
Assessing Assessment Literacy and Practices among Lecturers

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Abstract. Accountability systems are important for higher education and are often linked to the credibility of assessment literacy of lecturers. Lecturers are responsible for ‘report cards’ that act as benchmarks of student learning processes and outcomes. Therefore, assessment literacy of lecturers is of prior importance as institutions rely on lecturers to assess students’ content knowledge and skills. The question that arises is whether lecturers have been provided sufficient and appropriate knowledge of assessment methods or whether assessment has been left much to the idiosyncrasies of the lecturers. This study seeks to establish the level of assessment literacy among lecturers and investigate common assessment practices. The methodology involves a survey questionnaire administered to 65 lecturers from different disciplines at a Malaysian public university. Findings show that the state of assessment literacy among lecturers is not at a satisfactory level and that lecturers may have not gone through sufficient assessment training to discharge an important part of their professional responsibility in the context of teaching and learning.

Keywords: *higher education, assessment practice, assessment literacy, lecturers, types of assessments, learning outcomes.*

Introduction

Assessment has gained increasing attention in education in recent decades. Educational researchers now recognize that teachers’ classroom assessment beliefs and knowledge of assessment practice act as instruments from which both students and teachers can

benefit enormously. In addition, assessment at school and tertiary levels have resulted in vigorous discussions in many countries and Malaysia is no exception.

Chan (2008, p. 37) puts forth that “assessment refers to any method, strategy or tool a teacher may use to collect evidence about students’ progress toward achievement of established goals”. It is a process of collecting information and gathering evidence about what students have learned. In particular, Heaton (1990) and Popham (1995) point out that the goals and functions of assessment is to (1) understand the strengths and weaknesses of students’ learning ability, (2) assist teachers in monitoring student learning progress, (3) evaluate students’ learning, and (4) place students in learning groups based on given institutional standards. Assessment is a systematic process that provides an opportunity for teachers to meaningfully reflect on how learning is best delivered, collect respective evidences, and then use that information to improve their teaching. Furthermore, assessment can help instructors obtain useful and immediate feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning (Taras, 2005; Stiggins, 1992 cited in Buyukkarci, 2014).

Assessment can be classified into two main categories: The first is summative assessment (or assessment of learning put forth by Stiggins, 2002; Derrich and Ecclestone, 2006). The objective of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Taras (2005) notes that summative assessment is a judgment which summarizes all the evidence up to a given point. This certain point is seen as a finality at the point of the judgment. This type of assessment can have various functions, such as shaping how teachers organize their courses or what courses schools can offer their students, which do not have an effect on the learning process.

The second category, on the other hand, is formative assessment (or assessment for learning, ongoing assessment, or dynamic assessment as stated by Stiggins, 2002; Derrich and Ecclestone, 2006). The aim of formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching, and by the students to improve their learning. In Threlfall’s (2005) terms “formative assessment may be defined as the use of assessment judgments about capacities or competences to promote the further learning of the person who has been assessed” (p. 54). This type of assessment helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work and also helps faculty recognize in which areas the students are struggling and to address the problems immediately.

It is worth to mention that teachers may also take an interest in assessing the strengths and weakness of the individuals through diagnostic assessment. Brown (2005) described that, like formative assessment, diagnostic assessment is meant to improve the learner’s experience and their level of achievement. However, it looks backwards rather than forwards via assessing what the learner already knows and/or the nature of difficulties that the learner might have. This type of assessment is often used when a problem arises

or before teaching. If left undiagnosed, it might limit their engagement in new learning. In contrast, placement assessment, which is almost identical to summative assessment, is more specifically relevant to a given program, particularly in terms of the relatively narrow range of abilities assessed and the content of the curriculum, so that it efficiently separates the students into level grouping within that program.

Based on the given discussion about the modes of assessment, it can be said that formative assessment and its continuous and actual practices in classes would be highly beneficial for students' learning process compared to summative assessment. Yet, it varies from institution to institution and different teachers may have different views about practicing them. Chew and Lee (2013, p 1) state that "through formative assessment, students can be assessed for their process of learning rather than just for their product of learning. Coupled with the usual summative assessment that students are subjected to, acquisition and application of knowledge acquired can be effectively determined."

The role of lecturers in assessment is not without importance. The motivation behind this study is to seek whether lecturers at universities are equipped with the necessary skills knowledge in the fundamentals of language assessment to be able to evaluate students fairly and effectively. In addition, this study intended to explore the assessment practices and beliefs of the lecturers. Linn and Miller (2005) emphasized that the educational reform has called for the implementation of multiple sources of assessment information from the classroom instead of just relying on one type of assessment. The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has taken this assessment reform into account seriously and came up with a new national assessment system for all schools. The goal was to reduce dependence on the highly centralized assessment system and shift to a system that integrates assessment practices and beliefs. In anticipation of the reformation of the assessment system, the current assessment practices of the Malaysian lecturers need to be known so that appropriate action can be taken to improve the assessment skills of lecturers.

Previous attempts, in the context of Malaysia, to identify the assessment beliefs and assessment practices relied on the data from Malaysian primary, secondary or in-service school teachers (Mohd Sallehudin, 2011; Suah & Ong, 2012; Ch'ng & Rethinasamy, 2013). Inadequacies in the data often result in unclear picture about the assessment practices and beliefs of the lecturers. As assessment practices of Malaysian lecturers are not well explored, this study was carried out to identify the current assessment practices and beliefs of the lecturers' at tertiary levels.

It is firmly believed that the results of this study will shed light on both the strong and problematic areas of teachers' ideas and actual practices about assessment for learning and assessment of learning, which may lead to a better understanding of the importance of assessment in students' language learning processes.

Purpose of the Study

Harris, Irving and Peterson (2008) put forward that assessment is considered to be a critical component in the process of teaching and learning as it enables educators to evaluate student learning and utilize the information to improve learning and instruction. As a result, Brookhart (1999) highlights the great importance of teachers using assessments that are valid, reliable, meaningful and accurate to guide instruction. Hence, this study seeks to investigate assessment beliefs and practices of a group of lecturers from Malaysian tertiary institutions. In particular, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the state of assessment beliefs among lecturers in institutions of higher learning?
2. How do lecturers carry out their assessment practices?
3. Is there any relationship between assessment beliefs and practices of Malaysian lecturers?
4. What kinds of assessment methods and tools do lecturers use to evaluate their students?
5. What are the problems that lecturers encounter while assessing their students?

Research Background and Literature Review

Educators today are expected to make important professional decisions based on the results of educational assessments. Yet, in many instances, the educators making those assessment-dependent decisions are doing so without a genuine understanding of educational assessment (Popham, 2006). According to Wiggins (1998), the term 'educative assessment' used to describe assessment literacy includes techniques and issues that educators should know about when they design and use assessments. He states that the nature of assessment influences what is learned and the degree of meaningful engagement by students in the learning process. It is also believed that effective teaching is characterized by assessments that motivate and engage students in ways that are consistent with philosophies of teaching and learning and with theories of learning, and motivation.

Effective teaching and learning rests on meaningful assessment and professional judgment which is the foundation for assessment. Educators need to clearly understand and use all aspects of assessment. Whether that professional judgment occurs for constructing test questions, scoring essays, creating rubrics, grading participation, combining scores, or interpreting standardized test scores, the essence of the process is making professional judgment and interpretation. However, the degree of competence rests on a high level of making professional judgment and interpretation which is determined by the level of assessment literacy. Assessment literacy is based on professional assumptions and values

and is cultivated in the context of institutional needs and goals. Thus, assessment literacy has a high premium in describing the success of providing education.

Surprisingly, the term assessment literacy is not listed in the *Dictionary of Language Testing* (1999). Neither does it appear in the *ALTE Multilingual Glossary of Language Testing Terms* (1998) or Mousavi's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language Testing* (2002). In each of these works, the issue of how people actually become competent at assessing was not mentioned. However, it is assumed that when lecturers begin their careers, they are expected to be equipped with assessment literacy. If they do not already have the skills they are expected to develop them in tandem with all the other skills that will help to advance their careers such as intensive publications and research besides teaching. The issue in focus is how lecturers learn about concepts involved in assessment?

Assessment literacy does not cover just knowing about test formats such as multiple-choice tests, essay tests, cloze tests etc. It covers knowing aspects of assessments that include principles of good test constructions, factors external to the classroom such as mandated large-scale testing and different assessment strategies (using selected-response tests and providing practice in objective test-taking) (McMillan & Nash, 2000). Assessment literacy also means having knowledge about making decisions about what type of test to use and for what purpose. Assessment can come in many forms depending on what needs to be assessed and how to assess. Some of these are:

- Learning vs. auditing
- Formative (informal and ongoing) vs. summative (formal and at the end)
- Criterion-referenced vs. norm-referenced
- Value-added vs. absolute standards
- Traditional vs. alternative
- Authentic vs. contrived
- Speeded tests vs. power tests
- Standardized tests vs. classroom tests

Many researchers have argued that there are a number of “essential” assessment concepts, principles, techniques and procedures that educators need to know about (Calfee & Masuda, 1997; McMillan, 2001; Sanders & Vogel, 1993; Stiggins & Conklin, 1992). There continues to be relatively little emphasis on assessment preparation or professional development of assessment literacy for educators (Stiggins, 2000). Competing purposes, uses and pressures result in tension for educators as they make assessment-related decisions. These prevalent tensions suggest that the better informed decisions about assessment are best made with a complete understanding of how different factors influence the nature of the assessment. After these factors are understood, priorities need to be made and trade-offs may be inevitable. By understanding the tensions better, educators will hopefully make better informed and better justified assessment decisions.

Assessment is inherently a process of professional judgment which needs specialized training. In the course of hiring new lecturers, assessment literacy is not often a consideration for employment though assessment forms a major part of a lecturer's responsibility. It seems to appear that the skills are to be 'CAUGHT' rather than 'TAUGHT'. As a result, for many novice lecturers, assessment literacy is an issue as they have to contend with learning about assessment simultaneously with learning the many other duties of a lecturer. The gaining of assessment literacy should not be left to chance. There is definitely a place for every institution to harness and develop assessment literacy in a concerted manner to ensure that every lecturer has the knowledge and assessment skills in order to be an effective educator.

At the tertiary level, lecturers need to be secure and firm in their knowledge of assessment literacy. Lecturers must be able to put knowledge into practice in order to come up with viable tests that are valid. Their knowledge would need to cover the understanding of fundamental concepts common to all assessments, as well as specifics that would be essential for particular learning situations, e.g. in the laboratory, classroom, the different types of instruments used, measurement concepts and constructing and evaluating scoring rubrics.

Generally, personal experiences and interactions in daily life play a critical role in chipping beliefs and interpretations of events that individuals have engaged in (Al-Sharafi, 1998; Hsieh, 2002). Bauch (1984) holds that these beliefs are changed into attitudes which in turn influence intentions with intentions of becoming the bases for decisions that result in action.

In educational contexts, this belief system rules teaching behaviors, with individual pedagogies reflecting a teacher's beliefs about language teaching (Bauch, 1984; Graves, 2000; Huang, 1997). Beliefs are influenced by teachers' thought process and instructional decisions are substantial (Borg, 1999). These beliefs chiefly governs teachers' choices and practice such as addressing teaching objectives, designing lessons, selecting tasks and activities, and assessing student performance (Rios, 1996). Therefore, teachers not only impart knowledge to their students but also consciously or unconsciously pass or impose their beliefs about learning on to their students in the classroom (Horwitz, 1988).

Previous studies on assessment practices and beliefs

Studies focusing on assessment practices showed that teachers have been affected by subject areas and years of teaching experience (Bol, et al., 1998; Mertler, 1998, Trepanier-Street, McNair, & Donegan, 2001; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003). These studies indicated that teachers relied more on formative assessment practices approaches rather than summative. Several studies were carried out and compared primary school teachers with secondary school teachers. It was found that, all in all, formative assessment was preferred, while secondary teachers opted for more conventional types of assessment approaches.

Mohd Sallehudin (2011) analyzed the assessment practices of the Malaysian teachers. The results from the investigation showed that the language teachers adopted a range of practices. Suah and Ong (2012) investigated the assessment practices of 406 Malaysian in-service teachers and came to the conclusion that in-service teachers were found to often use traditional types of assessment. The assessment practices differed between language teachers and science and mathematics teachers, primary school teachers and secondary school teachers and experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers. Cheng (1997) found that teachers' beliefs about foreign language learning had a critical effect on students' anxiety about foreign language learning. The findings revealed that Chinese teachers are likely to emphasize the importance of excellent pronunciation, immediate error correction, vocabulary memorization and grammar rules. Rahim, Venville and Chapman (2009) uncovered that teachers' beliefs influenced their classroom decision-making regarding the teaching and learning experiences for students and assessment for making judgment about students' learning. For example, they reported that studies conducted on Mathematics teachers' beliefs indicated a positive relationship between Mathematics teachers' beliefs and their assessment practices. Chew and Lee (2013) also conducted a study in Singapore and their findings showed no significant gaps between participants' assessment beliefs and practices. Likewise, Thomos's study (2012) in Pakistan revealed that there is no significant difference in the assessment beliefs of trained and untrained teachers. In another study, Susuwele-Banda (2005) figured out that teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment have influenced their classroom assessment practices. They perceived assessment as testing and classroom assessment practices were not clearly embedded in their teaching. Finally, Chan's (2008) study on Taiwanese teachers discovered that teachers had strong beliefs of assessments. They preferred multiple assessment to conventional assessment. His findings revealed that, in general, teachers applied assessments or used alternative assessment most of the time. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between teachers' beliefs and practices showed that their relationship was positively significant at the level of .01. In fact, the study disclosed that the stronger the beliefs on assessments the teachers had, the more frequently they used multiple assessments in their teaching practices.

Method

A quantitative design approach was used in an effort to describe the current assessment beliefs and assessment practices and also to determine to what degree relationships exist among the variables. According to Gay and Airasian (2000) quantitative research is "based on the collection and analysis of numerical data" (p. 8) and is used to "describe current conditions, investigate relationships, and study cause-effect phenomena" (p.11). The respondents were randomly selected and they gave their consent to take part in this

study. Participants were composed of 35 male (53.8%) and 30 female (46.2%) Malaysian lecturers from various disciplines in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

The instrument

The instrument is a four-point Likert scale questionnaire which was developed by the researchers to meet the objectives of the study. It consists of three parts. In part A, there are seven demographic questions to collect background information of the participants. Part B gauges assessment beliefs and is composed of five constructs; 1) general assessment beliefs (20 items), 2) assessment and teacher (9 items), 3) assessment and student learning (5 items), 4) assessment and teaching improvement (4 items) and 5) irrelevance of assessment (7 items). Part C deals with assessment practices and also has five constructs; 1) assessment to measure students capability (7 items), 2) assessment practices (12 items) 3) frequency of assessment (5 items), 4) assessment approaches (13 items) and 5) assessment problems teachers face (16 items).

The survey was developed based on related literature and previous studies done on assessment beliefs and practices. Two main constructs (assessment beliefs and assessment practices) were developed in order to make this study feasible. Sub-constructs emerged as a result of the construct and content validity. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, three PhD holders were requested to comment on the questionnaire. They were experienced researchers in the field of language and education as well as Applied Linguistics, collectively with 17 years of experience in teaching and research. The independent experts left their comments on the instrument and the researchers were asked to revise it accordingly. Taking the comments into considerations, some irrelevant items under each sub-construct were removed due to their unsuitability. Some biased items were changed, while some were made shorter. The language of some items were improved as they were reported to be unclear and vague.

As for reliability, the items examining assessment beliefs were computed and reliability appeared to be 0.87 while the Cronbach's alpha reliability for the assessment practices was 0.87. The questionnaire had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

Result and Discussion

Data management and analysis were performed using SPSS software (version 17). The analysis attempted to address the research questions in detail. Table 1 shows the result for assessment beliefs and assessment practices among lecturers.

Table 1. Assessment Beliefs Vs. Assessment Practices

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assessment beliefs	3.1077	.56245
Assessment and the teacher	2.5692	.55816
Assessment and the student learning	2.9846	.67297
Assessment and teaching improvement	3.2615	.50858
Irrelevant of assessment	2.2308	.67937
Assessment beliefs (Total)	2.9077	.45836
Assessment to measure students capability	3.3846	.60447
Assessment practices	3.8615	.34807
Frequency of assessment	2.6462	.51329
Assessment practices (Total)	3.0615	.39039

As can be seen in Table 1, assessment practices had the highest mean (3.8615). The mean and standard deviation of assessment beliefs is 3.1077 and 0.56245 respectively. The total mean and standard deviation for assessment practices, meanwhile, are 3.0615 and .39039 respectively.

Table 2 presents the findings for overall assessment beliefs of the lecturers and its five sub-categories while table 3 illustrates the results for the assessment practices, in general, and its three subcategories.

Table 2. Assessment Beliefs Sub-categories

Assessment beliefs			Assessment and the teacher		
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0	Strongly disagree	1	1.5
Disagree	7	10.8	Disagree	27	41.5
Agree	44	67.7	Agree	36	55.4
Strongly agree	14	21.5	Strongly agree	1	1.5
Assessment and the student learning			Assessment and teaching improvement		
Strongly disagree	0	0	Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	15	23.1	Disagree	2	3.1
Agree	36	55.4	Agree	44	67.7
Strongly agree	14	21.5	Strongly agree	19	29.2
Irrelevant of assessment			Assessment beliefs (Total)		
Strongly disagree	8	12.3	Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	35	53.8	Disagree	10	15.4
Agree	21	32.3	Agree	51	78.5
Strongly agree	1	1.5	Strongly agree	4	6.2

The frequency and percentage of the respondent's answers regarding assessment belief sub-categories are presented in Table 2. In total, it can be stated that the assessment beliefs of the participants is fairly high. This suggests that teachers have positive views towards assessment.

Table 3. Assessment Practices Sub-categories

Assessment to measure students capability			Assessment practices		
	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Never	0	0	Strongly disagree	0	0
Not often	4	6.2	Disagree	0	0
Often	32	49.2	Agree	9	13.8
Very Often	29	44.6	Strongly agree	56	86.2
Frequency of assessment			Assessment practices (Total)		
Strongly disagree	0	0	Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	24	36.9	Disagree	3	4.6
Agree	40	61.5	Agree	55	84.6
Strongly agree	1	1.5	Strongly agree	7	10.8

As can be seen in Table 3, the frequency and percentage of the respondent's answers regarding assessment practices sub-categories are presented. The findings indicate that majority of the instructors' measures students' capability frequently. Likewise, they also believe that assessment practices are very useful. In total, 84.6% of the respondents agree that assessment practices are undertaken on a regular basis.

Pearson Correlation was used to explore the relationship between assessment beliefs and practices. Table 4 displays the correlation between assessment beliefs and assessment practices among participants.

Table 4. The correlation between assessment beliefs and assessment practices

	Assessment practices
Pearson Correlation	.294*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.017

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As is shown in Table 4, there is a positive significant correlation between assessment beliefs and assessment practices (this correlation is significant at the 0.05 level). In other words, the higher the level of assessment beliefs, the higher the level of assessment practices. The result is in line with the findings of Rahim, Venville and Chapman (2009) and Chan (2008), who also found a positive correlation between assessment beliefs and

practices. This implies that a greater understanding of assessment beliefs and importance of practices can contribute to the development of relevant professional development aimed at the improvement of teachers' assessment pedagogies and practices which can contribute to greater educational success. But, it remains unclear if the assessment practices are influenced by teachers' beliefs and the contexts or vice versa.

Table 5 indicates the correlation among sub-categories of assessment beliefs and assessment practices as the study was also interested in examining the correlation within the sub-categories of two variables.

Table 5. Correlation among sub-categories of assessment beliefs and assessment practices

		Assessment beliefs	Assessment and the teacher	Assessment and the student learning	Assessment and teaching improvement	Irrelevant of assessment	Assessment to measure students capability	Assessment practices	Frequency of assessment
Assessment beliefs	Pearson Correlation		.200	.459**	.337**	-.107	.290*	.077	.134
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.110	.000	.006	.396	.019	.540	.287
Assessment and the teacher	Pearson Correlation	.200		.107	.128	.431**	.175	.010	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110		.397	.310	.000	.164	.938	.179
Assessment and the student learning	Pearson Correlation	.459**	.107		.468**	-.197	.360**	.057	.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.397		.000	.115	.003	.649	.556
Assessment and teaching improvement	Pearson Correlation	.337**	.128	.468**		-.042	.379**	.031	.121
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.310	.000		.741	.002	.805	.338
Irrelevant of assessment	Pearson Correlation	-.107	.431**	-.197	-.042		.161	-.127	.283*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.396	.000	.115	.741		.200	.313	.023

As can be seen in Table 5 there is a positive significant correlation between some sub-categories of assessment beliefs and assessment practices. These include; assessment beliefs and Assessment and student learning, assessment beliefs and Assessment and teaching improvement, assessment beliefs and Assessment to measure students capability, Assessment and the student learning and assessment beliefs, Assessment and the student learning and Assessment and teaching improvement, Assessment and the student learning and Assessment to measure students capability, Assessment and teaching improvement and assessment beliefs, Assessment and teaching improvement and Assessment and student learning, and (Assessment and teaching improvement and Assessment to measure students capability). These correlations are significant at 0.05, but

at moderate level. It should also be highlighted that not only does no correlation exist between some variables (e.g. assessment and the teacher & irrelevant of assessment), there is also a negative correlation between several variables (e.g. assessment and teaching improvement & irrelevant of assessment).

Table 6 reveals how the lecturers use diversity of the approaches to undertake assessment of the pupils. The results are sorted from the least frequent to the most frequently used approaches.

Table 6. Employment of various approaches for conducting assessment of the students

	Mean	SD
Dramatization	1.8923	.97023
Role play	2.0615	.82683
Tests- weekly and monthly	2.5077	.83147
Projects and experiments	2.5692	.82858
Quiz- competition	2.6615	.88877
Written exercises in calls	2.6923	.82771
Demonstration of practical skills	2.7231	.89281
Scenarios/case studies	2.7385	.85288
Class presentation	2.9385	.93336
Homework/Assignment	3.0154	.78047
Group discussion	3.0308	.76993
Oral questions	3.0462	.77924
Tests-midterm and terminal	3.2615	.61940

Table 6 presents the mean and standard deviation for employment of various approaches for conducting assessment of the students. Group discussion, Oral questions and Tests-midterm and terminal with respective mean scores of 3.03, 3.0462 and 3.26 show that teachers are using these methods and tools the most to assess their students. Nevertheless, Dramatization, Role play and Tests- weekly and monthly are the least frequently used approaches.

Table 7 displays the results of the assessment problem which lecturers encounter while teaching. The findings were sorted based on the mean score to show the least and the most important problems that they faced.

Table 7. Assessment problems

Student absent on examination day because of fear	2.0923	.97984
Poor lighting	2.1231	.87514
Insufficient air conditioning	2.2000	.86963
Insufficient number of people to help invigilate the test	2.2308	.94818
Inexperienced expertise to vet	2.3846	.94691
Seating arrangement in classroom	2.4000	.89791
Audio-visual equipment	2.4308	.90085
Large class size	2.4462	.93593
Pupils needing more time to take the test	2.5077	.79300
Classroom layout	2.5385	.96949
Insufficient time to cover all the material	2.5538	.91908
Lack of discipline among students	2.5538	.86658
Students copying other students' work	2.6308	.80174
Time-consuming to write the test and administer it	2.8000	.86963
Administrative duties involved with assessment	2.8923	.86824
Time-consuming to mark all the papers	2.9077	.82392

As can be seen in Table 7 the mean and standard deviation for assessment problems are presented. Issues such as the time consumed to write and administer tests, administrative duties involved with assessment, and time-consuming to mark all the papers showed mean scores of 2.80, 2.89 and 2.90 respectively. As is evident, it is reported that marking is time consuming and had the highest means among assessment problems suggesting that they are assessment problems lecturers encounter most when assessing their students. Taken together, the findings of this study raise some significant issues related to the quality of teaching and assessment in tertiary level.

Conclusion

The findings of this research can be summarized as that firstly, Malaysian lecturers have strong beliefs about assessments and these are often presented in the way they conduct assessment practices. Secondly, the data seemed to indicate that there was a significant but weak correlation between assessment beliefs and assessment practices. Lecturers tended to use mid-term tests and final examinations as the most favored approach for conducting assessment of the students. Dramatization was the least favored. Finally, lecturers stated that factors such as *time-consuming to mark all the papers* and *administrative duties involved with assessment* are the most challenging assessment issues that lecturers encounter.

By and large, the results suggest that identifying the state of assessment literacy and practices among lecturers should always be given overriding priority in order that effective teaching and learning can take place in the classroom. Feedback of this nature could depict lecturers actual and perceived beliefs about assessment practices. The role assessment literacy plays in the teaching and learning process would then not be undermined. The findings are beneficial in that they reveal strengths and weaknesses of assessment systems and preferences among lecturers in terms of assessment methods and techniques, as well as providing necessary input for further meaningful feedback and action. To complement the awareness of assessment literacy of lecturers, the study also provided insights into the perceptions of another important stakeholder i.e. the students themselves. They are the final beneficiary of teaching and learning and are a captive audience, as well the subject of assessment practices. Teachers' beliefs about language teaching are also influential and have a huge impact on assessment literacy and practice. In line with this, future research should consider different variables of assessment literacy and investigate lecturers' beliefs on a deeper level. Further research should also be conducted to investigate students' beliefs to find out the relationship between teachers and students' beliefs and the ways these could impact and impinge on the other.

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Dėstytojų vertinimo kompetencijos vertinimas

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Santrauka

Aukštajame moksle apskaitos sistema yra svarbi ir dažniausiai siejama su pasitikėjimu dėstytojų vertinimo kompetencija. Dėstytojai yra atsakingi už „vertinimo lapus“, kurie laikomi pagrindiniu studentų pažangos ir mokymosi rezultatų rodikliu. Dėstytojų vertinimo kompetencija yra ypač reikšminga studijų procese, nes ugdymo institucijoje pasikliaujama dėstytojų pateikiamu studentų dalyko žinių ir įgūdžių vertinimu. Todėl kyla klausimų: ar dėstytojams suteikiama pakankamai ir tinkamų žinių apie vertinimo metodus, ar vertinimo kompetencijos ugdymasis yra paties dėstytojo atsakomybė? Tyrimu siekta nustatyti dėstytojų vertinimo kompetencijos lygį ir iširti dažniausiai taikomus vertinimo metodus. Tyrimui naudota anketinė apklausa. Apklausti 65 skirtingų studijų dalykų dėstytojai, dirbantys Malaizijos valstybiniame universitete. Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad dėstytojų vertinimo kompetencija yra žemesnė nei patenkinamo lygio. Tai rodo, kad dėstytojai neturėjo specialaus pasirengimo, ugdančio jų vertinimo kompetenciją kaip svarbią jų profesinės atsakomybės sritį mokymo(si) kontekste.

Esminiai žodžiai: *aukštasis mokslas, vertinimo praktika, vertinimo kompetencija, dėstytojai, vertinimo metodai, mokymosi pasiekimai.*

Įteikta / Received 2016-08-03
Priimta / Accepted 2016-11-14