

# Madrasah Teachers' Approaches to Classroom Assessment

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**Abstract:** Since assessment holds a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, it is essential to examine teachers' approaches to assessment in their classrooms to determine whether their methods align with assessment theories and best practices. This study aimed to explore how madrasah teachers approach student assessment in their classrooms, focusing on the purpose of assessment, the assessment process, fairness in assessment, and the principles of measurement theory. The study involved 27 secondary-level madrasah teachers in an Indonesian context to illustrate their assessment knowledge and address the research gap in assessment studies for madrasah teachers. Their classroom assessment approaches were gathered and evaluated using the Approaches to Classroom Assessment Instrument (ACAI). The results indicate that madrasah teachers generally view assessment for learning as the primary purpose of their assessments, focus on the design aspect during the assessment process, adhere to standard principles of assessment fairness, and give equal importance to both validity and reliability in measurement theory. Finally, findings of this study should give valuable contribution to the body of assessment theory and become a reference for the government in improving madrasah teachers' assessment literacy as well as their skills in assessing students' learning.

**Keywords:** Assessment, Assessment approach, madrasah teachers.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, there has been a rapid development of classroom assessment from the traditional form of assessment to the non-traditional one.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Traditional assessment, which is referred as assessment *of* learning, is usually summative in nature, relying on paper-pencil tests that focus on knowledge recall and lower-order cognitive skills.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the non-traditional assessment or usually known as assessment *for* learning focuses on evaluating students' performance during the learning process, aligning with classroom objectives to enhance student learning.<sup>6,7</sup> Furthermore, recently, the focus of assessment is not only on assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning but also on assessment *as* learning in which the students are involved in assessment in order to develop their independence in learning through planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning or better known as metacognition process.<sup>8,9</sup>

Such shifts of assessment theories should be the main concern of the teachers due to the significant role of assessment in students' effective learning. Black and William's<sup>10</sup> research of synthesizing over 250 assessment studies show that good use of assessment in the classroom promotes students' achievement. This evidence demonstrates that assessment plays a crucial role in student learning. Hattie & Timperley's<sup>11</sup> statement also put emphasis on such vital role of assessment asserting that without assessment, teaching will not be effective. These rapid changes in classroom assessment and the empirical evidence from research about the important role of assessment in learning certainly demand teachers to keep up with the development for the sake of assessing their students effectively.

The need for a strong understanding of and skills in assessment has grown significantly, especially as Indonesia's educational policy emphasizes formative assessment to monitor and enhance the learning process while evaluating the achievement of learning objectives.<sup>12</sup> This

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<sup>1</sup> Hussain Alkharusi, "Effects of Classroom Assessment Practices on Students' Achievement Goals," *Educational Assessment* 13, no. 4 (December 15, 2008): 243-66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627190802602509>.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce B Frey and Vicki L Schmitt, "Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices," *Middle Grades Research Journal* 5, no. 785 (2010): 107-17.

<sup>3</sup> Kim H Koh, "Improving Teachers' Assessment Literacy through Professional Development," *Teaching Education* 22, no. 3 (September 2011): 255-76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2011.593164>.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning," *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* 5, no. 1 (March 28, 1998): 7-74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102>.

<sup>5</sup> Koh, "Improving Teachers' Assessment Literacy through Professional Development."

<sup>6</sup> Frey and Schmitt, "Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices."

<sup>7</sup> M. Rizal Fuadiy, "Evaluasi Pembelajaran Sebagai Sebuah Studi Literatur," *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (December 1, 2021): 173-97, <https://doi.org/10.58577/dimar.v3i1.83>.

<sup>8</sup> Wynne Harlen, *Assessment of Learning, Learning* (1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road, London EC1Y 1SP United Kingdom: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446214695>.

<sup>9</sup> Ramdanil Mubarak, Makherus Sholeh, and Ika Irayana, "Classroom Management Strategy in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum) in Primary Education Institutions," *AlAdzka: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 13, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 189-202, <https://doi.org/10.18592/aladzkapgmi.v13i2.11356>.

<sup>10</sup> Black and Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning."

<sup>11</sup> John Hattie and Helen Timperley, "The Power of Feedback," *Review of Educational Research* 77, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 81-112, <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>.

<sup>12</sup> Nabila Nayyrotul Fitria, Luk Luk Nur Mufidah, and Puput Setiawati, "Summative Assessment of Islamic Education Subject in Merdeka Curriculum," *Journal of Educational Research and Practice* 2, no. 3 (November 14, 2024): 112-22, <https://doi.org/10.70376/jerp.v2i3.157>.

policy definitely requires the teachers to use not only testing but also various kinds of formative assessment or authentic assessment in their classroom.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence, *madrasah* teachers have to understand the various approaches in assessment and good principles of assessment as well as be skillful in implementing the assessment effectively according to the students' need.

However, even though there is a strong demand expected to be fulfilled by teachers related to assessment, Popham<sup>14</sup> claimed that many have limited knowledge about educational assessment. Such claim is in line with results of several studies on teachers' knowledge and skills of assessment or commonly known as assessment literacy.<sup>15,16,17</sup> The results of those studies demonstrate that teachers exhibit relatively low assessment literacy. This is also the case of *madrasah* teachers' assessment literacy in Philippine as revealed by Delosa et al.<sup>18</sup> In Indonesian context, the practice assessment of English teachers in *madrasah* has also been investigated showing some inconsistency of their assessment practices with the principles of assessment.<sup>19</sup> The consequences of low assessment literacy among teachers can lead to ineffective assessment practices, misinterpretation of student progress, and insufficient feedback, all of which can negatively impact student learning. On the other hand, when teachers are equipped with strong assessment skills, they can better support students in their learning, promote self-regulation, and ensure that assessments truly reflect student progress and learning needs. Ultimately, improving assessment literacy leads to more effective teaching and improved student achievement.

Teachers' tendency in assessment practice can also be revealed by identifying their approaches to assessment.<sup>20</sup> Different from teachers' assessment literacy that judge teachers' understanding and skills of assessment on the basis of right or wrong assessment principles, this study was an effort to see teachers' tendency in approaching their assessment practice without judging whether their understanding and skill in assessment is right or wrong.<sup>21</sup> So far, such study on teachers' approaches to classroom has rarely been conducted since most of previous

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<sup>13</sup> Indonesian Education Ministerial Regulation No. 21 Year 2022, "Standar Penilaian Pendidikan Permendikbudristek No 21 Tahun 2022," *Permendikbudristek*, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> W. James Popham, "Assessment Literacy for Teachers: Faddish or Fundamental?," *Theory Into Practice* 48, no. 1 (January 2009): 4-11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802577536>.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Lee Perry, "Teacher and Principal Assessment Literacy" (2013).

<sup>16</sup> Anil Kanjee and Jane Mthembu, "Assessment Literacy of Foundation Phase Teachers : An Exploratory Study," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 5, no. 1 (2015): 142-68.

<sup>17</sup> Ida Isnawati, "EFL Teachers' Assessment Literacy," *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching* 26, no. 2 (2023): 760-69.

<sup>18</sup> Jovelyn Gumatay Delosa et al., "Assessment Literacy of Madrasah Teachers," *International Journal of Educational Science and Research* 11, no. 2 (2021): 117-26.

<sup>19</sup> Pauzan Pauzan and Ribahan Ribahan, "PRACTICE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH TEACHERS IN STATE MADRASAH SCHOOL IN MATARAM CITY," *English Review: Journal of English Education* 10, no. 3 (October 30, 2022): 957-64, <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v10i3.6819>.

<sup>20</sup> M Asep Fathur Rozi, Ahmad Patoni, and Imam Fuadi, "Student Planning in Improving the Quality of Education," *International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies* 1, no. 1 (2021): 13-18.

<sup>21</sup> Mukhamat Saini et al., "Strategies for Enhancing Student Discipline in Islamic Educational Settings," *IERA, Islamic Education and Research Academy* 4, no. 2 (July 23, 2023), <https://www.ejournal.staimnglawak.ac.id/index.php/iera/article/view/1545>.

studies focused on assessment literacy. A study on teachers' approaches to classroom assessment was conducted by DeLuca, Valiquette and Coombs in Canada and the United States<sup>22</sup>.

Based on those considerations, another study in different context is badly needed to complete the findings of the previous study. This study was conducted to reveal the *madrasah* teachers' assessment approaches by analyzing their various responses to some current scenarios about assessment which can reflect their assessment approaches in the classrooms. In order to make this study focused, two research questions were formulated for this study. The first research problem is "How is the madrasah teachers' approach to classroom assessment in general?" and the second one is "How do the madrasah teachers approach their assessment in terms of Assessment Purposes, Assessment Processes, Assessment Fairness, and Measurement Theory?"

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design. 27 *madrasah* teachers or Islamic secondary school teachers, consisting of 15 teachers from three Islamic Junior High Schools and 12 teachers from four Islamic Senior High Schools were involved in this study. They were required to respond to a set of instrument adapted from the Approaches to Classroom Assessment Inventory (ACAI) developed by DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan & Luhanga,<sup>23</sup> which was intended to investigate their tendency in approaching assessment in their classrooms.

In this study, madrasah teachers were presented with four scenarios on summative assessment, grading, differentiated assessment, and integrated assessment, followed by 16 items related to four assessment dimensions: purposes, processes, fairness, and measurement theory. Each item offered three options reflecting different assessment approaches: for purposes (A: assessment of learning, B: assessment for learning, C: assessment as learning), for processes (A: design, B: administration, C: communication), for fairness (A: standard treatment, B: equitable treatment, C: differentiated approach), and for measurement theory (A: reliability, B: validity, C: both). The inventory was translated into Bahasa Indonesia to avoid misunderstandings, allowing teachers to identify their assessment preferences.

For data analysis, teachers' responses were tallied and compared to determine the most common approach to classroom assessment. Each teacher selected one of three options for each item, and the option with the highest percentage was identified as the dominant approach. Approach A emphasized assessment of learning, focusing on reliability and standardized administration. Approach B centered on assessment for learning, prioritizing validity and equitable treatment. Approach C focused on assessment as learning, balancing reliability and validity through individualized methods. Additionally, responses were grouped by four assessment dimensions (purpose, process, fairness, and measurement theory) to calculate the percentage for each, identifying the teachers' approach per dimension.

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<sup>22</sup> Christopher DeLuca et al., "Teachers' Approaches to Classroom Assessment: A Large-Scale Survey," *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* 25, no. 4 (July 4, 2018): 355-75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2016.1244514>.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher DeLuca, Danielle LaPointe-McEwan, and Ulemu Luhanga, "Approaches to Classroom Assessment Inventory: A New Instrument to Support Teacher Assessment Literacy," *Educational Assessment* 21, no. 4 (October 20, 2016): 248-66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627197.2016.1236677>.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The study's findings are organized and presented in alignment with the research questions. The first findings on teachers' approach to classroom assessment in general is described first before the description of teachers' approaches to classroom assessment in terms of assessment purposes, assessment processes, assessment fairness, and measurement theory.

For the first research question on teachers' approach to classroom assessment in general, the frequency of each option from all teachers' responses were taken without considering the assessment dimension. The results show that there was a slight difference among the frequencies of teachers' responses for option A, B, and C. 27.3 % of teachers' responses were for option A, 39.1% for option B, and 33.7% for option C. It can be inferred that despite the minor difference, in general, teachers tended to have Approach B as their approach to classroom assessment. Approach B is characterized by teachers' tendency in having assessment *for* learning that highlights validity aspect of assessment and puts emphasis on administration and scoring of assessments as well as equitable treatment for students in assessment. See Table 1 for *madrasah* teachers' approach to classroom assessment in general.

**Table 1.** *Madrasah* Teachers' Approach to Classroom Assessment in General.

	Approach A	Approach B	Approach C
Assessment Purposes	Assessment of Learning	Assessment <i>for</i> Learning	Assessment <i>as</i> Learning
Assessment Processes	Designing	Administration and Scoring	Communicating
Assessment Fairness	Standard Treatment	Equitable Treatment	Differentiated Approach
Measurement Theory	Reliability	Validity	Reliability and Validity
Frequency of Teachers' Responses	27.3 %	39.1 %	33.7 %

Next, the second research question on teachers' approaches to classroom assessment in terms of assessment dimensions was identified after teachers' responses were grouped into the four dimensions and the frequencies of teachers' responses of the three items in each dimension were gotten. It was found that, in terms of assessment purpose, most of the teachers prioritized assessment *for* learning as the purpose of their assessment (72.5%). Only 8.3% of teachers' responses on items related to assessment purpose were for option A which is assessment *of* learning and 19.2 % for option C which is assessment *as* learning.

The percentages on assessment purposes above indicate that in many assessment cases exposed to the teachers in the inventory, most of *madrasah* teachers agree with the priorities offered by formative assessment or assessment *for* learning. One example is in the case of planning a unit lesson (item 13 in the inventory). Nearly all the teachers (27 out of 30) selected option B, which involves designing formative assessments to be implemented during instruction

and utilizing the resulting information to inform the planning of future lessons, learning activities, and summative assessment tasks.

Dealing with the second dimension, assessment process, many teachers (46.7%) chose option A which represents their emphasis on designing assessment, while 25.8 % and 27.5% of the teachers selected option B and C respectively reflecting that they emphasized on administration/scoring the assessment and communicating the result of assessment.

One example from the inventory where many teachers opted for option A was item number 14, which involved planning a unit lesson. Out of 27 teachers, 17 chose to design a summative evaluation encompassing all relevant curriculum expectations for the unit (Option A/standard assessment process) rather than consulting school policy to determine the weighting of homework, quizzes, and the summative evaluation in the unit's overall grade (Option B/administration and scoring assessment).

In terms of assessment fairness, there were more teachers who perceived standard treatment of assessment as fair assessment (41.7%), whereas only 25.9% chose equitable assessment treatment and 32.4% considered differentiated assessment treatment as fair assessment.

Teachers' responses to option A in item 15 was an example teachers' tendency for standard treatment of assessment. In a similar case involving planning a unit lesson, 22 out of 27 teachers chose to design class lessons and assessments that are uniform for all students and align with curriculum expectations (Option A/ standard treatment), rather than administering a diagnostic assessment at the start of the unit and allowing students to use the results to choose suitable learning and assessment activities (Option C/ differentiated treatment).

**Table 2.** Madrasah Teachers' Approach to Classroom Assessment based on Assessment Dimensions

Assessment Dimensions	Options	Frequency (%)
Assessment Purpose	Assessment of Learning	8.3
	Assessment for Learning	72.5
	Assessment as Learning	19.2
Assessment Process	Designing	46.7
	Administration and Scoring	25.8
	Communicating	27.5
Assessment Fairness	Standard Treatment	41.7
	Equitable Treatment	25.9
	Differentiated Approach	32.4
Measurement Theory	Reliability	10.2
	Validity	34.3
	Reliability and Validity	55.6

Finally, related to measurement theory, most teachers in this study (55.6%) put priority on both validity and reliability in their assessment approach. The rest prioritized reliability alone (10.2%) or validity alone (34.3%). An evidence of teachers' choosing of option C (prioritizing both validity and reliability of assessment) was item 4 dealing with the case of most students' failure in doing summative test. In this study, 17 out of 27 teachers chose to focus on identifying

which students failed, reviewing the wording of test questions, considering any extenuating circumstances that might have influenced the failures, and comparing these factors with previous assessment data to adjust grades accordingly (Option C). See Table 2 for the detailed teachers' approaches to assessment in terms of assessment dimensions.

From the description of findings of this study discussed previously, it can be seen that there are some differences in analysis results between the teachers' approach to classroom assessment in general and that in terms of assessment dimensions. This could be attributed to the small variations in the percentage of teachers' responses for options A, B, and C regarding their general approaches to classroom assessment. As a result, evaluating teachers' approaches based on assessment dimensions is seen as a more precise way to capture their tendencies in assessment practices.

## Discussion

The present study focused on teachers' approaches to classroom assessment. The results show that, in general, when they are exposed to some classroom situation scenarios, teachers' ideal priority is to implement assessment *for learning*. Although the percentage of their choice does not have a sharp difference with those of other assessment approaches, this can be a good indication that the teachers are inclined to the assessment for learning. Without underestimating the assessment *of learning*, assessment *for learning* or formative assessment is nowadays recommended for teachers' use in assessing their students in the classroom since it is considered as a form of assessment that is closely aligned with the learning objective in the classroom<sup>24</sup>. In addition, this kind of assessment is believed to promote students' achievement in learning since assessment *for learning* or formative assessment requires information provided for students to be used as feedback for their learning<sup>25</sup>. More importantly, because it is considered as the most relevant approach of assessment for today's students, teachers in Indonesian school context in particular are encouraged to implement assessment *for learning* or formative assessment based on Indonesian educational policy.<sup>26</sup>

Dealing with teachers' approach to classroom assessment in terms of assessment dimensions, the results of this study are not fully in line with the previous study conducted by DeLuca, Valiquettea & Andrew Coombs.<sup>27</sup> When compared to the results of the previous study, all assessment dimensions, except for assessment purposes, are responded differently by the teachers in this study. The teachers in the previous study put priority on assessment *for learning* in terms of assessment purposes, emphasized on administrating and scoring of assessment for assessment processes, prioritised equitable treatment for assessment fairness, and emphasized validity in terms of measurement theory. On the other hand, the results of the present study show that teachers prioritized assessment *for learning* in terms of assessment purposes,

<sup>24</sup> Koh, "Improving Teachers' Assessment Literacy through Professional Development."

<sup>25</sup> Black and Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning."

<sup>26</sup> Indonesian Education Ministerial Regulation No. 21 Year 2022, "Standar Penilaian Pendidikan Permendikbudristek No 21 Tahun 2022."

<sup>27</sup> DeLuca et al., "Teachers' Approaches to Classroom Assessment: A Large-Scale Survey."

emphasized on designing assessment for assessment processes, prioritised standard treatment for assessment fairness, and put priority on validity and reliability in terms of measurement theory.

With respect to the assessment fairness, the results of the present study show that teachers still prioritize on standard treatment of assessment while actually it is recommended that the assessment should fulfil the principle of fair assessment by considering the openness of design, constructs and scoring as well as the openness of the values and biases of the test design process<sup>28</sup>. To ensure fair assessment, teachers should adhere to the following key principles: (1) take into account the personal impact of assessment practices on individual students and their families, (2) tailor assessments to align with students' abilities, as well as their social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, (3) avoid implementing harmful or irrational assessment practices within the school community, (4) ensure that the frequency, intensity, and intrusiveness of assessments do not overwhelm students or their families, and (5) prevent assessments from being influenced by students' behavior.<sup>29</sup>

To sum up, there are still many aspects that need to be improved dealing with teachers' assessment understanding and skill in assessment. This can be done by exposing them to continuous training and teacher professional development. For *madrasah* teachers specifically, enhancing their learning assessments can be achieved by simultaneously strengthening their Islamic psychosocial skills and emotional intelligence.<sup>30</sup> However, some of teachers' tendencies in prioritizing assessment *for learning* as indicated in this study should be appreciated as the initial steps in implementing effective assessment practice which, in turn, can achieve students' effective learning.

## CONCLUSION

As assessment plays a very important role in students' learning, teachers' approaches to classroom assessment is an important consideration when the priority is students' success in learning. The findings of this present study show that the general tendency of *madrasah* teachers' approaches to classroom assessment in prioritizing assessment *for learning* has indicated positive fashion for effective classroom assessment although some dimensions of teachers' approaches to classroom assessment have not been in line with assessment principles and recommended practices. These certainly bring implications that *madrasah* teachers' understanding and skills of assessment need to be improved and it is indispensable to involve them in some professional development programs to ensure that they can consistently apply assessment principles in all aspects of their teaching, leading to more effective and aligned assessment practices..

Finally, despite the important findings of this study, some limitations of this study should be acknowledged. This study involved a limited number of teachers as participants. In addition, some factors of the teachers such as teachers' teaching experience, their academic background,

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<sup>28</sup> Gordon Stobart, "Fairness in Multicultural Assessment Systems," *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* 12, no. 3 (January 18, 2005): 275-87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09695940500337249>.

<sup>29</sup> Stobart.

<sup>30</sup> Desi Sukenti, Syahraini Tambak, and Ermalinda Siregar, "Learning Assessment for Madrasah Teacher: Strengthening Islamic Psychosocial and Emotional Intelligence," *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 13, no. 1 (June 22, 2021): 725-40, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v13i1.552>.

their professional development experience, and gender, are not considered. Therefore, the future researchers should add the number of participants and involve teachers' factors in their studies.

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