The Impact of a Web–Based Training Programme on Promoting Secondary School EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards Alternative Assessment

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أثر برنامج تدريبى عبر الإنترنت فى تطوير إتجاهات معلمى اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية نحو التقويم البديل

ملخص البحث

برغم أن التقويم البديل من المصطلحات الأكثر شيوعا خلال العقدين الأخيرين فى مجال التقويم، إلا أن تطبيقه فى المدراس المصرية ما زال فى البدايات ولا يُعرف عن إتجاهات المعلمين فى مصر نحوه. ولما كان المعلمون هم المنوط بهم تطبيق مثل هذه الإصلاحات التعليمية على أرض الواقع فإن دراسة إتجاهاتهم نحو التقويم البديل من الأهمية بمكان. لذا تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تطوير إتجاهات معلمى اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية نحو التقويم البديل من خلال برنامج تدريبى مقترح عبر الانترنت. وتستخدم الدراسة المنهج الشبه تجريبى حيث قامت مجموعة من معلمى اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية (٤٣) بالتعبير عن إتجاهاتهم من خلال مقياس إتجاهات قبلى بعدى وتخللهما البرنامج التدريبى المقترح. وتشير النتائج إلى تطور كبير فى إتجاهات المعلمين نحو التقويم البديل والتى إرتفعت من المستوى المتوسط (٣٫٦٤) إلى المستوى المرتفع (٤٫٤٨). وفى ضوء ذلك، توصى هذه الدراسة بتوفير هذا البرنامج التدريبي لكافة معلمى اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية لمساعدتهم على تبنى إتجاهات إيجابية نحو التقويم البديل وإستخدام أساليبه المختلفة بشكل أكثر فاعلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : إتجاهات المعلمين – التقويم البديل – التطوير المهنى – معلمى اللغة الإنجليزية بالمرحلة الثانوية

Abstract

Alternative assessment has been a huge buzzword in educational assessment over the past couple of decades. However, in Egypt, implementing alternative assessment is in its infancy and little is known about the Egyptian teachers' attitudes towards it. Therefore, understanding teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment is of great significance because they are the agents of development as they are the ones who put reforms and changes into practice. Therefore, this study aims to develop secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment through a web-based training programme. The study deployed a quasi-experimental one group pre-posttest design. Forty-three secondary school EFL teachers took part in the study. Findings reveal significant improvements in favour of post-application. That is, teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment have developed from a moderate level (3.64) to a high level (4.48). In the light of the study findings, such a training programme needs to be made available to secondary school EFL teachers to help them adopt positive attitudes towards alternative assessment and to conduct it more effectively.

Key Words: teachers' attitudes, alternative assessment, professional development, secondary school EFL teachers

Introduction

Alternative assessment has been a buzzword in educational assessment for a number of years and it is increasingly gaining momentum. By all accounts, teachers are the most influential factor in educational reform. They are the agents of development as they are the ones who implement educational reforms.

It is widely accepted that teachers' appropriate assessment practice is strongly associated with their attitudes towards the effectiveness of a given method of assessment. Consequently, if teachers have the required knowledge and skills to utilise a particular assessment strategy and develop positive attitudes towards it, they will be inclined to use it frequently and effectively. As a result, understanding teachers' attitudes are of great significance because such attitudes drive their teaching practices and influence their educational decisions.

Furthermore, research has provided mounting evidence that teachers' attitudes towards certain educational aspects such as teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment strongly impact how and what they teach and how and what their students learn. Thus, it is critical to investigate teachers' attitudes towards and enthusiasm for considering alternative approaches to evaluate students' performance. Such views and attitudes need to be made explicit and visible especially if they are deemed necessary to be positively changed.

Generally speaking, alternative assessment is an umbrella term to lump together any nontraditional or non-standardised assessment methods. That is, alternative assessment has been interchangeably identified as authentic assessment, informal assessment, productive assessment, portfolio-based assessment

and performance-based assessment. Methods of alternative assessment include exhibitions, interviews, journals, teacher observation, oral presentations, portfolios and projects (McMillan, 2007).

Context of the Problem

While working as a secondary school senior EFL teacher, the researcher has discovered that many of his colleagues held quite negative attitudes towards alternative assessment. In order to further investigate the problem, the researcher undertook the following steps:

First: Semi-Structured Interviews

Ten semi-structured interviews were carried out to collect some tentative data about secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment. Teachers were asked to name the classroom assessment methods they tend to use; how they use them; and why they use them in particular. Initial results revealed that teachers are more inclined to employ traditional methods of assessment. In addition, only two teachers adopted positive attitudes; three had moderate tendency and five held negative attitudes towards alternative assessment.

Second: Reviewing Previous Studies

When reviewing some of the previous studies on the domestic, regional and international arenas, it was discovered that results are inconsistent and vary considerably from a context to another as will be discussed in the literature review. Following are some of the studies conducted in a number of countries such as Australia (Watt, 2005), New Zealand and Australia (Brown, Lake & Matters,

2011), Croatia, Czech Republic and Slovenia (Brumen, Cagran & Rixon, 2009), Cyprus (Solomonidou, 2015), Germany (Imhof & Picard, 2009), Turkey (Metin, 2011), Pakistan (Iqbal & Manarvi), Kuwait (Al-Nouh et al., 2014), Oman (Al-Naibi, Al-Hatali & Al-Hadhrami, 2019), Saudi Arabia (Aldegether & Hamdan, 2015) and Egypt (Attia, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the present study is the quite negative attitudes that secondary school EFL teachers hold towards alternative assessment. Therefore, the researcher proposes a tailored web-based professional development training programme and measures its effect on developing their attitudes towards alternative assessment.

Research Question

The present study aims to find an answer to the following question:

What is the effectiveness of the suggested web-based training programme on developing secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment?

Hypothesis of the Study

The research postulates that there is a statistically significant difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the mean scores of the study group on the pre and post-administrations of the Teacher Attitude Scale towards Alternative Assessment, in favour of the post-administration.

Variables of the Study

The current study has the following two variables:

1. The independent variable: A web-based training programme titled *'Alternative Assessment for Better Learning'*
2. The dependent variable: Secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment

Aim of the Study

This current study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed training programme in developing secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment.

Significance of the Study

The current study contributes to the relatively small corpus of literature on teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment. It empirically investigates secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment in the Egyptian context. In addition, it examines the effectiveness of the suggested training programme on developing their attitudes towards alternative assessment. Furthermore, its findings are anticipated to contribute to:

1. Emphasising the significance of investigating and developing secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment.
2. Drawing attention of the concerned authorities and officials to make similar web-based training programmes available for pre and in-service teachers.

3. Laying the foundation for future research on measuring and promoting attitudes towards alternative assessment amongst teachers of different subjects at other educational phases.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study is delimited to the following:

1. A group of secondary school EFL teachers (43) selected randomly from a number of governorates
2. September and October of the first semester in the academic year 2020-2021
3. Developing teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment

Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework of Attitudes

There is a consensus that an attitude refers to a psychological predisposition to positively or negatively act out towards a given attitude object as a result of considering it good-bad, harmful-beneficial, pleasant-unpleasant, or likable-dislikable (Ajzen, 2001).

There are three components which underlie the formation of an attitude: cognition, affect and behaviour. First, the cognitive dimension constitutes: (1) a person's evaluative ideas, thoughts and beliefs towards an attitude object, (2) the person's knowledge of such object, and (3) the person's perceived difficulty, i.e. the extent to which the person believes that carrying out a certain exercise would be easy to do (Rodgers, Conner & Murray, 2008). Second, the affective dimension encompasses a person's feelings and emotions towards an attitude object such as enjoyment and anxiety (Oskamp & Schultz, 2005). Third, the behavioural

dimension represents a person's behavioural responses or actions when having to deal with the attitude object.

Van Aalderen-Smeets, Walma van der Molen and Asma (2012), however, maintain that there is another dimension called 'self-efficacy' which does not "necessarily fit into one of the overall cognitive, affective, or behavioral dimension" (p. 168). Self-efficacy means a person's beliefs about the one's ability to execute certain behaviours to accomplish certain goals (Maddux, 2016).

Related Studies

Studies on teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment have provided inconclusive results and there is not a consistent pattern of findings. In Australia, Watt (2005) investigated 60 secondary school mathematics teachers' attitudes towards using six methods of alternative assessment. Results indicated that teachers did not favour alternative assessment methods and considered traditional tests more valid measures of student learning.

On a different note, younger teachers were slightly more positive towards alternative assessment. Besides, teachers listed five main reasons that deterred them from using alternative assessment: subjectivity, unsuitability to mathematics, time constraints, nature of alternative assessment and lack of resources. On the other hand, some positive responses highlighted the usefulness of the oral and practical tasks.

In Germany, Imhof and Picard (2009) undertook a study around one and a half years after portfolios had been introduced in teacher preparation programmes. They recruited 144 pre-

service teachers to examine their level of acceptance of portfolios and the impact of using them on their professional attitudes and competencies. They divided their informants into an experimental group that worked with portfolios on a regular basis and a control group that enrolled in a traditional programme.

Results were mixed to some extent. That is, it was found out that portfolios were well-received by both pre-service teachers and their mentors as a tool of teaching and learning. In addition, the majority of pre-service teachers stated that portfolios were useful for their learning. However, more than 50% of the participants perceived that portfolios were not important at all or were of little importance to their development. In addition, comparison between the two groups provided no evidence of a positive effect of using portfolios on their professional attitudes or development. The researchers attributed these mixed attitudes towards portfolios to the fact that portfolio was a new tool to all the participants of the study.

In a completely different context, Iqbal and Manarvi (2011) deployed a mixed method research in which they surveyed 38 and interviewed 6 faculty members from three Pakistani universities. Notwithstanding alternative assessment had not been formally introduced into the Pakistani educational system nor had the majority of the participants been trained on it, teachers were enthusiastic to experiment it on their own. Furthermore, two thirds of the respondents believed that alternative assessment was more beneficial than traditional tests for students, teachers and professional development. However, when it came to implementing alternative assessment methods, 42% believed that using these methods would make the teacher's job easier while 45% believed the opposite. In agreement with (Watt, 2005), it was also found

that less experienced teachers were more inclined to use alternative assessment, whereas the most experienced teachers were reluctant to make use of it.

In Saudi Arabia, Aldegether and Hamdan (2015) explored 105 pre-service teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment. It was reported that teachers held negative attitudes towards it. Such negative attitudes were attributed to the fact that pre-service teachers had limited knowledge of it. In addition, they were exposed only to traditional methods of testing and they were not given the opportunity to use or try out alternative assessment methods. These findings resonate with (Al-Naibi et al., 2019) who found that Omani EFL teachers at a higher education institution held a low attitude level towards using portfolios.

In Egypt, Attia (2010) surveyed 405 student teachers and interviewed 8 to explore their views towards using both portfolios and e-portfolios as performance assessment methods. Findings revealed that the majority of the sample were aware of what portfolios are; what their components are; and how to plan and develop portfolios. However, over two thirds perceived that planning and developing portfolios effectively need ongoing professional development.

Furthermore, the majority believed that using portfolios better helps document student progress; identify areas of strengths and weaknesses; promote learner autonomy; create a psychologically safe learning environment; increase cooperation and collaboration between students and teachers; encourage self-reflection; and develop creativity and critical thinking skills. In addition, they believed that portfolios are reliable and accurate indicators of student performance as well as effective methods of self-

evaluation. Besides, they perceived that utilising and being assessed by portfolios or e-portfolios enabled them to continuously add, edit and improve their work which reduced their exam-related anxiety.

Factors Shaping Attitudes towards Alternative Assessment

From the previous review, it can be inferred that there are a number of factors that shape teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment. One main factor is teacher's age and experience. In Turkey, Metin (2011) reported that younger and less experienced teachers were more positive towards alternative assessment than their elder counterparts. These results were borne out by similar findings in higher education in Pakistan (Iqbal & Manarvi, 2011).

Another factor is the context, i.e. teachers' attitudes could be more or less similar in countries with similar social and cultural backgrounds. Brown et al. (2011) reported similarities in assessment conceptions among teachers in Australia and New Zealand. Similarly, Al-Nouh and her colleagues (2014) noted that primary EFL teachers in Kuwait had a medium level of tendency towards portfolio assessment. Likewise, Al-Ruqeishi and Al-Humaidi (2016) reported similar results for Omani primary EFL teachers' views towards alternative assessment.

This factor, however, cannot be taken for granted because there are some contradictory findings such as the results of Brumen et al. (2009). They surveyed 108 foreign language teachers at the primary stage in Croatia, Czech Republic and Slovenia. Significant differences were documented among the three groups in terms of the type and frequency of assessment methods they used.

An additional factor is the level of training the teachers received. In Cyprus, Solomonidou (2015) investigated Modern Greek language teachers' previous training on assessment. They lamented the inadequacy of assessment training and lack of concrete and practical examples of putting alternative assessment methods into practice. Several studies concluded that teachers are in dire need of training in assessment in general (Mertler, 2003, 2009) and in alternative assessment in particular (Attia, 2010; Birgin & Baki, 2009; Brumen et al., 2009; Solomonidou, 2015).

Finally, even when teachers use alternative assessment methods, they tend to prefer some methods over others. Brumen and her colleagues (2009) reported that oral activities and interviews were the most frequently used, whereas portfolios were the least used in Slovenia, Czech Republic and Croatia. However, Australian teachers ranked the methods in this order: oral tasks, observation, practical tasks, journals, self and peer-assessments and parental assessment (Watt, 2005).

Design of the Study

The study used a quasi-experimental design. One-group pre-post-administration design was employed to measure the impact of the quasi-independent variable (the proposed web-based training programme) on the dependent variable (teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment) by comparing the means of their responses before and after the treatment.

Participants of the Study

A group of secondary school EFL teachers ($n = 43$) voluntarily took part in the study via the study website. Participants consisted of 20 female and 23 male teachers from nineteen out of the 27

Egyptian governorates. The eight governorates that could not offer any participants were Asyut, Luxor, Minya, New Valley, Red Sea, Qalyubia, Sohag and South Sinai. Teachers at public schools represented a much larger number of participants with 32 teachers while there were 11 AlAzhar teachers. As per school location, 14 participants worked at schools in rural areas, 8 in the outskirts, and the majority (21) in urban locations. In terms of years of experience, 8 participants had less than ten years of experience; the largest number of participants (26) had ten to twenty years; and 9 had more than twenty years of teaching experience. As for their qualifications, graduates of Bachelor of Education represented the largest number of participants with 20 teachers, 16 of Arts, 2 of Alsun, 2 of Languages and Translation, 2 had a master's degree and 1 had a PhD in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL).

Instruments of the Study

1. The Pre-Post Attitude Scale

To systematically investigate secondary school EFL teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment, Teacher Attitude Scale towards Alternative Assessment, henceforth called *TASTAA*, has been constructed.

TASTAA Development

Developing *TASTAA* was a multi-faceted process that required critically reviewing literature into teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment. Then, the four main dimensions of teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment were identified. These included the cognitive, affective, behavioural and self-efficacy dimensions. *TASTAA* consisted of 30 items on a 5-point

Likert scale. Teachers were asked to tick the most appropriate box next to each statement to show their level of agreement, ranging from 'Strongly Agree 5' to 'Strongly Disagree 1'.

TASTAA was divided into seven sub-dimensions as depicted in Table 1 below. The first set of items examined the cognitive dimension, i.e. teachers' thoughts and beliefs about the usefulness of alternative assessment in (a) facilitating student learning (Items 1-5); (b) assessing student abilities and progress more effectively (Items 6-10); and (c) engaging students actively in the process of their learning (Items 11-15). Items 16-18 assessed teachers' perceived difficulty of conducting alternative assessment. Items 19-21 measured the affective component. Items 22-25 explored the behavioural component. Finally, Items 26-30 analysed teachers' self-efficacy.

Table 1: TASTAA Items Distribution

No	Dimension	Sub-Dimension		Number of Items	Items
1	Cognitive	Usefulness in:	Facilitating learning	5	1-5
2			Assessing learning	5	6-10
3			Engaging students in learning & assessment	5	11-15
4		Perceived Difficulty		3	16-18
5	Affective			3	19-21
6	Behavioural			4	22-25
7	Self-Efficacy			5	26-30

TASTAA Validation

TASTAA was validated by eight jury members who are experts in the field. The purposes of this process were to: (1) Review the scale and check on its content validity by making sure it adequately measured the key underlying constructs of alternative assessment (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014); (2) Assess face validity by surveying the items order, sequence, appropriate language, and language level for the intended participants (Fink, 2003); (3) Check for clarity, wording and other linguistic issues such as punctuation, lexis and grammar; (4) Examine the layout, length and structure of the scale to increase its usability and effectiveness; and (5) Check for any violations of the conventions of Likert scale items such as leading, misleading, loaded items, double−barreled, etc. (Artino, La Rochelle, Dezee & Gehlbach, 2014; Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014).

As a result, (1) a couple of items needed to be rewritten to make them clearer; (2) three items had to be rephrased as they were deemed leading; (3) an item had to be removed because it was considered redundant, and finally (4) the negatively worded items were increased from seven to nine items in order to boost the reliability of the scale.

TASTAA Pilot

A group (*n* = 41) of secondary school EFL teachers, different from the participants of the main study, completed and further reviewed the piloted *TASTAA* via a Google form. Piloting was conducted for a number of reasons: (1) To check whether the items are generally understood as intended by the researcher and interpreted in the same way among the participants themselves. (2) To practically identify the time needed to complete the scale.

(3) To test the scale reliability through the collected preliminary data. (4) To identify and remove the items that do not yield usable data towards answering the research question (Bell, 2014). Finally, the participants pointed out that *TASTAA* items are clear and easy to comprehend. In addition, they stated that they needed around ten minutes to complete it.

TASTAA Reliability

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha analysis was carried out to examine the reliability of *TASTAA*. The result revealed a high level of consistency among informants' responses to the *TASTAA* items (.93). Pallant (2016) explains that values above .7 are acceptable and above .8 are preferable.

Besides, to increase the instrument reliability, nine negatively worded items (Items 5, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22 & 24) were included to help prevent response bias and "to ensure that the participants really read, understand the statements and mark their responses accordingly" (Oommen, 2012, p. 57). During coding, the scores of these items were reversed, ranging from 'Strongly Agree 1' to 'Strongly Disagree 5'.

2. The Suggested Web-Based Training Programme

Training Programme Description

The suggested training programme, titled 'Alternative Assessment for Better Learning', was a tailored web-based course which was made available on https://aa4elt.com during September and October in 2020. The programme was customised specifically for secondary school EFL teachers to attend to their language assessment needs. The programme aimed to promote secondary school EFL teachers' alternative assessment literacy which could help them adopt more positive attitudes towards alternative assessment. The training was self-study and self-paced to allow teachers to advance through the course content at their own pace and convenience. It was expected to take teachers around twenty hours to complete. However, they varied in their participation, commitment and completion timeframe.

Training Programme Aim

The training programme aimed to assist secondary school EFL teachers to become more alternative assessment literate and expose them to a wide range of alternative assessment methods in a way that helps them adopt positive attitudes towards it.

Training Programme Content

The training programme contents and materials were organised as shown in the Table 2 below:

Table 2: *Training Programme Table of Contents*

Module No.	Lesson No.	Lesson Title
Module One	1	What is assessment?
	2	Alternative Assessment Vs Traditional Testing
	2.1	Alternative Assessment Vs Traditional Testing – Project 1
	2.2	Alternative Assessment Vs Traditional Testing – Project 2
	3	Formative Vs Summative Assessments
	4	Criterion-Referenced Vs Norm-Referenced Assessments
	5	Interpretation of Criterion & Norm-Referenced Scores – Scenario1
	5.1	Criterion Vs Norm-Referenced Assessments – Project 3
	6	Formal Vs Informal Assessments
	7	Diagnostic Assessment
		Module One Assignment
		Module One Self-reflection
Module Two	1	Assessment Purpose
	2	Learning Expectations
	2.1	Learning Expectations – Scenario 2
	3	Assessment Design
	3.1	Assessment Design – Scenario 3
	3.2	Assessment Design – Scenario 4
	4	Student Engagement in Assessment
	5	Self and Peer-Assessment Quiz
		Module Two Assignment
		Module Two Self-reflection
Module Three		Analysis of Student Performance – Warmer
	1	Analysis of Student Performance
	1.1	Analysis of Student Performance – Checklists
	1.2	Analysis of Student Performance – Rating Scales
	1.3	Analysis of Student Performance – Rubrics
	1.4	Analysis of Student Performance Quiz
	1.5	Consistent Scoring – Scenario 5
	1.6	Analysis of Student Performance – Project 4
	2	Effective Feedback

	2.1	Effective Feedback Quiz
	3	Instructional Follow–Up
	4	Communicating Results and Instructional Decisions
	Module Three Assignment	
	Module Three Self–reflection	
Module Four		Assessment Quality – Warmer
	1	Validity
	1.1	Validity Quiz
	2	Types of Validity
	2.1	Content Validity
	2.2	Construct Validity
	2.3	Criterion Validity
	2.4	Face Validity
	2.5	Most Important Type of Validity
	3	Reliability
	4	Types of Reliability
	5	Error of Measurement
	6	Practicality
	7	Fairness
	8	Ethics
	9	Washback/Impact
	10	Reflection
	Module Four Assignment	
	Module Four Self–reflection	

Here are some screenshots of the training programme materials as they appeared on the website:
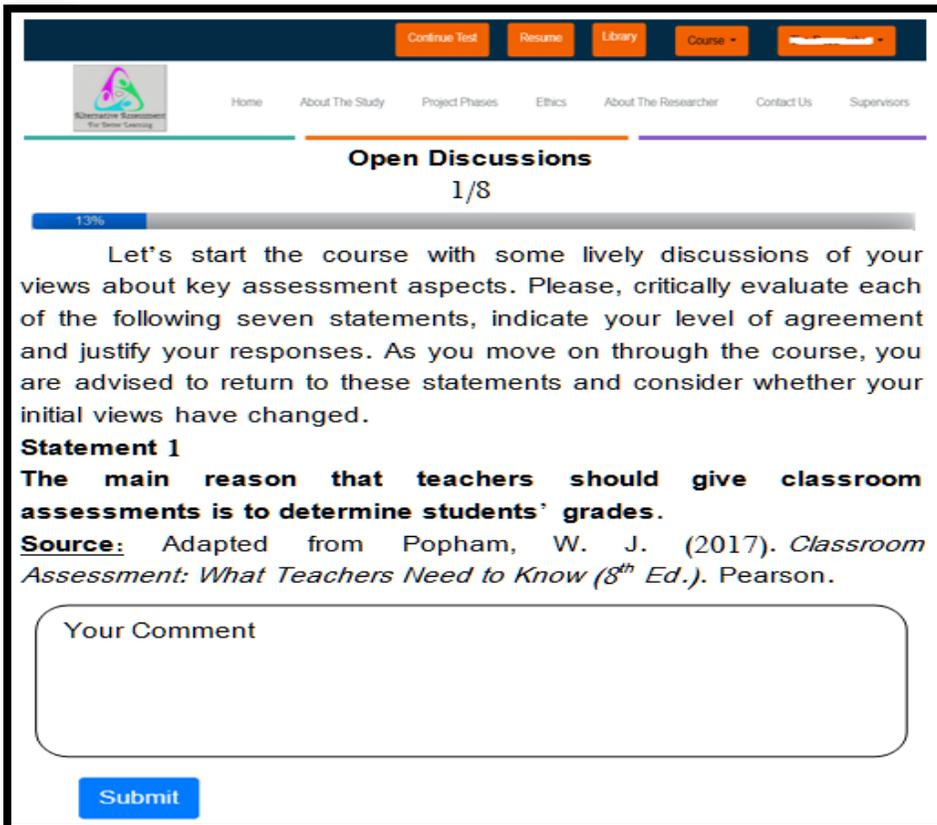
Figure 1. Screenshot of Sample Open Discussion

Figure 2. Screenshot of Sample Warmer

Figure 3. Screenshot of Sample Lesson
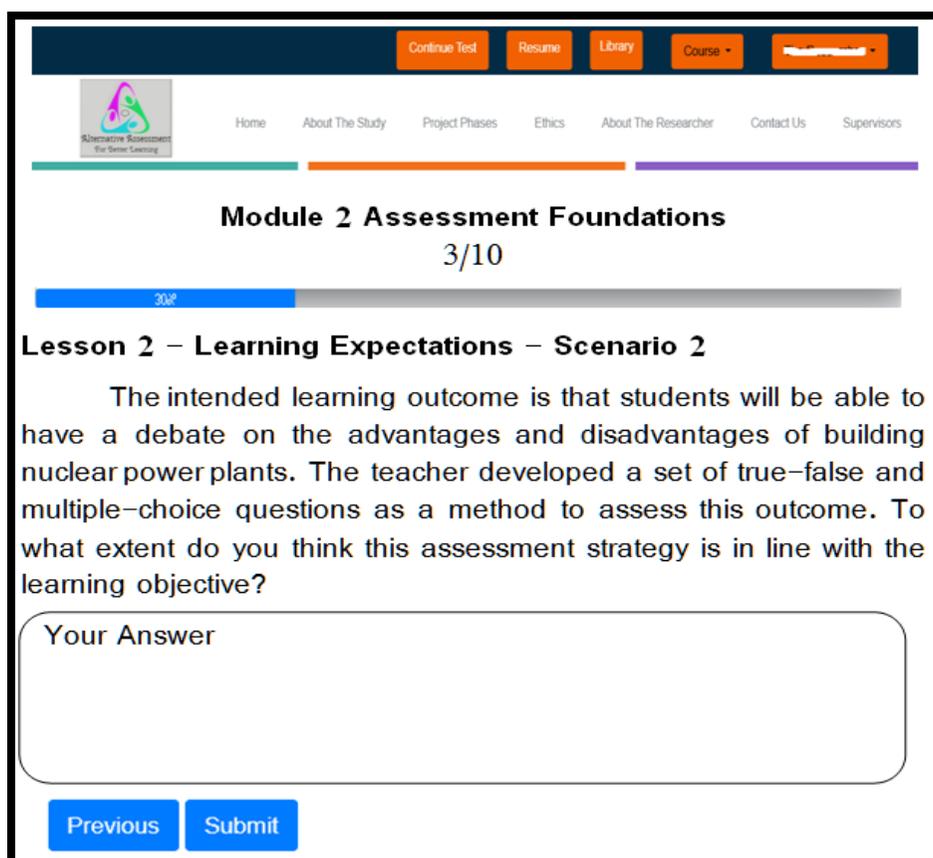
Figure 4. Screenshot of Sample Scenario

Training Programme Assessment

As stated earlier, the training programme aimed to expose the participants to a variety of alternative assessment methods so that they apply what they have learnt. Therefore, teachers were continuously assessed in a formative way to help them promote and consolidate their learning. Examples of evaluation methods included open discussions, quizzes, projects, scenarios, module assignments, presentations and self-reflection assignments. The screenshots below show some examples of the evaluation methods.

Figure 5. Screenshot of Sample Project
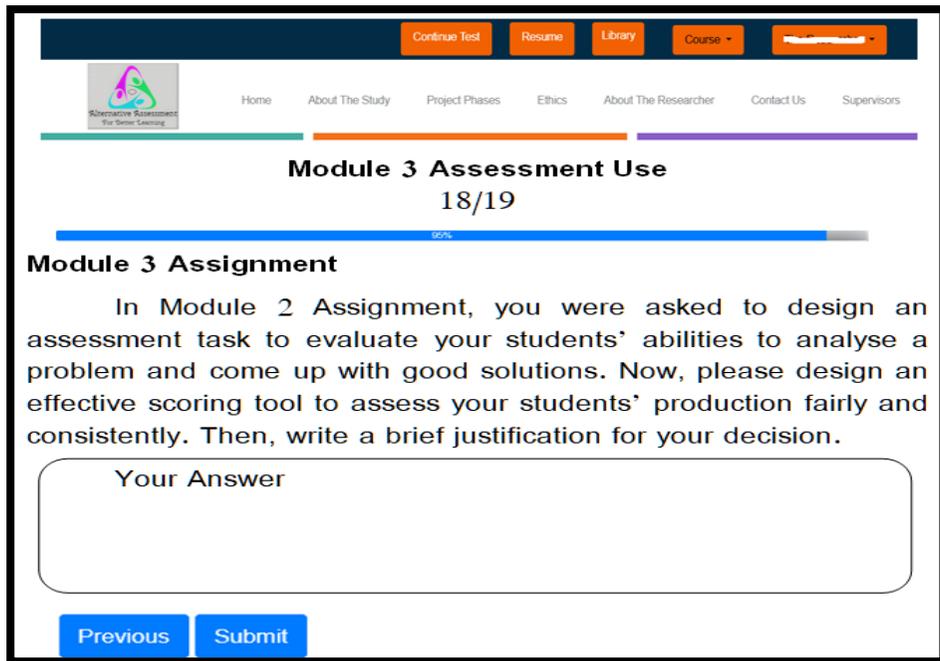
Figure 6. Screenshot of Sample Module Assignment
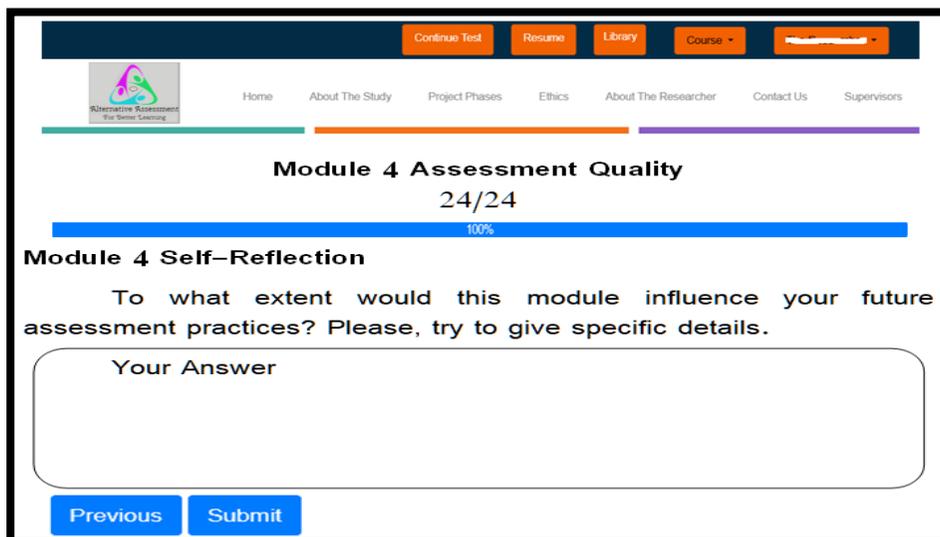
Figure 7. Screenshot of Sample Self-Reflection Assignment

Results and Discussion

The hypothesis of the present study suggests that there is a statistically significant difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$) between the mean scores of the study group in the pre and post-administrations of *TASTAA*, in favour of the post-administration. To verify this hypothesis, paired-samples t-test analyses were conducted. It is imperative to highlight that informants' attitudes were divided into three levels: high, medium and low. These levels were determined by subtracting the lowest value (1) from the highest one (5), then dividing the sum (4) by 3, i.e. the three levels (Al-Nouh et al., 2014). The standards are as follows: From 1 to 2.33 indicates low means. From 2.34 to 3.67 indicates medium means. From 3.68 to 5 indicates high means.

Based on these guidelines, Table 3 below illustrates that the participants' attitudes towards the seven components of *TASTAA* developed from the pre to the post-administration and reached the statistical significant level (p < .001). Besides, the t-values ranged from 3.514 to 5.470. In addition, the eta squared statistics ranged from .23 to .42, showing large effect sizes of the training programme (Cohen, 2013). Thus, the research question has been answered and the research hypothesis has been supported.

This subsection looked at the differences in mean scores of each of the seven components as a whole. However, the following seven subsections present the in-depth investigations which were conducted in order to analyse the impact of the proposed training programme on each item in each of the seven components of attitudes that constitute the *TASTAA*. Statistical analyses were run to compare the study group's pre-post administration responses on each and every item of each sub-dimension.

Table 3: *T–Test Statistics on TASTAA Dimensions*

No	Dimension	Sub–Dimension	Ass.	Mean	SD	Rank	t–value	Sig.	Eta Squared	Effect Size
1	Cognitive	Facilitating learning	Pre	3.96	.97	High	4.019	<.001	.28	Large
			Post	4.65	.37	High				
2		Assessing learning	Pre	3.91	.91	High	3.514	<.001	.23	Large
			Post	4.51	.50	High				
3		Engaging students	Pre	3.70	.79	High	4.034	<.001	.28	Large
			Post	4.40	.64	High				
4		Perceived Difficulty	Pre	3.09	1.03	Med.	5.233	<.001	.39	Large
			Post	4.32	.82	High				
5	Affective		Pre	3.43	.98	Med.	5.470	<.001	.42	Large
			Post	4.43	.57	High				
6	Behavioural		Pre	3.84	.67	High	4.316	<.001	.31	Large
			Post	4.51	.65	High				
7	Self–Efficacy		Pre	3.55	.94	Med.	5.201	<.001	.39	Large
			Post	4.53	.59	High				

Alternative Assessment Usefulness in Facilitating Learning

As shown in Table 3 above, the mean score of this sub–dimension increased significantly from 3.96 to 4.65. Table 4 below illustrates that improvements reached the statistical significant level in four items. Besides, the t–values ranged from 2.239 to 3.925. Further, the eta squared statistics were at a medium level (.11) in the third item and at a large level in the other three items (.18, .20 & .27), indicating large effect sizes of the training programme.

Although there was a medium level of the effect size in the third item (.11), it was significant enough to take the participants' attitudes towards this statement from a moderate (3.44) to a high level (4.07). Similarly, their attitudes improved towards the fifth statement, but it did not reach the statistical significance level.

However, this increase was important because it took the participants' attitudes towards this statement from a moderate (3.67) to a high level (4.16).

Table 4: *First Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	T	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. AA creates a richer environment for learning through negotiations, discussions, cooperation and collaboration.	4.35	1.11	H	4.91	.37	H ↑	3.047	<.001	.18	Large
2. AA better accommodates student diverse needs, interests and learning styles.	4.16	1.11	H	4.86	.35	H ↑	3.925	<.001	.27	Large
3. AA allows for differentiated assessment and instruction.	3.44	1.18	M	4.07	1.42	H ↑	2.239	<.05	.11	Med.
4. AA helps students to be more autonomous in their learning.	3.81	1.14	H	4.56	.77	H ↑	3.259	<.001	.20	Large
5. AA slows down student learning.	3.67	1.27	M	4.16	1.23	H ↑	1.658	.105	/	/

Alternative Assessment Usefulness in Assessing Learning

It has been previously reported that the mean score of this component developed significantly from 3.91 in the pre-administration to 4.51 in the post-administration. Table 5 below shows that development in teachers' attitudes towards this sub-dimension reached the statistical significant level in four statements. Furthermore, the t-values ranged from 2.585 (the fifth statement) to 4.319 (the second statement). In addition, the eta squared statistics ranged from .14 to .31, showing large effect sizes of the training programme. Even though, there was a relatively small improvement in the fourth statement, it was

important because it took the participants' attitudes towards this statement from a moderate (3.49) to a high level (3.88).

Table 5: *Second Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	T	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. AA enables students to demonstrate their theoretical and practical knowledge and skills.	4.02	1.10	H	4.60	.54	H ↑	3.031	<.001	.18	Large
2. AA assesses higher order skills, such as problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, reasoning, etc.	3.95	1.23	H	4.79	.47	H ↑	4.319	<.001	.31	Large
3. AA helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses.	4.02	1.04	H	4.72	.50	H ↑	3.794	<.001	.26	Large
4. AA provides insufficient evidence of individual student achievement.	3.49	1.20	M	3.88	1.48	H ↑	1.371	.178	/	/
5. AA produces a more accurate picture of a student's abilities and progress.	4.07	.96	H	4.58	.70	H ↑	2.585	<.01	.14	Large

Alternative Assessment Usefulness in Engaging Students

The mean score of this sub-dimension increased significantly from 3.70 to 4.40. As depicted in Table 6 below, teachers' attitudes towards all the five statements in this component developed significantly. Moreover, the t-values ranged from 2.383 (the fifth statement) to 4.758 (the fourth statement). More importantly, the eta squared statistics were found to be at a medium level (.12) in the fifth statement and at a large level in other four statements (.26, .28, .30 & .35). Despite the fact that a medium level of an effect size was found in the fifth statement (.12), this change was enough to take the participants' attitudes

towards this statement from a moderate (3.37) to a high level of tendency (3.98).

Table 6: *Third Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	t	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. AA dedicates more room for effective feedback on students' performance.	3.98	1.01	H	4.72	.55	H ↑	4.219	<.001	.30	Large
2. AA allows students to self and peer-assess their work which deepens their learning.	3.98	1.01	H	4.70	.71	H ↑	4.070	<.001	.28	Large
3. Self and peer-assessments hinder student learning as they are inaccurate demonstration of student learning.	3.74	.98	H	4.51	.70	H ↑	3.852	<.001	.26	Large
4. AA actively engages students in their own learning process.	3.86	1.10	H	4.77	.48	H ↑	4.758	<.001	.35	Large
5. The disadvantages of self and peer-assessments outweigh their advantages.	3.37	1.20	M	3.98	1.28	H ↑	2.383	<.05	.12	Med.

Perceived Difficulty

This component was found to be the most developed as the mean score increased significantly from 3.09 to 4.32. This change was significant enough to take teachers' attitudes from a moderate to a high level. Table 7 below sheds light on the statistics of the three statements of this dimension. Additionally, the t-values ranged from 4.399 (the third statement) to 5.539 (the second statement). Besides, the eta squared statistics were found to be at

a high level .36, .42 and .32 respectively, revealing large effect sizes of the training programme.

Table 7: *Fourth Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	t	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. I lack the needed knowledge to carry out AA efficiently.	3.21	.94	M	4.28	.86	H ↑	4.843	<.001	.36	Large
2. I have the necessary skills to conduct AA effectively.	3.12	1.07	M	4.44	.80	H ↑	5.539	<.001	.42	Large
3. I find it difficult to implement AA.	3.05	1.17	M	4.19	.98	H ↑	4.399	<.001	.32	Large

Affective Dimension

The second largest development was found in the affective dimension. That is, the teachers' attitudes developed significantly from 3.43 to 4.43. This change was significant enough to take their attitudes from a moderate to a high level. Table 8 below shows that improvements reached the statistical significant level in all the three items. Besides, the t-values ranged from 3.340 (the second statement) to 5.676 (the first statement).

Table 8: *Fifth Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	t	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. I feel at ease using AA.	3.21	1.22	M	4.51	.70	H ↑	5.676	<.001	.43	Large
2. I feel discomfort when I use AA.	3.28	1.22	M	4.16	1.11	H ↑	3.340	<.01	.21	Large
3. I feel proud using AA as it is more realistic and meaningful.	3.79	.97	H	4.60	.54	H ↑	5.072	<.001	.38	Large

Further, the eta squared statistics were found to be at a high level (.43, .21 & .38) respectively, which shows a large effect size of the training programme.

Behavioural Dimension

Likewise, the mean score of this dimension increased significantly from 3.84 to 4.51. As shown in Table 9 below, significant improvements were documented in the four statements. Further, the t-values ranged from 2.717 (the first statement) to 3.996 (the second statement). Besides, the eta squared statistics were found to be at a high level (.15, .28, .21 & .23) respectively, producing a large effect size of the training programme.

Table 9: *Sixth Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	t	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. AA leads to less effective teaching practices.	3.67	1.06	M	4.37	1.07	H ↑	2.717	<.01	.15	Large
2. AA enables teachers to cater for individual student needs, interests and learning styles.	3.95	.95	H	4.63	.73	H ↑	3.996	<.001	.28	Large
3. AA leaves no room for teachers to reflect on and modify their teaching practices and educational decisions.	3.63	.95	M	4.33	1.06	H ↑	3.377	<.01	.21	Large
4. AA helps teachers evaluate learner performance as a complete process, not just as a final product.	4.09	.84	H	4.70	.60	H ↑	3.554	<.001	.23	Large

Self-Efficacy

This component represented the third largest development of all dimensions. Results indicated that the mean score increased significantly from 3.55 to 4.53. This change was significant enough to change the participants' attitudes towards their self-efficacy from a moderate to a high level. As seen in Table 10 below, significant improvements were documented in the five statements. In addition, the t-values ranged from 3.810 (the fourth statement) to 5.365 (the first statement). Additionally, the eta squared statistics were found to be at a high level (.41, .33, .36, .26 & .34) respectively, showing a large effect size of the training programme.

Table 10: *Seventh Sub-Dimension T-Test Statistics*

Items	Pre			Post			Comparison			
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	T	Sig.	Eta	Effect Size
1. I can design AA tasks effectively.	3.19	1.24	M	4.47	.74	H ↑	5.365	<.001	.41	Large
2. I can select efficient scoring strategies (e.g. rating scales, rubrics, etc.) aligned with the AA purposes.	3.56	.96	M	4.51	.74	H ↑	4.591	<.001	.33	Large
3. I can design efficient scoring strategies (e.g. rating scales, rubrics, etc.) aligned with AA purposes.	3.28	1.22	M	4.33	.72	H ↑	4.855	<.001	.36	Large
4. I can provide students with effective feedback throughout the process of AA to foster their learning.	3.93	.96	H	4.65	.57	H ↑	3.810	<.001	.26	Large
5. I can use AA results to review my instructional practices in a way that better promotes student learning.	3.79	1.01	H	4.70	.56	H ↑	4.687	<.001	.34	Large

Discussion

Findings of the present study reveal that teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment have developed from a moderate level in the pre-administration to a high level in post-administration. Before the treatment, teachers' attitudes towards the seven sub-dimensions that make up *TASTAA* range between moderate to high levels. However, by obtaining the average of the means of the seven sub-dimensions, it is found to be 3.64, which is a moderate level as per the previously established guidelines.

In contrast, by doing the same thing after the treatment, the average is 4.48, indicating a high level of tendency. Such development in teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment could be attributable to the training programme. These findings are in line with previous studies that reported positive effects of in-service training courses on teachers' beliefs (e.g. Borg, 2011; Lamie, 2004; Phipps, 2010).

Figure 8 below shows the development of the teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment by presenting the means of the seven sub-dimensions that constitute *TASTAA* in both the pre and post-administrations. The largest improvement is reported in teachers' perceived difficulty in conducting alternative assessment. Precisely, teachers reveal that they have acquired the necessary knowledge and have developed the required skills to implement alternative assessment more effectively.

The second largest improvement is reported in the affective dimension. In other words, teachers' feelings towards alternative assessment have improved as they report that they have started to feel more confident when applying alternative assessment methods. In addition, they argue that they have become more

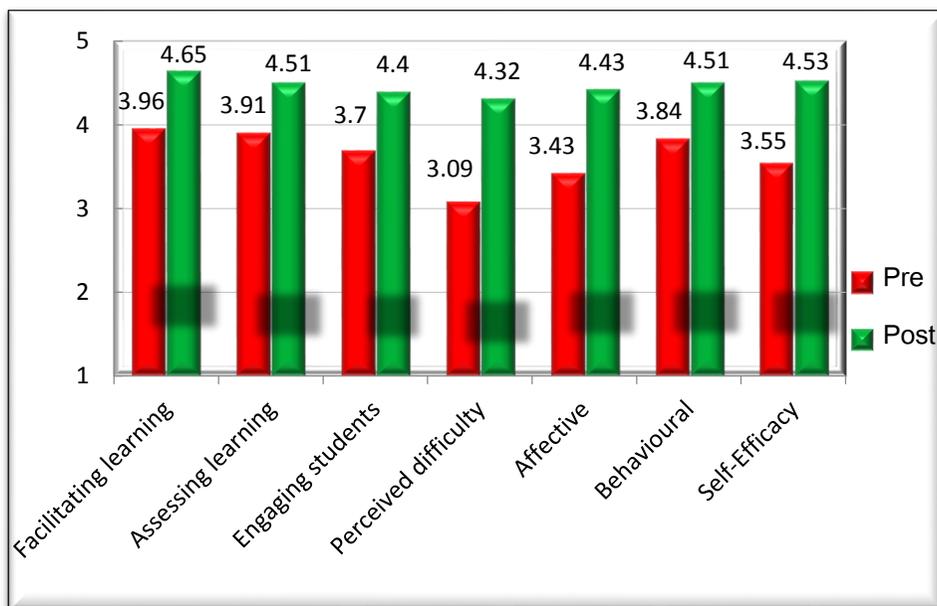proud having the feeling that they do something more realistic and meaningful.

Figure 8. Teachers' Pre & Post Means of TASTAA Dimensions

Next in the pile is teachers' self–efficacy. Teachers reveal that they have become more capable of designing alternative assessment tasks. In addition, they argue that they have developed their skills in selecting and designing efficient scoring strategies aligned with the alternative assessment purposes. Moreover, they assert that they have come to be more capable of providing students with effective feedback which can help students foster their learning. Besides, they maintain that they have reached a level where they can use alternative assessment results to review their instructional practices in a way that better promotes student learning.

Next is teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of alternative assessment in engaging students in their own learning. Teachers have shown significant improvements in their belief in the capability of alternative assessment in providing more room for effective feedback on students' performance. In the same vein, they seem to agree more that alternative assessment allows students to self and peer-assess their own work which deepens their learning. Also, they assert that self and peer-assessments foster student learning and such assessments demonstrate student progress. In addition, they have become more confident that the benefits of self and peer-assessments outweigh their drawbacks. Finally, they have become more positive towards the idea that alternative assessment actively engages students in their own learning process.

The following sub-dimension is teachers' attitudes towards alternative assessment usefulness in facilitating student learning. Teachers have become more affirmative that alternative assessment creates a richer environment for learning through purposeful interactions such as negotiations, discussions, cooperation and collaboration. Further, they have become more convinced that alternative assessment better addresses student diverse needs, interests and learning styles. Furthermore, they have become more positive towards the notion of differentiation in assessment and instruction that alternative assessment offers. Additionally, they have agreed more that alternative assessment helps students be more autonomous in their learning. Thus, it fosters and accelerates their learning.

Next dimension is teachers' attitudes towards the behavioural component. Teachers have become more certain that alternative assessment leads to more effective teaching practices. Further,

they have expressed a more favourable stance that alternative assessment better enables teachers to cater for individual student needs, interests and learning styles. Besides, they have agreed more that alternative assessment gives them more room to reflect on and modify their teaching practices and educational decisions. Finally, they have endorsed the notion that alternative assessment helps teachers evaluate learner performance as a process, not just as a product.

The final aspect is teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of alternative assessment in assessing student learning. It seems that they have become more convinced that alternative assessment better enables students to demonstrate their theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Therefore, it better helps identify students' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, they have become more assertive that alternative assessment is more able to assess higher order skills such as problem solving, decision making, critical thinking and reasoning. Hence, it provides more evidence of individual student achievement. Therefore, alternative assessment and its results produce a more accurate picture of students' abilities and progress.

Conclusion

Findings of the current study indicate that secondary school EFL teachers seem to hold a moderate tendency towards alternative assessment. In addition, the post-administration results show significant development in their attitudes towards alternative assessment. Their attitudes improved from a moderate to a high level which could be attributable to the training programme.

Recommendations

With reference to the results of the present study, These two recommendations can be put forward:

1. Teacher candidates have to be exposed to and assessed through different methods of alternative assessment while at university. Thus, they become more familiar with it and consequently formulate positive attitudes towards it.
2. In-service teachers should receive sufficient practical training on alternative assessment to encourage them adopt positive attitudes towards it and use it more frequently and efficiently.

Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the findings of the present study, the following studies are suggested for future research:

1. Attitudes of teachers of different subjects at other educational phases towards alternative assessment need to be explored and developed if necessary. The proposed training programme and *TASTAA* can be deployed to achieve these aims.
2. Students' attitudes towards alternative assessment have to be evaluated and developed if needed. That is because research indicates that students' attitudes towards and appreciation of sound assessment practices facilitate their own learning.

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