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**EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE USE OF  
PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL EFL  
CONTEXT:**

*The Case of EFL Middle School Teachers at M'sila.*

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master**

**Candidates**  
SAIDI Nada.  
SADDOUK Nassima.

**Supervised by**  
Miss. CHERIET Imene.

**Board of Examiners**

Dr. BOUAZID Tayeb	Mouhamed Boudiaf University, M'sila	Chairperson
Miss. CHERIET Imene	Mouhamed Boudiaf University, M'sila	Supervisor
Dr. BOUNAAS Chaouki	Mouhamed Boudiaf University, M'sila	Examiner

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## **Dedication**

*To our dear parents, precious sisters, families and friends*

*We dedicate our work*

*Nada and Nassima.*

## **Acknowledgement**

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to complete this work.

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## **Abstract**

Portfolio assessment has gained an increasing interest as an alternative assessment tool in foreign language teaching. Therefore, this study aims to find out EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of portfolio assessment in EFL middle schools context. In order to answer the research questions and fulfill the objectives of this study, the researchers applied the descriptive method, using questionnaire and two interviews, one for teachers and another one for inspectors of education. The participants of the study were 50 EFL middle school teachers at M'sila in addition to two inspectors of education. The findings of the present study indicated that EFL teachers' perceptions varied towards portfolio assessment as they agreed that this assessment tool is beneficial to assess pupils' progress and achievement; however, the teachers perceived the length of time it takes and its difficulty to collect pupils' documents as the main problems in applying portfolio assessment. In addition, the results demonstrated that teachers focus on pupils' writing skill and neglect other skills. The results also indicated that although portfolio assessment is included in the Algerian curriculum of middle schools, but it has average use in M'sila EFL classes.

**Key terms:** *Assessment, Alternative assessment, Portfolio assessment.*

## **List of Abbreviation**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**ELT:** English Language Teaching.

**ESL:** English as a Second Language.

**CLT:** Communicative Language Teaching.

**OTA:** Office of Technology Assessment.

**NCRE:** National Commission For the reform of Education.

**CBA:** Competency-Based Approach.

**NCLRC:** National Capital Language Resource Center.

**CEMSE:** Curriculum of English for Middle School Education.

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# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

**1. Background of the study.**

**2. Problem statement.**

**3. Research Questions.**

**4. Aims of study.**

**5. Significance of study.**

**6. Research Methodology.**

**7. Structure of study.**

**8. Definitions of key terms.**

- ✓ Assessment.
- ✓ Traditional assessment.
- ✓ Alternative assessment.
- ✓ Portfolio assessment.

## **1. Background of the study**

In the last few decades, classroom assessment has gained an increased amount of interest as it is an inseparable component in any educational system. Assessment plays an important role in education for both stakeholders and teachers. It is considered as a bridge between teaching and learning processes. According to Brown (2000), assessment is a continuous process which embraces much wider domains.

Nowadays, since there is a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approach, there is also a shift in assessment procedures in EFL setting, where the change is from traditional assessment to alternative assessment (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). That is, English language teaching encourages no more traditional way of transmitting knowledge, the emphasis is to improve students' critical thinking, to learn how to solve problems and to cooperate and communicate with others (Caner, 2010).

Recently, instead of habitual testing applications, researchers have shown an increased interest in thinking of alternatives, which require questioning the learning processes and using learning and assessment activities together. Therefore, it is realized that assessing students' skills and performance cannot be through the use of traditional assessment. This new form of assessment is called "alternative assessment" or performance based assessment.

Alternative assessment deals with multiple types of assessment procedures that are used as alternatives to standardized tests. It is a process-oriented which includes self and peer assessment, students' diaries, journals, teachers and students conferences and portfolio assessment (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Portfolio assessment is considered as one of the most popular alternatives in assessment within CLT framework (Brown, 2000). Portfolio assessment has been emphasized by many researchers and used to measure students' performances. Portfolio, according to Genesee and

Upshur (1996), is "a purposeful collection of students' work that demonstrates ... their efforts, progress and achievement in a given area" (Brown, 2000, p. 256).

Portfolio includes essays, reports, projects, photos, journals, oral presentations, audiotapes and notes on lectures (Brown, 2000). Portfolio assessment is the process used to plan, collect, and analyze the different sources of data included within the portfolio (Moya & O'Malley, 1994). Unlike traditional assessment, the portfolio assessment procedure aims to involve students to make decisions about their work items that should be evaluated and assist them to become independent thinkers and produce individual solutions to deal with the problems they face (Caner, 2010).

Zhang (2009) emphasized on the effectiveness of the use of portfolio in Chinese context. The results revealed that portfolio assessment was successfully used in their practices and both the students and teachers benefited from using it. Charvade, Jahandar and Khodabandehlou (2012) confirmed the effectiveness of portfolio assessment on EFL learner's reading comprehension ability. The researchers found that portfolio assessment empowers students' comprehension ability. On the other hand, Samad, Hussin and Sulaiman' (2015) study about the techniques ESL teachers in Malaysia use in implementing portfolio as an assessment tool showed that the portfolio assessment model developed has provided ESL teachers the opportunity to document individual progress. Moreover, Mokhtaria (2015) noted that portfolios are useful tools to increase learners' responsibility, to give a common vision of their goals and authentic picture of learning, to improve teaching / learning and reflection of assessment reform.

From all, it has been displayed that portfolio assessment has many advantages compared with traditional assessment. Portfolio assessment can provide teachers with the opportunity to give feedback for students for their learning process and make effective communication with teachers as well as their parents. Portfolio assessment provides more authentic and valid

assessment of students' development. It can give a clearer picture about the learning process for both teachers and students; and help the teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of their students.

## **2. The statement of the problem**

Following the shift from traditional assessment to alternative assessment, the Ministry of National Education in Algeria has introduced new reforms in the middle school EFL teaching curriculum. The new reforms encourage the use of alternative assessment, in particular, portfolio assessment (Curriculum of English for Middle School Education, 2015). Up to now, little attention has been paid to portfolio assessment in Algerian Middle School context, and most studies conducted about it have been restricted and limited to the effectiveness and impact of portfolio assessment. So, there is a need to focus on the teachers' perceptions about the portfolio assessment as an alternative tool of assessment.

Since limited literature exists about teachers perceptions about portfolio assessment, particularly in the Algerian context, this study was set out to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions about the use of portfolio assessment as an alternative assessment tool in the context of Middle schools and to raise their awareness about this new type of assessment.

## **3. Research Questions**

This study is attempting to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are EFL middle school teachers' current assessment practices?
- 2- What are EFL middle school teachers' perceptions about the implementation of portfolio assessment?
- 3- What are EFL middle school teachers' trainers (inspectors of education) opinions about the implementation of portfolio assessment?

#### **4. Aims of the study**

The current study is set out to achieve the following objectives:

- To explore current assessment practices used by EFL middle school teachers.
- To investigate EFL middle school teachers levels of familiarity with portfolio assessment in EFL classrooms, their perceptions about its use and effectiveness.
- To investigate EFL teachers' trainers (inspectors of education) perceptions and opinions about portfolio assessment use in middle schools.

#### **5. Significance of study**

The findings of the study serve to increase awareness about portfolio assessment as an alternative means of assessment among EFL Algerian middle school teachers and, hence, the findings should make an important contribution to the paradigm shift from assessment of learning to assessment for learning. The significance of this study can be further summarized in the following points:

- It provides teachers with useful information to enhance their instructional plans and practices.
- The study findings might encourage stakeholders to pay more attention to the incorporation of the portfolio assessment procedures in addition to traditional tests in Algerian educational system.
- It sheds light on teachers' levels of readiness and willingness to use such assessment methods since they are the practitioners in charge of realizing this shift in assessment practices.

#### **6. Research Methodology**

This study aims at exploring teachers' perceptions about portfolio assessment in M'sila middle schools EFL classes. Hence, the descriptive method is used in this research, because it is the appropriate and effective method that fits the outlined objectives. Concerning data

gathering tools, the researchers used the questionnaire and the interview to collect more reliable and comprehensive data to accomplish the outlined aims. The target population of this research is oriented towards EFL middle school teachers at M'sila. The sample is M'sila middle schools which were chosen following the cluster sampling process. The researchers divided M'sila into four regions to choose the sample in a random way. The total number was 52 participants, 50 middle school English teachers were selected randomly from 25 middle schools; in addition to 2 middle school English inspectors.

## **7. Structure of the study**

This dissertation is divided into two main chapters. Each chapter divided into sections. The first chapter is devoted to review of the related literature while the second one is concerned with the practical part of this study in which the collected data will be analyzed, interpreted and discussed. Chapter one comprises two sections that tend to provide a better understanding of assessment, traditional and alternative assessment and portfolio assessment through definitions, tools, characteristics, challenges, purposes and implementation. The second chapter provides details about methodology design, data analysis, findings, discussion, limitations, pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research.

## **8. Definitions of key terms**

- **Assessment:** According to Cizek (1997), assessment is the planned process of gathering and synthesizing information in order to discover and document students' strengths and weaknesses, to plan and enhance instruction, or to evaluate progress and to make decisions about students (as cited in McMillan & Workman, 1998).
- **Traditional assessment:** Marzano, Pickering, and Mc Tighe (1993) viewed traditional assessment as tests that include true/false, matching, multiple choices, short answers, fill in the blanks and essay.

- **Alternative assessment:** Alternative assessment involves students in an ongoing process in which the teachers make judgments about the students' progress through the use of non-conventional strategies (Hancock, 1994).
- **Portfolio:** Paulson, Paulson and Mayer (1991) defined portfolio as "a purposeful collections of student's work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievement in one or more areas" (p. 60).

# **CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Assessment in English Language Teaching**

#### **1.1. Assessment.**

#### **1.2. Role of assessment.**

#### **1.3. Types of Assessment.**

##### **1.3.1. Traditional Assessment.**

##### **1.3.2. Alternative Assessment.**

#### **1.4. Traditional Assessment versus Alternative Assessment.**

#### **1.5. Assessment in the Educational Reforms in Algeria.**

### **2. Portfolio Assessment**

#### **2.1. Definition.**

#### **2.2. Characteristics of Portfolio.**

#### **2.3. Purpose of Portfolio.**

#### **2.4. Types of Portfolio.**

#### **2.5. Advantages of Portfolio.**

#### **2.6. Challenges for implementation.**

#### **2.7. Portfolio assessment versus Standardized Assessment.**

#### **2.8. Research on the use of Portfolio.**

#### **2.9. Implementation of Portfolio Assessment in classroom.**

### **Conclusion.**

## **Introduction**

This chapter provides the theoretical background of assessment and its types, in addition to portfolios as an alternative assessment tool and their implementation. The present chapter contains two sections. The first section of this chapter gives a comprehensible background of different scholars definitions of assessment and its types, presents the tools of traditional assessment as well as the characteristics of alternative assessment; and then, it distinguishes between the two terms (traditional and alternative), and emphasizes the call of change to the alternative forms of assessment. The second section was intended to present the portfolio assessment as an effective tool of assessment through various definitions from different researchers' perspectives. Presentation of this new method's characteristics, types, purpose and challenges for implementation. Finally, it sheds the light on the steps of portfolio implementation in the classroom.

### **1. Assessment in English Language Teaching**

Assessment is a crucial component in education. It has received a great interest as it is a vital instrument in both teaching and learning process, and is extremely and widely addressed in research studies and theoretical articles both in education movement (Troudi, 2009). Assessment provides students with opportunities to identify their abilities, enables them to evaluate their own performances and knowledge about the subject matter; and therefore, they try to meet the challenges of the learning process (Burnaz, 2011).

## **1.1. Definition of Assessment**

In education, the term assessment has been defined by many scholars. Nunan (1998) tried to distinguish between assessment and evaluation by referring to assessment as "the process and procedures, whereby we determine what learners are able to do in the target language" and, on the other hand, "evaluation refers to a wider range of processes which may or may not include assessment data" (p. 185). Thus, assessment is process-oriented whereas evaluation is product-oriented (Boumediene, 2018).

Assessment is "a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence (Longman Dictionary, p. 35). Similarly, Palomba and Banta (1999) viewed assessment as "the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving learning and development" (Kinzie, 2015, p. 2). That is, a process of gathering information to monitor the development and make educational decisions.

Additionally, assessment has been described as making judgments and determining the strengths as well as the weaknesses over the learning process (Rust, 2002). In the same sense, Taras (2005) mentioned that assessment refers to making judgments about the work of students.

According to MC Alpine (2002) assessment is "a form of communication" (p.4) between different members in education including: learners, teachers and curriculum designers.

The definition of assessment varies but there is a general agreement that it is inseparable part of any effective educational system. Thus, assessment is a process that gives teachers information about learners' improvement as well as strengths and weaknesses of their teaching.

## **1.2. Role of Assessment**

Assessment is an important aspect in the teaching and learning process. Though it is the most difficult part of teachers' jobs since no single procedure can meet the needs of all learners and situations during instruction (Frank, 2012). In order to realize the position of assessment in the learning activity, the role of assessment should be determined.

Assessment is seen as means to help teachers to provide their students with instructions seeking to guide them on their learning process. Referring to Rust (2002), he argued that "assessment plays a crucial role in the educational process, it determines much of the work students undertake, affects their approach to learning, and is an indication of which aspect of the course are valued most highly " (p. 1).

In another contribution offered by O'Farrell (2009, p. 3), he reported that the roles of assessment are as follows:

- To identify that the objectives of the course are being achieved.
- To provide feedback to students' learning in order to improve their performance.
- To guide and support learning.
- To demonstrate that the teacher maintain the appropriate standards.

- To evaluate the teaching effectiveness.
- To motivate students to undertake appropriate work.
- To describe students' attainment, informing decisions on progression and awards.

According to The Center of Educational Research and Innovation ([CERI], 2008), assessment strategies are used for improving the education system by gathering the information. First, at the school level, assessment is used to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses across the school, and to develop and improve teaching-learning process strategies. Second, at the classroom level, information are obtained by teachers on students understanding, and adjust teaching in order to identify learning requirement. Finally, at the policy level, the officials and stakeholders guide support for schools and teachers to set broad priorities for education through the use of information gathered from national or regional tests, or from monitoring of school performances.

### **1.3. Types of Assessment**

Assessment is divided into two main broad headings: traditional assessment and alternative assessment. These two types will be explained in details in the following section.

#### **1.3.1. Traditional Assessment**

Traditional assessment is one of the types of assessment that has been followed since a long time. It can be defined as evaluation that includes standardized and classroom achievement tests with mostly open-ended items, such as true/false, multiple choice and fill in the blanks (Belle, 1999, as cited in Wikström, 2008). Similarly, Marzano, Pickering, and Mc Tighe (1993) viewed traditional assessment as

tests that include true/false, matching tests, multiple choices, short answers, fill in the blanks and essay. As a means for evaluation, this type of assessment uses quizzes, tests and homework. Traditional assessments used by teachers to evaluate students, rank them and assign the final grade (Kwako, 2004).

Five tools of traditional assessment are commonly used: true/false, multiple choice tests, essays, matching tests and short answer questions.

True/false tests are tests consisting of statements that require students to decide whether they are true or false (Brown & Hudson, 1998); however, the possibility of guessing and cheating must be taken into consideration when designing this type of tests; also, they are limited in assessing high-order thinking skills (Walsted, 2001).

Multiple choice tests are commonly utilized by teachers. They require students to select the correct answers from a set of choices (Brown & Hudson, 1998). Davis (2009) noted that multiple choice items can be easily and reliably scored. However, writing good quality multiple-choice questions can be demanding and time consuming (Gay, 2010). Moreover, it cannot assess the learners' capacities to work at problems over a period of time (ibid).

Essay tests are one of the most effective tools of assessment. They help teachers to judge students' abilities to express themselves, organize, integrate and interpret materials (Davis, 2009). Moreover, they provide teachers with a better understanding of learners' way of thinking, comment on students' progress and difficulties they may face (Walsted, 2001). However, Rust (2002) reported that plagiarism might be an issue for essay tests.

Matching tests items in matching tests provide a way for learners to connect a word, a sentence, a phrase in one column to a corresponding word, sentence or phrase

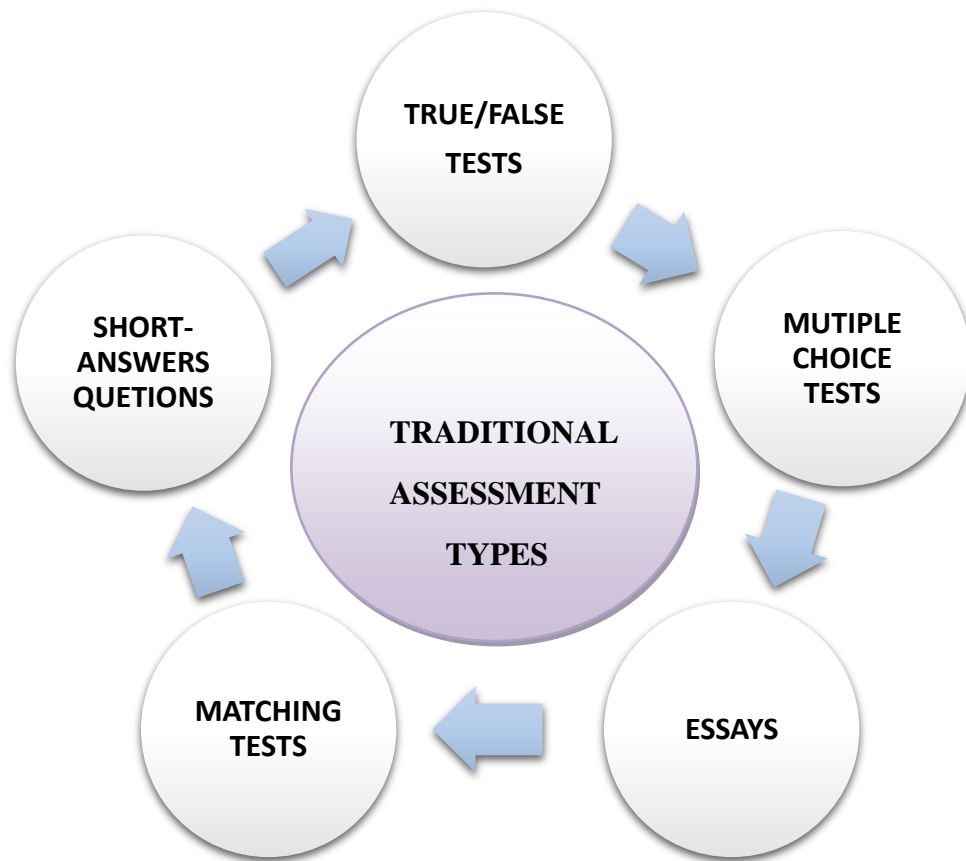
in a second column (Mequanent, 2019). They are useful way to assess students' recognition of the relationship between items (Davis, 2009). Matching test items cannot assess higher order thinking, it depends on the learners' memorization of facts (Mequanent, 2019).

Short-answer questions are concerned with providing answers in a form of one or two sentences or a long paragraph (Davis, 2009). This kind of tests help teachers to know the students' ability to express their thoughts; though, they take longer time to score than multiple-choice (ibid). Another drawback of short-answer assessments is that they focus on assessing a few phrases or sentences (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Generally, traditional assessment tools are used to measure students' receptive skills; however, they fail to check the productive language skills of students (Nasab, 2015). The figure below summaries the types of traditional assessment:

**Figure 1**

*Traditional Assessment Tools*



### **1.3.2. Alternative Assessment**

As a result of some drawbacks and limitations of traditional way of assessment, and the call of change in the way teachers are assessing their students, scholars interested in assessment methods and tools suggested the term "alternative assessment" as a gradual shift from standardized assessment for the last decades. The new expectations for teaching and learning processes have resulted changes brought about to students assessment. While traditional forms of assessment are still utilized to measure students' knowledge of their skills, the new modes of assessment are being used to evaluate the high order abilities called for while thinking, understanding, resolving problems or completing tasks (Elharrar, 2006).

There are several terms to define alternatives to traditional assessment. The most known ones include authentic assessment and performance assessment, whereas,

the most known is alternative assessment (Worthen, 1992). Alternative assessment has gained certain popularity and become a common concept in various educational reforms (Elharrar, 2006).

The meaning of alternative assessment has some varied perspectives. Often in literature, there are similar concepts refer to alternative assessment such as authentic assessment and performance assessment as Gardner (1992), Cresset (1993) and Wiggins (1993) reported that alternative assessment embraces both authentic and performance assessment meaning ( as cited in Elharrar, 2006). Authentic assessment can be described as one form of alternative assessment in which the task is related to real-world experiences of the students (Dikli, 2003); on the other hand, performance assessment requires students to create, demonstrate or apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes in a particular situation connected to real-life contexts.

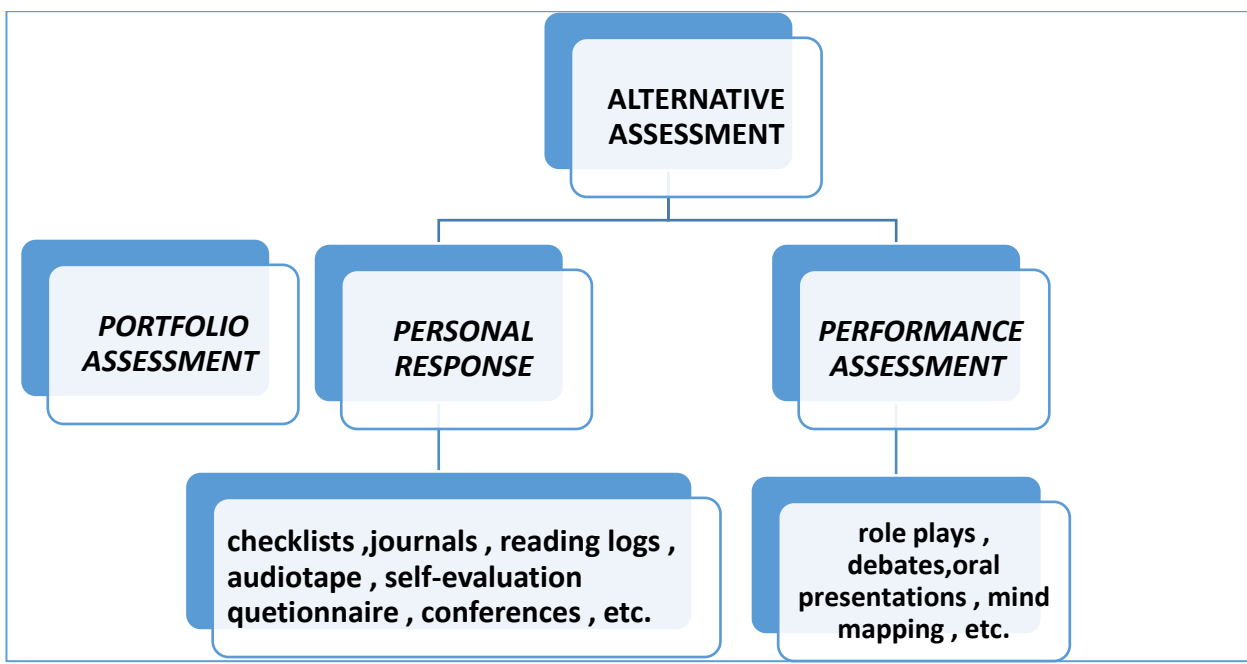
Hancock (1994) refers to alternative assessment as involving students in an ongoing process in which the teachers make judgments about the students' progress through the use of non-conventional strategies. Meanwhile, The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA, 1992) defines the term alternative assessment as "testing methods that require students to create an answer or product that demonstrates their knowledge and skills" (p. 18). For example, the teacher provides the students with a set of tasks in a particular subject matter, then, they observe the way the students become involved during the task ( Lin & Gronlund, 1995; Henke et al, 1999)( as cited in Elharrar, 2006). Consequently, alternative assessment forms allow teachers to see what students can and cannot do, rather than, what they do and do not know; that is, they enable teachers to evaluate applied proficiency instead of measuring knowledge

i.e., problem solving and reflection rather than providing answers to specific question (as cited in Rousseau, 2018).

Alternative assessment can be described as an umbrella that covers any number of alternatives to standardized tests. It is carried out in several ways including: checklists of students' behaviors and products, journals, reading logs, videos of role plays, self-evaluation questionnaires, mind mapping, diaries, audiotapes of discussions, debates, oral presentations and conferences (Burnaz, 2011). This following figure illustrates the types of alternative assessment:

**Figure 2**

*Alternative Assessment Tools*



Furthermore, the various types of alternative assessment lead to some consequences and affect the teaching and learning process. A study conducted by Nasab (2015) mentioned that "alternative forms of assessment present new ways of inspiring and motivating students to explore and exploit dimensions of themselves as well as the world around them". Alternative assessment provides the teachers

with a chance to discover their students' strengths and weaknesses in various situations.

Several characteristics of alternative assessments have been brought by Brown and Hudson (1998) as follows:

- Require students to create, perform, and produce as well as to be active participants.
- Real-world contexts are used.
- Allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day.
- Focus on both on process and product.
- Emphasize higher-level thinking and problem solving skills.
- Use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities.
- Provide information about both strengths and weaknesses of students.
- Insure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgment.
- Are non-intrusive in that they extend their day-to-day classroom activities.
- Call upon teachers to perform instructional and assessment roles. (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Janish, Liu and Akrofi (2007) suggested another set of distinguishing characteristics they attributed to alternative assessment. They rigorously pointed to the following aspects:

- Situated in the classroom where the teachers make decisions in the measures used.
- Based on a constructivist view of learning, so that, the students, the text and the context affect the outcomes of learning.

- Predicated on the view that learning processes are equal to the resulting products. (Janish, Liu & Akrofi, 2007).

#### **1.4. Traditional Assessment versus Alternative Assessment**

There has been a shift from traditional assessment to alternative assessment. Reeve (2000) points out that traditional assessment is challenged by alternative approaches (cited in Kadhim & Al-Atabi, 2020). From Bailey's (1998) view, traditional assessments are inauthentic, indirect and provide no feedback to learners (as cited in Dikli, 2003). In addition, Law and Eckes (1995) noted that traditional assessments measure what learners can do in a particular time, they are single-occasion tests (as cited in Dikli, 2003). Furthermore, according to Franklin (2009), this type of assessment fails to take into consideration students' growth and development. Besides, traditional assessments focus more on students' capacity of memorization and recall (Smalidon et al, 2000). Although this type of assessment has numerous backwashes, it is objective and reliable, and it is not time consuming, easy to administer and grade (Elharrar, 2006).

On the other hand, alternative assessment focuses more on higher order skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (Smalidon et al, 2000, p. 272). This type of assessment emphasizes more on students' performance and growth. Additionally, alternative assessment allows teachers to measure the students' strengths and weaknesses in different areas and situations (Law & Eckes, 1995, as cited in Dikli, 2003). However, it has also some disadvantages. Brindely (2001) mentions that alternative assessments are time consuming, and need high costs. Also, different methods of alternative assessment need skillful teachers to imply them successfully (Clack & Gipps, 2000, as cited in Kadhim and Al-Atabi, 2020). Moreover, alternative assessments such as portfolio assessment carry some issues of subjectivity and

reliability. Weigle (2002) states that scoring a portfolio can be less reliable than traditional test.

Bailey (1998), made a distinction between traditional and alternative assessment (as cited in Kadhim and Al-Atabi, 2020) as follows:

**Table 1**

*Traditional Assessment vs Alternative Assessment*

<b>Traditional Assessment</b>	<b>Alternative Assessment</b>
Indirect tests	Direct tests
One-shoot tests	Continuos, longitudinal assessment
Individual projects	Group projects
Unauthentic tests	Authentic tests
Speeded exams	Untimed exams
No feedback provided	Feedback provided
Norm-referenced score interpretation	Criterion-referenced score interpretation
Decontextualized tasks	Contextualized tasks
Standardized tests	Classroom-based tests

Furthermore, as shown in the table (1) above, alternative assessment differs from traditional one in terms of practices and authenticity, that is, traditional assessment is indirect, unauthentic, one-shot, speed-based and norm-referenced; while alternative assessment is based on real-life situations, daily classroom activities and more valuable since it comes from different sources (Kadhim and Al-Atabi, 2020).

In a summary, traditional and alternative assessments are two approaches of assessment; both of them have tools, characteristics, advantages and disadvantage. Regardless of their benefits and drawbacks, it is difficult to dismiss one of them, so a combination of the two is important for better assessment and for achieving objectives of learning and teaching processes.

### **1.5. Assessment in the Educational Reforms in Algeria**

Algeria is one of the most countries that have made a series of changes in the educational system. According to Gasmi (2020), this change is considered as a response to the need dictated by the fast changes in the world. In 2002, a reform of national education has been planned by the Algerian policy makers. This reform paved the way to an approach that focuses on the learner rather than the teacher which is explained in Roegiers' (2006) educational mission that boosts the learner's autonomy and responsibility to be actively involved in the learning process (ibid). Obviously, it seems that the purpose behind the educational reforms is to modernize the goals of education to provide an adequate education for learners.

Nowadays, schools are required to meet the new reforms, so that, teachers do not need to only understand the subject matter but also to know the new technologies and way of assessment that help their learners to explore ideas, acquire and synthesize information, and solve real-life problems (Gasmi, 2020). In addition to know how to interact with students as well as to collaborate with other teachers and parents (ibid).

Following the recommendations set by the NCRE (the National Commission for the Reform of Education), the CBA has been adopted by the Algerian Educational System to teach the foreign languages (as cited in Gasmi, 2020). The CBA is learner-centered approach that encourages learners to be responsible and active participants along with their learning process unlike the traditional teacher-oriented paradigm. Moreover, it aims to form autonomous learners capable of utilizing their skills for solving real-life related problems. The new reforms resulted in designing new syllabi and textbooks in foreign languages such as English (ibid).

Alternative assessment has become a call of change in Algerian educational reforms to encourage students to express themselves in other ways rather than standardized tests through demonstrating their knowledge and skills by using them instead of demonstrating their comprehension or interpretation of the acquired skills (CEMSE, 2015). As a result of these reforms, it has been emphasized on the use of portfolio assessment as one of the new generation of assessment tools that will meet the objectives outlined in the Algerian curriculum (ibid).

In this respect, Algeria like other countries adopted the current learning theories and encouraged teachers to use technology in the field of education.

## **2. Portfolio Assessment**

Alternative assessment strategies can present new ways of motivating students to learn and evaluate their ability on the basis of authenticity in their use of language. Alternative assessment procedures include personal response assessment, performance assessment and portfolio assessment. Therefore, this study will shed the light on portfolios since they are considered as one of the most commonly and widely used types of new alternative forms of assessment.

### **2.1. Definition**

Portfolio has been considered as an effective tool of assessment by many researchers. Fithri (2015) said that portfolios play a big role in learners learning process since they are not only used for the purpose of scoring but also for monitoring learners' achievement through giving feedback and comments.

Different definitions are given to portfolios in literature. According to Genesee and Upshur (1996), portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' work that

illustrates their efforts, improvement and achievement in a particular area (cited in Brown, 2001). In the same sense, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define portfolio as "a purposeful collection of work that provides information about someone's efforts, progress or achievement in a particular context. It is learning as well as an assessment tool" (p. 443).

Another definition suggested by Hancock (1994) stated that portfolio is the collection of students work for determining how much has been learned. Hancock (1994) added that both teachers and students are important in choosing the items in the portfolio. Portfolio is also described as the collection of evidence that demonstrates skills, progress, learning and competencies (Cooper, 1999) (as cited in Suwaed, 2018).

In a more sophisticated conception of portfolio, it is described as "the systematic, longitudinal collection of student work created in response to specific, known instructional objectives and evaluated in relation to the same criteria" (The National Capital Language Resource Center [NCLRC], 1998, p. 10). Then, portfolios help teachers to evaluate learners' progress in a given area which meet the outlined objectives.

From the definitions above, there is a consensus that portfolio is a purposeful, systematic, meaningful collection of learners' work that illustrates learners achievements, progress, efforts in a specific area related to the objectives planned.

## 2.2. Characteristics of Portfolio

Since portfolio is considered as an effective tool of assessment, it possesses multiple characteristics. Moya and O'Malley (1994) listed five key features of portfolio assessment strategies as follows:

- **Comprehensiveness:** portfolio contents should show the students' abilities through comprehensive data collection and analysis.
- **Predetermined and systematic:** a sound portfolio should be planned previously and very well before its implementation.
- **Informative:** the portfolio should be meaningful to teachers, learners, program staff and parents.
- **Tailored:** items in the portfolio must be related to the purpose, objectives and students needs.
- **Authentic:** authentic tasks should be provided that help the learner deal with real-life situations.

Another set of characteristics provided by Richard and Schmidt (2010). They stated that as applied to language learners, through portfolio assessment:

- the learner is involved in deciding what to include in the portfolio;
- the learner may revise material in the portfolio after feedback from the teacher or others;
- the learner is required to assess or reflect on the work in the portfolio, thus becoming aware of personal development;
- there is evidence of mastery of knowledge;
- it may include various forms of work, such as written work, audio recording and video recording.

To sum up, portfolio has multiple characteristics that can be summarized in clear content related to the objectives and learners' needs, well planned, meaningful and tasks provided should help the learners' deal with the real life situations.

### **2.3. Purpose of Portfolios**

Portfolio can be considered as a new tool of assessment that serves a variety of purposes; such as to assess students' progress, to showcase outstanding work, and to measure levels of competency for certification, career advancement, and graduation requirements (Johnson, 2010).

Another set of purposes stated by Barton and Collins (1997 in Johnson, 2010) that portfolios are:

- another method to evaluate the graduate success;
- a way to provide students and faculty with the opportunity to reflect on students progress;
- a method to translate the learning from teachers to students;
- a way that allows teachers to evaluate the different specific evidences while making general determination about students.

Furthermore, portfolio is the responsibility of the learner, with teacher guidance, and involvement of peers and help of parents (Barnhardt, Kevorkian and Delett, 1998). Accordingly, Lam (2018, p. 2) said that portfolios' main purpose emphasizes fostering teaching and learning in particular domains. They serve as a generative method for promoting learning quality.

As a conclusion, portfolio assessment has several purposes including giving teachers the opportunity to assess students' improvement in different skills, allowing

them to monitor their learning, promoting teacher-student collaboration and a method for enhancing learning and teaching quality.

## **2.4. Types of Portfolios**

Portfolios vary in types; they may serve different purposes according to the curriculum objectives. The showcase portfolios, collection portfolios and evaluation portfolios are the three major types of portfolio listed by O'Malley and Pierce (cited in AL-Serhani, 2007):

### **- Showcase portfolio**

This type includes collection of the students' best work determined by the teacher and the students. It emphasizes the products of learning; hence, it contains only completed work such as video tapes, students' electronic records and photographs (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

### **- Collection portfolio**

It involves collection of students work to show any improvement or change over time. Specifically, the portfolios' collection includes all activities from brain storming to the final draft. This collection can involve the best and the weakest of students. The collection portfolio emphasizes the process of learning; it is also called the growth portfolio, working portfolio or documentation portfolio (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

### **- Evaluation portfolio**

Evaluation portfolio is also known as "assessment portfolio" or "portfolio assessment". In this type, students have to select work for assessment according to

predetermined criteria provided by the teacher. It is used for grading purposes (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Another classification is the one made by Melograno (2000) (as cited in Birgin and Baki, 2007). In his classification he defines nine types which can be used separately or in combination as mentioned below:

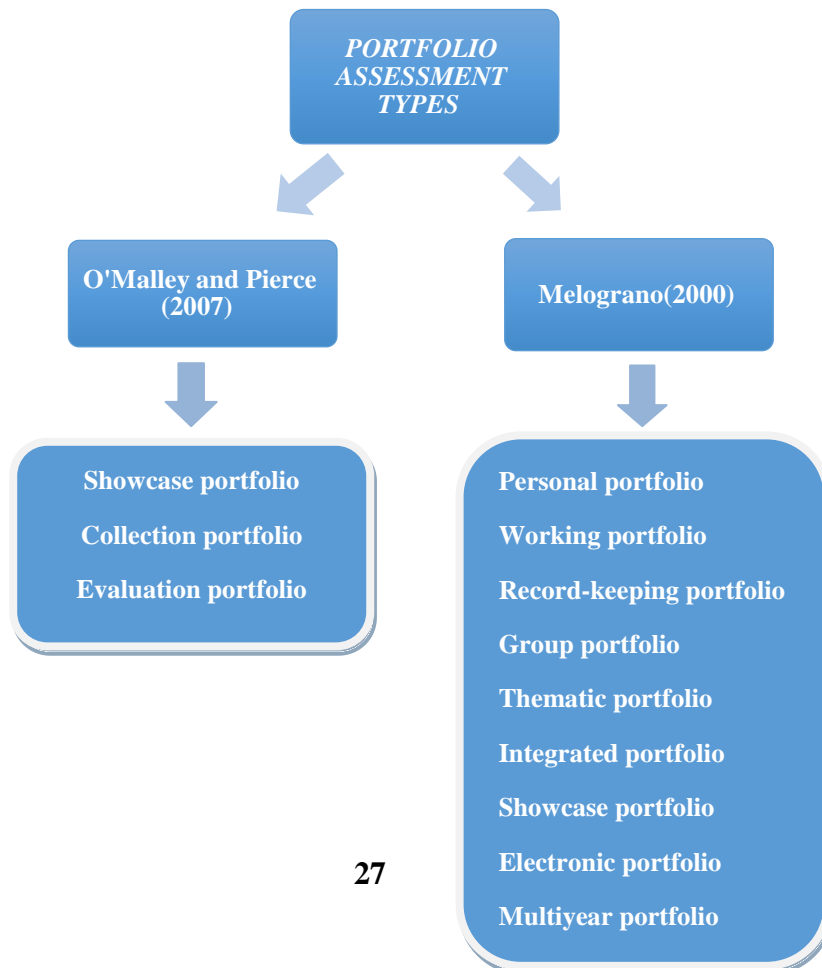
- **Personal portfolio:** Personal portfolio gives an overview about students and their interests. It may contain pictures, awards, videos, and memories. Personal portfolio includes items from within and outside school.
- **Working portfolio:** It includes a collection of students work samples. This collection can be daily, weekly, monthly, or unit work products forms.
- **Record-keeping portfolio:** This type of portfolio contains the important assessment samples and records (written exams, proficiency tests). It could also include (anecdotal notes, frequency index scales, narrative descriptors, behavior checklists) and progress reports.
- **Group portfolio:** Each member of a cooperative learning group contribute individual items along with group items (e.g., samples, pictures, community project) to demonstrate the effectiveness of the entire group.
- **Thematic portfolio:** This type of portfolio would relate to a unit of study with a particular focus.
- **Integrated portfolio:** It contains works from all disciplines showing connections between or among subjects to view all students. This portfolio can be used in math and science courses.
- **Showcase portfolio:** In this type, only the student's best works are included. Portfolios are supposed to contain five to seven examples of the students' best work during the school year and scored must reflect optimum performance.

- **Electronic portfolio:** It refers to portfolios saved in electronic format (Lankes, 1995). Lankes (1995) added that technology allows the storage of information in the form of text, graphics, sound, and video, so students can save writing samples, solutions to mathematics problems, samples of art work, science projects and multimedia presentations in one document. Electronic portfolios provide many advantages such as to collect, to store, and to manage the information electronically (ibid). In recent years, electronic portfolios are used much more.
- **Multiyear portfolio:** This portfolio can be used to track students' progress in primary, secondary school and university education. It is stored at the school.

The figure bellow shows the classifications of portfolio assessment types according to O'Malley and Pierce (2007) and Melograno (2000):

**Figure 3**

*Portfolio Assessment Types*



## 2.5. Advantages of Portfolio Use

As a response of the criticism to traditional assessment and standardized tests, portfolios have become a desired tool of assessment as they provide authenticity to what students know, believe and are able to achieve. One of the greatest advantages of portfolio is the fact that students are instructed to become both independent thinkers as well as independent learners (Hancock, 1994). Thus, teachers assign the students to actively participate in selecting which of their works will be included within portfolios. Therefore, the students are encouraged to engage into discussion of any progress they have made and set future goals with the teacher (Afrianto, 2017).

Moreover, three categories of portfolio advantages have been classified by Brown and Hudson (1998) as follows: strengthening students' learning, enhancing teachers' roles and improving testing process. In terms of strengthening students' learning, they stated that portfolio may:

- Emphasize the work that would take place in the classroom.
- Focus learner attention on learning process.
- Facilitate practice and revision process.
- Help motivating students through the presentation of meaningful and interesting topics.
- Encourage students involving in the learning process.
- Enhance student-teacher and student-student collaboration.
- Provide means for establishing minimum standards for classroom work and progress.

- Encourage students to learn the meta-language necessary for students and teachers to talk about language growth (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Portfolio assessment can foster the role of teachers by providing them with an obvious picture about students' progress and help teachers to act as facilitator and a coach, rather than an advisor (Brown & Hudson, 1998). For instance, portfolios help teachers to understand students' individual differences and thoughts via self-reflection. Meanwhile, the researchers, in relation to improving the testing process, mentioned that portfolios boost teacher-student involvement by providing teachers with multiple opportunities for observation and assessment, and permitted the assessment of various skills (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Brown (2000) synthesizes a number of advantages of portfolios from several sources stating that they:

- Foster intrinsic motivation, responsibility and ownership.
- Promote student-teacher interaction with the teacher as a coach and facilitator.
- Individualize learning and celebrate the uniqueness of each student.
- Provide tangible evidence of a student's work.
- Facilitate critical thinking, self-assessment and revision process.
- Offer opportunities for collaborative work with peers.
- Point assessment of multiple dimension of language learning.

Another important benefit of portfolios use is that they provide teachers with great help to assess their own learning and progress and assist them to become self-directed and reflective practitioners as well as contributing them the individual and professional development (Birgin, 2007; Mokhtari et al., 1996) (as cited in Birgin &

Baki, 2007). Besides, teachers can have the chance to subscribe with other teachers and to design their own authentic tasks which could be created based on contextual needs (Khattri, Kane & Reeve, 1998, as cited in Fithri, 2015).

To conclude, portfolios provide more authenticity and comprehensive views to students' development and performances in the learning process; moreover, they encourage students to become self-directed learners and provide them with opportunities to demonstrate their strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, portfolios help teachers to direct their teaching process and encourage them to change their instructional practices and they are an effective way to link curriculum and instruction with assessment.

## **2.6. Challenges for Implementing Portfolios**

Although the use of portfolios results in many potential benefits and advantages, they have some remarkable challenges. Brown and Hudson (1998) listed five disadvantages that can challenge portfolio implementation:

- Design issues including the content and grading criteria .The teachers should decide what portfolios will contain and how to evaluate them. If the teachers fail to decide about such issues, they will face difficulties in grading criteria.
- Issues related to interpretation such as grading students' achievements, ensuring fairness in assessing students and training teachers to make fair interpretation can influence portfolio implementation.

- Another problem is the logistical issues as time. Portfolios can be very time consuming for teachers as Buchman (1995) claimed that time management is an obstacle in portfolio assessment.
- Reliability is another main issue. Scoring portfolios may involve subjective evaluation procedures such as rating scales and professional judgment, and this limits reliability.
- Validity, including determining how adequately portfolio reflects students' work, capacities, progress, and whether the portfolios match the purposes made.

### 2.7. Portfolio Assessment versus Traditional Assessment

Many researchers have distinguished between portfolio assessment and traditional assessment (Tierney et al., 1991; Barnhardt et al., 1998). Combined, the difference between portfolio assessment and traditional assessment listed in the table (2) provides a synthesis of these researchers' arguments:

**Table 2**

*Standardized Assessment vs Portfolio Assessment.*

<b>Standardized Assessment</b>	<b>Portfolio Assessment</b>
-measures students' ability at one time; -does not capture the range of students' language ability; -mechanically scored or by teachers who have little input; -assess all students on the same dimensions;	-measures students' ability over time; -captures many facets of language learning performance; -engage students in assessing their progress and/or accomplishments and establishing on-going learning goals;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-students assessment is not a goal;</li> <li>-address achievement only;</li> <li>-separates learning, testing and teaching</li> <li>-does not give students responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-measures each students' achievement while allowing for individual differences between students;</li> <li>-has a goal of student self-assessment;</li> <li>-addresses improvement , efforts and achievement;</li> <li>-links assessment and teaching to learning;</li> <li>-students learn to take responsibility.</li> </ul>
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## **2.8. Research on the use of Portfolio in classroom**

There are multiple studies carried out on the use of portfolios in educational setting which were mostly about learners' perceptions about portfolio assessment and its implementation process. Therefore, along with the current study, the researchers emphasize EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of portfolio in educational contexts, and the benefits of keeping portfolios from different perspectives. This section will present these perspectives.

Bushman and Schnikter (1995) set out a study to investigate teachers' attitudes on the implementation and practicability of portfolio assessment. The study consists of a survey of 31 participants in order to determine their knowledge and attitudes towards this type of assessment. The results suggested that teachers have positive perceptions about portfolio assessment as an effective tool of addressing students' progress, strengths and weaknesses; however, they detect practical problems concerning portfolios such as inadequate training and time management.

Intiaz (2014) carried out a descriptive study to explore prospective teachers' attitudes towards the use of portfolios. Such study consisted of 80 prospective teachers (23 male, 57 females). In this study, a survey method was implied; the researcher come up with a conclusion that most female prospective teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio in comparison to male teachers with regard to gender .

Another study conducted by Rizaldy (2017) on teachers understanding' in implementation of portfolios in secondary schools in Indonesia, in addition to the portfolio complied content. The researcher employed the framework of qualitative research in his study. The results revealed that teachers understanding' on implementing portfolios as tools to assess students learning was highly determined. Therefore, it was suggested that professional development has to be carried in order to enhance teachers' capacity to implement portfolios effectively and overcome the burdensome of standardized assessment.

Salvans' (2019) qualitative case study was carried out to explore teachers understanding of portfolio assessment and whether they implement it in the teaching and learning process. The study results said that teachers have different understanding towards portfolio assessment according to the subject matter they teach.

## **2.9. Implementation of Portfolio in Classroom**

Before creating portfolios, teachers should take into consideration some steps to successfully implement portfolio assessment in EFL classes as mentioned by Dellet, et al., (2001) as follows:

- **Step 1: *plan the assessment purpose:*** stating the purpose is an important step. It helps to guide the portfolio process by deciding what to include in the portfolio and how to assess it. Also, identifying a clear purpose help teachers to clarify their reasons for using portfolios to learners, administrators and parents (Dellet, et al., 2001).
- **Step 2: *determine portfolio outcomes:*** after stating a clear purpose, teachers and students break down the purpose into relevant outcomes. The outcomes of portfolio describe what skills and knowledge students should be able to demonstrate. These outcomes should be specific to ensure the success of the portfolio process (Dellet, et al., 2001).
- **Step 3: *match classroom tasks to outcomes:*** classroom tasks generate products that become the entries in students' portfolio. Enough products should be created by students during the semester so that their portfolios show development by containing different samples for each outcome (Dellet, et al., 2001).
- **Step 4: *determine organization of the portfolio:*** in this step, teachers should consider what kind of materials will be used for portfolio products and check whether these materials are available. In addition, teachers have to determine how students will store the portfolios materials. After that, the teachers can plan and organize the portfolio entries. The criteria for submitting entries will vary from one class to another (Dellet, et al., 2001).
- **Step 5: *establish criteria for assessment:*** the portfolio measures progress toward objectives by the use of consistent system of assessment. Rubrics, as a detailed criteria associated with rating scales, provide this consistency. Before the portfolio process begins, teachers and students should develop criteria that will be used to assess portfolio entries. Also, they should develop criteria to evaluate the portfolio

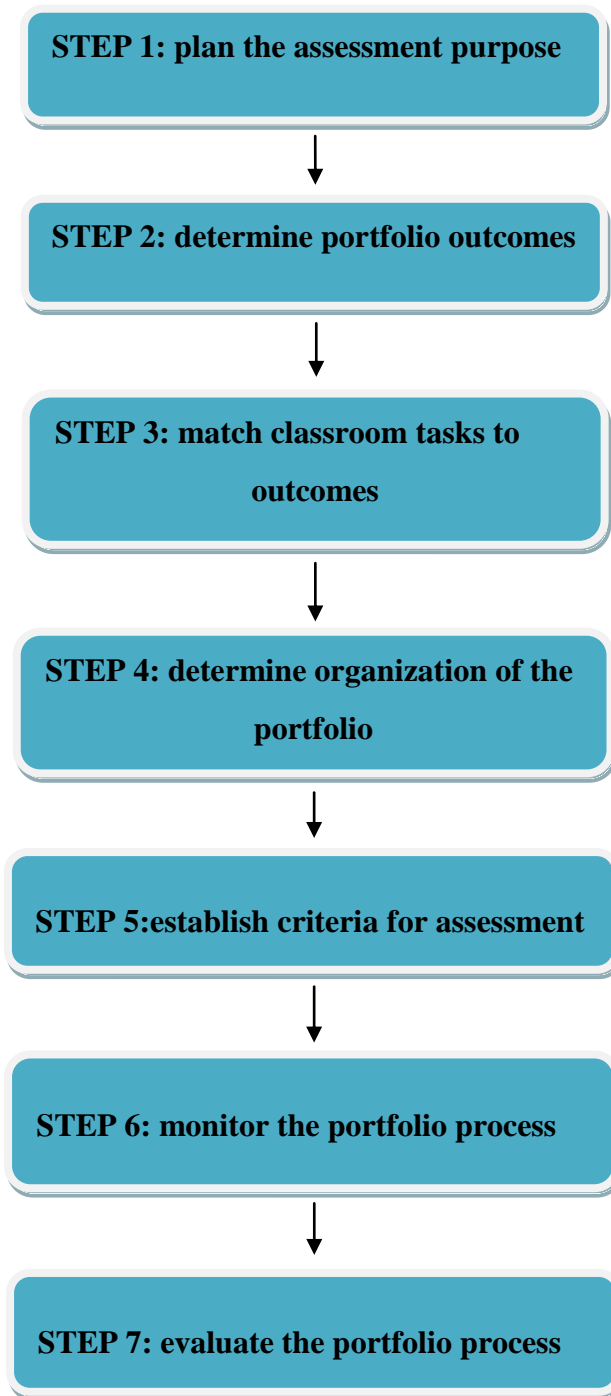
as a whole. Besides, teachers establish criteria by identifying the dimensions of language learning that will be assessed for every outcome. Clear criteria strengthen the reliability of the assessment. After the criteria are established, the teacher selects a rating scale to measure to what extent a student has met the criteria (Dellet, et al., 2001).

- **Step 6: *monitor the portfolio process*:** as students can monitor their own progress in relation to the objectives that have been established in the portfolio, the teacher also monitor the assessment. The teacher should ensure that the activities provided in the classroom allow students to produce a content that illustrates their improvement toward outcomes. Monitoring a portfolio is an important part that helps teachers make the appropriate adjustments to the portfolio (Dellet, et al., 2001).
- **Step 7: *evaluate the portfolio process*:** after monitoring and making the necessary adjustment, the teacher should evaluate assessment process. The teacher determines whether the portfolio served the assessment objectives and whether the evaluation were accurate and appropriate (Dellet, et al., 2001).

Figure (4) below summarizes the previous steps as follows:

#### **Figure 4**

*Step of Implementing Portfolio Assessment*



## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework about the shift from traditional assessment to alternative assessment specifically portfolio assessment which is the main concern of the present study. All what have been mentioned above would be considered as a reference for the investigation in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO: PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Research Design and Data Collection Tools**

##### **1.1. Research Method.**

##### **1.2. Sample and Population.**

##### **1.3. Instruments.**

###### **1.3.1. Teachers' Questionnaire.**

###### **1.3.2. The interview.**

##### **1.4. Statistical Tools for Data Analysis.**

#### **2. Data Analysis and Discussion**

##### **2.1. Teachers' Questionnaire Data Analysis and interpretation.**

##### **2.2. Teachers' Interview Analysis and interpretation.**

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##### **2.4. Discussion of the Results.**

##### **2.5. Summary of the Findings.**

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##### **2.8. Recommendations for Further Research.**

### **Conclusion**

## **Introduction**

The present study intends to explore teachers' perceptions on the use of portfolio assessment in EFL classes. The previous chapter presented a review of related literature about assessment, traditional and alternative assessment, and portfolio assessment as a new generation of assessment strategies through definitions as well as comprehensive information concerning this new type of assessment.

The second chapter, which contains two sections, will present the field work of this research. It concerns with the research design including sample of study, method and instruments used in data collection; then, it deals with data analysis, results and discussions. The first section describes the overall methodological framework of the current study which includes the participants used in the research and data collection tools. The second section deals with the analysis and discussion of the collected data.

### **1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

Research design is the conceptual framework including various techniques and strategies followed to collect, measure and analyze the data (Kothari, 2004, p. 31). It provides a well-organized outline of what the researcher will tackle from defining the research problem to the final results. This study's research design includes the following:

#### **1.1. Research Method**

The current work intends to explore teachers' perceptions about portfolio assessment in Middle School EFL classes in M'sila. It follows the descriptive research method, which defined as the systematic and accurate description of the situation and

facts of a given population (Issac & Michael, 1984, as cited in Moulana, 2020). To answer the research questions and collect the reliable data, an exploratory-descriptive research was used to obtain a picture about the teachers' perceptions on portfolio assessment use through using both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection.

## **1.2. Sample and Population**

The population of this study is Algerian middle school EFL teachers. The targeted population is Middle School EFL teachers in M'sila district. Hence, the sample of this study is selected from 25 Middle Schools in M'sila district using the cluster sampling technique since it is impossible for the researchers to get information about the population as a whole, but instead, they can get information about the clusters. This technique is defined as the selection of groups or clusters of the subjects rather than individuals (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008, p. 95). Accordingly, the researchers divided M'sila into four regions including Bousaada, Sidi Aissa, M'sila and Magra; then from each region, the researchers selected the Middle Schools randomly to form the research sample.

Instead of interviewing and surveying every Middle School English teachers, the researchers submitted a paper-and-pencil questionnaire and an interview to 50 English teachers in the selected schools. The table (3) below reveals the gender variation in the study sample, and their years of experience in teaching English at Middle School:

**Table 3**

*Teachers' Gender and Years of Experience in Teaching English at Middle School*

Gender				Years of experience					
Male		Female		0-5		6-10		More than 10 years	
Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
14	28	36	72	21	52,5	7	17,5	12	30

From the table (3) above, males covered the percentage (30%) and females are (70%). Moreover, the table also shows that the majority of teachers (52,5%) said that their teaching expertise extents 0-5 years, while 17,5% of them are experienced for 6-10 years of teaching. Whereas, teachers who have taught English more than 10 years covered the percentage 30%. Thus, the study sample is mixed of experienced and new teachers in teaching English at Middle Schools.

In addition, in order to get more reliable data, the researchers interviewed two Middle School English inspectors.

### **1.3. Instrumentation**

This study opted of triangulation of data collection tools including the questionnaire and the interviews.

#### **1.3.1. Teachers' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed for quantitative data to seek information from teachers about their current assessment practices, perceptions and attitudes towards the use and implementation of portfolio assessment in EFL classes. It comprises two parts. The first part was about assessment in general, and the second one talks about portfolio assessment including teachers knowledge about it, its implementation in

classroom, its effectiveness and ineffectiveness, and the skills to which teachers use portfolio assessment to improve and to assess. It contains 18 open/close-ended questions. The questionnaire was submitted to Middle School English teachers. It was prepared as a Google Forms; then, it was distributed online. The printed version was delivered by the researchers visiting the middle schools. The researchers received 14 responses from the online version, and 26 responses out of 40 hard-copies to the selected middle schools.

The questionnaire development was based on adapted information from reading the literature, in addition to investigate experts' opinions about the tool to check its validity and reliability as well as its usability.

### **1.3.2. The interview**

The interview was designed to collect further data about teachers' perceptions. Two versions of the interview were used; one for Middle School teachers and the other one for the Middle School English inspectors in order to support the validity of the data collected from the study.

A semi-structured interview was used that contains 6 both open/closed-ended questions. The researchers interviewed 10 Middle School teachers; to collect information about their perceptions about alternative and portfolio assessment, the challenges of implementation and suggestions for successful implementation of assessment in middle schools. The researchers also interviewed two Middle School English inspectors to collect accurate information about the implementation of portfolio assessment in the Algerian curriculum, the training seminars, challenges and their suggestions to successfully implement new forms of assessment.

The data collection instruments were developed after reading the literature about portfolio assessment and discussion with the supervisor.

#### **1.4. Statistical Tools for Data Analysis**

This study uses descriptive statistics measures such as frequencies (F) and percentages (%). The statistical operations processed by using Excel 2007 for Microsoft.

## **2. Data Analysis and Discussion**

This section is devoted to the analysis and interpretations of the collected data from the provided research instruments which were analyzed following both quantitative and qualitative approaches. On the one hand, quantitative data consisted of teachers' questionnaire. On the other hand, qualitative data consisted of teachers' and inspectors' interviews. The researchers use Excel 2007, for Microsoft to process the collected data.

### **2.1. Teachers' Questionnaire's Data Analysis and Interpretations**

The obtained data from the questionnaire were analyzed to explore the teachers' perceptions on the use of portfolio assessment in middle school EFL classes (**see Appendix 01**). The results are summarized in the following tables and graphs.

#### **2.1.1. Teachers' Perceptions about Assessment**

This section aims to collect data about teachers' perceptions about assessment in general including their collection of pupils' works, current assessment practices, and effectiveness of traditional and alternative types of assessment. The collected data are summarized as follows:

Item (3) is designed to check whether teachers conduct any research to improve their assessment skills. Table (4) below demonstrates the answers of the participants as follows:

**Table 4**

*Teachers' research about Assessment Development*

	Freq	%
Yes	28	70%
No	12	30%
Total	40	100%

From table (4), (70%) of teachers said that they do their own research to improve their assessment skills, while the other (30%) stated that they do not. This may indicate that teachers are interested in their professional developing specifically the development of their assessment skills.

In item (4), the researchers asked the participants if they assess their pupils' progress through time, as displayed in table (5) below:

**Table 5**

*Assessing Pupils' Progress during evaluation*

	Freq	%
Yes	30	75%
No	10	25%
Total	40	100%

Table (5) above demonstrated that (75%) of teachers chose the option "yes", besides (25%) of them said "no". This may indicate the teachers' willingness to improve their pupils' development along with the learning process.

Furthermore, teachers who answered "yes" were also asked to specify the means or ways through which they assess their pupils. Almost all of the responses revealed that teachers have the same ways of assessing their pupils' progress; the table (6) below summarizes their responses:

**Table 6**

*Teachers' practices to assess pupils' progress*

Themes	Freq	%
Class observation	2	5
Remedial work	5	12,5
Formative assessment	11	27,5
Diagnostic assessment	5	12,5

From the table (6), the researchers noticed that (27,5%) of teachers are using formative assessment, while (12,5%) apply remedial works and diagnostic assessment, and (5%) of them use class observation to assess pupils' progress. This indicates that teachers are based on formative assessment to assess their pupils' progress.

The aim of item (5) is to know whether teachers are collecting samples of their pupils' writing essays, paragraphs or textbook exercises. The table (7) below represents teachers' responses when being asked about pupils' works collection:

**Table 7***Teachers' collection of pupils' works*

	Freq	%
Yes	31	77,5%
No	9	22,5%
Total	40	100%

The results show that majority (77, 5%) of teachers affirmed that they are collecting samples of their pupils' writing essays, paragraphs or textbook exercises. While (22, 5%) of participants said that they are not.

Moreover, the researchers asked the teachers who stated that they collect their pupils' work, whether they reflect on the collected works from time to time with their pupils or not. The results are illustrated in table (8) below:

**Table 8***Teachers' reflection on pupils' works*

	Freq	%
Yes	24	60%
No	7	40%
Total	31	100%

The table (8) shows that (60%) of the participants reflect on pupils' collected work from time to time with them. On the other hand, the remaining (40%) do not. The obtained results may indicate that teachers are using portfolio assessment in their

classes but they may not be aware of it; they just collect their pupils' works for any purpose but not assessing their progress.

By item (6), the researchers aimed to discover whether teachers are recording their pupils' oral performance during the sessions and keep them for comparison or they do not. The obtained results are shown in table (9):

**Table 9**

*Teachers' recording to pupils' oral performance*

	Freq	%
Yes	14	35%
No	26	65%
Total	40	100%

The results from table (9) above show that the majority of teachers do not record their pupils' oral performance during instruction, this answer takes the largest percentage (65%) and the rest (35%) said that they do. This may indicate that teachers do not pay much attention to assessing the progress of speaking skill.

The item (7) is designed to discover which traditional tools teachers use when assessing their pupils' language performance and how often they use them. The results are distributed in the following table (10):

**Table 10**

*Traditional Assessment Tools*

Traditional assessment tools	Always		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Essays	7	17,5	20	50	6	15	7	17,5
Multiple-choice	12	30	19	47,5	7	17,5	2	5
Short-answer	22	55	14	35	4	10	0	0
Matching tests	14	35	16	40	8	20	2	5
True-false tests	25	62,5	12	30	3	7,5	0	0
Fill-in the blank	20	50	16	40	4	10	0	0
Own made tests	20	50	17	42,5	3	7,5	0	0

According to the results presented in table (10), the tools that dominate a category of being used as "always" are true-false tests (62,5%) in addition to short-answer tests (55%), teachers' own made tests and fill-in the blank (50%), accompanied in a somewhat less degree by matching tests (35%) and multiple-choice tests (30%), followed by the least "always" used essays (17,5%).

A percentage of (50%) of teachers stated that they use essays "sometimes", multiple-choice tests (47,5%) and their own made tests (42,5%). Whereas, "matching tests" covered the same percentage as "fill-in the blank" (40%) being used "sometimes". The other (35%) of teachers said that they use short-answer tests "sometimes" and (30%) goes for true-false tests.

The data in table (10) also revealed that (20%) of teachers use matching tests "seldom", followed by "multiple-choice tests" and "essays" (17, 5%), in addition to "short-answer" tests and "fill-in the blank" (10%). "True-false tests" and "teachers' own made tests" covered the same percentage (7,5%) of being used "seldom".

Interestingly, a very small percentage of teachers stated that they "never" use multiple-choice tests or matching tests (5%), in addition to (17, 5%) said that they "never" use essays.

The obtained results indicates that all teachers use all different forms of traditional assessment including; True-false tests, Short-answer tests, and Teachers' own made tests as the most frequent employed assessment tools, and the findings also indicates that the majority of them utilize Essays, Multiple-choice tests and Fill-in the blank tests either "always" or "sometimes" during the evaluation process.

To show the findings in a clearer way, Figure (5) below displays the results of item (7):

**Figure 5**

*Traditional Assessment Tools*

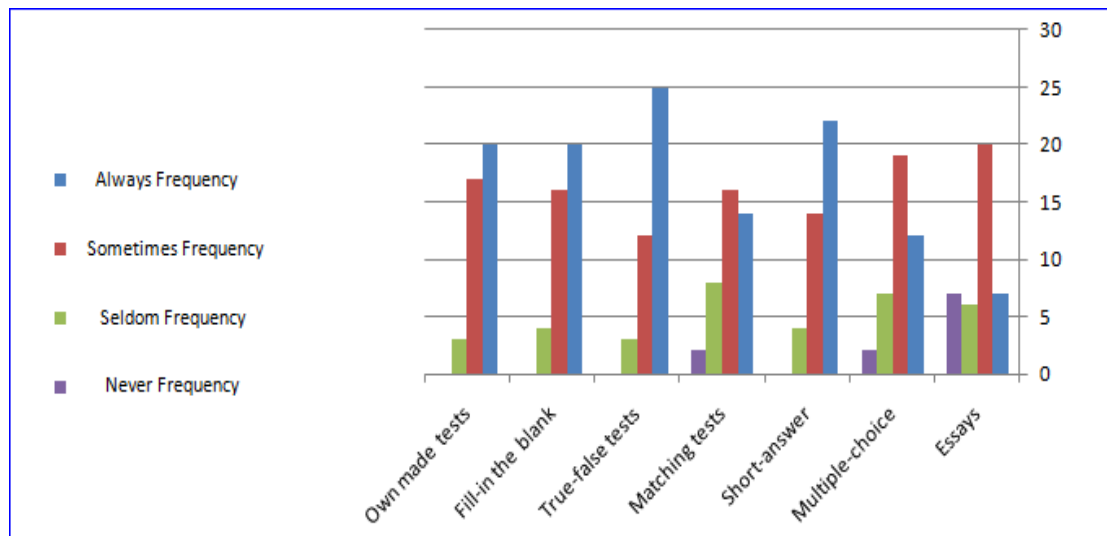


Figure (5) above shows the distribution of traditional assessment used by teachers to assess pupils' language performance. It is clear that the highest used tools are True-false tests (25), besides Short-answer (22) in addition to Fill-in the blank and Teachers' own made tests (20). The results indicate that True-false tests are the most used tool by teachers.

Table (11) below lays out the data obtained from item (8) which aims at exploring teachers' opinions about the effectiveness of traditional assessment tools in improving pupils' language performance.

**Table 11**

*Teachers' Attitudes towards Traditional Assessment Effectiveness*

	Freq	%
Yes	18	45%
No	22	55%
Total	40	100%

It is clear from table (11) that (55%) of teachers select the option "no", whereas the remaining (45%) of them respond with "yes".

The researchers asked the teachers who stated that traditional assessment tools are not effective in developing pupils' language performance to give justification to their answers. These are some of their justifications about the ineffectiveness of these tools:

- It limits pupils' critical thinking.
- It is difficult to reach pupils' goals.
- They do not assess pupils' progress.
- It is suitable only for written tests.

The obtained data reveals that teachers are not satisfied with traditional assessment tools since they are not effective in assessing pupils' language performance, and they need to implement new ways of assessment or alternative tools of assessment.

The item (9) was set out to conduct teachers' awareness about alternative assessment that helps them to measure their pupils' level of proficiency. The responses are represented in table (12) below:

**Table 12**

*Teachers' Awareness about Alternative Assessment*

	Freq	%
Yes	30	80%
No	10	20%
Total	40	100%

What is remarkable in table (12) is that the majority of teachers (80%) are aware of alternative assessment; whereas (20%) of them stated that they are not.

The teachers who said that they are aware about alternative assessment were asked to state their definition to this type of assessment.

Almost all of the teachers have defined alternative assessment in the same way. These are some selected answers about the definitions of alternative assessment:

- It is a process as well as a product in order to reflect the students' efforts, abilities, skills, knowledge and achievements.
- It is a method used to determine what students can and cannot do in contrast to what they do and do not know (performance tests).
- It is a type of assessment that consolidates learners' analytical thinking and logic through different tools.
- Tools that are creative and do test what traditional method ignores.

- It is the successive as well as the progressive evaluation within organized period of time.

Item (10) aims to seek information about teachers' current alternative assessment practices used to assess pupils' language performance and how often they are being used. Table (13) below displays the results obtained from the responses.

**Table 13**

*Alternative Assessment Tools*

	Always		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Presentations	13	32,5	19	47,5	4	10	4	10
Projects	9	22,5	18	45	10	25	3	7,5
Role plays	10	25	17	42,5	8	20	5	12,5
Group discussion	10	25	17	42,5	6	15	7	17,5
Games	8	20	20	50	8	20	4	10
Peer-assessment	7	17,5	17	42,5	10	25	6	15
Checklists	8	20	14	35	11	27,5	7	17,5
Portfolios	0	0	13	24,5	12	30	15	37,5

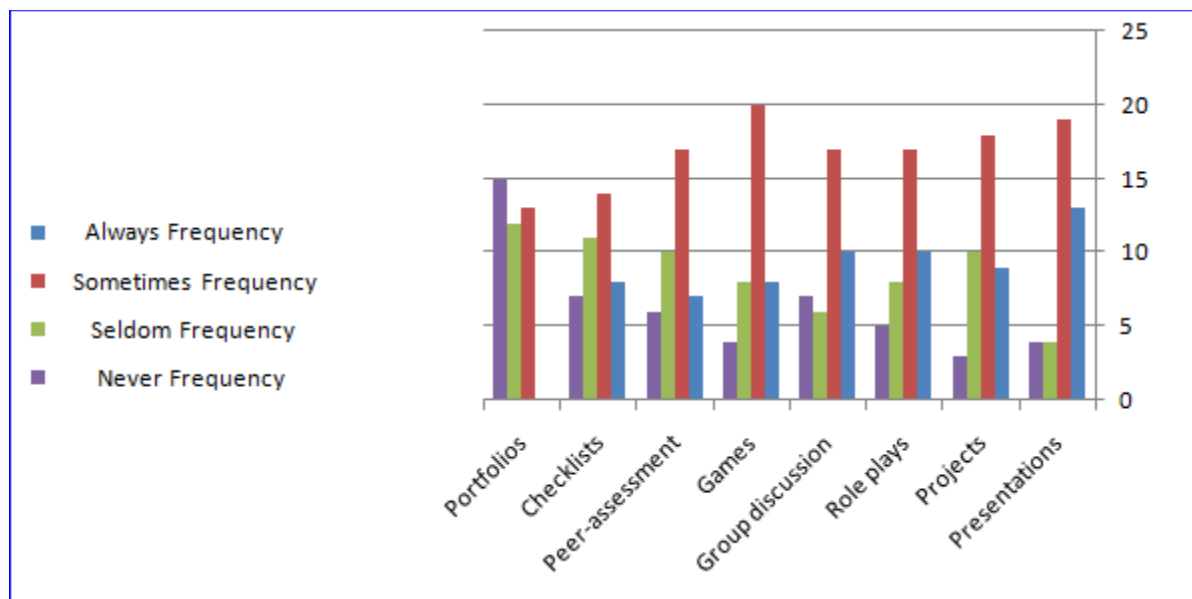
According to the results shown in table (13), (32,5%) of teachers "always" use presentations, (25%) role plays and group discussion. Whereas (22,5%) said that they "always" use projects, (20%) games and checklists and (17, 5%) peer-assessment.

The tools that dominate a category of being used as "sometimes" are games (50%) and presentations (47,5%), accompanied with projects (45%) followed by peer-assessment which covered the same percentage as role plays and group discussion (42,5%), checklists (35%) and portfolios (24,5%).

It was stated by (27, 5%) of teachers that they use checklists "seldom", followed by portfolios (30%), peer-assessment and projects (25%), games and role plays (20%). Interestingly, the researchers observed that a very small percentage of teachers stated that they use group discussion (15%) and presentation (10%) "seldom". It has been also interesting to observe that (37, 5%) of teachers stated that they "never" use portfolios, accompanied with group discussion, checklists (17, 5%) and peer-assessment (15%). (12, 5%) of them said that they "never" use role plays, presentations (10%) and projects (7, 5%). To give a clear image of the findings of this analysis, figure (6) represents the displayed results as follows:

**Figure 6**

*Alternative Assessment Tools*



As distributed in figure (6) above, it was noticed that games are the most frequently used tool by teachers (20), besides (19) presentations, (18) projects and group discussion, role plays and peer-assessment (17).

The obtained results clearly indicate that games, presentation and projects are the most employed alternative tools by teachers, in addition to role plays, group discussion, peer-assessment either always or sometimes.

The purpose of item (11) is to investigate teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment tools effectiveness in improving pupils' language performance, as shown in table (14) below:

**Table 14**

*Teachers' Attitudes towards Alternative Assessment Effectiveness*

	Freq	%
Yes	34	85%
No	6	15%
Total	40	100%

The table (14) shows that the majority of the teachers (85%) stated that alternative assessment tools are effective in assessing pupils' language performance, while (15%) of the respondents believed that they are not. The obtained results indicated that many teachers are aware about the importance of alternative assessment tools.

The teachers who affirmed that alternative assessment tools are effective in improving pupils' language performance were also asked to justify their answers about the effectiveness of these assessment tools. The following table (15) below summarizes their responses:

**Table 15**

*Teachers' Justifications to Alternative Assessment Effectiveness*

Themes	Freq	%
Improve pupils' critical thinking skills	15	37,5
Detect pupils' strengths and weaknesses	10	25
Improve communicative competencies	9	22,5

From table (15), it is noticeable that (37,5%) of teachers believed that alternative assessment improve pupils' critical thinking, while (25%) of them argued that it helps teachers to detect their pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and the rest (22,5%) said that it enhances pupils' communicative competencies.

### 2.1.2. Teacher's Perceptions about Portfolio Assessment

This section is devoted to collect data about teachers' awareness and use of portfolio assessment, its advantages and challenges, and to discover which skills teachers use portfolio assessment to assess and improve. The following tables and figures display the obtained results.

Item (12) was designed to check teachers' knowledge about portfolio, as represented in table (16) below:

**Table 16**

*Teachers' Knowledge about Portfolio*

	Freq	%
Yes	28	70
No	2	5
Not sure	10	25
Total	40	100

The table (16) above summarizes their responses as (70%) of teachers claimed that they do know what is portfolio, whereas (25%) of them said they are not sure. The rest (5%) stated that they do not know about it.

Teachers who said that they know about portfolio were asked to state how they know about it. Table (17) below summarizes their responses as follows:

**Table 17**

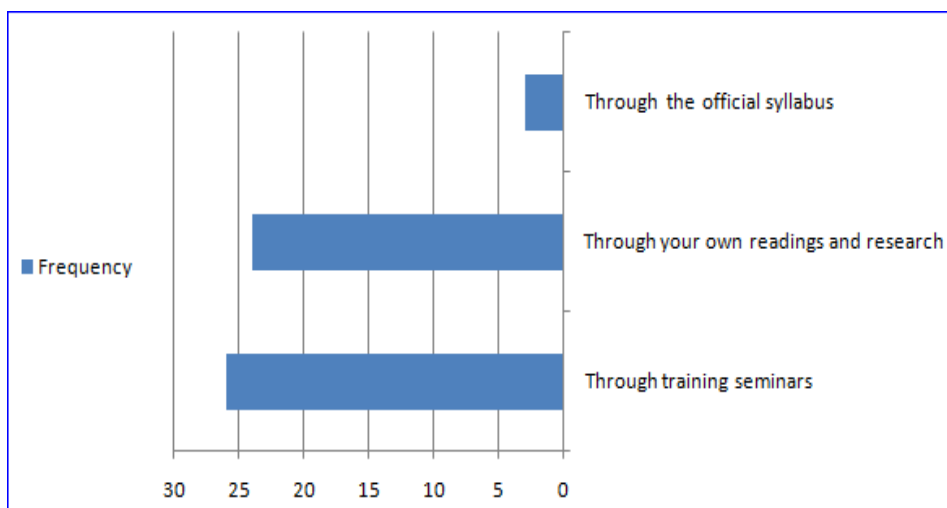
*Teachers' Knowledge about Portfolio Assessment*

	Freq	%
Through training seminars	26	65
Through your own readings and research	24	60
Through the official syllabus	3	7,5
Total	40	100

The table (17) above represents how teachers know about portfolio assessment, teachers who said "through training seminars" cover the percentage (65%), while (60%) of them answered "through their own readings and research". The remaining (7, 5%) stated "through the official syllabus". To give a clear picture about the results, Figure (7) illustrates the participants' responses as shown below:

**Figure 7**

*Teachers' Knowledge about Portfolio Assessment*



It is remarkable from the figure (7) above that most of teachers (26) know about portfolio through training seminars, and their own reading and research (24), but few of them select the choice of official syllabus (3). This item indicates that teachers know about portfolio from seminars and own readings which are both part of their professional development, yet they don't know about it from official syllabus even though it recommends it.

Table (18) set out to meet the objective of item (13) which aims at exploring whether teachers are using portfolio assessment during their instruction or not. The results are displayed as follows:

**Table 18**

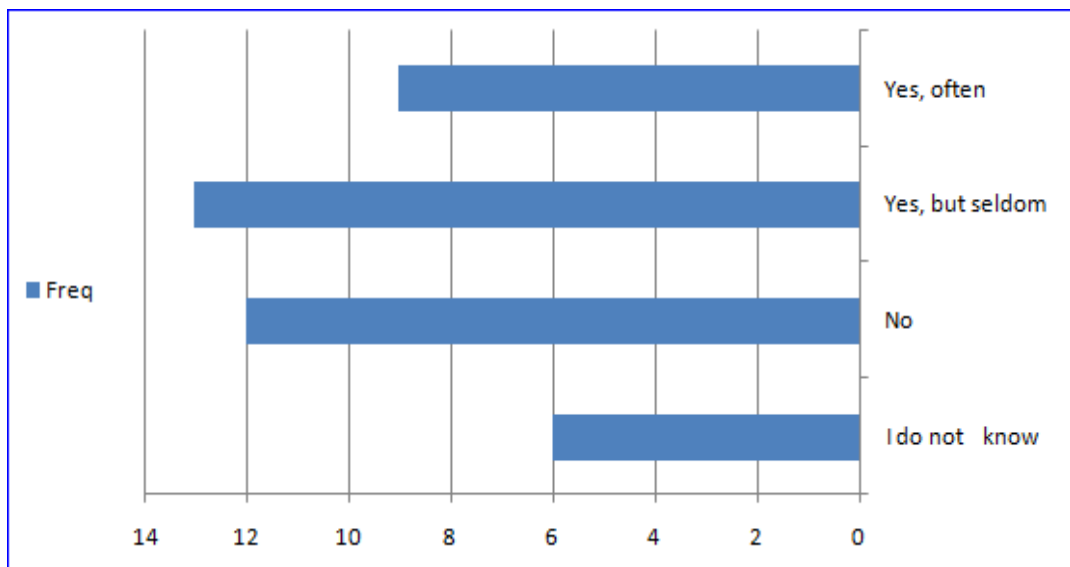
*Teachers' Use of Portfolio Assessment in class*

	Freq	%
I do not know	6	15
No	12	30
Yes, but seldom	13	32,5
Yes, often	9	22.5
Total	40	100

The table (18) above shows that (32,5%) of teachers stated that they use portfolio assessment in the class but seldom, while (22,5%) said "yes, often" and the other (30%) of the respondents argued they do not use it. The other (15%) said they do not know if they are using it unconsciously or not. From the results obtained, it is clear that teachers are using portfolio assessment in their classes even if seldom. Figure (8) represents more detailed analysis about the collected data:

**Figure 8**

*Teachers' Use of Portfolio Assessment in class*



It is clear from figure (8) that (13) teachers use portfolio assessment during instruction but seldom; whereas (9) of them often use it in their classes, the other (12) said that they do not use portfolio assessment, while (6) of them do not know whether they are applying it or not.

Teachers who stated that they are using portfolio assessment were asked to give their opinions about the effectiveness of this tool when implementing it during their

instruction. Table (19) distributes the teachers' responses saying whether portfolio assessment is very effective, less effective or not effective as presented below:

**Table 19**

*Effectiveness of Portfolio Assessment*

Effectiveness	Freq	%
Very effective	21	52,5
Less effective	19	47,5
Not effective	0	0
Total	40	100

Results in the table (19) above indicate that (52, 5%) of teachers stated that portfolio assessment is very effective, and (47, 5%) of them argued that it is less effective. It is noticed that none (0%) of the teachers answered with "not effective". According to the obtained results, there is an agreement that portfolio assessment is an effective tool of assessment. For better interpretation, Figure (9) was made to indicate teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of portfolio assessment.

**Figure 9**

*Teachers' Perceptions about Portfolio Assessment Effectiveness*

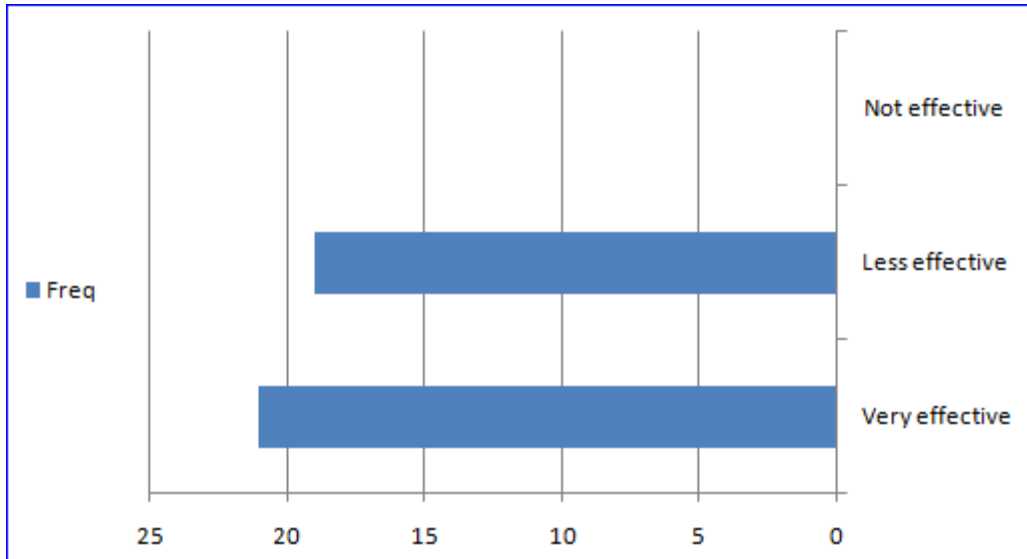


Figure (9) shows that the majority of participants (21) claimed that portfolio assessment is effective, while (19) of them believed that it is less effective. None of the teachers said that portfolio assessment is no effective.

The researchers wanted to know the reasons to which teachers think that portfolio assessment tool is effective by designing the item (14), thus table (20) summarizes those reasons as following:

**Table 20**

*Portfolio Assessment Advantages*

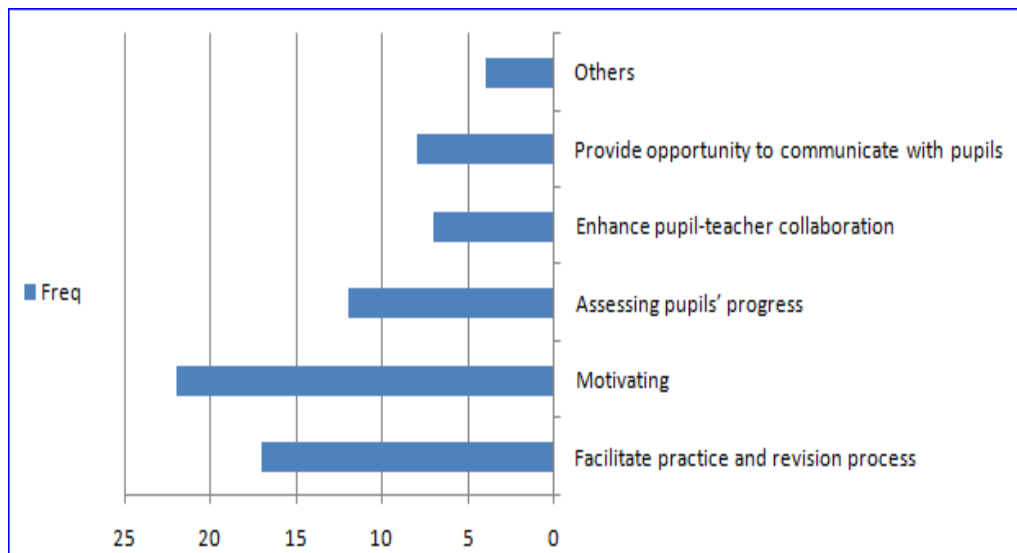
Advantages	Freq	%
Facilitate practice and revision process	17	42,5
Motivating	22	55
Assessing pupils' progress	12	30
Enhance pupil-teacher collaboration	7	17,5
Provide opportunity to communicate with pupils	8	20
Others	4	10

As shown in table (20) above, the majority of teachers (55%) agreed that it is motivating, while (42,5%) stated that portfolio assessment facilitates practice and revision process. Whereas (30%) of them said that it assesses pupils' progress and the remaining (17, 5%) argued that it enhances pupil-teacher collaboration. Few degree of percentage of teachers (20%) add another arguments as "it has good benefits in learning, encourages pupils to exchange ideas between each other, and it helps to discover what did pupils understand and not". From the presented data, it is clearly indicated that almost of teachers agreed on the fact that portfolio assessment is motivating and facilitating the learning process, besides it improves the pupils' progress.

In order to provide a clear picture about the effectiveness of portfolio assessment, Figure (10) designed to show the advantages stated below:

**Figure 10**

*Portfolio Assessment Advantages*



It is clear from the figure (10) above that portfolio assessment is motivating is the main reason why teachers (22) think that portfolio assessment is effective, besides facilitates practice and revision process (17) and assessing pupils' progress (12).

The purpose of item (15) is to ask the teachers about the reasons for stating that portfolio assessment is less effective, for that reason, table (21) was designed to represent the disadvantages of portfolio assessment according to teachers' point of view.

**Table 21**

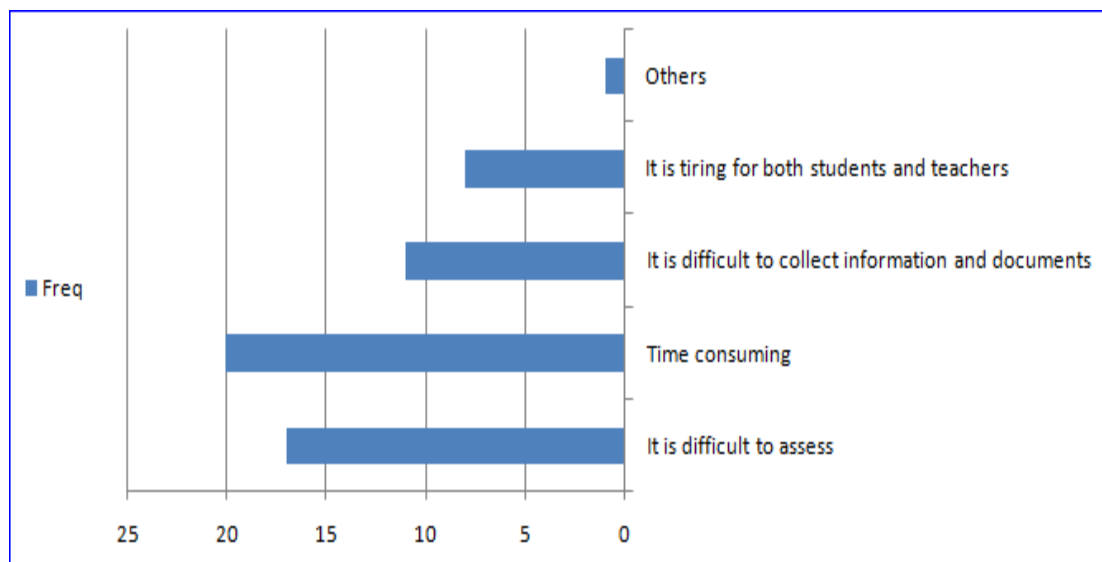
*Portfolio Assessment Disadvantages*

Disadvantages	Freq	%
It is difficult to assess	17	42,5
Time consuming	20	50
It is difficult to collect information and documents	11	27,5
It is tiring for both students and teachers	8	20
Others	1	2,5

From the observation of the table (21), which represents portfolio disadvantages, half of the teachers (50%) stated that portfolio assessment is time consuming, (42,5%) said it is difficult to assess, while the (27,5%) of them argued it is difficult to collect information and documents. The rest (20%) believed that it is tiring for both teachers and pupils. It has been noticed that (2, 5%) of teachers add another reason of why portfolio assessment is ineffective which is that pupils do not care about their progress in English language. The obtained data indicates that the majority of teachers agreed that portfolio assessment is time consuming and difficult to assess, in addition to its difficulty to collect information and documents. Figure (11) below distributes the results in a clearer image:

**Figure 11**

*Portfolio Assessment Disadvantages*



From the results presented in figure (11), it is observed that most of teachers (20) agree on the fact that portfolio assessment is time consuming, in addition to its difficulty in assessing pupils' works (17) and difficulty in collecting information and documents (11).

In this item (16), the researchers try to seek information about the skills to which teachers use portfolio assessment. Table (22) below shows the results from the collected data of this item:

**Table 22**

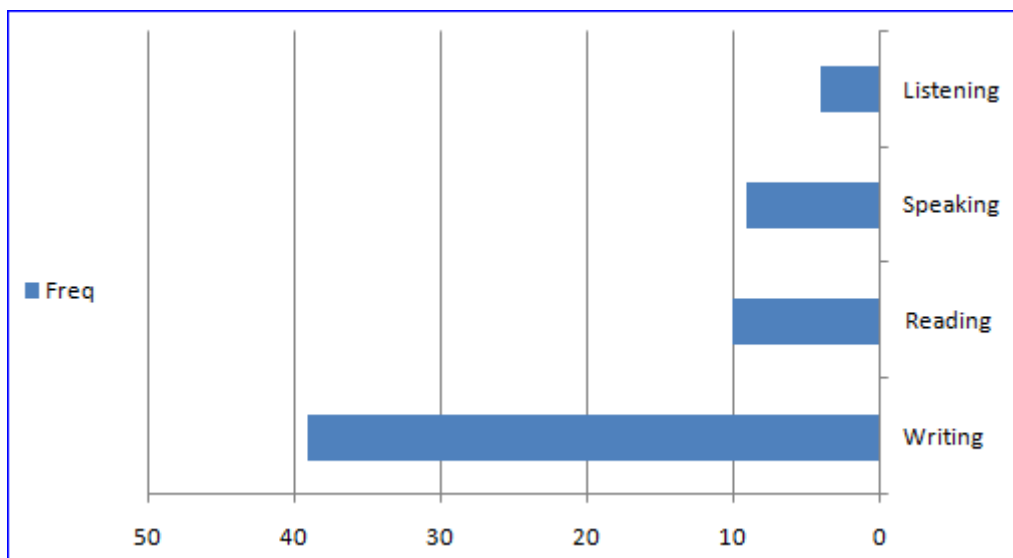
*Skills to which teachers use Portfolio Assessment*

Skills	Freq	%
Writing	39	97,5
Reading	10	25
Speaking	9	22,5
Listening	4	10

The results presented in the table (22) show that (97,5%) of teachers chose the writing skill, while (25%) selected the reading skill, and (22,5%) picked the speaking skill. Whereas (10%) of respondents select the listening skill. The obtained data clearly reveals that the majority of teachers use portfolio assessment to improve the students writing and reading skills. Figure (12) below provides a clear distribution of the results:

**Figure 12**

*Skills to which teachers use Portfolio Assessment*



The results displayed in figure (12) above show that the writing skill is the most selected skill among teachers (39), whereas the other skills (reading "10", speaking "9" and listening "4") are least chosen by teachers.

The item (17) aims at exploring which skills are better assessed using portfolio assessments according to teachers' point of view as presented in table (23) below:

**Table 23**

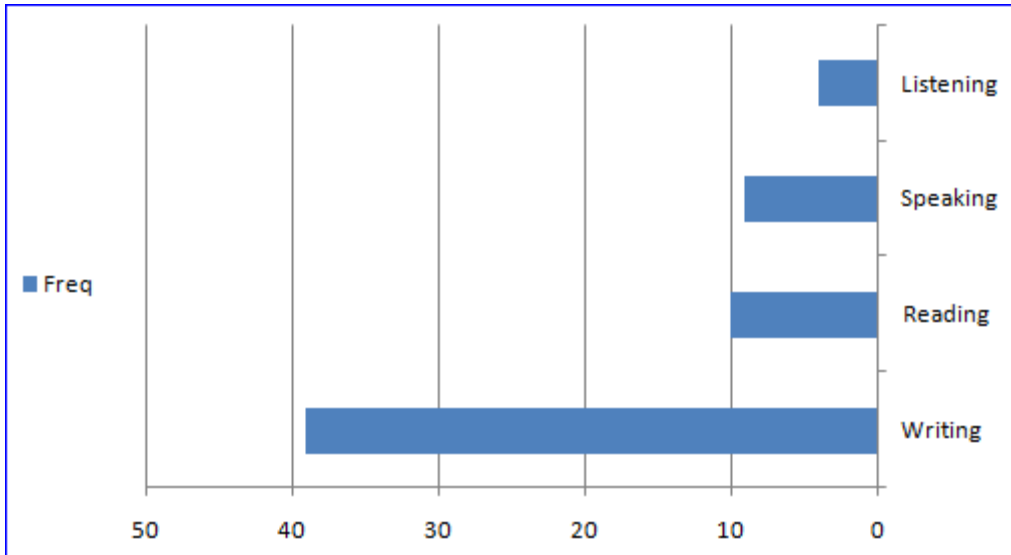
*Skills which better assessed using Portfolio Assessment*

Skills	Freq	%
Writing	39	97,5
Reading	10	25
Speaking	9	22,5
Listening	4	10

According to the results shown in table (23), most of the teachers (97,5%) believed that the writing skill is better assessed using portfolio assessment, followed by (25%) who stated that it is the reading skill, (22,5%) of them said it is the speaking skill and the other (10%) argued that the listening skill is better assessed using portfolio assessment. This is clearly indicated that the pupils' writing skill is the skill that most teachers believe to be better assessed through the use of portfolio assessment. Thus, teachers perceive portfolio assessment as the most suitable tool which teachers rely on to assess their students writing skill. Figure (13) below shows a clear image about the obtained results as follows:

**Figure 13**

*Skills which better assessed using Portfolio Assessment*



As distributed in figure (13) above, the writing skill is the most selected skill by (39) teachers that it is better assessed through the use of portfolio assessment, but it is noticed that the other skills are the least chosen by teachers to be better assessed using this tool (reading "10", speaking "9" and listening "4").

In the last item in this questionnaire, the researchers investigate teachers' point of views about the skills they think are better improved using portfolio assessment. The results will be displayed in table (24) below:

**Table 24**

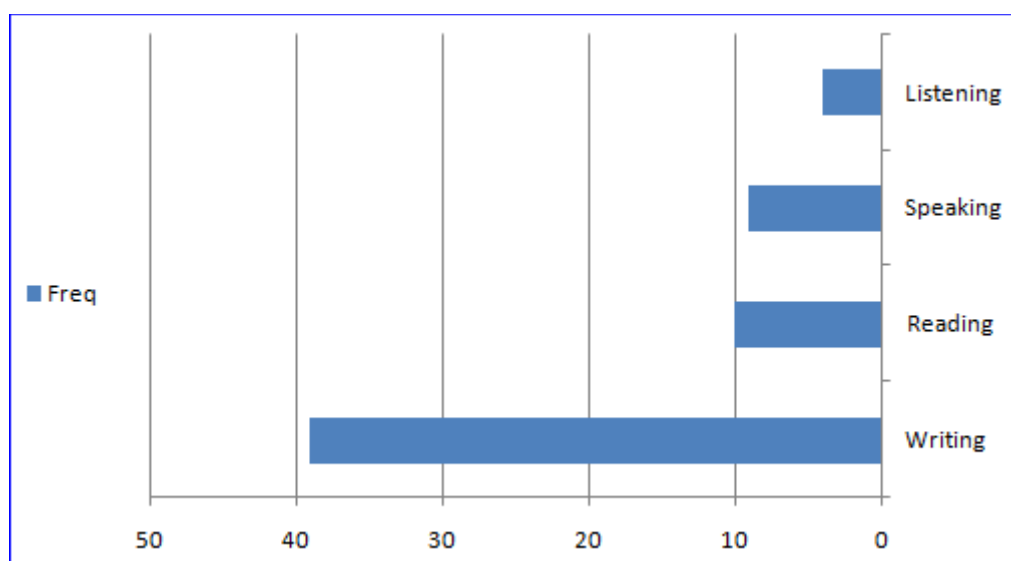
*Skills which can be better improved using Portfolio Assessment*

Skills	Freq	%
Writing	39	97,5
Reading	10	25
Speaking	9	22,5
Listening	4	10

It is clear from the table (24) that the majority of teachers (97,5%) confirmed that the writing skill is the most skill to be better improved using portfolio assessment, followed by (25%) who stated that reading skill is better improved. Whereas (22,5%) believed that speaking is the skill which can be better developed by the use of portfolio assessment. The remaining (10%) of teachers argued that it is the listening skill. From the data obtained, teachers perceive writing as the most skill to be improved by portfolio compared to the other skills which received less consideration. The figure (14) below represents the results as follows:

**Figure 14**

*Skills which can be better improved using Portfolio Assessment*



From figure (14), it is clear that most teachers (39) argued that writing is the skill to be better improved using portfolio assessment, compared to the other skills which received the least percentage of use such as reading (10), speaking (9) and listening (4).

Teachers were asked to state some activities that they utilize to enhance those skills. The followings are a summary of activities used by teachers:

**Writing skill:**

- Collect sample of pupils' works (paragraphs, essays, workbook exercises ...).

**Reading skill:**

- Focus on improving the pupils vocabulary and lexis through reading passages.

**Speaking skill:**

- Oral activities such as role plays, poems, oral expressions, group discussion, presentations.
- Recordpupils' oral performance to assess their improvement in pronunciation.
- Audio-tapes.

**Listening skill:**

- assess pupils learning with self-reflection.
- exchange, understand and underline verbal messages and interpret oral discourse.

## **2.2. Teachers' Interview Data Analysis and Interpretations**

The interview is addressed to 10 EFL middle school teachers at M'sila; it fundamentally reports their perceptions about alternative and portfolio assessment, the challenges and suggestions for successful implementation of this kind of assessment. This interview is made up of six questions (see **Appendix B**) whose related findings are the following:

The first item is posed to find out the extent to which these teachers of English are aware about the new forms of assessment such as alternative assessment and portfolio assessment. The majority of teachers said that they are aware about

alternative assessment and portfolio assessment. Only one teacher said no. The teachers, who stated that they are aware, argued that alternative assessment and portfolio assessment recently gain certain popularity since they are interesting in the world of tasks and the evidence of students' achievement.

The second item aims to know whether teachers are reading the official syllabus recommended by the ministry of education or not. The results show that six teachers out of ten claimed that this type of assessment is recommended by the ministry of education in the official syllabus; while the remaining four teachers denied the recommendation of portfolio assessment in the official syllabus. This indicates that not all teachers have a clear vision about what is recommended by the ministry of education and what is included in the official syllabus.

Through the third item, the researchers attempt to know whether EFL teachers support the idea of using portfolio assessment during instruction and for what reasons. The majority of teachers (eight of them) support the idea of implementation, they justify their answer by stating that portfolios help teachers to evaluate their pupils' progress in a given area, enhance the learners production and writing style, motivate to learn, reinforce teacher-pupil collaboration and provide teachers with valuable information to improve the process of evaluation and evidence of pupils' performance. However, the other two teachers were against the implementation of portfolios, because, for one of them, they are difficult to assess which may lead to unfairness, and they need more time and efforts. For the second teacher, he claimed that the syllabuses are heavy and the learners are not interested in improving their learning progress. This may mean that they prefer traditional ways of assessment.

This item four was asked to know the degree to which teachers of English read and do research to improve their knowledge about assessment in general and portfolio in specific. Seven teachers respond by "yes", they think that teachers do personal research in general and portfolio assessment in specific. One of them stated that they think that there are teachers who do research to improve their assessment skills and find more successful ways to assess their learners, while the others do not. The remaining teachers said they do not think so. The results reveal that most teachers are improving their professional development to effectively assess their students.

Item five was about the difficulties teachers may face when using portfolio assessment. All teachers agreed about common difficulties. These difficulties can be summarized by lack of time, tiring for both pupils and teachers and lack of materials and budget that support teachers. Two teachers stated that motivating pupils to take portfolio seriously can be very difficult due to pupils lack of responsibility, because they do not take their assignments seriously. One teacher claimed that lack of knowledge and deeper understanding of portfolio assessment for both teachers and pupils.

The last item was designed to investigate EFL teachers' suggestions to the successful implementation of new forms of assessment in Algerian middle schools. Some teachers said that more training seminars should be done for teachers to improve their knowledge to implement such assessments and in the same time teachers should organize sessions devoted to explain new forms of assessment such as portfolio assessment, peer and self assessment to gain more experience. The majority of teachers insisted about the role of ministry of education to provide the teacher with the suitable environment especially in terms of materials such as language laboratories. In addition, they insisted about the cooperation of pupils' parents.

### **2.3. Inspectors' Interview Data Analysis and Interpretations**

In order to collect more accurate and reliable data about the implementation of portfolio assessment, the researchers designed the interview for middle school English inspectors to investigate their perceptions about portfolio assessment (see **Appendix C**). The results obtained from their responses are summarized in the following items.

In this item, the inspectors were asked about if portfolio assessment is included within Algerian curriculum of middle school or not. Both inspectors stated that it is included within the curriculum in page 63 as "portfolios contain the learners' written works such as reading reports, a written account of a film or play, a newspaper articles related to project work, a diction, a letter to a friend. These productions must be corrected by the teacher and then rewritten by the learner who will be able to measure his own progress". This is a proof that portfolio assessment is recommended by the ministry of education within the official syllabus.

The second item is set to see if stakeholders and education policy developers encourage the implementation of portfolio assessment; one of the inspectors answered that they do theoretically, but practically speaking, there is no clear cut decisions of measures are taken to encourage the implementation of this type of assessment. The other inspector also said they do. They justify their answers by stating that portfolios provide more evidence about the students learning progress in terms of competencies, skills and attitudes.

In item three, the researchers asked the inspectors whether they support portfolio implementation in middle schools EFL classes and for what reasons. Both inspectors show strong support to this idea; one of them argued that it is an effective means of assessment and it will be one of his future projects when the current

situation (Covid-19 epidemic) is settled down. The other inspector believed that it is high time to implement new strategies since traditional ones did not prove their efficiency and to be up to date with educators in developed countries. He added that portfolios encourage learners to be autonomous, thus, taking more ownership and responsibility over their process, in addition to helping them gain new prospective of education beyond the common one, assessing their competencies and whether demonstrating some progress or not. The results revealed that the idea of implementing portfolio assessment in middle schools is highly supported by the inspectors because of its effectiveness on the learning process.

Item four was designed to explore inspectors' point of views about the effectiveness of portfolios as an assessment tool. The two inspectors agreed that portfolio assessment is an effective tool of assessment. For one inspector, it helps learners to know where they are, and enables them to record their learning and document their improvement over a period of time. More importantly, it assists learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and plan for future enhancement. The other inspector claimed that portfolio assessment shows cumulative efforts and learning of students over time. It is always there with the learners as it accompanies them on their day to day long journey of learning. In addition, portfolio offers valuable data about the learners' improvement; for instance, the learners can compare their goals set after each learning; all this can be done thanks to records kept in portfolios. According to inspectors view points, it has been found that portfolio assessment is an effective tool of assessment that can provide evidences about learners' progress in different skills.

In this item, the inspectors were asked if they have organized seminars and study days to raise teachers' awareness about portfolio assessment since it is included in the new 2G curriculum. One inspector said he has organized just one seminar about assessment and its tools, and the other one stated that he has not done it yet. The results revealed that even though inspectors perceive portfolio assessment as an efficient tool in EFL teaching practice, they did not highlight it or integrate it as part of their teachers training program.

When asked about teachers professional development and its impact on teachers assessment practices generally and portfolio use specifically in item six, the inspectors believed that the minority of teachers do personal research to improve their knowledge about assessment in general and Portfolio assessment in specific. They added that teachers always claimed they do not have enough time, and teaching is an exhausting job.

The inspectors were asked about the difficulties teachers may face when implementing portfolio assessment in classroom in item seven. Both inspectors stated various difficulties including:

- The issue of reliability and validity.
- The number of steps included in the process of implementing portfolio assessment.
- Lack of sufficient time to design and organize portfolios, and to review / evaluate them out of class.
- Difficulties in motivating the students to be collaborative and create their own portfolios and keep using them accurately.

- Lack of materials and the additional budget that most teachers and learners cannot afford.
- Difficulties in scoring and grading.

Also, they emphasized that teachers should change their mindset and try to understand well the importance of change concerning assessment in general and portfolio in particular. This indicates that implementing portfolio assessment in EFL may be challenging for both teachers and learners, but teachers should overcome these challenges.

To successfully implement new forms of assessment in Algerian middle schools, the researchers designed the eighth item to collect inspectors' suggestions about it. The two inspectors agreed that a radical change should be brought to successfully implement new forms of assessment by providing different suggestions. It can be summarized as follows:

- There must be change in the curriculum and the way assessment is perceived by the education policy developers, stakeholders and community in general. The thought to teach for test should be eradicated and replaced by teaching for life. This paradigm would prominently lead to find new ways of assessment such as using Socratic-quizzes, online assessment, gamification.
- Training learners on using learning devices such as portfolios should begin at earlier stages to foster learner-centeredness and autonomy.

## 2.4. Discussion of the Results

The current study aims to explore EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of portfolio assessment in M'sila Middle Schools. Referring to teachers' questionnaire and interview, the results reported that the majority of teachers claimed that they do research about assessment to improve their assessment skills (28%), in contrast, the inspectors believed that the minority of teachers do personal research to improve their knowledge about assessment in general and portfolio assessment in specific.

The results also revealed that teachers current assessment practices varied between traditional tools of assessment and alternative ones. As revealed from teachers questionnaire, it has been indicated that teachers use true-false tests (62%) and short-answers tests (55%), in addition to fill-in the blank (50%) as the most frequently used tools of assessment because they are easy to administer, easy to assess and help them to preview their pupils' knowledge as claimed by EL Harrar (2006) that traditional assessment tools are not time consuming, easy to administer and grade. Besides, the results also revealed that teachers always use presentations (32,5%), projects (25%), role plays and group discussions (25%) in addition to games (20%), but portfolios are the least used alternative tool by the teachers (7,5%). From the teachers questionnaire it can be inferred that teachers' portfolio use is limited.

Additionally, the obtained data revealed teachers' perception of the limitations of traditional assessment tools since they only assess pupils' current knowledge in contrast to alternative assessment which is capable of assessing students' skills and performances that cannot be directly assessed with traditional tests. That was highlighted by (Smalidon et al, 2000), stating that traditional assessments focus more on learners' capacity of memorization and recall in contrast to alternative assessment

that focuses more on higher order skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. The results also show that teachers claimed that they know about portfolio assessment through training seminars (65%), through their own reading (60%) yet they do not know about it from official syllabus (7.5%) even though it is recommended by the ministry as the analysis of inspectors of education interview proved “it is included within the curriculum in page 63”. This is a proof that teachers may not have a clear vision about curriculum and they may have a misperception about what is really meant by portfolio assessment.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the majority of teachers support the idea of implementing and using portfolio assessment in EFL classes as well as inspectors stating that it gives the opportunity to evaluate pupils' progress in different skills and situations, but in fact the results revealed that even though inspectors perceive portfolio assessment as an efficient tool in EFL teaching practice, they did not highlight it or integrate it as part of their teachers training program. Also from the analysis of inspectors' interview, stakeholders and education policy developers support the idea of implementing such type of assessment theoretically, but practically speaking, there is no clear decisions are taken to encourage the implementation of this type of assessment.

The teachers' questionnaire showed that portfolio assessment is the least alternative assessment tool used by the teachers (32,5% of teachers use it seldom). Although portfolio assessment is an effective means of assessment for teachers and inspectors since it is motivating, assessing learners progress as Brown and Hudson (1998) said that portfolio assessment can foster the role of teachers by providing them with an obvious picture about learners' progress, enhance learners and teachers

collaboration, in the same time, teachers hold some negative perceptions regarding the difficulty to use portfolio because, for them, it is time consuming (50%), as Buchman (1995) claimed that time management is an obstacle in portfolio assessment implementation, in addition to its difficulty of scoring (42%) and collecting documents from pupils (27,5%). Inspectors' interview also shows that teachers are always complaining about time and that teaching is an exhausting job.

The finding revealed also that the majority of the teachers use portfolio assessment to assess their pupils' writing skill and give less attention to the other skills such as speaking, reading and listening as the results in the questionnaire demonstrated that (77,5%) of the teachers are collecting their pupils' written essays, paragraphs and textbook exercises and (60%) are reflecting on them with their pupils may be for any reason such as scoring but not assessing pupils progress. The results also revealed that (65%) do not record their pupils' oral performance and keep them for comparison these results indicate that teachers do not take into consideration the speaking skill. Moreover, the analysis of items (16, 17, 18) proved that most teachers are mainly focused on writing skill (97,5%) and neglecting the other skills including reading (25%) and listening (10%). This may be due to teachers misperception about portfolio assesses only the writing skill. (Brown & Hudson, 1998) insisted that portfolios boost teacher-learners involvement by providing teachers with multiple opportunities for observation and assessment, and permitted the assessment of various skills (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

## **2.5. Summary of the Findings**

The findings of this research are:

- Portfolio assessment is included within Algerian curriculum of middle school.

- EFL teachers are working on their individual and professional development to improve their assessment skills to be self-directed and reflective practitioners.
- The majority of EFL middle school teachers at M'sila are aware about alternative assessment.
- EFL middle school teachers think that they are aware about portfolio assessment, but in fact they do not know the real purposes of it.
- Most of teachers focused on the importance of portfolio assessment in improving the writing skill ignoring its importance in developing the other skills.
- The majority of teachers do not have a clear vision about the official syllabus.

From the analysis of questionnaire and interview, this investigation can answer the research questions as follows:

1. EFL middle schools teachers' current assessment practices are both traditional and alternative assessment tools.
2. EFL middle schools teachers at M'sila hold a misperception about portfolio and its uses; on the other hand, they support its implementation in their classes.
3. EFL middle schools teachers' trainers (inspectors of education) support the idea of implementing portfolio assessment in EFL classes.

## **2.6. Limitations of study**

The current study investigates EFL middle schools teachers' perceptions regarding the portfolio assessment use in classes. Although this study has reached the outlined objectives; there have been some obstacles the researchers faced that perhaps the future researchers should not meet during their investigation.

- The lack of respondents' seriousness in responding to both the questionnaire and interview which obliged the researchers to exclude some responses.

- Difficulties to get in touch with English teachers because of the new work schedule during Covid-19 epidemic.
- EFL middle school teachers are not using their emails which limited the sample size that may not be representative to the whole population (Algerian EFL middle school teachers).
- Difficulties in contacting English inspectors.

## **2.7. Pedagogical Implications**

Based on the results and the reviewed literature in this study, the researchers have put some suggestions and recommendations to better implement portfolio assessment as follows:

- Teachers should be eclectic by using a combination of traditional approaches and alternative ones.
- Inspectors should encourage teachers' cooperation and coordination to successfully implement the new types of assessment.
- Stakeholders and policy education developers should encourage the implementation of portfolio assessment in EFL secondary and middle schools classes.
- More training seminars and study days should be organized by inspectors to improve teachers' knowledge about the importance of these new types of assessment.
- Teachers should organize sessions to train learners on using portfolio assessment, peer and self assessment.
- The ministry of education should provide the schools with the appropriate materials such as language laboratories.

- Pupils' parents should cooperate with teachers for better implication.
- There should be a change in the curriculum through adding new forms of assessment such as Socratic-quizzes, online assessment and E-portfolios.

## **2.8. Recommendations for Further Research**

- Further research can be done with more participants at different regions in Algeria and involve other research instruments such as observation, learners samples of portfolios.
- Another study can be done to explore teachers' perceptions on the use of portfolio assessment in enhancing students writing skill or the effect of portfolio assessment on students speaking and reading ability.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter is devoted for the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the research tools. The collected data was consisted of teachers' questionnaire and two interviews, one for EFL middle school teachers as well as another one for inspectors of education. The results were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings of this study provide a better understanding about teachers and inspectors perceptions about the implementation of portfolio assessment in EFL classes. EFL middle school teachers seemed to be aware about portfolio assessment but they hold a misperception about its real purposes. Moreover, teachers' trainers strongly support the idea of portfolio assessment implementation but they do not integrate it as part of teachers training program. This chapter also provides some suggestions and recommendations for teachers and policy makers to successfully implement portfolio assessment in EFL classes.

# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## **General Conclusion**

In this dissertation, the researchers attempt to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of portfolio assessment in middle schools EFL context. Three main research questions were stated with the aim to reach complimentary findings. The first question discussed EFL middle school teachers' current assessment practices. The second question looked for EFL middle school teachers' perceptions about the implementation of portfolio assessment, and the last question deals with inspectors of education opinions about the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The present study is a total of two chapters. The first chapter is related to the review of literature. While, the second chapter is concerned with the practical framework of investigation. In the theoretical part, the researchers started with an overview about assessment in general with some definitions, its role in the learning process with special focus on traditional and alternative tools through definitions, characteristics and types, in addition to educational reforms in Algerian context.

In the practical part of this study, the researchers used the descriptive method in order to explore EFL middle school teachers' perceptions regarding the use of portfolio assessment in EFL middle school context; hence, the researchers selected two main research tools, a questionnaire and an interview were administered to EFL middle school teachers at M'sila to investigate their perceptions about portfolio assessment implementation, besides an interview was carried out to the inspectors of education in order to support the significance of the study.

After analyzing and discussing the data collected from the questionnaire and the interviews, it has been found that both teachers and inspectors support the implementation of portfolio assessment. On the other hand, the results showed that teachers have an average perception concerning the use of portfolio; they stated that portfolio assessment is an effective tool of assessment but they encounter many difficulties and challenges in implementing such

type of assessment. Furthermore, the results also indicated that EFL middle school teachers at M'sila focus mainly on using portfolio assessment to assess their pupils' progress in writing neglecting its importance to enhance the other skills. Moreover, the inspectors of education noted that stakeholders and policy makers should give more attention to this type of assessment. Additionally, they added some suggestions for successful implementation of new forms of assessment.

As in any research, the present study is not free from limitations. The results gathered by the researchers cannot be generalized on larger groups because it was conducted only on small number of middle school teachers. Besides, the researchers faced many difficulties to contact teachers and inspectors. Despite these difficulties, the researchers have made great efforts to make this work in its present state. The findings from the study are supposed to open up areas for more research on portfolio assessment effectiveness and the new methods of assessment.

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# **Appendices**

# Appendix A

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### Portfolio Assessment Questionnaire for Teachers (PAQT)

This questionnaire is designed for a master's degree dissertation entitled "EFL Teachers' Perceptions regarding the use of Portfolio Assessment in Middle School EFL Context". Your cooperation is extremely important to our study. We are grateful for your time and will to answer this questionnaire. Your honest responses are highly appreciated and your answers will stay confidential.

Thank you in advance.

**Please, complete the following items:**

- 1-Gender: male  female   
2- years of experience: 0-5  6-10  more than 10 years

#### **PART I : Perceptions about Assessment**

1-Do you usually do your own research about assessment to improve your assessment skills?

Yes  No

2- During evaluation, do you assess pupils' progress through time? Yes  No

If your answer is "yes", how?

.....  
.....  
.....

3-Do you collect samples of your pupils' writing essays, paragraphs or workbook exercises?

Yes  No

If yes, do you reflect on them from time to time with your pupils? Yes  No

4- Do you record your pupils' oral performance and keep them for comparison? Yes  No

5- When assessing your pupils language performance (oral /written), which traditional tools do you use, and how often?

- Essays : always  sometimes  seldom  never
- Multiple-choice tests : always  sometimes  seldom  never
- Short-answer questions : always  sometimes  seldom  never
- Matching tests : always  sometimes  seldom  never
- True-false tests : always  sometimes  seldom  never
- Fill-in the blank : always  sometimes  seldom  never
- Your own made tests : always  sometimes  seldom  never

6- Do you think that traditional assessment tools are always effective in assessing (evaluating) pupils' language performance (oral /written) Yes  No

Why?.....  
.....  
.....

7- Are you aware about alternative assessment?      Yes       No

If yes, what is your definition to alternative assessment?  
.....  
.....

8-When assessing your pupils language performance (oral /written), which alternative tools do you use, and how often?

- Presentations : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Projects : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Role plays : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Group discussions : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Games : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Peer-assessment : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Checklists : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**
- Portfolios : **always**     **sometimes**     **seldom**     **never**

9- Do you think that Alternative assessment tools are effective in assessing pupils' language performance (oral /written)?      Yes       No

Why?.....  
.....  
.....

**PART II : Perceptions about Portfolio**

1- Do you know what is portfolio      Yes       No       Not sure

If your answer is "yes", how did you know about it?

- Through training seminars
- Through your own readings and research
- Through the official syllabus
- Other.....

2- Have you ever used portfolio assessment in your classes?

Yes, often       Yes, but seldom       No       I don't know

\* If your answer is " yes" , to what extent did you find it effective?

- Very effective
- Less effective
- Not effective

**4- In case you think it is "effective", why did you think so?**

- Facilitate practice and revision process
- Motivating
- Assessing students progress
- Enhance student-teacher collaboration
- Provide opportunity to communicate with the students
- Others.....

**5- In case you think it is "ineffective", why did you think so?**

- It is Difficult to assess
- Time consuming
- It is difficult to collect information and documents
- It is tiring for both students and teachers
- Others.....

**6-What is the skill to which you used portfolio assessment? (you can select more than 1)**

- Writing     Reading     Speaking     Listening

**7- Which of the following skills you think is better assessed using portfolio assessment? ( you can select more than 1)**

- Writing     Reading     Speaking     Listening

**8- Which of the following skills can be better improved using portfolio assessment?**

- Writing   
Can please explain how?  
.....  
.....
- reading   
Can please explain how?  
.....  
.....
- speaking   
Can please explain how?  
.....  
.....
- listening   
Can please explain how?  
.....  
.....

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions for Middle School Teachers:

1- Are you aware about alternative assessment and portfolio assessment?

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2- Is this type of assessment recommended by the ministry of education in the official syllabus?

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3- Do you support the idea that EFL teachers should use portfolio assessment during instruction? Why?

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4- Do you think that teachers read and do personal research to improve their knowledge about assessment in general and Portfolio assessment specifically?

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5- What difficulties may be faced by teachers in implementing Portfolio assessment?

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6- what do you suggest to successfully implement new forms of assessment in Algerian middle schools?

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## Appendix C

### Interview Questions for Inspectors:

This interview is a part of a master's degree dissertation entitled " EFL Teachers' Perceptions regarding the use of Portfolio Assessment in Middle School EFL context". Your cooperation is extremely important to our study. We are grateful for your time and will to answer this interview questions . Your honest responses are highly appreciated and your answers will stay confidential.

Thank you in advance .

**1-**Is portfolio assessment included within Algerian curriculum of middle school ?

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.....

**2-** Do stakeholders and education policy developers encourage implementing this new type of assessment? Why ?

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**3-** As an inspector , do you support the idea of portfolio implementation in middle schools ? Why ?

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**4-** According to your point of view , do you think that portfolio assessment is an effective tool of assessment ? Why ?

.....  
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.....

**5-** Have you organized any study days or seminars to raise teachers' awareness about this type of alternative assessment since it is included in the new 2G curriculum?

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.....

**6-** Do you think that teachers read and do personal research to improve their knowledge about assessment in general and Portfolio assessment specifically?

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7-As an inspector, what do you think can be the difficulties that teachers may face when implementing portfolio assessment in their classes?

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8- what do you suggest to successfully implement new forms of assessment in Algerian middle schools?

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## الملخص:

اكتسب التقييم القائم على السجل اهتمامًا متزايدًا كأداة تقييم بديلة في تدريس اللغة الأجنبية. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة تصورات أساتذة المتوسط للغة الانجليزية للتقييم القائم على السجل. بهدف الإجابة على تساؤلات هذا البحث وتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة اختار الباحثون المنهج الوصفي باستخدام استبيان ومقابلتين، واحدة للأساتذة و أخرى لمفتشي التعليم. شارك في الدراسة 50 أستاذ من أساتذة التعليم المتوسط للغة الإنجليزية في المسيلة بالإضافة إلى اثنين من مفتشي التعليم. أشارت نتائج الدراسة الحالية إلى أن تصورات أساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية تباينت تجاه التقييم القائم على السجل حيث اتفقوا على أن أداة التقييم هذه مفيدة لتقييم تقدم الطلاب وإنجازاتهم. لكن طول الوقت الذي يستغرقه وصعوبة جمع ملفات التلاميذ هي المشاكل الرئيسية في تطبيق هاته الأداة؛ بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أظهرت النتائج أن الأساتذة يركزون على مهارة الكتابة للتلاميذ ويهملون المهارات الأخرى. كما أشارت النتائج أيضًا أنه على الرغم من أن المنهج الجزائري للتعليم المتوسط يتضمن التقييم القائم على السجل، إلا أن استخدامه يبقى متوسط في أقسام اللغة الانجليزية في المسيلة .

الكلمات المفتاحية: التقييم، التقييم البديل، تقييم السجل.