

Journal of Educational Studies and Multidisciplinary Approaches (JESMA)

www.jesma.net

Students' Views Toward Classroom-Based Assessment Processes in Moroccan EFL High Schools

Mohamed El zerk¹

To cite this article:

El zerk, M. (2025). Students' Views Toward Classroom-Based Assessment Processes in Moroccan EFL High Schools. *Journal of Educational Studies and Multidisciplinary Approaches (JESMA)*, 5 (2), 105-117. <https://doi.org/10.51383/jesma.2025.110>

The Journal of Educational Studies and Multidisciplinary Approaches (JESMA) is an international scientific, high-quality open access, peer-viewed scholarly journal that provides a comprehensive range of unique online-only journal submission services to academics, researchers, advanced doctoral students, and other professionals in their field. This journal publishes original research papers, theory-based empirical papers, review papers, case studies, conference reports, book reviews, essays, and relevant reports twice a year (March and September)

¹ PhD Candidate at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco, mohamed.elzerk@um5r.ac.ma

Students' Views Toward Classroom-Based Assessment Processes in Moroccan EFL High Schools

Mohamed El zerk <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6619-9887> 

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Original Research

DOI: 10.51383/jesma.2025.110

Received 13 September 2024

Revision 07 April.2025

Accepted 21 April 2025

ABSTRACT

In response to the need to foster positive attitudes toward Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) and shift the test-oriented culture prevalent in various educational contexts to a learning-oriented mindset, this study examines students' views toward CBA processes. Using online self-report questionnaires, the data were collected from 120 Moroccan EFL high school students. This study uncovers several findings. First, the results demonstrated the student participants' tendency to agree with the importance of receiving descriptive feedback, understanding learning objectives, and participating in various assessment activities (e.g., portfolios), including peer assessment. Second, the results indicated a slight tendency toward agreement regarding the importance of participating in self-assessment, viewing grades as the primary objective for engaging in CBA, recognizing the importance of participating in group assessment activities, and defining the assessment criteria. Conversely, student participants remain neutral regarding the priority of written exams over other assessment techniques and the retention of information for a long time after taking written exams. The study concludes with important recommendations, implications and future research suggestions, emphasizing the necessity of involving students in CBA processes.

Keywords: students' views, CBA processes, learning objectives, assessment criteria, feedback, portfolios, peer assessment and self-assessment



This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original authors and source are credited.

Introduction

In recent decades, students have emerged as the main participants in CBA who are concerned with both assessment processes and outcomes. From an early school age, they form views toward CBA based on how it is carried out, especially the roles they are expected to play during the assessment process. As a result, students' specific beliefs and perceptions about CBA processes and their outcomes tend to become more fixed over time. These views can greatly influence their level of involvement and motivation. For example, some students might set learning-oriented goals, while others may focus on performance goals (Amua-Sekyi, 2016; Shepard, 2000). Therefore, without a clear understanding of the reasons behind engaging in various CBA activities, students may not see assessment as a tool to improve their learning but rather as a way to judge the final product of their efforts. In summary, their central role highlights the importance of ensuring they have a clear understanding of CBA processes and what they mean for learning at different grade levels.

Throughout the educational spectrum, students develop views on CBA based on their experiences with common assessment practices and processes, the results and information they primarily receive, and the influence of their overall school culture. To elaborate, several factors shape their perceptions of CBA. These include but are not limited to the frequent use of specific assessment techniques, such as tests; an overemphasis on assessing lower-level skills; reliance on norm-referenced criteria; and a primary focus on the summative use of assessment results. This is especially evident in high-stakes testing environments. Therefore, CBA should fundamentally evolve into a learning culture (Tierney, 2013), where it is seen as a process that communicates key learning objectives to students and motivates teachers and students to align their efforts with meaningful learning and teaching (Alonzo, 2019). It should also empower students to take responsibility for their own progress and improvement, rather than relying solely on ranking or certification of achievement (Shepard, 2000). Consequently, effective assessment design involves the successful implementation of innovative, student-centered techniques that ensure active learner involvement throughout the assessment process.

In the Moroccan EFL context, it is argued that CBA is not well understood (Ghaicha, 2016). Presumably, this lack of understanding also extends to students, given that they are the primary stakeholders in the assessment process who are directly affected by and deeply involved in the implementation and outcomes of CBA. Furthermore, despite being the primary target of assessment alternations, students are often overlooked in research focusing on changes in assessment (Omarakly & Tamer, 2022). Additionally, assessment is still perceived as an end (e.g., to obtain grades) rather than a means of learning (Babni, 2019; Ouakrime, 2000). As a result, students come to see grades as the ultimate goal of education, often neglecting the importance of the learning process and how those grades are achieved (Ghaicha & Oufela, 2021). Building on these insights, exploring students' views on CBA processes will enable them to voice their stance regarding CBA, particularly their perceptions of alternative assessment techniques (Babni, 2019). Moreover, approaching CBA from students' perspectives may offer valuable insights into the reasons behind the discrepancy between EFL teachers' self-reported conceptions, research implications, and their actual practices (Ghaicha & Oufela, 2021; Mamad & Vigh, 2021).

While the existing literature emphasizes teachers' self-reported practices and the theoretical underpinnings of CBA, there remains a noticeable lack of attention to students' lived experiences and views toward CBA. Accordingly, this study aims to explore students' views toward CBA processes. In this study, processes encompass students' underlying goals for engaging in CBA activities, their awareness of learning objectives and assessment criteria, and their perspectives on participating in various CBA activities. It also includes their perception and reaction to feedback and mistakes. Therefore, the findings of this study hold valuable implications for high school English teachers, instructional and assessment material developers, and the Moroccan Ministry of National Education. Moreover, exploring students' perspectives on CBA processes offers critical insights into enhancing EFL teaching and assessment practices, thereby fostering a learning-oriented assessment culture that

promotes student involvement, autonomy, and improved learning outcomes. To realize these objectives, this study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are Moroccan EFL high school students' views toward CBA processes?

RQ2: Do Moroccan EFL high school students hold positive views toward CBA processes?

RQ3: Do Moroccan EFL high school students' views toward CBA processes support their involvement?

Review of the Literature

This section provides a comprehensive overview of Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA), including the impact of the assessment environment and students' views toward CBA processes, with an emphasis on the Moroccan EFL context.

CBA in the EFL Context

In language classrooms, assessment denotes a process of collecting different sorts of data about learners' progress or achievement in language knowledge and skills using several techniques depending on the learning objective(s) being assessed and the purpose(s) of conducting the assessment. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) characterizes learners who learn the English language after their native language has been acquired outside an English-speaking environment (Bailey, 2017). Conceptually, assessment has two main purposes. The first is to summarize students' achievement up to the current time, and the second is to inform future decision-making concerning students' progress toward the desired learning outcomes (Heritage, 2013). Besides, classrooms imply a complex learning environment with various cognitive, social and emotional factors that come into interplay, therefore, influencing teachers' judgements and students' performance, including their views toward CBA processes. Notably, the educational context plays a significant role in shaping students' views toward CBA processes.

The Influence of the CBA Environment

CBA has the potential to shape students' views toward the learning objectives set by the teacher and, therefore, serves to communicate and reinforce the goals of instruction (Kane & Wools, 2019), affecting, in turn, students' perception, motivation, self-regulation, and performance. In good assessment design, students' success with previous similar assessment tasks is the main basis for building self-efficacy for assessment (Brookhart, 2013). Furthermore, Moss (2013) argues that the assessment environment and students' perceptions influence students' goals, effort and feelings of self-efficacy. Similarly, the surrounding environment of students, including the beliefs of peers and parents, can influence the development of students' self-concepts (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Therefore, CBA has a powerful influence on students' perceptions of learning goals, self-efficacy, self-concept, motivation and confidence, especially within educational environments where high-stakes tests prevail.

High-stakes situations are characterized by test-driven teaching and intensive test preparation (Finch, 2007). According to Moss (2013), students dislike high-stakes summative tests and exhibit high levels of anxiety toward them. They are also aware that test results do not accurately capture their depth of understanding and ability. In a similar context, Cheng et al. (2011) found in a study on students' and parents' views of School Based Assessment (SBA) in Hong Kong a significant correlation between students' perceptions of SBA and their perceptions of external examinations, suggesting that they view SBA simply as another exam that they have to prepare for. This normative approach emphasizes competition, communicating to the weaker students that they lack ability. As a result, they become demotivated, and they, ultimately, lose confidence in their ability to learn (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Furthermore, both teachers and students find it difficult to convert from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced ways of thinking (Scott, 2001).

Students' Views Toward CBA Processes

Learning Objectives and Assessment Criteria

Students are found to be of two kinds: those who have a learning orientation and those who have a performance orientation (e.g., obtain high grades). Students who believe that academic success is the result of their own efforts are more likely to adopt a learning-oriented view. Simply, their aim is learning improvement (Shepard, 2000). In this regard, to foster positive attitudes among students about assessment and learning, they should be clear on the learning objectives, the expected standards of performance and the success criteria ahead of time as well as develop personal evaluation skills for self-monitoring (Ferrara et al., 2019; Shepard, 2000). Furthermore, when conducting CBA for formative purposes, students must be familiar with work examples to develop the success criteria (Andrade, 2013). Building on these insights, it is essential to ensure that students fully understand both the learning objectives and success criteria: the key characteristics of expected high-quality work products.

CBA Feedback

CBA information influences students' perceptions and conclusions about their academic journey from their earliest school experiences. Over time, this accumulated evidence becomes a critical factor in determining their success, commitment to learning, and self-confidence as learners (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005). According to McMillan (2019), the usefulness of CBA information depends on students' perception, preparation, and reaction to assessment as well as the influence of assessment on students' learning and motivation. Furthermore, Ruiz-Primo and Li (2013) argue that "feedback can reinforce students' beliefs that they can always improve their work and that they can master new challenging goals and tasks, thus enhancing students' learning-goal orientation" (p. 220). For Amua-Sekyi (2016), it is noticeable that grades encourage a focus on performance goals, such as passing a test, rather than learning goals, such as understanding the subject. Therefore, CBA feedback shapes students' perceptions toward CBA and reinforces specific goals. Notably, descriptive feedback is more likely to engender positive views toward CBA while also enhancing students' motivation, engagement and autonomous learning.

CBA Activities

CBA techniques and activities also influence students' goals, motivation and effort. The choice of particular assessment and examination techniques reflects to both teachers and students the techniques that are more valued and ultimately define achievement (Elwood, 2001). Besides, students study differently depending on whether they expect constructed response tests- *studying for generalization*, or selected response tests- *preparing more for details* (Hogan, 2013). According to McSweeney (2014), despite the use of various assessment techniques, students reported preparing more for traditional essays and examinations, indicating the necessity of clarifying the purpose and goals of other assessment techniques to students. As highlighted previously, students accustomed to formal exams are more likely to prioritize summative assessment methods and focus on performance goals, such as achieving high grades. Al-Shehri (2008) attributed students' preference for formal assessment to factors, such as students' lack of familiarity with informal assessment from early stages, and their lack of the required language competency and motivation (e.g., intrinsic) to engage in this ongoing assessment process. Hence, previous schooling plays a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing students' perceptions of CBA techniques, underscoring the need for training in the effective use of alternative assessments, such as self- and peer assessment.

Ongoing CBA has the potential to boost students' confidence (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005). According to Finch (2007), both the product and process can be emphasized when a learning journal (e.g., dairy) and one or more portfolios are used as sources of evidence of learning development during the language course. Moreover, collaborative peer assessment techniques where students work in groups to review work such as a presentation or assess their own group's work (Price et al., 2011), are likely to increase students' involvement in CBA. However, when students and probably their parents do not fully understand or value assessment for learning compared to the traditional scores and grades, they may resist or undermine the influence and the benefits of the portfolio assessment (Fox, 2017). To illustrate,

in a study on students' views on assessment, most student participants view it as a means of judging their knowledge and competence. In other words, a large percentage of students (75%) expressed their dislike of memorization-based examinations, considering them as stressful (McSweeney, 2014). Given this, students are likely to prefer ongoing assessment as it ensures their active involvement, provides regular feedback, reinforces learning and allows students to adjust their learning strategies. However, this requires cultivating a positive attitude toward mistakes, alongside equipping students with the skills to effectively use feedback for learning.

Students' Views Toward CBA: Moroccan EFL Empirical Perspective

In the Moroccan EFL context, assessment is conceptualized as a summative-final end in itself (Babni, 2019; Ouakrime, 2000). A potential reason for this conceptualization is the pervasive use of written exams with predominantly selected-response items for summative purposes. Consequently, students develop the view that the whole assessment experience is intended to provide grades to students through written exams. Besides, students are not aware of the learning objectives (Ouakrime, 2000), nor are they informed about the objectives of tests (Benzehaf, 2017). Furthermore, students are not adequately involved in self-assessment (Ghaicha & Oufela, 2021; Ouakrime, 2000). Therefore, to foster positive views toward CBA processes, students should view assessment as a process for providing constructive feedback on their learning experience using various techniques, including alternative assessments (e.g., portfolios accompanied by reflection and self-and peer assessment). In this regard, Omarakly and Tamer (2022) reported that students expressed appreciation for alternative assessments, such as portfolios, self-and peer assessments, and student-teacher conferences, and acknowledged the role of feedback in improving the quality of their reflection and writing.

Methods and Materials

This section presents the research design, participant profile, sampling technique, data collection instrument, ethical considerations and the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Research Design

To explore students' views toward CBA processes, this study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to collect descriptive numerical data, offering a snapshot of Moroccan students' current views toward CBA processes in EFL high schools (Creswell, 2009; Mills & Gay, 2016). To elaborate, the participants in this study were Moroccan EFL high school students who completed an online self-report questionnaire. An overview of the participants and the data collection instrument is provided below.

Participants

As Figure 1 demonstrates, the participants in this study were 120 Moroccan EFL high school students; 65.6% were females and 34.4% were males. Regarding their school level, 49.1% study at the common core level and about 25% at first-year or second-year baccalaureate levels.

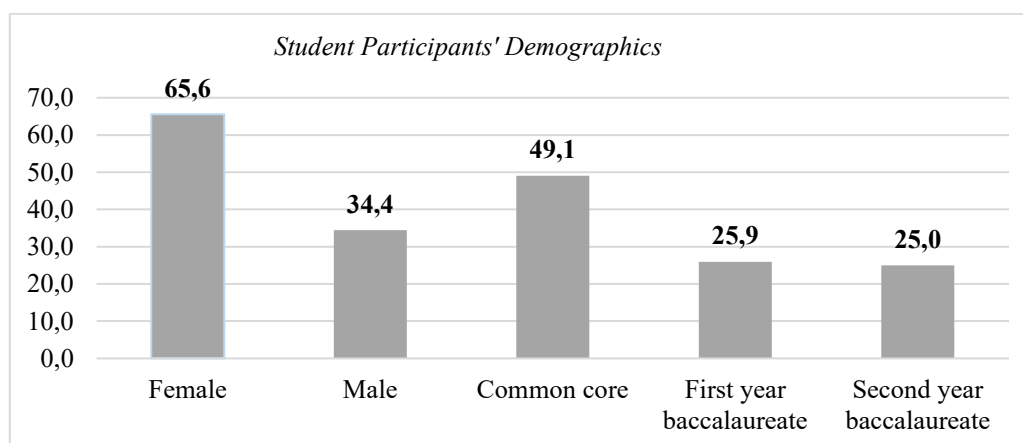


Figure 1. *The demographic information of student participants*

Sampling

Considering the nature of this study, an exploratory study, accidental sampling, also known as “convenience” or “opportunity” sampling, was utilized to select student participants who were voluntarily (self-selected) asked to complete an online self-report questionnaire with no obvious visible characteristic other than being a Moroccan EFL high school student. While this sampling strategy allowed for practical access to the intended participants, it may have introduced potential biases that could affect the generalizability of the findings. Specifically, with Common Core students comprising 49.1% of the sample, the target high school population was somewhat overrepresented by students with comparatively limited English proficiency.

Instrument

This study utilized an online self-report questionnaire since it is relatively inexpensive and allows the collection of large amounts of data from a large sample of participants in a short time (Mills & Gay, 2016). The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section addresses the participants' background information using multiple-choice items. The second section includes two questions: one asks the participants to rate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with ten item views about CBA processes, and a multiple-choice question with three items assessing students' views toward making mistakes.

To account for the validity and reliability issues, the questionnaire was carefully proofread by the author, a university professor and two teachers of English. Following this, it was sent out for pilot testing to ten students- *five students from common core classes and five from first-year baccalaureate classes*. The goal was to spot deficiencies and provide suggestions for improvement (Mills & Gay, 2016). Accordingly, confusing items were revised in terms of language clarity. Besides, technical and abstract words were translated into the Arabic language.

Further, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the five-point Likert scale. As Table 1 shows, the five-point Likert scale assessing students' views on CBA processes demonstrated acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.87, confirming its validity as a measure of the intended construct.

Table 1. *The Cronbach's Alpha value of students' views Likert scale*

| Scale | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Students' Views toward CBA Processes | .87 | 10 |

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the study, formal approval was obtained from the Doctoral Center, Faculty of Education in Rabat, Morocco. Given the nature of the research, it posed no risk to the student participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, with all student participants providing informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Additionally, they were fully informed about the purpose of the study and the estimated completion time of the online self-report questionnaire. Furthermore, they were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The self-report questionnaire was disseminated among Moroccan EFL high school students online via Google Forms® due to its feasibility of reaching a large number of participants in a short time. Afterwards, the quantitative data were coded using Microsoft Excel (2019) and then analyzed with SPSS 26.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY). Specifically, a contingency table and a graph were generated. The five-point Likert scale assessing students' views on CBA processes was analyzed descriptively, while the multiple-choice questions regarding students' perspective toward making mistakes were analyzed using percentage distribution.

Results

This section reports the analysis of the five-point Likert scale used to assess students' views on CBA processes through descriptive statistics, as well as the analysis of a multiple-choice item exploring students' views toward making mistakes using frequency distribution.

Students' views toward CBA processes

To address the question regarding students' views on CBA processes, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for students' views on CBA processes. As shown in the table, the mean scores for the items range from 3.00 to 3.92, while the standard deviation falls between 1.16 and 1.33. This indicates a moderate level of variability in responses, suggesting that most participants' views were centered around the mean.

Participants are neutral toward the importance of written tests compared to other assessment techniques (mean=3; SD=1.16) as well as retaining information for a long time after taking written tests (mean=3; SD = 1.29). The lowest mean of 3.00 indicates a neutral average response. However, participants agreed with the importance of receiving descriptive feedback (mean=3.92; SD=1.29), being aware of the learning objectives of each CBA activity (mean=3.65; SD=1.21), participating in various assessment activities (e.g., portfolios) (mean=3.58; SD=1.29), including peer-assessment to improve their learning (mean=3.52; SD=1.30). These items have higher means (superior to 3.5). In brief, these items indicate a tendency toward agreement.

Participants also expressed a small tendency toward agreement with the importance of participating in self-assessment (mean 3.46; SD=1.30), receiving grades as the primary objective behind taking part in CBA (mean=3.39; SD=1.30), the importance of participating in group assessment activities (mean=3.35; SD=1.33), and in specifying the assessment criteria (mean=3.33; SD=1.17). Overall, these items also have high means (superior to 3.3), indicating a small tendency toward agreement.

Table 2. *Students' views toward CBA processes*

| Scale Items | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| 1. The English exams I take every semester are more important than other activities (e.g. portfolio (شخصي ملف), project, etc). | 1 | 5 | 3.00 | 1.16 |
| 2. I can remember all the information I learned a long time after the exams. | 1 | 5 | 3.00 | 1.29 |
| 3. My primary objective for participating in classroom assessments (e.g., exams, projects) is to get good marks and grades. | 1 | 5 | 3.39 | 1.30 |
| 4. It is important for me to know the learning objective(s) of each classroom assessment (e.g., exams, projects, etc) before participating in it. | 1 | 5 | 3.65 | 1.21 |
| 5. It is important for me to get information about my learning problem(s) and what to do to develop myself. | 1 | 5 | 3.92 | 1.29 |
| 6. I prefer to participate in many different activities (e.g. exams, portfolio (شخصي ملف), presentations, etc.). | 1 | 5 | 3.58 | 1.29 |
| 7. I learn better when I participate in group assessment activities (e.g., project presentations). | 1 | 5 | 3.35 | 1.33 |
| 8. It is important for me to participate in specifying the qualities of good answers in order to choose or set my learning objective(s). | 1 | 5 | 3.33 | 1.17 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|------|------|
| 9. Correcting my work (e.g. writing) by myself using a checklist (e.g. a list with correct responses) helps me learn better. | 1 | 5 | 3.46 | 1.30 |
| 10. I learn better when I get information (e.g., corrections, suggestions to improve) from my classmate about my work (e.g., writing). | 1 | 5 | 3.52 | 1.30 |

Students' Views Toward Mistakes

Upon inquiring about students' views on making mistakes as English language learners, the following responses, summarized in Figure 2 below, were reported. The data reveals that 76.9% of students perceive mistakes as opportunities for learning, 14.2% consider them as bad habits to be corrected, and only 4.7% view them as signs of lacking intelligence.

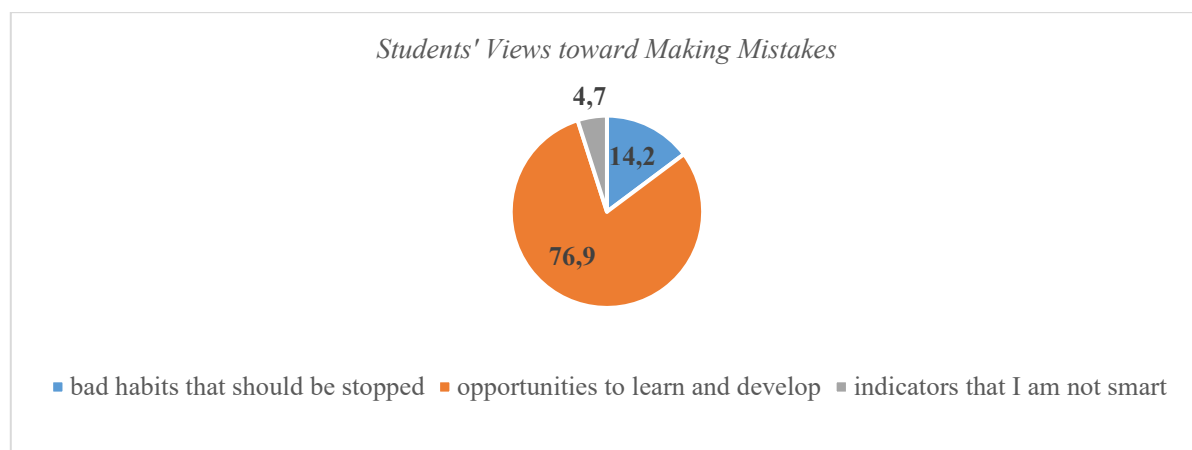


Figure 2. *Students' views toward making mistakes*

Discussion

CBA information shapes students' life conclusions from their earliest school experiences (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005). Additionally, the assessment environment and students' perceptions influence students' goals, effort and feelings of self-efficacy (Moss, 2013), as well as their self-concepts (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Furthermore, in good assessment design, students' success with previous similar assessment tasks is the main basis for building self-efficacy for assessment (Brookhart, 2013). The results of this study demonstrated that participants hold positive views toward CBA processes. Similarly, most participants view making mistakes as opportunities to learn and develop. In comparison, Cheng et al. (2011) found that students view School-Based Assessment (SBA) in Hong Kong simply as another exam that they have to prepare for. This difference may be attributed to variations in local educational systems, including CBA policies, practices, and beliefs, as well as other student-related factors that warrant further investigation.

CBA serves to communicate and reinforce the goals of instruction (Kane & Wools, 2019). That said, the results of this study indicated that students showed a tendency toward agreement with the importance of understanding the learning objectives targeted by each assessment activity. McSweeney (2014) argued that clarifying the purpose and goals of other assessment techniques besides traditional essays and examinations to students is necessary. Furthermore, in the Moroccan EFL context, research showed that students are not aware of the learning objectives (Ouakrime, 2000), nor are they informed about the objectives of tests (Benzehaf, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to ensure that students comprehend the learning objectives and the rationale behind the implementation of CBA. This will, in turn, enhance their academic achievement, foster autonomous learning, and strengthen their self-regulated learning skills.

Given the role of students' perception, preparation and reaction to assessment in determining the usefulness of feedback (McMillan, 2019), the results of this study demonstrated that most student participants expressed their agreement toward the importance of receiving descriptive feedback. From the perspective of the local research conducted in the EFL context, Omarakly and Tamer (2022) found that students acknowledge the role of feedback in enhancing the quality of their reflection and writing. Therefore, descriptive feedback is significant for orienting students toward learning goals and reinforcing positive beliefs toward learning improvement (Ruiz-Primo & Li, 2013). Accordingly, students need information about their progress and suggestions to improve. This process should be supported by opportunities for reflection and corrective action, which is particularly important given students' positive views on making mistakes and improving their learning. However, it is crucial to ensure that students not only understand descriptive feedback clearly but also know how to use it effectively to enhance their learning.

Ongoing CBA has the potential to enhance students' confidence (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005). Moreover, it places emphasis on both the product and the process of learning through tools such as learning journals and portfolio assessments accompanied by reflection. This kind of assessment is also considered a source of evidence of learning development (Finch, 2007). In this regard, the results of this study demonstrated a tendency toward agreement with the importance of participating in various assessment activities (e.g., portfolios), including peer assessment and, to a lesser extent, group assessment activities. The findings further indicated a modest inclination among participants to agree with the importance of self-assessment, even though opportunities for such involvement remain limited within the Moroccan EFL context (Ouakrime, 2000; Ghaicha & Oufela, 2021). Furthermore, Omarakly and Tamer (2022) reported that students expressed their appreciation toward portfolios, self- and peer assessments, and student-teacher conferences.

The choice of particular assessment and examination techniques reflects to both teachers and students the techniques that are more valued and ultimately define achievement (Elwood, 2001). Accordingly, CBA in the Moroccan EFL context is conceptualized as a summative-final end in itself (Babni, 2019; Ouakrime, 2000). The results of the study showed that student participants hold neutral views regarding the prioritization of written exams over other assessment activities, as well as the long-term retention of information following exams. This supports McSweeney's (2014) finding that a large percentage of students expressed their dislike of memorization-based examinations, considering them stressful. This is particularly the case with High-stakes summative tests (Finch, 2007; Moss, 2013), which emphasizes competition among students as well as a lack of confidence in their ability to learn (Black & Wiliam, 1998). It is, therefore, essential to maintain a balanced integration of both summative and formative applications of CBA techniques. More importantly, students require structured training in the effective use of alternative assessment techniques for learning improvement.

Proceeding with CBA feedback, it is argued that students who believe that academic success is the result of their efforts are more likely to adopt learning goals (Shepard, 2000). Conversely, grades encourage a focus on performance goals (Amua-Sekyi, 2016). In this study, participants indicated a small tendency toward agreement on the view that receiving good grades is a primary objective behind participating in CBA. Therefore, to encourage students to adopt meaningful learning goals, it is essential that they clearly understand the expected performance standards and success criteria in advance (Ferrara et al., 2019; Shepard, 2000). In the present study, findings revealed a slight tendency toward agreement on the importance of clarifying assessment criteria. This aligns with Andrade's (2013) assertion that students must engage with exemplar work to effectively develop an understanding of success criteria. Consequently, students must understand the learning objectives and collaboratively take part in specifying the success criteria to be able to monitor their learning. Furthermore, they need guided opportunities, accompanied by appropriate mediation, to engage with assessment criteria and apply them in evaluating both their own work and that of their peers.

Despite the valuable insights offered by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of purposive sampling may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the wider population

of EFL students. Second, the reliance on a survey design using solely an online self-report questionnaire introduces the possibility of social desirability bias. Besides, this may not fully capture students' authentic views. Third, although efforts were made to simplify the language and clarify abstract or technical terms, some participants, particularly those at the Common Core level, may have struggled with comprehension due to limited English proficiency. Consequently, this may potentially lead to misinterpretation of items and inaccuracies in their responses. Building on this, these limitations highlight areas for future research and methodological refinement (e.g., using a mixed-method design). This would contribute to a deeper understanding of students' views, perspectives, and experiences with CBA processes, while also providing valuable implications to foster greater student involvement.

Conclusion and Implications

This study investigates students' views toward Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) processes, focusing on their understanding of learning objectives and assessment criteria, the perceived role of feedback, and their engagement in various CBA techniques. These techniques include written exams, portfolios, self-assessments, peer assessments, and collaborative group-based activities. Data were collected from 120 EFL high school students through an online self-report questionnaire, employing a convenience sampling method. The results of this study demonstrated that the majority of student participants hold positive views toward CBA processes and mistake-making.

Student participants indicated a tendency toward agreement with the importance of receiving descriptive feedback, understanding the learning objectives, and participating in various assessment activities (e.g., portfolios), including peer assessment, meant to improve their learning. Additionally, the results indicated a small tendency toward agreement regarding the importance of engaging in self-assessment, viewing grades as the primary motivation for participating in CBA, recognizing the value of group assessment activities, and the need for clarity in assessment criteria. In contrast, participants expressed neutral attitudes toward the significance of written exams relative to other assessment methods and the extent to which information is retained long-term following such exams.

Based on the findings of this study, it is highly recommended to involve students in CBA processes by participating in selecting the learning objectives of their lessons, specifying the success criteria and taking part in self-directed assessment activities, such as portfolio assessment, peer and self-assessment. Additionally, Students require targeted training opportunities to effectively apply assessment criteria in both self- and peer assessment. Additionally, guidance on how to meaningfully integrate feedback into their learning process is essential. Such support is particularly vital for fostering autonomous learning, enhancing self-determination, and strengthening their sense of self-efficacy.

Proceeding with the implications of this study, the National Ministry of Education is urged to revise local assessment policies and instructional materials to promote the integration of alternative assessment techniques aimed at enhancing learning outcomes in EFL classrooms. Besides, teacher education and pre-service training programs should provide EFL teachers with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in the effective implementation of diverse CBA techniques and the use of feedback to support learning. More broadly, all concerned stakeholders, including parents, should work collaboratively to challenge and gradually transform the long-standing exam-oriented culture that has characterized the Moroccan EFL context for decades. Instead, efforts should be directed toward cultivating a culture that values deep learning, understanding, and the development of lifelong learning skills.

Concerning future research, in-depth qualitative studies employing interviews and narrative inquiry are recommended to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives, beliefs, and concerns surrounding CBA processes in the EFL context. Additionally, experimental research is needed to investigate the impact of student engagement in portfolio assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment on motivation, academic achievement, and self-efficacy. Future research should further investigate the impact of using assessment criteria in self- and peer assessment on students' learning progress, particularly in enhancing the quality of their writing. Notably, studies involving high school

students in the Moroccan EFL context should account for the potential influence of language proficiency differences on participants' responses.

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Mina Ichabah for her invaluable guidance and support. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to all the participants for sharing their time and insights, as well as to the JESMA reviewers and editors for their constructive feedback, which greatly contributed to enhancing the quality of this paper.

References

- Alonzo, A. C. (2019). Defining trustworthiness for teachers' multiple uses of classroom assessment results 1. In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom assessment and educational measurement* (pp. 120-145). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429507533>
- Al-Shehri, K. D. (2008). *Teachers' and students' attitudes toward formative assessment and feedback in teaching English for specific purposes (ESP)* [Master's thesis, University of Glasgow].
- Amua-Sekyi, E. T. (2016). Assessment, Student Learning and Classroom Practice: A Review. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(21), 1-6.
- Andrade, H. (2013). Classroom assessment in the context of learning theory and research. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 17-34). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n2>
- Babni, A. (2019). Alternative assessment and English language teaching and learning in Morocco: High school teachers' perceptions and favourite methods and techniques. *Massalek Atarbiya wa Atakwine*, 2(2), 38-47. <https://doi.org/10.48403/IMIST.PRSM/massalek-v2i2.20171>
- Bailey, A. L. (2017). Assessing the Language of Young Learners. E. Shohamy, I. Or, & S. May (Eds.), *Language Testing and Assessment. Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (pp. 323-342). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02326-7_22-1
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: principles, policy & practice*, 5(1), 7-74. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102>
- Brookhart, S. (2013). Classroom assessment in the context of motivation theory and research. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 35-54). SAGE Publications. <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n1>
- Benzehaf, B. (2017). Exploring teachers' assessment practices and skills. *International Journal of Assessment Tools in Education*, 4(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.21449/ijate.254581>
- Cheng, L., Andrews, S., & Yu, Y. (2011). Impact and consequences of school-based assessment (SBA): Students' and parents' views of SBA in Hong Kong. *Language Testing*, 28(2), 221-249. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0265532210384253>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Elwood, J. (2001). Examination techniques: Issues of validity and effects on pupils' performance. In D. Scott (Ed.), *Curriculum and Assessment* (pp. 83-104). Ablex Publishing.
- Ferrara, S., Maxey-Moore, K., & Brookhart, S. M. (2019). Guidance in the Standards for Classroom Assessment: Useful or Irrelevant? In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom assessment and educational measurement* (pp. 97-119). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429507533>
- Finch, A. (2007). Involving language learners in assessment: A new paradigm. *English Language Assessment*, 1(1), 39-58.
- Fox, J. (2017). Using Portfolios for assessment/alternative assessment. In E. Shohamy, I. Or, S. May (Eds.), *Language testing and assessment. Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 135-147). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02326-7_9-1
- Ghaicha, A. (2016). Theoretical framework for educational assessment: A synoptic review. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(24), 212-231.

- Ghaicha, A., & Oufela, Y. (2021). Moroccan EFL secondary school teachers' current practices and challenges of formative assessment. *Canadian Social Science*, 17(1), 1-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12015>
- Heritage, M. (2013). Gathering evidence of student understanding. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 2-16). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n1>
- Hogan, T. (2013). Constructed-response approaches for classroom assessment. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 275-292). SAGE Publications. <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n1>
- Kane, M. T., & Woolls, S. (2019). Perspectives on the validity of classroom assessments. In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom Assessment and Educational Measurement* (pp. 11-26). Routledge. <https://www.doi.org/10.4324/9780429507533>
- Mamad, A., & Vigh, T. (2021). Moroccan EFL public high school teachers' perceptions and self-reported practices of assessment. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(3), 119-135. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2021.12067>
- McMillan, J. H. (2019). Discussion of part I: Assessment information in context. In S. M. Brookhart & J. H. McMillan (Eds.), *Classroom Assessment and Educational Measurement* (pp. 79-94). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429507533>
- McSweeney, F. (2014). Students' views on assessment. *Other Resources*, 12 (6), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.21427/D75485>
- Mills, G. E., & Gay, L. R. (2016) *Education research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Pearson Education. <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2018.1.2.14>
- Moss, C. (2013). Research on classroom summative assessment. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 235-255). SAGE Publications. <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n1>
- Omarakly, E., & Tamer, Y. (2022). The role of portfolio Assessment in enhancing the Moroccan EFL Students' writing self-concept. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 4(1), 52-65. <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v4i1.800>
- Ouakrime, M. (2000). An argument for a more formative approach to assessment in ELT in Morocco. In *Proceedings of the 20th MATE Annual Conference* (pp. 97-107). Moroccan Association of Teachers of English.
- Price, J., Pierson, E. & Light, D. (2011). Using classroom assessment to promote 21st century learning in emerging market countries. In S. Barton, J. Hedberg & K. Suzuki (Eds.), *Proceedings of Global Learn Asia Pacific 2011--Global Conference on Learning and Technology* (pp. 419-429). Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). <https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/37206/>.
- Ruiz-Primo, M., & Li, M. (2013). Examining formative feedback in the classroom context: new research perspectives. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 215-232). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n13>
- Scott, D. (2001). *Curriculum and assessment*. Ablex. <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10001988>
- Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of classroom assessment in teaching and learning. *CSE Technical Report*.
- Stiggins, R., & Chappuis, J. (2005). Using student-involved classroom assessment to close achievement gaps. *Theory Into Practice*, 44(1), 11-18. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4401_3
- Tierney, R. (2013). Fairness in classroom assessment. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *SAGE handbook of research on classroom assessment* (pp. 124-144). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218649.n8>

Biographical notes:

Mohamed El Zerk: A PhD candidate at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco, and a high school teacher of English. His main research interest lies in Educational Assessment.