



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Teachers' Concept about Strategies of Assessment for Learning and its Application: A Descriptive Study of Undergraduate Teachers of Education**

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**ABSTRACT**

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AFL in classroom promotes productive and lifelong learning for students and develops an active relation between teacher and student. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the teacher concepts' about strategies of AFL and its application in the classroom. Using the quantitative paradigm, the present study is descriptive, and survey design has been followed to carry out the research. 40 teachers of Education were selected from government colleges of Karachi using simple random sample technique. Data collection was done by using a closed-ended questionnaire, which was comprised of three parts i.e., Knowledge of assessment and strategies of AFL, practices of AFL, and application of AFL strategies in the classroom. Research findings revealed that most of government college teachers have little awareness of concept AFL and its strategies as a result the ratio of implementation of AFL in the classroom is low due to lack of time and resources, irregularity of students, and the large classes. Organizing workshops and short courses of AFL may help teachers to enhance their teaching competency to implement AFL strategies effectively in the classroom.

**Introduction**

Assessment is about learning. Traditionally assessment is proposed to uncover and report on what has been learnt thus its relation with classroom activities. Assessment is fundamental to teaching and learning activities in school and mediates the communication between teachers and students in the classroom. The word assessment derived from the Latin word 'assidere,' which means 'to sit behind' (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). While in teaching and learning scenario, the word 'assessment' refers to the numbers of different methods teacher use to evaluate, measure and maintain the record of academic and learning progress and acquisitive skills of students throughout the student life, i.e., from preschool to college and adulthood (Anandan, 2015). The primary purpose of assessment can be easily understood by this example; in education the student is viewed as 'empty vessel', where teacher pour knowledge as much as it possible, and the primary function of

assessment is to measure what has filled in, and what needs to be filled (Faulty & Savage, 2008)

### **Literature Review**

AFL can be defined as the '[...] assessment, which prioritizes to aid the purpose of students' learning [...] to provide information which uses as feedback by the teachers and students by assessing themselves [...] in changing the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged' (Black, et al., 2003). The nature of AFL is formative and develops knowledge about the standard of performance that students are expected to reach. AFL makes student to do self-assessment and self-reflection on their performance. AFL gives them the insight to understand where they need to work more and what step should take to learn more with the collaboration of teacher. AFL develop metacognitive skills with the capacity to 'how to learn'.

AFL promotes active relation of teacher and student. It helps to identify up to what level student have learned and it also enhances students' understanding of the standard expected to reach. Grima, Borg, &Curmi (1990) stated that 'AFL collect evidence of students' understanding, use this evidence to increase their learning and enable the teacher to know where student stand in their learning which forms a bridge for the student between what is known and what to know next'. AFL focus is on the process of learning, and it is ongoing process. In AFL, a student is a central and essential element. The Assessment Reform Group (ARG) develops ten principles to explain the definition of AFL. These principles state that AFL;

1. is a part of effective planning.
2. focuses on how student learn
3. is central to classroom activity
4. is a professional skill
5. is sensitive and constructive
6. motivate the learner
7. helps learner know how to improve
8. boost up self-assessment
9. supports understanding of goals and assessment criteria
10. recognizes all achievement (ARG, 2002)

### **Application of AFL in Classroom**

Literature review has identified the following strategies of AFL which has been currently using in the classroom.

#### **ABC Brainstorming**

ABC brainstorming strategy provides the teacher information on students' learning in a particular topic or subject. In ABC brainstorming student try to think one word to each alphabet and write it down. This activity provides a variety of information about the student (Benjamin, 2010, p. 105). According to Lynne and Gayle (2010), ABC brainstorming has several steps for conducting. First, All student will work individually in the start, and they write down only alphabets on the sheet,

leaving space for phrase or word for each alphabet. Second, the teacher provides a topic the student brainstorms the word or phrase and writes it down with correlate alphabet. Third, the student discusses their work with their partner to check which alphabets they haven't filled. In last, all class will do a group discussion and consider their words or phrase written for each letter.

### **Checklists**

Checklist are the new tool in AFL, it helps teachers to reveal exactly what students should understand a subject in a short time during a unit of study. The checklist is majorly taken at the beginning of a new lesson. For conducting a checklist, the teacher makes a list of all skills in which students need to demonstrate their learning. The checklist can be done individually, in a pair or a small group.

### **Concept Maps**

Concepts are the type of graphic visual presentation, which enhance students' understanding of a new topic. It reduces the overloaded information and high volume of text in a paragraph. Concept maps refine students' learning abilities. It helps students to see the concept and the relationship between concepts and express their idea (Birbili, 2006). The traditional concept maps provide a hierarchical representation from top to bottom, but the concept map is more than top-down charts. From one single topic, a student can create a spider map, Mind-map, flowchart, visual flow, etc. by using a picture or geometrical shapes. (Jennings, 2012)

### **Discussions**

Discussion method gives valuable information regarding student knowledge on a particular topic as well as on subject. Discussion method stimulates imaginative and conceptual think in students. Welty (1989) said teacher could conduct discussion on any topic in class by doing these simple steps; (1) prepare the concept and outline of matter and organize it before class; (2) made question should be according to level of students; (3) adjust the sitting arrangement; (4) begin class with little brainstorm and ask your prepared questions to students; (5) listen and response to students' discussion; (6) observe body language, group working and sense of timing of students; (6) End the class with sum up of discussion; (7) provide a detail on-time feedback to students performance.

### **Double Entry Journals**

Double entry journals are one kind of journaling. It has two columns, the left column; where student write keywords, ideas, or quotation, and the right column; where student write their respond (i.e., personal thinking, experience, etc.). Drapper (2010 p.12) stated that the double entry journal is structured to provide a reading response and to make a significant decision based on text and to reflect one's thought or connection to the text.

### **I-Think**

I-Think is a cooperative group strategy which addressed a problem and their sensible solutions. Thomas (2006) stated, "I" referred to student' thinking about the

question that is posed by the teacher before sharing with the group. The I-Think strategy encourages students to analyze the problem individually or cooperatively, develop metacognitive skills by using verbal and written discourse. (Wilson, 2004)

### **Observations**

Observations provide information about student progress in class from verbal, non-verbal behavior, and academic records. Raymond (1988) stated teacher can record information into many different forms and can be noted on the file card. To study the pattern of student progress, the teacher can use sticky notes and jot them down. Thus, the teacher will be able to analyze student observation. This strategy will make the teacher able to study and predict student progress or pattern behavior.

### **Open-Ended Questions**

Open-ended questionnaire required the student to think and then respond. Open-ended questions play an essential role in students' learning. It is not only a pedagogical tool to assess student learning but also improve students' understanding. (Sardaresh et al., 2014). The open-ended question typically has more than one answer, and they promote higher order thinking skills.

### **Paper Pass**

Paper pass process can be formal or informal. In which the teacher prepares a chart paper on a selected topic with different target words or questions. Student rotates their paper one by one to each other and writes their comment about the topic to target words. In paper pass strategy student correct others' answer by peer-assessment and learn from other students.

### **Peer-Assessments**

Peer assessment is a predefined assessment to evaluate student's understanding and consolidating learning (Jones, 2005). Peer assessment involves student involvement in assessing peer work by comparing work to developed criteria by the teacher. It also provides further opportunities for students to recognize their learning goals (Herrera, Murry, & Cabral, 2007).

### **Reflection Journals**

Reflective journal enable the student to think about what they have learned and made the connection to their own lives. It provides an excellent opportunity for teacher and student. Harmer (2007) stated that reflection journals provoke students into writing reflection of their learning. The teacher can assess student by reading through the entries the student made in the journal. It will help the teacher to shape the future lesson plan.

### **Self-Assessments**

Self-assessment is a potent tool; it involves students' reflection about their learning to determine lesson outcomes. When the student can assess their work, they

can identify their learning gap, learn the criteria for high-quality performance. (Herrera, Murry, & Cabral, 2007; Jones, 2005)

### **Sentence Prompts**

Sentence prompts are used in the variety of way to assess student informally, and gather student information. They mostly start with I Learned..., I don't learn..., I need to learn that... statement. The primary purpose of sentence prompts, firstly student provide quick feedback on teaching methodology, and, secondly, it informs to what extent student has achieved learning goals (Ellis, 2010).

### **Three Minute Pauses**

McTighe & Lyman developed Three-minute pause strategy in 1988. It helps students to comprehend the topic by taking a small pause and analyze what they are reading. The key idea of three-minute pause activity is to read for three minutes and stop. Then summarize the key point what they have read, add their concept, and pose clarifying questions. This activity assists students in making a connection to prior background knowledge and current learning by themselves as well as from their peers. (Kelencik & Bernadowski, 2007, p. 107)

### **Think-Pair-Share**

Think-Pair-Share is one of group strategy which involved the various method of collaborative learning. Kagan firstly developed Think-Pair-Share in 1991. It triggers the students prior learning and to imply it in the current situation (Hamdan, 2017), which is majorly used in mathematics. Think-Pair-Share allows students to think individually on the assigned task and then involve in group discussion and improve the quality of learning (Sampel, 2013).

### **Jigsaw**

Jigsaw strategy helps students to create their learning. It is a type of cooperative learning just like a jigsaw puzzle. In which strands of the lesson are segmented to small parts of information, and this information is given to groups of students to explain and discuss with each other and complete the jigsaw puzzle. The jigsaw method developed a topic into subtopic introduced to students (Azmin, 2016).

### **Material and Methods**

The study was descriptive and survey design was adopted to conduct the study. The population was comprised of Education Teachers of Government sector colleges having a minimum five-year experience. The sample included 40 males and females Education Teachers of Government colleges by using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a closed-ended questionnaire based on three parts. The first part was based on the concept of assessment and its strategies, comprised of best choice questions with three options. The second part of questionnaire was based on practice and knowledge of AFL in the classroom, comprised of semi-closed ended questions. The third and last part of questionnaire was based on the assessment practices in classroom, comprised of 4-degree Likert scale with options "Most of the time, Often, Sometimes and Rarely".

Pilot testing of the present study was conducted and inter-rated reliability of the tool was checked by Cronbach Alpha which showed 0.670. To check face and content validity, the tool was checked by four experts. Data was collected by in-person administration of the tool. The collected data were analyzed using frequency distribution and the chi-square test.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### Demographic information

For analysis of demographic information, frequency tabulation was used.

**Table 1**  
**Academic Qualification of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Masters	25	62.5	62.5	62.5
MPhil/MS	8	20.0	20.0	82.5
PhD	5	12.5	12.5	95.0
Missing Value	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 showed the academic qualification of majority respondents were masters 25 (62.5%) while only 5 (12.5%) respondents were PhD degree holders.

**Table 2**  
**Professional Qualification of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
B.Ed.	14	35.0	35.0	35.0
M.Ed.	20	50.0	50.0	85.0
Don't Have	6	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 showed the professional qualification of majority respondents were M.Ed. 20 (50%), and 14 (35%) respondents were B.Ed. while 6 (15%) respondents doesn't had any professional qualification.

**Table 3**  
**Experience of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
5 years	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
6-10 years	10	25.0	25.0	35.0
11-15 years	9	22.5	22.5	57.5
more than 16 years	17	42.5	42.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 showed the majority respondents 17 (42.5%) more than 16 years teaching experiences while only 4 (10%) respondents had 5 years teaching experience.

**Table 4**  
**Designation at workplace of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lecturer	21	52.5	52.5	52.5
Assistant Professor	11	27.5	27.5	80.0
Professor	3	7.5	7.5	87.5
Missing Value	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 showed the majority respondents 21 (52.5%) were working as lecturers in college while only 3 (7.5%) respondents were working as professor in college.

**Table 5**  
**Job type of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Permanent	38	95.0	95.0	95.0
Part time	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 showed that 38 (95%) respondents were permanent employed in colleges and only 2 (5%) respondents were part time employed in colleges

### Hypotheses Testing

For hypotheses testing, Chi-square test was used.

#### Hypothesis 1

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification about the concepts of strategies of AFL.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification about the concepts of strategies of AFL.

**Table 6**  
**Testing of Hypothesis 1**

Items	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value
What is assessment?	3.154	3.423
What is evaluation?	6.452	5.172
What is formative assessment?	8.370	10.000
What is summative assessment?	6.933	7.582
Which statement defines best assessment for learning?	3.260	4.705
Which statement defines best assessment of learning?	1.000	1.080
Which statement defines best assessment as learning?	8.058	8.327
Cloze Procedure is a _____	8.160	9.628
The inside/outside circle is a _____	3.974	5.348
_____ can be used on regular basis to assess student formatively.	17.920	20.809
What is surprise test?	4.069	5.293

What is alternative assessment?	7.656	9.197
Checklist is used _____	4.280	5.897
Total	83.228	99.461

Table 6 showed the tabulated value is higher than calculated value. Thus failed to reject null hypothesis and it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and knowledge about the strategies of AFL

### **Hypothesis 2**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and the practice of AFL strategies in classroom.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and the practice of AFL strategies in classroom.

**Table 7  
Testing of Hypothesis 2**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Calculated Value</b>	<b>Tabulated Value</b>
Do you assess your students in classroom to measure their learning?	1.051	1.656
Do you assess students at the beginning of the class?	5.804	6.416
Does assessment influence the way students learning?	1.462	2.353
Do you provide specific information to students about their strength and weakness in class?	5.935	8.348
Do you allow your students to discover their learning difficulties?	8.775	8.847
Do you think students should be involved in setting assessment criteria?	26.762	26.775
Do you create the situations in which students have the chance to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned?	.519	.572
Do you provide real time feedback on students work to all students?	1.806	2.882
Total	52.114	57.849

Table 7 showed the tabulated value is higher than calculated value. Thus failed to reject null hypothesis and it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and the practice of AFL strategies in classroom.



### Hypothesis 3

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and their current assessment strategies in classroom.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and their current assessment strategies in classroom.

**Table 8**  
**Testing of Hypothesis 3**

Items	Calculated Value	Tabulated Value
What type of assessments you use in classroom to measure student learning?	6.235	7.702
What strategies you use for assessment?	16.230	19.614
In your view which assessment is better?	7.600	10.306
When do you assess your student?	1.529	1.974
In general, how many times you assess your student in a year?	7.346	8.734
Do you know about Bloom's taxonomy of education?	2.560	3.859
Up to what level of Bloom's taxonomy you use for assessment?	2.263	3.009
Do you think students' score represent what they have learned?	.927	1.236
Do you believe on alternative assessment?	3.077	2.851
What alternative assessment you use in your classroom?	13.104	16.553
Do you think management or administration has any the role in assessment?	7.747	5.253
Total	68.618	81.091

Table 8 showed the tabulated value is higher than calculated value. Thus we failed to reject null hypothesis and it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and their current assessment strategies in classroom.

### Discussion

The main idea of assessment was to measure students learning and outcome. It became an essential process in teaching-learning process, where teachers can measure and evaluate students' level of understanding and learning by gathering and collecting students' data (Hanna & Peggy, 2004) regarding certain topic or unit and teacher can also provide feedback (Moon, 2000).

Assessment was adopted by all educational institute but later, the term assessment was categorized according to its application by many researchers into AOL, AFL and AAL (Earl L. M., 2010; Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Assessment for learning (AFL) is an assessment for which the first priority in its strategy and practice is to assist the purpose of encouraging students' learning. AFL goes beyond more psychometric and behavioristic backgrounds of assessment that emphasis on measuring individual students' performance in particular areas against externally norm-referenced distributions of attainment.

There are number of positive effects on students and teachers. AFL can be better used for questioning, feedback, peer and self-assessment and the formative use of summative tests where these are used in the schools or system concerned.

In degree colleges of Pakistan, there is annual system of education. Annual system of Examination is the one which conducts one Examination at the end of year in which papers are set by external instructors and are checked by external examiner under the supervision of the concerned University, little or no role for internal assessment and examiner, so there are little chances of biases for students evaluation of students. In the annual system of education, an academic year is not divided into different terms. There are some pros of annual examination system like:

- The students have much time to review the curriculum.
- Students have a chance to mention to various subject related books.
- They can organize their notes by using library resources.
- Students can join in all the co-curricular activities.
- Teachers have a chance to give information to the students related to the subject.
- Teachers can take the students to various field trips and give them much exposure.

But this system has some cons also like:

- In the annual system, most of the students show slackness towards studies as the examination is focused once a year.
- Students have to study the whole syllabus for annual exams which is a load.
- Most of the students do not attend the college regularly as there is no strict guideline on attendance.

The findings of the present study indicated that the Education teachers of government sector colleges have basic knowledge of assessment, formative and summative assessment and evaluation, but regarding AFL and its strategies, it was found that only few teachers have good knowledge of it. It was also found that most of the participants were Masters i.e. 62.5% and 50% were M.Ed. stated that they

weekly assess their students in classroom to measure up to what level they have learned. The study showed most of the participants stated they assess their student in beginning by formative and summative assessment.

The present study also revealed that in current classroom set-ups there is no application of AFL to measure student concept and learning. The absence of key element of assessment in educational systems at college level creating an hindrances in students learning, which prevents teachers to measure up to what level students has mastery in certain topic or unit. The data analysis highlighted the key finding that the majority of our respondents were not aware of AFL and its strategies which are using in classroom to measure students' learning on time and provide real-time feedback. While collecting data it was found that the main obstacle of not applying AFL strategies is classroom is language barrier, because the all literature and books on AFL available in market and online are in English language, while our participants have not command in English language, for which researcher translated their tool in Urdu language to overcome this issue.

The other issues were highlighted by our participants for not applying any type of assessment particularly AFL in classroom is due: to irregularity of students in classroom, absences of students in case of informed test, no responses from students on their assessment, students prefer coaching centers rather college for learning, large size of class, students unwillingness to be assessed, individual difference, time limitation, shortage of resources, lack of interest of management and lack of interest of parents in college performance of students.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis leads to this conclusion that education teachers of college level at government sector have little awareness of concept AFL and its strategies. However, the findings showed that the ratio of implementation of AFL in the classroom is low as negligible due to lack of time, resources, teachers' interest, irregularity of students, and the large size of the classroom.

The suggestions given by our participants regarding implementation of AFL in classroom are; to organize test or exams during the course of study, to supervise and evaluate teachers' responsibility to complete the syllabus within the allotted time period for course, to conduct assignment and provide proper resources to implement AFL, and to provide extra time for assessment activities.

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended to arrange workshops and short courses for training of AFL and its strategies.
- It is also suggested to introduce application of AFL at college level, under the supervision of administration and management.
- To overcome the absenteeism of student in classroom, it is recommended for administration to put penalty on students' absentees.

- It is also suggested to teachers to upgrade their knowledge and implement it into classroom.
- Coaching systems from our society should be discouraged.

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