

Perceptions and practices of classroom assessment among university lecturers

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment influence instructional decisions, feedback practices, and students' learning experiences in higher education. This mixed-methods study explored university lecturers' perceptions and practices of classroom assessment. Twenty-two lecturers completed a 33-item questionnaire, and five participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that lecturers viewed assessment mainly as a tool for improving student learning and identifying students' strengths and weaknesses. They valued formative assessment, timely feedback, and continuous monitoring of learning progress. However, large class sizes, heavy workloads, and limited time constrained the use of formative assessment practices. Most respondents (82%) reported designing assessments to measure higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and creation. Common assessment forms included written assignments and quizzes (86%), while alternative assessments such as reflective journals (54%) and project-based assessments (50%) were also used. The findings highlight the need for sustained professional development and institutional support to promote authentic, learner-centered assessment practices in universities.

Keywords: Assessment, Perceptions of assessment, Assessment practices, Formative assessment

Introduction & Literature Review

Assessment is an essential element of teaching and learning – an integral part of teachers' work (Hildén & Fröjdendahl, 2018). Assessments significantly impact students' learning in various ways (Jimaa, 2011). How assessments are planned and implemented affects students' learning (Segers et al., 2008). The assessment methods employed by teachers impact students' learning approaches (Partanen et al., 2023, p. 475). A recent study also showed

that teachers' perception of assessment influences their assessment practices and the teaching and learning process (Fletcher et al., 2011).

Teachers' approach of instruction are linked to their concepts of teaching which in turn will affect how they evaluate students' learning (Watkins, Dahlin, & Ekholm, 2005). According to Gardner and Galanouli (2015), teachers' behavior is influenced by their perceptions of the dimensions of the assessment. Varied teachers'

perspectives lead to different evaluation techniques, according to Schellekens et al. (2023). Hence, teachers who consider the teaching and learning process as the replication or transmission of knowledge assess their students' capacity to replicate the learned knowledge. Teachers who emphasize critical thinking and meaningful learning tend to view assessment as an integral part of the learning process that promotes reflection, knowledge construction, and student engagement (Parmigiani et al., 2024).

According to DeLuca, Coombs, and LaPointe-McEwan (2018), teachers' assessment practices significantly influence students' learning experiences and classroom learning cultures. Assessment practices shape not only how students demonstrate learning but also how they engage with learning tasks, feedback, and self-regulation processes. Recent studies further indicate that teachers' beliefs, assessment literacy, and instructional orientations strongly affect the implementation of formative and learner-centered assessment practices (Schellekens et al., 2023; Parmigiani et al., 2024). Consequently, it is essential to examine and improve teachers' assessment literacy, perceptions, and classroom assessment practices to foster meaningful learning experiences and support higher-order thinking skills in higher education.

Assessment in the classroom is seen as a crucial component of successful teaching and learning. It is essential because it provides instruction to students on how to improve their performance and the learning process (Popham, 2008). Classroom assessment provide feedback on students' progress over time so that any learning difficulties can be detected and addressed. According to research (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006), classroom assessment is a crucial component of the teaching and learning process, and when it is

included into regular classroom activities, significant learning advantages can be obtained.

The aim of this study was to explore how university lecturers perceived and used classroom assessment. Given that perceptions influence behavior, researching how instructors view assessment is crucial.

Methodology

The study aimed to explore university lecturers' perceptions and practices of assessment. The study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To establish lecturers' perceptions of classroom assessment.
2. To establish lecturers' classroom assessment practices.

This study used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to investigate the research questions. The questionnaires were conducted aiming to establish the lecturers' perceptions about the assessment. Interviews were undertaken to obtain more understanding of the assessment practices. The researcher adapted the teachers' perception questions developed by Maclellan (2001).

The participants in this study are lecturers in a private university in Thailand. The respondents in the study were informed about the purpose of the study, their confidentiality, and that the use of data was voluntary. In total, 22 lecturers completed the questionnaire survey. Questionnaires were sent out to the researchers through office forms (online). Five lecturers participated in a semi-structured interview conducted informally to allow them to speak freely about classroom assessment topics and issues.

Quantitative data and qualitative data were analyzed separately. The qualitative data was used to validate the survey and to obtain more information about assessment practices. As this study was a cross-sectional study,

descriptive analysis was the main method. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze demographic information and respondents' responses. Data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed through a deductive approach.

Findings

The research was conducted in one private university in Thailand. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. The study used a 33-item questionnaire on perceptions and assessment practices. The questionnaire included demographic information, purposes, content, timing, and modes of assessment; marking criteria; and

value of feedback. Twenty-two lecturers from five departments participated in the study. Five lecturers participated in the semi-structured interviews to investigate the perceptions and practices of assessment.

As indicated in Table 1, 22 university lecturers – 11 male and 11 female – participated in the study. Six (27.3%) were from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and the remaining 4 (18.2%) were from the Faculty of Business, Education, Religious Studies, and Science, respectively. Regarding educational qualifications, the respondents were Master's and Ph.D. degree holders. The years of teaching experience showed that most lecturers had more than 11 years of experience in higher education settings.

Table 1 Respondents' Demographics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	11	50.0
	Female	11	50.0
Department	Arts and Humanities	6	27.3
	Business	4	18.2
	Education	4	18.2
	Religious Studies	4	18.2
	Science	4	18.2
Educational Qualification	Master	11	50.0
	PhD	11	50.0
Years of Teaching Experience	3-5 years	3	13.6
	6-10 years	5	22.7
	11 years and above	14	63.6

Lecturers' Perceptions on Purposes of Assessment

In the questionnaire, lecturers were asked about their perceptions of the purposes of classroom assessment. The findings showed that lecturers viewed identifying students' strengths and weaknesses as the most important purpose

of assessment, compared to motivating student learning, ranking students' achievement, and reflecting on teaching performance. This suggests that lecturers perceived assessment as an important tool for understanding and supporting student learning.

Table 2 Perceptions on Purposes of Assessment

Lecturers' Perceptions on Purposes of Assessment	Mean
Assessment is used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.	4.45
Assessment is used to motivate student learning.	4.09
Assessment is used to rank student achievements.	3.91
Assessment is used to reflect lecturer's teaching performance.	3.23

The interview data also sought respondents' perceptions about the purpose of the assessment. In the interview, two lecturers stated that assessments exist to check students' learning progress and evaluate their performance.

In general, the purpose of assessment is to assess the student's learning outcomes, their learning progress, and their performance. An assessment is for teachers to see how well students have achieved the objectives (Lecturer C)

To me, the purpose of assessment is to make an impartial assessment of learners' performance or progress or to define each individual learning continuum and compare learners academic performance. Sometimes,

assessment tools are heart-breaking since they serve to penalize the retarded learners who need more endeavors and attention from the instructor. (Lecturer E)

Lecturers' Perceptions on Contents of Assessment

The respondents were asked to share their perceptions of the content of assessment. Each question aimed to elicit information on how lecturers think about the design of assessment tasks. On a five-Likert scale, they were asked to rank the importance of each item in connection to the assessment content. Table 3 summarizes the respondents' perceptions about the content of assessment.

Table 3 Perceptions on Contents of Assessment

Contents of Assessment	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
Assessments are designed to assess students' ability ...						
... to present information			4 (18.2%)	13 (59.1%)	5 (22.7%)	4.05
... to analyze information			3 (13.6%)	15 (68.2%)	4 (18.2%)	4.05
... to synthesize information			4 (18.2%)	13 (59.1%)	5 (22.7%)	4.05
... to apply knowledge into real life situations		1 (4.5%)	4 (18.2%)	12 (54.5%)	5 (22.7%)	3.95
... to evaluate information			6 (27.3%)	11 (50.0%)	5 (22.7%)	3.95
... to develop new knowledge		1 (4.5%)	8 (36.4%)	11 (50%)	2 (9.1%)	3.64

Table 3 indicated that 59% of lecturers considered presenting information to be an often-important aspect of assessment content, while 22% rated this aspect as always important. Similarly, most lecturers (68.2%) perceived analyzing information as an often-important component of assessment content. These

findings suggest that lecturers emphasized higher-order thinking skills in their assessment practices. However, lecturers viewed the development of new knowledge as less important compared to other aspects of assessment content. Only 9.1% of respondents

perceived this aspect as always important in designing assessment tasks.

Data obtained from the interviews further revealed that lecturers considered course objectives to be an essential factor in designing assessment tasks. Most lecturers explained that assessment activities were developed to align with course objectives and intended learning outcomes. In other words, lecturers designed assessment tasks to evaluate whether students had achieved the expected learning goals and understood the course content effectively.

The assessment meets the course description. Each assessment task would fulfill the requirement of the course aims. (Lecturer A)

The main objectives for designing assessment tasks are to measure learners' understanding of the contents or to evaluate if they meet the designated outcomes/goals of the chapter/topic that has been instructed or presented. (Lecturer D)

Lecturers' Perceptions on Timing of Assessment

In the questionnaire, lecturers were asked about the timing of the assessment practices implemented in their courses. Table 4 showed that the majority of lecturers (50% and 36% , respectively) reported that they “often” and “always” assessed students at the end of chapters, modules, or courses. This indicates that assessment was commonly conducted after the completion of learning activities to evaluate students' achievement and understanding of the content. In contrast, most lecturers indicated that they rarely assessed students at the beginning of a chapter, module, or course to determine prior knowledge or readiness for learning. Based on these findings, it may be suggested that lecturers relied more heavily on summative assessment practices than on ongoing formative or diagnostic assessments throughout the teaching and learning process.

Table 4 Lecturer's Perceptions on Timing of Assessment

Timing of Assessment	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Means
Assessment is conducted ...						
... at the start of the course/chapter.	1 (4.5%)	7 (31.8%)	7 (31.8%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	3.09
... during the course/chapter.	1 (4.5%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (31.8%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	3.55
... at the end of the course/chapter.			3 (13.6%)	11 (50%)	8 (36.4%)	4.23

Data obtained from interviews indicated that only a few lecturers assess students' prior knowledge before the class or at the start of a chapter or module.

Mostly, I give [an] assessment to my students at the end of the chapter or unit, rarely at the start of chapters. (Lecturer C)

Lecturer's Perceptions on Modes of Assessment

Lecturers were also asked about the mode of assessment practiced in their courses. The eight modes of assessment reflect the lecturer's assessment practices. Table 5 indicated respondents' responses about the modes of assessment used.

Table 5 Lecturer's Perceptions on Modes of Assessment

Modes of Assessment	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
Assessment is conducted through...						
... individual presentations.	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	5 (22.7%)	11 (50%)	4 (18.2%)	3.73
... written assignments.			3 (13.6%)	12 (54.5%)	7 (31.8%)	4.18
... multiple-choice questions.	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	8 (36.4%)	7 (31.8%)	1 (4.5%)	3.05
... short answer questions	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	5 (22.7%)	12 (54.5%)	3 (13.6%)	3.68
... reflective journal-writing	1 (4.5%)	4 (18.2%)	5 (22.7%)	9 (40.9%)	3 (13.6%)	3.41
... group-project presentations with formative feedback		3 (13.6%)	8 (36.4%)	9 (40.9%)	2 (9.1%)	3.45
... a final exam	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	7 (31.8%)	12 (54.5%)	4.27
... presentation without feedback	9 (40.9%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)	1 (4.5%)		1.86

The most common assessment mode employed by lecturers was the final examination. More than half of the lecturers (54.5%) reported that they always used final examinations as a mode of assessment, while 32% indicated that they often used them in their courses. This finding suggests that summative assessment remained a dominant practice among the respondents. In contrast, presentation without feedback was the least frequently used assessment mode, with 41% reporting that they never used it and another 36% stating that they rarely used it. Other commonly used assessment methods included written assignments (54.5%, mean = 4.18), followed by individual presentations and short-answer questions. These findings indicate that lecturers employed a combination of traditional and interactive assessment approaches to evaluate students' learning.

Although written assignments and short-answer questions were frequently practiced, the findings also revealed limited use of digital and technology-enhanced formative assessment tools, particularly in post-COVID-19 higher education contexts. Recent studies have highlighted the growing importance of learning management systems, online quizzes, automated feedback systems, and instant-

response applications in supporting formative assessment and improving student engagement. For example, Chang Lu and Maria Cutumisu (2022) found that online formative assessments and learning management system (LMS) engagement positively influenced students' academic performance and learning engagement in technology-enhanced courses. Similarly, recent research emphasized that digital assessment and feedback tools can support continuous assessment practices and reduce challenges related to large class sizes and heavy lecturer workload (Castillo-Manzano et al., 2024; Sembey, Hoda, & Grundy, 2024). These technology-supported assessment practices may help lecturers provide more efficient feedback and facilitate ongoing monitoring of student learning.

In the interview, data showed that final exams were the common form of summative assignments, while written assignments and short quizzes were also conducted to check students' learning progress.

I use [written] assignments, class activities (only when I have a small class), quizzes, presentations and final exams. I used these modes because it helps to measure students learning progress and their performance in class. (Lecturer B)

I generally use [written] assignments, reading reports, quizzes, presentations and exams. I used these modes because I learned using them when I was in school and found them very useful. (Lecturer C)

Lecturer C's statement, "because I learned using them when I was in school and found them very useful," provides important insight into the deeply rooted nature of traditional assessment practices among university lecturers. This finding suggests that lecturers' current assessment approaches may be strongly influenced by their own educational experiences and prior exposure to conventional assessment methods. Such practices may reflect broader educational and cultural traditions in which examinations, written assignments, and teacher-directed evaluation are viewed as legitimate and effective forms of assessment.

This finding may also be understood within the cultural context of Thai and many Asian educational settings, where teachers are often viewed as authoritative figures and classroom practices tend to emphasize respect for hierarchy, structured learning, and examination-oriented instruction. Hussain et al. (2021) and Treve (2021) noted that traditional educational cultures and established teacher-student hierarchies can influence lecturers' willingness to adopt more student-centered and formative assessment approaches. Therefore, the gap between lecturers' positive perceptions of assessment for learning and their continued reliance on summative assessment practices may not only result from structural barriers such as workload and class size, but also from long-standing educational beliefs, institutional culture, and prior learning experiences.

Lecturers' Perceptions of Assessment Criteria

In one of the sections in the questionnaire, lecturers were asked to indicate

their practices regarding assessment criteria. Table 6 summarizes the respondents' answers to the assessment criteria.

The majority of lecturers (59%) stated they often gave explicit marking criteria, while 18% revealed their assessment was always based on explicit criteria. Most of them (50% = always, and 36% = often) indicated that assessment criteria are clearly stated in the course outline, while almost all lecturers specified that assessment requirements and criteria are made available in the course outline at the beginning of the course. This proactive dissemination of assessment criteria aligns with recommendations for enhancing assessment literacy and student engagement, fostering a clearer understanding of expectations and pathways to success (Gaikwad et al., 2023, p. 15).

However, while the provision of explicit marking criteria is a positive indicator of assessment transparency, it remains important to examine whether these criteria are aligned with formative assessment principles. Explicit criteria may serve not only grading purposes but also guide students toward improvement through constructive feedback and clear learning expectations.

In this study, the findings suggest that assessment criteria were primarily used to communicate grading requirements, with less emphasis on how criteria could support ongoing learning and self-improvement. This distinction reflects the broader tension identified in the study between assessment of learning, which focuses on measuring achievement, and assessment for learning, which emphasizes feedback, reflection, and continuous learning development.

Interview data confirmed the quantitative results that most lecturers indicated the total marks for each assessment were explicitly indicated in the course outline and made available to students at the beginning of the course.

I use rubrics (holistic and analytical) for scoring criteria, and the percentage or weight for each category is clearly explained in my class. (Lecturer D)

Marking criteria for written assignments is based on organization, grammar, and language structure. (Lecturer E)

Table 6 Lecturers' Perceptions of Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
Marking (scoring) is based on implicit criteria.	6 (27.3%)	7 (31.8%)	6 (27.3%)	3 (13.6%)		2.27
Marking (scoring) is based on explicit criteria.		2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	13 (59.1%)	4 (18.2%)	3.86
Detailed marking criteria are provided for all assignments.		2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	11 (50.0%)	5 (22.7%)	3.86
Assessment criteria are clearly stated in the course outline.			3 (13.6%)	8 (36.4%)	11 (50.0%)	4.36
Assessment requirements and marking criteria in the course outlines are made available to students at the beginning of the course.			1 (4.5%)	9 (40.9%)	12 (54.5%)	4.50

Lecturers' Perceptions on Value of Feedback

Lecturers were asked about the utility of feedback. This includes their perspectives on the value of feedback and how it relates to facilitating learning, discussions with lecturers and classmates, and perceptions of future assessments. A summary of respondents' answers were shown in Table 7.

The findings regarding the value of feedback showed that lecturers generally perceived feedback as an essential component of student learning. Sixteen out of 22 lecturers (72.7%) strongly agreed that feedback helps students improve their learning, resulting in the highest mean score ($M = 4.73$). Similarly, 9 lecturers (40.9%) reported that detailed written feedback is always necessary to encourage deep learning, while 11 lecturers (50.0%) indicated that it is often necessary ($M = 4.32$).

Most lecturers also believed that feedback supports students' future learning

and assessment preparation. Twelve lecturers (54.5%) stated that feedback often helps students prepare for future assessments, while 8 lecturers (36.4%) reported that it always does so ($M = 4.27$). In addition, 15 lecturers (68.2%) indicated that feedback is often provided within a reasonable time to facilitate learning ($M = 4.00$).

The findings further showed that lecturers perceived feedback as promoting classroom interaction and communication. Twelve lecturers (54.5%) believed that feedback often prompts discussion among students, while 11 lecturers (50.0%) reported that feedback often encourages discussion between students and lecturers. These results suggest that lecturers recognized feedback not only as a tool for evaluation but also as an important mechanism for supporting learning, reflection, and classroom engagement.

In the interview data, lecturers highlighted their beliefs that feedback could

improve students' learning and encourage deep learning.

[the purpose of] giving feedback is to indicate strengths and weaknesses, improve learning, and amend mistakes. (Lecturer A)

Feedback is necessary for genuine and continuous learning. Feedback will make students more reflective and grow in their learning. Without feedback, students do not know their strengths and weaknesses and areas to improve their learning. (Lecturer B)

Table 7 Lecturers' Perceptions on Value of Feedback

Value of Feedback	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean
Detailed written feedback is necessary to encourage deep learning.			2 (9.1%)	11 (50.0%)	9 (40.9%)	4.32
Feedback on assessment is given within a reasonable time to facilitate learning.		1 (4.5%)	2 (9.1%)	15 (68.2%)	4 (18.2%)	4.00
Feedback allows students to prepare for future assessments.			2 (9.1%)	12 (54.5%)	8 (36.4%)	4.27
Feedback prompts discussion between students in the classroom.		2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)	12 (54.5%)	3 (13.6%)	3.73
Feedback prompts discussion between students and lecturers.			5 (22.7%)	11 (50.0%)	6 (27.3%)	4.05
Feedback helps students to improve their learning.				6 (27.3%)	16 (72.7%)	4.73

Even though lecturers accepted that feedback was a motivating tool for supporting learning, they nonetheless highlighted difficulties with providing feedback. Such challenges include class sizes, time constraints, and other academic loads.

Recent studies suggest that technology-enhanced assessment tools can help address many of the barriers associated with traditional formative assessment practices. For example, Gagik Sedrakyan et al. (2023) highlighted that digital formative assessment tools facilitate interactive learning, immediate feedback, and continuous monitoring of student progress, thereby reducing some of the workload demands on lecturers. Similarly, Shiweda Haipinge et al. (2022) emphasized that technology-supported diagnostic assessment tools in hybrid and online classrooms can enhance student engagement and support

timely feedback processes. These findings suggest that integrating learning management systems, online quizzes, automated feedback systems, and instant-response applications may help lecturers provide more efficient and learner-centered assessment practices while overcoming constraints related to time and large class sizes.

Discussion

Lecturers perceived identifying students' strengths and weaknesses as the primary purpose of assessment. The findings also indicated that traditional forms of assessment, such as tests and written assignments, are the predominant practice in this university. The data also revealed that assessment criteria are explicitly stated and made available to students to inform them of what they are expected.

The content of the assessment focused on analytical skills and information

presentation skills. It was shown that most lecturers used summative assessments. This is inconsistent with perceptions of the purpose of assessment. According to research, diagnostic assessments are mostly used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses (Sujinah et al., 2024, p. 4).

Limitations and Implications

Although the study was carefully prepared and carried out, there were some unavoidable limitations. The study was undertaken in only one private university, and thus the findings may be different across other private universities. The study examined only the teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment. It would be meaningful to explore university students' perceptions of classroom assessment and compare the results.

The study would help explore practices of assessment that enhance student learning in the private university context. The study's findings can provide insights into teachers' classroom assessment practices and function beyond grading students' performance. Moreover, it showed that assessment could foster student learning. Lecturers in the university should broaden their understanding of the purpose and mode of assessment.

Based on the results, the study also suggests implementing a variety of alternative assessment tools in the university to encourage

deep learning and foster critical and analytical thinking skills. Therefore, lecturers need to be encouraged to explore and attend professional development regarding assessment techniques and tools.

Conclusion

The findings showed that lecturers believed in assessment for learning; however, assessment of learning is largely practiced using summative assessment and traditional modes of assessment. Several studies have shown that Assessment for Learning supports students' learning. Lecturers at the university need to reflect on current assessment practices. Assessment and instructions go hand in hand. Helping students meet their learning goals is the primary goal of classroom instruction, and assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process (Pejčić, 2025). To foster a more effective assessment for learning culture, pedagogical strategies should integrate both formative and summative assessment approaches, balancing diagnostic feedback with evaluative judgments to optimize student learning outcomes (Schellekens et al., 2023, p. 6). This comprehensive approach necessitates ongoing professional development for educators, particularly in enhancing their competencies in formative assessment, rubric design, and the provision of quality feedback (Letina et al., 2025, p. 1118).

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