



The Degree of Use of Authentic Assessment Strategies by Higher Education Teachers from the Perspective of Higher Education Teachers

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Abstract:

The present study aims to shed light on the degree to which higher education teachers use authentic assessment strategies from the perspective of higher education teachers. The study sample consisted of 40 professors from the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, selected randomly. For this purpose, the researcher designed a questionnaire composed of five dimensions (paper-and-pencil assessment, performance-based assessment, communication-based assessment, observation-based assessment, and self-review assessment). Each dimension includes a set of items. The descriptive approach was adopted due to its suitability to the nature and objectives of the study, in order to answer the following question: What is the degree of use of higher education teachers of authentic assessment strategies from their own perspective? The results were as follows:

The use of authentic assessment strategies by higher education teachers, from their perspective, was generally moderate. The paper-and-pencil assessment strategy was the most frequently used among these strategies, followed by the performance-based assessment strategy. The use of self-review assessment and communication-based assessment strategies was moderate, while the observation-based assessment strategy was the least used.

Keywords: degree of use – authentic assessment strategies – higher education teachers.

Introduction:

Higher education plays a fundamental and irreplaceable role in designing and implementing national development plans, given societies' need for university expertise to prepare human resources capable of

building and implementing the developmental programs required by nations. This reality necessitates that universities exert continuous efforts to fulfill their major responsibilities in preparing and qualifying experts who, in turn, assume responsibility for developing productive capacities across all economic and social sectors upon which society relies in its development plans.

In Algeria, as in all countries of the world, the demand for higher education is steadily increasing as a result of the spread of democratic principles that call for the dissemination of higher education among all segments of society, as well as the role assumed by higher education institutions in providing diverse educational services to all members of society—a role that involves a high degree of difficulty and complexity. If the education system is to be effective and achieve its objectives, it must be based on strong and stable foundations that enable it to bring about qualitative formation in educating generations and developing their capacities and talents so that they may become leaders in bearing responsibilities. This objective cannot be achieved unless two essential conditions are met: mastery of the professional skills acquired by students during their academic preparation, and the utilization of these professional skills in the service of development projects and the advancement of progress in the country. The higher education system must also be grounded in a solid base of policies and strategies founded on effective assessment systems that provide supportive and corrective feedback and offer moral support to confidently continue developing academic programs.

One of the established principles agreed upon by educators is that the education received by university students is the joint responsibility of faculty members and universities. Therefore, universities must measure and assess the impact of educational programs on outputs, as well as evaluate the methods used in providing educational services to their beneficiaries.

Boud (1990) pointed out that the fundamental problem lies in the existence of a gap between teaching and the real world, and between assessment and what occurs in the labor market. Educational trends have shifted from knowledge-based education to competency-based education and its assessment in a more authentic manner. It is noteworthy that for a long time many educators considered assessment synonymous with achievement tests, as the grades obtained by students in tests were regarded as indicators measuring the extent to which educational objectives were achieved. This trend was appropriate to the nature of prevailing teaching methods, which focused on memorization and rote learning, and functioned as a measurement tool in only one domain of cognitive objectives (Al-Sharif, 2009, p. 467, p. 417). Traditional assessment focuses on highlighting individual differences among students in information retention, which no longer suits current and future requirements. Assessment is no longer an end in itself, but rather has become part of the teaching process, guiding, reinforcing, and correcting its course. This requires a shift from traditional testing methods to approaches that develop the integrated personality

Traditional assessment focuses on highlighting individual differences among students in the retention of information. This no longer suits current and future requirements, as assessment is no longer an end

in itself; rather, it has become part of the teaching process, guiding it, reinforcing it, and correcting its course. This requires a shift from prevailing traditional testing methods to approaches that foster the development of the integrated personality, the functional skills it possesses, and a deep understanding of educational content acquired through self-directed learning (Keita, 2017).

The assessment process continues to witness significant developments that have resulted in fundamental reforms in the concept, methods, purposes, and functions of assessment, leading to the emergence of what is now termed **authentic assessment**.

The Problem Statement:

The policy of expanding access to higher education, which enjoys public support in human societies, carries with it great responsibilities. This expansion is not limited to providing higher education to all who desire it within the same nation; rather, it goes beyond that to providing educational services of a qualitative level that meets societal needs in an era characterized by rapid development and global competition. Objective assessment is an inevitable necessity to ensure the continuity and growth of higher education institutions, as it enables determining how close an institution is to achieving its goals and provides vital information needed by decision-makers to take the necessary decisions to improve performance. Based on this concept, universities need to apply a system of effective measurement and assessment mechanisms that ensure a truthful and accurate monitoring of their educational trajectory and, at the same time, provide feedback that enables them to enhance their quantitative and qualitative performance in achieving their objectives. In the field of assessing university performance, there are two main purposes of assessment that must be given serious consideration, the first of which concerns forming accurate judgments about the level of university outputs, in addition to providing feedback.

Given the great importance of assessment in general, and authentic assessment in particular, in the teaching–learning process, it has received considerable attention from educational researchers, and many studies have been conducted in this field. The studies by Joan Latchaw (1995) and by David Swenson and Sharon Souter (1990) sought to reveal the reality of assessment practices followed in universities. Meanwhile, the studies by Ketter (2002), McDonald and Boud (2003), and Al-Kharabsheh (2004) aimed to identify the relationship between authentic assessment and achievement, concluding that there is a positive relationship between them. Other studies focused on measuring the degree to which teachers use authentic assessment strategies, such as Mueller (2005), Abu Khalifa, Khudr, Asha, and Hamash (2011), Al-Bashir and Barham (2012), and Al-Mutrafi (2015), where the paper-and-pencil assessment strategy ranked first with a high degree. The current study differs from previous studies in that it addresses the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by university teachers, given the contribution this study may make to university education in general and to assessment in particular.

Research Questions:

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by higher education teachers?

2. What is the degree of use of the paper-and-pencil assessment strategy by higher education teachers?
3. What is the degree of use of the performance-based assessment strategy by higher education teachers?
4. What is the degree of use of the communication-based assessment strategy by higher education teachers?
5. What is the degree of use of the observation-based assessment strategy by higher education teachers?
6. What is the degree of use of the self-review assessment strategy by higher education teachers?

Objectives of the Study:

This study aimed to:

1. Identify the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by higher education teachers.
2. Identify the degree of use of the paper-and-pencil assessment strategy by higher education teachers.
3. Identify the degree of use of the performance-based assessment strategy by higher education teachers.
4. Identify the degree of use of the communication-based assessment strategy by higher education teachers.
5. Identify the degree of use of the observation-based assessment strategy by higher education teachers.
6. Identify the degree of use of the self-review assessment strategy by higher education teachers.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study lies in the following:

1. Contributing to revealing the reality of higher education teachers' use of authentic assessment strategies.
2. Contributing to the development of university professors' competencies in the field of authentic assessment strategies.
3. Encouraging teachers to take the initiative to involve their students in the assessment process.

Delimitations of the Study:

- **Spatial limits:** Faculty of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Laghouat and the University of Ghardaia.
- **Human limits:** Higher education teachers at the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences at the University of Laghouat and the University of Ghardaia.
- **Methodological limits:** This field study is based on the perspectives of higher education teachers regarding their practice of authentic assessment strategies. The descriptive approach

was adopted to achieve the objectives of the study, relying on the questionnaire as a tool for data collection.

Operational Definitions of Concepts :

- **Degree of use:** The degree of response of higher education teachers from the study sample to the prepared questionnaire.
- **Authentic assessment strategies:** A set of procedures carried out jointly by the teacher and the student to make judgments about students' performance, using paper-and-pencil assessment, performance-based assessment, communication-based assessment, observation-based assessment, and self-review assessment. It is operationally measured through the responses of the study sample of higher education teachers to the instrument used in this study.
- **Higher education teachers:** University professors at the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences at both the University of Laghouat and the University of Ghardaia.

Previous Studies:

Joan Latchaw (1995):

This study discusses "Assessment and Society," examining the behavior of educators in higher education who tend to treat students as consumers of goods. This behavior, in turn, leads assessment to rely on poorly formulated questions answered by individuals who are unconcerned. In reality, any assessment criteria for outputs are intended to evaluate both student and teacher performance together. The study referred to Anthony Petroski's research in the Mississippi Delta in the United States, indicating that the procedures applied through such assessment standards involve several problems:

1. They focus on solutions such as tests and vertical movement rather than on teaching and learning processes.
2. They emphasize basic skills rather than higher-order critical thinking strategies.
3. They help develop a degree of sensitivity and isolation among teachers.
4. They are considered a means of maintaining outdated patterns of educational practices (such as reinforcing rote memorization instead of discussion-based approaches).

David Swenson and Sharon Souter (1990):

In this study, the two researchers review the curricula and strategies implemented by New Mexico State University in the United States to assess students' academic achievement. The university unified assessment methods and specified the domains included in assessment to measure students' levels of achievement, namely:

1. Effective communication
2. Problem solving
3. Critical and creative thinking skills
4. Awareness of cultural diversity
5. Awareness of developments in the cognitive sciences

6. Collaborative work skills
7. Numerical skills
8. Skills of positive community interaction
9. Level of computer and information literacy

The results clearly revealed the effectiveness of the curricula in achieving objectives and the extent of their impact on producing outputs in accordance with the plans that were set.

The study by Ketter (2002) aimed to identify the effect of authentic assessment on students' achievement in mathematics in Regina schools in Canada, and it concluded that there is a positive relationship between authentic assessment and achievement.

The study by McDonald and Boud (2003) aimed to identify the effect of the authentic assessment strategy on students' achievement in mathematics, and it also demonstrated the existence of a positive relationship between authentic assessment and achievement.

This is consistent with the findings of Al-Kharabsheh's study (2004), which in turn aimed to identify the effect of authentic assessment strategies on the performance of ninth-grade students in Jordan in written expression.

Other studies focused on measuring the degree to which teachers use authentic assessment strategies, such as the study by Mueller (2005), whose results revealed a high degree of practice, and the study by Hiyajneh (2007), whose results showed statistically significant differences in teachers' use of authentic assessment strategies attributable to the proposed training program in favor of the experimental group.

The study by Abu Khalifa, Khudr, Asha, and Hamash (2011) sought to determine the degree to which teachers of the first basic cycle use authentic assessment strategies and tools in schools of Amman Governorate in Jordan. The results indicated that the paper-and-pencil assessment strategy ranked first, while the self-assessment strategy came last.

The study by Al-Bashir and Barham (2012) sought to determine the degree to which mathematics and Arabic language teachers use authentic assessment strategies and tools in Jordan. The results showed that their degree of use of the paper-and-pencil assessment strategy was high, while their degree of use of performance-based assessment, observation, and communication strategies was moderate, and their degree of use of the self-review strategy and authentic assessment tools was weak.

The study by Al-Mutrafi (2015) aimed to reveal the extent of the importance of using authentic assessment strategies among teachers of Sharia sciences. It concluded that the most frequently used authentic assessment strategy was the paper-and-pencil assessment, while the least used was portfolio assessment.

The current study differs from previous studies in that it addresses the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by university professors. It may be unique in this regard, as the researchers did

not find, within the scope of their search, any studies that addressed the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by higher education teachers in Algeria.

Study Methodology and Procedures:

Study Method:

To reveal the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by higher education teachers, the researchers used the descriptive approach, as it is the appropriate method for achieving the objectives of this study.

Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of 40 higher education teachers from the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences in the provinces of Laghouat and Ghardaia. The sample was distributed as follows:

Table No. (1): Distribution of the sample by province

Study population	Number	Percentage
Laghouat	20	50%
Ghardaia	20	50%
Total	40	100%

All distributed questionnaires, numbering 40, were retrieved, representing a response rate of 100%.

Study Instrument:

The researcher designed a questionnaire to measure the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies. It consisted of 50 items distributed across five axes: paper-and-pencil assessment, performance-based assessment, communication-based assessment, observation-based assessment, and self-review assessment, with 10 items for each axis. Three response alternatives were provided: (always, sometimes, never). Validity was verified by presenting the instrument to 10 specialists, and by examining internal consistency validity as shown in the following table:

Table No. (2): Internal consistency validity

Variable	Questions	Number of items	Internal consistency coefficient
Performance	From question 1 to question 10	10	0.723
Paper and pencil	From question 11 to question 20	10	0.795
Observation	From question 21 to question 30	10	0.880
Communication	From question 31 to question 40	10	0.82
Self-review	From question 34 to question	10	0.85

Variable	Questions	Number of items	Internal coefficient	consistency
	50			
Overall consistency	50	0.942		

Reliability was also calculated. The reliability of the questionnaire instrument refers to the extent to which the test yields the same results if it is re-administered to the same group under the same conditions at a later time. It is measured using several coefficients, including Cronbach's alpha. The table below shows that all coefficients were high (close to 100%), indicating strong internal consistency of the various responses of the sample members within each variable, as well as overall consistency of the responses.

Study Results:

SPSS software was used to conduct a set of statistical analyses. Examining and analyzing the results obtained through this study—although it involved a small sample—enabled us to draw a number of observations, the most important of which are:

- The use of authentic assessment strategies by higher education teachers, from their own perspective, was generally moderate.
- The paper-and-pencil assessment strategy was the most frequently used among these strategies.
- This was followed by the performance-based assessment strategy.
- The use of self-review assessment and communication-based assessment strategies was moderate.
- The observation-based assessment strategy was the least used.

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. Organizing training courses for university teachers in the field of assessment in general, and authentic assessment in particular, as one of the modern assessment strategies.
2. Introducing students to these strategies, especially the self-review assessment strategy.
3. Encouraging teachers to take the initiative to involve their students in the assessment process.
4. Conducting similar studies to reveal the degree of use of authentic assessment strategies by university professors in Algerian universities.

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