and training programs focused on learning-oriented assessment can empower teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective assessment practices.

Conclusion

The study results shed light on the current landscape of assessment practices among Algerian EFL university teachers. While several positive LOA aspects were identified, such as the recognition of the involvement of learners in assessment, the pivotal role of interaction between students and teachers, and the importance of providing feedback, there are areas for improvement. Achieving a more balanced approach to assessment goals, expanding teachers' assessment toolkits, diversifying assessment methods, and addressing the challenges in the assessment processes are essential steps toward effective learning-oriented assessment implementation in the Algerian higher education context.

This research provides valuable insights for both teachers and higher education institutions. At the pedagogical level, the study findings emphasize the shift towards incorporating student choice and control over their learning, necessitating adjustments in current teaching and assessment methodologies to accommodate the learners' modern needs. For teachers, there is a clear need for professional development initiatives focused on enhancing familiarity with assessment techniques that promote learning and diversify assessment practices. Investing in teacher training and professional development in LOA is a necessary and promising avenue for improving the quality of education and student success. Moreover, addressing challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and time constraints requires collaborative efforts between teachers, educational institutions, curriculum designers, and policymakers. Promoting a systemic shift towards an assessment culture that prioritizes meaningful learning necessitates collective action and targeted training programs to empower instructors with the skills and knowledge essential for effective implementation.

This study has several limitations, however. Firstly, its scope was restricted by a small-scale design and correspondingly limited participation, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Recommending larger sample sizes would enhance the potential for broader applicability of the results. Secondly, the exclusive reliance on a questionnaire as the primary research tool constrains the depth of insight into teachers' practices, particularly in comparison to more robust methodologies such as classroom observation, which is considered a more valid means of exploration in this context.

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