



## TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GREECE

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### Abstract:

This study aimed to explore teachers' assessment practices in lower secondary education in Greece. A total of 74 teachers teaching in secondary education schools participated by completing a self-administered questionnaire. The findings revealed that Greek secondary education teachers generally use both traditional and alternative assessment tools, demonstrating a marked preference for traditional ones. The participants reported various factors influencing their limited adoption of alternative assessment tools such as portfolios, self- and peer-assessments, and rubrics. These factors include time constraints, lack of skills, and teachers' perceptions of tools' effectiveness. Notably, teachers reported a willingness to participate in training that would help them effectively use assessment tools, thus promoting assessment for learning in their classrooms.

**Keywords:** assessment, formative assessment, students, teachers, secondary education, Greece

### 1. Introduction

Assessment comprises a continuous process of systematically gathering information to facilitate decision-making regarding students' learning (Linn & Miller, 2005; Seifert & Sutton, 2009). Historically, assessment was frequently used interchangeably with measurement. However, today, assessment cannot be considered synonymous. It extends beyond measurement, referring to a broader process of collecting data for students' learning and progress (Kubiszyn & Borich, 2024).

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The focus center of this work is primarily on formative assessment, which takes place during the lesson and seeks to gather data from various sources to provide timely feedback to students (Andersson & Palm, 2017b; Chiou *et al.*, 2025; Graham *et al.*, 2015). As Yan and Brown (2021, p. 2) mention, it *"is an integral part of learning and should be used as a tool to support learning and teaching."*

Formative assessment plays a vital role in teachers' decisions related to the lesson and its refinement to better promote learning and students' progress (Chiou *et al.*, 2025; Karaman, 2021; Seifert & Sutton, 2009). Formative assessment can be informal, based on spontaneous and unsystematic observations, or formal, involving systematic observation and the utilisation of diverse tools to gather information regarding students' needs and learning progress (Seifert & Sutton, 2009). In contrast, summative assessment aims to assess learning outcomes and final academic products, often connected with the assignment of final grades. A summative assessment is typically implemented at the end of a learning period (Kibble, 2017; Seifert & Sutton, 2009), and it is perceived as separate from students' learning (Yan & Brown, 2021).

Nevertheless, assessment is considered a fundamental component of the teaching and learning process. It is embedded in the initial stage of instructional design, and it is directly connected with the learning goals and the desired learning outcomes posed in line with the content, behaviours, and skills that are expected to be enhanced. Suskie (2018) delineates a four-step teaching-learning assessment process described as follows:

- 1) Defining expected goals for students' learning,
- 2) Ensuring opportunities for students to achieve these goals,
- 3) Collecting and analysing data, and interpreting evidence,
- 4) Improving students' learning based on the evidence.

This process sets the centre of focus on students' learning while it emphasises the alignment between learning goals and assessment to achieve learning gains. Teachers' assessment practices can play a crucial role in shaping students' educational experiences and affecting their learning.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that teachers frequently face significant challenges in effectively implementing formative assessment (De Lisle, 2014; Wylie & Lion, 2015), indicating the need for more focused professional development (Wylie & Lion, 2015). Such development can lead to changes in teachers' assessment practices, which, in turn, positively affect students' learning (Andersson & Palm, 2017a). The forms of formative assessment adopted by teachers vary across different contexts. A systematic review by Yan *et al.* (2021) revealed that both personal and contextual factors can influence teachers' intentions or implementations related to formative assessment. Personal factors, such as instrumental attitude, self-efficacy, education, and training, along with contextual factors like internal school support, external policies, school environment, and cultural norms, were found to influence teachers' intentions to implement formative assessment in their classrooms. Additionally, factors including education and training, instrumental attitude, and belief in teaching, as well as school environment, internal school support, and working conditions, were highlighted as the most common to influence formative assessment implementation. Similarly, Atjonen (2014), by investigating teachers' views

on their assessment practices, revealed that a heterogeneous student population alongside the inclusion of students with special needs and fairness interpretation challenged teachers' assessment practices, whereas the adoption of various assessment techniques, students' enhanced competencies, and curriculum guidance facilitated the assessment process.

The assessment techniques and tools that teachers use can vary significantly based on teaching philosophy, teachers' experience, subject, and students' needs. Well-developed formative assessment facilitates teachers' tracking of students' development and learning progress and encourages students to regulate their own learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). To achieve this, a variety of assessment techniques, from simple to more sophisticated and from traditional to more modern and alternative, provide teachers with a rich repertoire of assessment choices (Chiou *et al.*, 2025). Written tests, oral assessments, and closed-ended questions are considered traditional assessment tools over projects, self- and peer-assessment, rubrics, and systematic observation, which comprise modern and alternative assessment tools. Ultimately, the final choice of assessment tools depends exclusively on teachers' decisions affected by factors related to the "what" to assess and "how" to assess.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Research aim**

The purpose of the present research was to examine teachers' assessment practices in Greek secondary schools, as well as the underlying reasons for the adoption or rejection of specific assessment techniques and tools.

To achieve this objective, the following research questions were addressed:

**RQ1:** Which assessment techniques are employed by teachers in Greek secondary education, and to what extent are they utilised?

**RQ2:** What are the reasons for the non-adoption of certain assessment techniques?

**RQ3:** Which alternative assessment techniques do teachers in Greek secondary education consider useful?

**RQ4:** Which assessment tools do teachers in Greek secondary education prioritise when determining final grades?

### **2.2 Participants**

The participants were 74 teachers educating students aged 12 to 14 years in the first three years in Greek lower secondary schools. Teachers were recruited from the total of six public lower secondary schools located in a town in the Northern Aegean Region of Greece. Among the participants, 22 were men (29.7%), and 52 were women (70.3%).

The majority of the teachers (59.5%) were aged between 50 and 59, followed by 23% between 40 and 49 years, 12.2% between 30 and 39 years, 4.1% over 60 years, and one teacher younger than 30 years old. Of the participants, 65 teachers held permanent teaching positions, while 9 had temporary positions. In terms of educational qualifications, 46 teachers (62.2%) had completed only bachelor's studies, 25 had a

master's degree, and one held a PhD degree. Two teachers did not provide relevant data regarding their qualifications.

Regarding the years of service, 40.5% of teachers had 21-30 years of teaching service, followed by 27% who had served 13-20 years, 17.6% who had more than 30 years, 8.1% who had 6-12 years of service and 6.8% with less than 5 years of service.

### 2.3 Research questionnaire

For data collection, a self-administered questionnaire was used. The first section of the questionnaire gathered information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The second section included both open-ended and closed-ended questions designed on the basis of the research questions. This section aimed to gather information on the teachers' practices regarding classroom assessment techniques.

### 2.4 Procedure

The authors visited the six public schools in the town and informed the schools' principals and teachers about the purpose of the research. Teachers were assured of the confidentiality and the anonymity of their data, including demographic information, responses on the second part of the questionnaire, and the school's name and location. Teachers' names were not required on the questionnaires. Participation in the research was voluntary.

## 3. Results

Data was analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Descriptive analysis revealed that teachers tend to adopt more traditional techniques, such as tests, oral assessment, and homework, as well as the modern approach of systematic observation. These techniques were used more frequently compared to alternative assessment techniques like portfolios, self-assessment, peer-assessment, project-based assessment, e-portfolios, and rubrics (Table 1). Oral assessment emerged as one of the most commonly used assessment techniques in the classroom.

**Table 1:** How often do you use in general the following assessment techniques?

	Never (%)	Seldom (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Almost always (%)
Tests (N=70)	10	21.4	37.1	22.9	8.6
Oral assessment (N=73)	1.4	2.7	11	38.4	46.6
Homework (N=72)	4.2	8.3	44.4	27.8	15.3
Systematic observation (N=69)	8.7	4.3	20.3	40.6	26.1
Portfolio (N=62)	40.3	25.8	19.4	6.5	8.1
Student Self-assessment (N=62)	19.4	38.7	30.6	8.1	3.2
Student Peer-assessment (N=64)	48.4	32.8	14.1	3.1	1.6
Projects (N=65)	16.9	21.5	35.4	21.5	4.6
E-portfolio (N=58)	79.3	13.8	3.4	3.4	0.0
Rubrics (N=55)	83.6	7.3	7.3	1.8	0.0

When participants (N=61) were asked which assessment techniques they had not used so far, but planned to use in the current year, they mostly referred to alternative techniques, including self-assessment (23%), peer-assessment (24.6%), projects (16.4%), e-portfolios (18%), and rubrics (19.7%). Only 4.9% of participants mentioned written tests, 3.3% mentioned systematic observation, and 6.6% mentioned portfolios.

Teachers were also asked about the reason they do not prefer to use certain assessment techniques in their classrooms in the year of study. Various reasons were provided, including time restrictions, lack of skills to apply the techniques, and professional perceptions regarding the added value of these assessment methods, as the main barriers to adopting alternative assessment techniques (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Reason(s) for not using certain techniques in year of study

Assessment planning to use in the current school year	Please state the reason(s) why you will not use these techniques:
Tests	Not suitable for the lesson (N=7), Not required (N=2).
Homeworks	Not suitable for the lesson (N=3).
Systematic observation	Time restrictions (N=3), Not suitable for the lesson (N=1).
Portfolio	Not suitable for the lesson (N=6), Time restrictions (N=5), Large number of students (N=1), I have never used it (N=1).
Student Self-assessment	Time restrictions (N=2), Subjective assessment (N=1), Students do not have the knowledge to use it (N=1), Not helpful (N=2), Large number of students (N=1).
Student Peer-assessment	Not suitable for my lesson (N=5), Time-consuming (N=3), Students do not have the knowledge to use it (N=1).
Projects	Not suitable for my lesson (N=3), Not easily applicable (N=2).
E-portofolio	I don't agree with its use (N=2), Time-consuming (N=3), Not required by the curriculum (N=6), I have never used it (N=1), Not easily applicable (N=2), I have limited knowledge of computer use (N=1), No access to computer (N=1), Not helpful (N=2), Large number of students (N=1).
Rubrics	I am not aware of how to use it (N=5), I don't agree with its use (N=1), Not suitable for my lesson (N=3), Not obligatory (N=2).

Regarding written responses, the findings indicated that teachers use various types to differing extents. True-false items and questions requiring short responses were the most preferred, while hierarchical questions were less frequently recorded. Three participants reported that they use other types of responses, such as summaries, questions requiring a justified answer, and oral productions (Table 3).

**Table 3:** How often do you use the following types of written responses?

	Never (%)	Seldom (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Almost always (%)
Multiple Choice Items (N=70)	2.9	12.9	38.6	21.4	24.3
Matching Items (N=71)	2.8	9.9	43.7	22.5	21.1
True/False Items (N=71)	2.8	11.3	33.8	26.8	25.4
Completion of Blanks (N=70)	11.4	15.7	27.1	27.1	18.6
Hierarchical Questions (N=61)	19.7	19.7	29.5	19.7	11.5
Questions needing Short Response (N=70)	7.1	10	30	41.4	11.4
Questions needing Extended Response (N=68)	7.4	22.1	26.5	30.9	13.2
Other (N=3)	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3

Next, teachers were surveyed regarding the sources of the written assessments they employ. Of them, 91.7% reported that the written assessments they use are of their own design, followed by 66.2% who source them from educational websites, 47.2% who utilise extracurricular materials, 44.4% who draw exercises from school textbooks, and 12.5% who obtain assessments from other sources, including libraries, books, teachers' guides, and university notes.

Table 4 presents teachers' perceptions regarding the usefulness of various alternative assessment techniques in secondary education. Among these, systematic observation and project-based assessments are regarded as the most useful, followed by students' self-assessment techniques. In contrast, e-portfolios and rubrics are considered less useful by teachers.

**Table 4:** How useful do you think it is to apply the following alternative assessment techniques in secondary education?

	Not useful (%)	Slightly useful (%)	Fairly useful (%)	Useful (%)	Very useful (%)
Systematic observation (N=67)	1.5	6	25.4	29.9	37.3
Portfolio (N=61)	4.9	24.6	31.1	19.7	19.7
Student Self-assessment (N=67)	7.5	13.4	43.3	22.4	13.4
Student Peer-assessment (N=64)	17.2	25	37.5	14.1	6.3
Projects (N=65)	4.6	12.3	27.7	46.2	9.2
E-portfolio (N=55)	21.8	30.9	30.9	10.9	5.5
Rubrics (N=47)	40.4	36.2	17	6.4	0.0

Additionally, teachers were asked to report the extent to which various assessment techniques are more considered when assigning the final grades to students. The findings indicate that participation during the lesson, oral assessments, systematic observation, behaviour, and homework are given greater consideration by teachers when assigning final grades, in comparison to tests, portfolios, and students' self- and peer-assessments, and rubrics (Table 5).

**Table 5:** To which extent do you take into consideration the following for the students' final grade?

	Not at all (%)	Slightly (%)	Moderately (%)	Very (%)	Extremely (%)
Tests (N=71)	7	16.9	38	29.6	8.5
Oral assessment (N=71)	1.4	1.4	14.1	53.5	29.6
Homework (N=71)	4.2	11.3	25.4	47.9	11.3
Systematic observation (N=64)	4.7	4.7	21.9	43.8	25
Portfolio (N=62)	38.7	17.7	19.4	11.3	12.9
Student Self-assessment (N=57)	28.1	24.6	33.3	7	7
Student Peer-assessment (N=59)	44.1	27.1	20.3	6.8	1.7
Projects (N=60)	15	25	30	25	5
E-portfolio (N=56)	55.4	28.6	10.7	3.6	1.8
Rubrics (N=45)	64.4	22.2	8.9	4.4	0.0
Participation during the lesson (N=69)	2.9	2.9	8.7	26.1	59.4
Behavior (N=62)	4.8	14.5	22.6	33.9	24.2

Notably, among the total participants, 75.5% indicated that a training seminar on student assessment techniques would enhance their ability to effectively apply the aforementioned assessment techniques. In contrast, 16.2% of the teachers expressed opposition to this idea, while 8.1% did not provide an opinion.

#### 4. Discussion

The main goal of this study was to explore teachers' classroom assessment practices in Greek secondary education. Through the data collected, it was possible to identify both traditional and modern methods utilised in assessing students, as well as the factors influencing their frequent or non-frequent adoption.

The findings indicate that secondary school teachers predominantly rely on traditional oral assessments, followed by systematic observation. Homework and tests are also frequently preferred, ranking as the third and fourth choices. The data gathered from these assessment tools play a significant role when it comes to determining the final grades, alongside the participation during the lesson and students' behaviour. Conversely, alternative forms such as self- and peer-assessment, rubrics, and portfolios are the least adopted assessment tools among teachers. Notably, teachers perceive them as less useful compared to systematic observation and project-based assessments, especially those of e-portfolios and rubrics.

Teachers were also found to prioritise specific assessment tools when assigning final grades. Oral assessments, homework, and systematic observation were given more weight compared to tests, portfolios, and student self- and peer-assessments. Such approaches are not only familiar but also less time-consuming, as teachers declare, thus fitting better within the constraints of the classroom setting.

Existing research indicates that teachers often employ various forms of assessments, both traditional and alternative, demonstrating a higher preference for conventional approaches (Çalışkan & Kaşıkçı, 2010). Despite the well-documented benefits of alternative assessment approaches (Aysu, 2021; Kulkarni *et al.*, 2013; Panadero *et al.*, 2017), traditional assessment methods are still preferred, sometimes over more modern approaches, such as portfolios, self-assessment, peer-assessment, and rubrics. The wide adoption of traditional methods is not surprising, as conventional assessment practices are deeply rooted in many education systems.

Several reasons were identified for the non-adoption of various alternative assessment methods, most notably time restrictions, lack of required skills, and teachers' perceptions regarding their effectiveness. These findings are in line with those of other studies, which suggest that teachers often face challenges in implementing formative assessments and embracing new assessment techniques due to a variety of personal and contextual factors (Atjonen, 2014; Black & Wiliam, 1998; De Lisle, 2015; Wylie & Lion, 2015; Yan *et al.*, 2021).

Interestingly, when teachers were asked about assessment techniques they intended to use in their classrooms in the future, a shift was recorded toward alternative assessment methods, mostly self-assessment, peer-assessment, and project-based assessment. This result is quite promising, indicating the possibility for changes in teachers' assessment practices, suggesting that the delivery of professional development programmes and training in alternative assessment methods may strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills to adopt more alternative assessment techniques in their classrooms. Moreover, this study revealed that the majority of the teachers were interested in professional development on assessment techniques that would enhance their ability to effectively implement various formative assessment tools. This result reveals that teachers not only recognise their needs in relation to modern assessment techniques, but also, they appear willing to receive professional support to become more effective.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

This study revealed that teachers of Greek secondary education generally use both traditional and alternative assessment approaches. They appear to have a higher preference for traditional assessment tools over more modern ones, making frequent use of a wide range of written responses. Out of the more alternative forms of assessment, teachers mostly use systematic observation followed by projects, reporting various reasons for not adopting widely other alternative assessment tools such as portfolios, self-



and peer-assessments, and rubrics. These reasons include time constraints, lack of skills, and teachers' perceptions regarding their effectiveness.

Considering that teachers report that they need support to implement effectively diverse formative assessment tools, this study suggests a large-scale evaluation of teachers' needs and the organisation of professional development programmes and training on various formative assessment approaches and tools that will help them better promote the assessment for learning in their classrooms.

## 6. Limitations

In the present study, two limitations can be identified. First, the research is based on a case study examining the teachers' preferences regarding assessment methods. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to all secondary education teachers in Greece. Second, the sample size is relatively small. A larger, more representative sample, that encompasses a broader range of Greek regions, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' preferences for assessment methods and the underlying reasons influencing their assessment decisions.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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