

New Forms of Assessment: Incorporating EFL Reading and Writing Students' Contributions

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Abstract

Assessment has witnessed drastic changes in the last decade. However, depending only on the summative assessment might not help in reaching the ultimate goals of enhancing students' learning and improving instructors' teaching. Besides, having the instructor as the only assessor in the classroom might hinder personalized learning. Accordingly, the present study aims at investigating the effect of implementing new forms of formative assessment on enhancing EFL freshman students' reading and writing skills. The study was conducted in a private Saudi university during the academic years 2016 – 2017 and 2017 – 2018. Fifty-two EFL students enrolled in a reading and writing course and randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group participated in the study. The suggested assessment strategy focused on encouraging students to contribute to their learning instead of collecting evidence for their instructor by participating in tests generation, scoring rubrics design and reflection learning logs. A list of dynamic tasks was created in collaboration with students who took the full responsibility of teaching each other. Weekly expert students were assigned to contribute to the learning and teaching of other groups while the instructor's main job was only to facilitate the whole process. Instruments of the study included a pre-post reading and writing test, semi-structured interviews and students' reflection learning logs where their opinions regarding their learning were constructively measured. Findings proved that students' high performance was in favour of the items they constructed. Test item writing increased their sense of being responsible for their academic achievement. Their endeavours to produce test items kept them well informed of the specific details of the syllabus and increased their analytical skills. Students had a highly positive attitude towards their participation in test construction. A list of recommendations with the possible drawbacks of learning-oriented assessment were considered as well.

Key Words: Formative Assessment - Rubrics – Expert student – Reflective learning logs

أنماط جديدة للتقييم: دمج مساهمات الطلاب الدارسين للقراءة والكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

ملخص البحث

لقد شهدت عمليات التقييم تغيرات جذرية في العقد الماضي، ومع ذلك فإنه على ما يبدو أن الاعتماد على التقييم التجميحي أو النهائي فقط في الوصول إلى الأهداف المنشودة ربما لا يساعد في تحسين تعلم الطلاب وقدرة تدريس المعلمين على السواء. علاوة على أن وجود المعلم كمقيم وحيد في الفصل قد يعوق عملية شخصنة التعلم بما يضمن تمرّكه حول المتعلم. وبناءً عليه فالدراسة الحالية تهدف إلى اكتشاف أثر تطبيق أشكال جديدة من التقييم التكويني على تحسين مهارات القراءة والكتابة لدى الطلاب الجدد الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. لقد أجريت الدراسة في إحدى الجامعات السعودية الخاصة خلال الأعوام الدراسية 2016 - 2017 و 2017 - 2018. حيث التحق اثنان وخمسون طالبة من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بمساق القراءة والكتابة وتم تعيينهم بشكل عشوائي إلى مجموعة تجريبية ومجموعة ضابطة ليشاركوا في الدراسة. ركزت استراتيجية التقييم المقترحة على تشجيع الطالبات على المساهمة في تعلمهن بدلاً من جمع الأدلة للمعلم من خلال المشاركة في إعداد الاختبارات، وتصميم مقاييس تقدير الأداء وإعداد سجلات التعلم التأملي. كما تم إنشاء قائمة للمهام بالتعاون مع الطالبات حيث أخذن المسؤولية الكاملة لتدريس بعضهم البعض. ومن أمثلة ذلك، تعيين الطالبات الأكثر خبرة للمساهمة في تعليم وتدريس مجموعات أخرى في حين أن الوظيفة الرئيسية للمعلم كانت فقط تسهيل العملية برمتها. تضمنت أدوات الدراسة اختبار قبلي وبعدي للقراءة والكتابة، والمقابلات وسجلات التعلم التأملي للطالبات حيث تم قياس آرائهم بشأن طريقة تعليمهم وتحصيلهم بشكل بناء. أثبتت النتائج أن أداء الطالبات العالي في الاختبار كان لصالح المفردات الاختبارية التي قاموا بإنشائها. حيث زادت مشاركتهم في كتابة عناصر الاختبار من إحساسهم بالمسؤولية عن تحصيلهم الأكاديمي. وقد جعلت مساعيهم لإنتاج عناصر الاختبار منهم أكثر قدرة على الإطلاع على التفاصيل الدقيقة للمنهج وزادت من مهاراتهم التحليلية. وقد كان لدى الطالبات موقف إيجابي للغاية تجاه مشاركتهم في بناء الاختبار. واختتم البحث بقائمة بالتوصيات والعيوب المحتملة للتقييم الموجه للتعلم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التقييم التكويني - مقياس تقييم الأداء - الطالب الخبير - سجلات التعلم التأملي

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1. Introduction

The typical pattern of teaching and delivering tests is that only instructors are responsible for designing them and students are just passive receivers. There is no objection that instructors are playing an important role in assessing their students (Buhagiar, 2007), however, perceiving students as contributors and not just receivers increases chances of learning and assessment personalization and shifts the focus from the instructors into the students because students will be engaged from the first moment of learning (Jones and Lisciandro, 2019). Formative assessment as an alternative way of assessment is required because if it is conducted well, it gives good results (Earl, 2013, p.3). Accordingly, one should think; what will happen if role reversal is implemented? “students must be active participants in designing assessment tasks and be given responsibility for using assessment data to monitor and improve their own learning.” (Valencia, 1990, p. 339) They should be encouraged to contribute to their learning instead of collecting evidence for their instructor. Engaging students as leaders of their own Learning is a must because whatever activities and practices happen in the classroom should be made clear for the students that their instructor is not the only owner but they shared their ownership (Heritage, 2010). As students are given the tools to understand and assess their own strengths and challenges, their ability to take ownership increases. Students become leaders of their own learning— understanding learning targets, tracking their progress, using feedback to revise their work, and presenting their learning publicly—and partners with their teachers. Formative assessment builds students' learning to learn skills by placing emphasis on the process of teaching and learning, and actively involving students in that process, building students' skills for peer- and self-assessment, helping students understand their own learning, and develop appropriate strategies for “learning to learn”. According to Shepard (2000, p.12) when students' practice self-assessment, this makes them responsible for their learning

and gives them a good example of student-instructor collaboration and how far it affects their learning.

2. Statement of the problem

In spite of the progress that has been witnessed in the field of EFL assessment practices in higher education, little research has been conducted to explore students' role in their assessment, how far instructors are involving their students in the actual process of assessment and the effect that these practices might have on EFL freshman students' reading and writing skills. Accordingly, the present study aims at investigating the effect of implementing new forms of formative assessment on enhancing EFL freshman students' reading and writing skills through seeking answers to the following questions:

1. What is the effect of EFL freshman students' involvement in the test generation on their reading and writing achievement level?
2. What is the effect of EFL freshman students' involvement in scoring rubrics design on their reading and writing achievement level?
3. How far are EFL freshman students' reflection learning logs effective in increasing their self-assessment skills and learning ownership?
4. How far are EFL freshman students satisfied with contributing to the assessment practices implemented during the analytical reading and writing course?

3. Purpose of the study

The present study aims to investigate the effect implementing new forms of formative assessment on enhancing EFL freshman students' reading and writing skills.

4. Significance of the study

It is expected that results obtained from the present study might be of great significance on several levels. On the instructors' level, it is expected that EFL instructors who are assigned teaching the same course in the future will change their assessment practices and try to incorporate students within the assessment process. On the higher management level, it is expected that more training on new forms of alternative assessments will be an essential part of professional development training programs. On the students' level, it is expected that students will gain more confidence in their ability to learn and be

more autonomous learners. On a wider view, it is expected that stakeholders in the higher education might rethink the EFL current assessment practices and give more focus on the learners as partners in the educational process and not as passive learners.

5. Limitations of the study

Being only implemented on a small sample in a private university is considered one of the limitations of the present study. In addition, it might be preferable to try this study for a longer time to avoid time constraints and to implement it on a male sample to consider gender differences.

6. Review of literature and previous studies

According to Nunan and Carter (2001, p.137) the term assessment refers to “a variety of ways of collecting information on a learner’s language ability or achievement”. Assessment gets its importance from the common believe among educators that it is with assessment that instructors can ensure that their students learnt what they have been taught (Wiliam, 2013). Designing and implementing assessment that enhances higher education students’ learning and increases their motivation can be an achievable target once the right type of assessment is adopted. Race (2014, p. xi) believes that “it is assessment and feedback from lecturers that most profoundly influence the ways that students go about their learning.” However, the majority of students consider traditional forms of assessment as an unpleasant experience which never adds to their knowledge. Therefore, in order to change students’ attitudes towards assessment, educators should make assessment benefit students’ learning (Kivunja, 2015). One of the common forms of assessment is the formative assessment which is not a new term in the educational field. However, it does not have a clear definition among researchers (Good, 2011) or even obvious and well-established rules for its implementation (Bennett, 2011, p. 5-25).

Recent studies highlighted the importance of rethinking the relationship between students and their instructors and even more, their relation with the higher management in their educational institutions. In spite of not having a clear or concise definition for formative assessment and because of its widespread use within higher education institutions, especially in EFL language teaching, a clear set of strategies are required to help instructors in its implementation. Carless (2012) suggested seven strategies for formative assessment: (1) Sharing learning intentions and success criteria, (2) Questioning as a means of engineering productive classroom discussions and

dialogues, (3) Peer learning and assessment activating students as learning resources for each other, (4) Self-assessment involving students in monitoring the quality of their work, (5) Extensions of Strategies (3) and (4), which involve students in taking ownership of their learning through learning to learn, (6) Feedback that helps move learning forward and (7) The formative use of tests designed principally for summative purposes. Matthews, Groenendijk and Chunduri (2017) conducted a study to investigate undergraduate students' perceptions of how involved they were in partnership activities across their degree programs. They concluded that students should be considered partners who contribute to the enhancement of their universities and participate in all assessment practices. On his way to clarify the instructors and students' involvement, Healey (2014) suggested a framework of four classes of partners in: (1) Learning, teaching, and assessment (2) Subject-based research and inquiry (3) Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy (4) Scholarship of teaching and learning.

Shaker (2003) investigated the effect of incorporating three self-assessment tasks: the think sheet, the reflective journal, and the portfolio on enhancing college students' writing. The sample of the study involved 180 students who were enrolled in the Essay Writing and Reading Comprehension Course during the academic year 2001/2002 at the Suez Faculty of Education, Egypt. Data collection included a pre-post-test, an attitude questionnaire and a number of semi-structured interviews. The study concluded that the implemented self-assessment tasks helped in enhancing students' writing quality and positively affected their attitudes towards writing. These results indicated that giving students the right to be active partners in their assessment, leads to an increase in their engagement and enhance their writing. Engagement, awareness and enhancement are identified by Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten, (2014) as the most important three outcomes that can be reached as a result of student-faculty partnership. They added that both faculty and students benefit from this partnership as it deepens students' learning and gives them more confidence and make them more focused on the process of their learning. Once being engaged, students will have more opportunities to reflect on their learning and faculty will rethink their teaching practices as well to meet their students' needs. The first two outcomes will definitely lead to enhance students' learning experiences and make them take the responsibility of their learning and become active learners.

Luo, Matthews and Chunduri (2019) main concern was to investigate whether students enrolled in a biomedical sciences degree program in

an Australian university are aware of the values of partnership practices. Their study was led by one main question “what values and attitudes do you think are necessary for students and academics to work as collaborative partners on teaching and learning?”. The researchers concluded that continuous dialogues between students and their instructors should be highly valued especially with students who are not familiar with the notion of students as partners. On the other hand, while Luo, Matthews and Chunduri (2019) collected students’ responses and worked on analysing them, Bryson (2014) mentioned that in order to understand student engagement in higher education, researchers need to deepen their investigations and look for students’ real experiences which cannot be identified by using surveys. Within this context, it might be good to refer to the seven principles of good practices in the undergraduate education that were suggested by Chickering and Gamson (1987): (1) encourages contacts between students and faculty; (2) develops reciprocity and conversation among students; (3) uses active learning techniques; (4) gives prompt feedback; (5) emphasizes time on task; (6) communicates high expectations; and (7) respects diverse talents and ways of learning. Per each of these principles, Chickering and Gamson listed some real examples on how to fulfil each principle.

On the other hand, there are three assessment approaches that can be identified within the field: assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning (Lam, 2016). The researcher examined how using one of the alternative assessments forms which is assessment as learning within an EFL portfolio-based environment can enhance teaching writing and student learning. He concluded that assessment for learning help facilitate the development of students’ language awareness, self-assessment skills, and self-reflection. Fletcher (2016) was concerned with assessment as learning as well but in a different context which is primary education where the concept of agentic engagement with self-regulated learning were introduced into the classroom practice of 126 students from different grades with their 7 teachers. Scaffolded planning effect on students’ self-regulation was measured. The study findings exceeded students’ teachers and the researcher’s expectations as students’ motivation increased and noticeable enhancement in their achievement was recorded.

Giving students the chance to be responsible for their learning proved to be effective and resulted in higher levels of achievement. It is not only the responsibility of accomplishing assignments or classroom activities but it is the major element in their learning which is test setting. For most students, this is considered a prohibited area which is

solely the teacher's responsibility. They become more reflective and more autonomous learners. Sanchez-Elez et al. (2014) conducted a study to enhance students' learning process through self-generated tests. The sample of the study involved 769 students enrolled in 12 different courses. They were asked to write multiple choice questions based on a given module then upload their questions on a platform especially designed for this purpose. The experiment went through different stages from designing questions to editing and revising the content and sharing the files among all enrolled students to finally selecting test items for setting class exam. The researchers concluded that students' participation in test item generating creates positive channels of communications among students and their teachers and increased students' final results. Even more, being involved in test items revision phase fostered students' relations and gave them more time to enhance their learning.

Torres (2019) conducted a comparison between both the formative and the summative assessment with the aim of investigating their impact on students' learning and teachers' instructions as well. The researcher concluded that formative assessment provides students with enough feedback at certain points during their learning which guides them to be aware of what to do next in order to improve. However, according to Torres (2019), it is not only the formative assessment that is important, but the summative assessment as well. From the instructors' point of view, the summative assessment offers an objective, reliable and practical way of measuring students' achievement by the end of a given course. This is what Torres (2019) considered as a drawback of summative assessment as waiting till the end of the course to determine whether students achieved the expected learning outcomes is not benefitting either students or instructors.

While Torres main focus in his study was on the instructor's feedback, Huang (2016) investigated the effect of self-feedback on improving the foreign language speaking skills of freshmen EFL students enrolled in a compulsory course in Northern Taiwan. Learners' feedback was collected using a self-assessment task which requires them to listen to their speaking samples and give their feedback on their own performance. Huang stated that learners passively receive their instructor's feedback because they feel that they are not engaged in the actual process. On the contrary, being asked to review their work and reflect on their performance shifted the whole process from instructor centeredness into students' centeredness and increased the level of students' engagement. In their action research, Contreras León and Chapetón Castro (2019) explored the effect of implementing

collaborative learning on thirty pre-university students' interaction in an EFL classroom at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia. Results revealed that the use of collaborative learning resulted in changing students' role as they became more active and decision makers learners. Increasingly, the researchers concluded that linking class materials and topics to students' real life increased their involvement and fostered their roles in a collaborative learning environment. According to Greenstein (2012), teachers' usage of appropriate stimuli and supports helps students to enhance their work and to become autonomous learners who have the ability to reflect not only on their own work but on other students as well. Greenstein differentiated between collaboration and cooperation as collaboration involves students' learning how to plan and work together. Accordingly, collaborative learning "incorporate and build on 21st century skills such as problem solving; digital literacy; and oral, written, and visual communication skills" (Greenstein: 2012, p. 108).

In his study, Shaker (2002) gave 80 senior students at the Faculty of Education, Suez Canal University the chance to be part of an Online Writing Collaboration OWC project during the second semester of the academic year 2001/2002. His main concern was to investigate whether the OWC might help the students produce better written products, promote their audience awareness while composing and to reveal its influence on their attitudes towards writing in general and the OWC in particular. Findings of Shaker's (2002) study gave clear indications of an improvement in students' writing quality, in addition to helping them to acquire sense of audience awareness while composing. The researcher recommended the implementation of the OWC in varied ELT contexts. Another study conducted by Wang, Shang and Briody (2013) where they explored the effect of incorporating technology in evaluating university students' writing skills in Taiwan. The authors adopted an automated writing evaluation AWE software which gives students immediate linguistic feedback supported by explanation in response to each of their writing submission. Using a questionnaire and a semi-structures interview, the researchers concluded that the experimental group exceeded the control one in terms of writing accuracy. However, these results put the AWE software at the heart of the evaluation as the only source of giving feedback which might not encourage engaging students into the evaluation process by reflecting on their writing and trying to find out what went right and what went wrong.

Hamouda (2011) used a questionnaire to investigate both Saudi students' and teachers' preferences regarding writing skills error

correction. In addition, his study aimed at identifying the difficulties both parties are facing during the correction process. Findings revealed positive attitudes towards the error correction and feedback practice. Surprisingly, students expressed their preferences for classroom correction error rather than other types. The researcher recommended integrating classroom discussions on error correction and feedback in order to raise students' awareness towards its importance in enhancing their writing skills.

Alshakhi (2019) interviewed ten Saudi male students who were enrolled in an MA Applied Linguistics program at a governmental Saudi university with the aim of investigating their perception and beliefs towards the writing assessment practices in the program. Being interviewed, students considered the heavy use of examination to measure their performance as one of the program drawbacks in addition to lacking new ways of assessment methods or even new writing tasks. In their qualitative study, Fullana et al. (2016) investigated students' perceptions towards the benefits and challenges of reflective learning which they experienced in four different courses. Findings of the study revealed that reflective learning helped students to understand themselves and increased their motivation to learn. However, authors of the study declared that students faced difficulty in understanding the experience and in handling tasks that required them to reflect on their personal experiences and attitudes. Accordingly, they recommended preparing students for the experience to be confident enough when reflecting on their own experiences. Friesner and Hart (2005) said that students can use learning logs to reflect on their learning experiences while researchers can use it as a research tool that gives them more insights on what students have learnt and what difficulties they are facing.

7. Design of the study

This is a quasi-experimental study with mixed research methods which was used for collecting the required data of the present study. The quantitative research method was used with students' pre-post reading and writing test results. While the qualitative research methods were used with students' semi-structured interviews and reflection learning logs.

8. Methods of the study

8.1. Context and participants of the study

The study was conducted in a Saudi private university where all freshman students in the college of humanities are required to pass an introductory course entitled "Analytical Reading and Writing". The

assessment and evaluation procedures adopted in the college are very similar to other private universities in the Kingdom with two major exams, some quizzes, assignments and projects which in most cases are decided by the course instructors and count for sixty percent of the total score then a final exam designed by the instructor which counts for forty percent. All assessment tools and exam questions should address the course learning outcomes. Students communicate with their instructors using the Moodle which is one of the available (Learning Management Systems LMS) in higher education. The sample group of the study consisted of fifty-two female freshman students distributed between two classes enrolled in the analytical reading and writing course during the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. The course was one of students' compulsory department requirements and was taught by the author. The two classes were randomly assigned into two groups an experimental group (N=26) and a control one (N=26).

8.2. Tools of the study

Three tools were used for data collection of the present study as follows.

8.2.1. The pre-post reading & writing test

The pre-post reading and writing test was designed in order to measure the improvement in students' achievement as a result of the implementation of multiple formative assessment tools. It addresses six outcomes and consists of three parts with part I focuses on reading comprehension where students were asked to read a text of 458 words and a short text of 145 words length. Part II of the test investigates students' understanding of the academic vocabulary in context and finally part III focuses on students' ability to write a summary response essay.

A scoring rubric was attached to the test paper to help students identify what is required and give them the chance to assess themselves against the rubric. The test addresses students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting details in different pieces of academic writing, recognize implicit meanings in well-structured academic articles, write clear and detailed essays on a wide range of subjects, write well-developed essays with an accurate use of transitions, both within and between paragraphs, read and respond to academic and non-academic texts that deal with a range of topics and deduce the meanings of unfamiliar and newly introduced words.

Five EFL specialists reviewed the test for validity and all ambiguous items were modified based on their recommendations. The reliability of the test as well as its items was calculated through SPSS / PC+ the

Statistical Program Package by using the computer. It was calculated by using Cronbach's Alpha (0.89). This is a high reliability coefficient.

8.2.2. Students' semi-structured interviews

A semi-structured interview protocol was designed in order to collect thorough qualitative data and generate thoughts about students' experience with the suggested new forms of assessment. Sample of the leading questions included in the interview were: how do you feel towards being a participant in classroom practices? did you face any difficulty generating test items? do you recommend implement this intervention with another students? what's your reflection on sharing with your instructor the designing of your assessment tools? do you think you learn more from each other than from your instructor? Are sharing and having ownership of your assessment good for you?

8.2.3. Students' reflection learning logs

The students' reflection logs were one of the most important tools in this study as it gives insights on students' attitudes towards the whole process and whether they are really benefiting from this intervention or not. Students were asked to establish their logs at the beginning of the semester. A template was suggested and shared with students with some sample questions that they respond to each on a regular basis. Then students were asked to be creative and registered their reflections, thoughts and suggestions for improvements in their logs. Sample questions were "What did you learn today? What do you need to improve in your writing? How do you feel towards being involved in your assessment tools setting? etc.

8.3. Procedures

Q-Skills Reading and Writing Skills 5 was the prescribed textbook for the analytical reading and writing course. It has eight units and is accompanied with multiple activities focusing on developing students' critical thinking and academic vocabulary which they are required to incorporate within their academic essay writing. Only four units were assigned to be covered during the whole semester which gives the instructor the chance to tailor them in order to suit the purpose of the study. The study intervention addressed three new forms of formative assessment: the students' co-generated test questions, students' co-generated scoring rubrics and students' reflective learning logs.

The first step was to obtain participants' consent on their participation in the study. Then the reading and writing pre-post-test was prepared by the researcher and implemented on both the control and the experimental group in order to identify their level before the intervention. Course

outcomes were explained in class and a soft copy was shared with both groups on the Moodle. Then the new material was presented according to the course plan to the control group. With respect to the experimental group, their co-generated test questions were considered as one of the tools of the present study as analysing them gave an evidence on students' improvement. The more test items students produced, the more confidence they gained on being partners in the assessment process. Several types of questions were submitted by students using the available LMS (Moodle). Each student was asked to create as many questions as she could according to the material covered in class. Students were told that some of their questions would appear in the exam. Then they were asked to form group of three each and come up with one test version. The instructor only monitored to be sure that all students were on task. Variety of classroom assessment techniques were shared with students. Groups exchanged their questions and made any required modifications. Revisions covered both mechanics and content. Students were permitted to read every other student's test and check the correct answer. Final versions from all groups were collected by the instructor. Students' items were coded and included in the final version of the test prepared by the instructor with some rephrasing. Final versions were administered, then students' answers were analysed. This process was repeated weekly.

With respect to students' co-generated rubrics, three different types of rubrics for grading writing essays were produced with the contribution of both the students and their instructor. During the course, students were trained on writing three different genres of essay: extended definition, argumentative and summary response essay. Per each type students collected descriptors for each level, shared among the whole class and feedback was given. The final version was approved by both the students and the instructor then used by each student to assess her writing before the final submission. The final assessment was conducted by the instructor and a comparison was held between student's assessment and the instructor's one. Any discrepancies were handled in class in an open free discussion in order to identify reasons behind the inconsistency.

Regarding the reading skill, weekly expert students were assigned to contribute to the learning and teaching of other groups while the instructor's main job was only to facilitate the whole process. Each expert member was assigned a specific reading article either chosen from the prescribed textbook or one of her own choice with the consultation of the course instructor. She is asked to read the article and be ready to share it with her group in class by transferring her knowledge to them. Then each group presents their article to the class who should evaluate it using the students' co-designed rubrics. The RSQC2 (Recall, Summarize, Question,

Comment and Connect) technique was used as well to help students access the reading article assigned to them during class time.

As for the student reflection on learning logs, it was mainly designed to help students monitor their learning through reflection prompts using own words. Examples prompts were adapted from Wiliam (2011) such as: I was surprised by..., the most useful thing I will take from this lesson is ..., I was interested in..., what I liked most about this lesson was..., one thing I'm not sure about is... , the main thing I want to find out more about is..., after this lesson I feel... , I might have learned more from this lesson if...etc . Students were provided with a learning log template to guide them; however, they were informed that they can create their own template and share it with the instructor. Below is the template format.

Date of event	What was the development activity?	What was I expecting to learn?	What have I learned?	How will I apply this learning?

By the end of the semester, nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with students of the experimental group who signed in the consent form of being interviewed. The main purpose of the interviews was to seek students' feedback on the whole process.

Data derived from the administration of the reading and writing test was analysed using the SPSS version 22 and the qualitative data derived from the students' semi-structured interviews and the reflection learning logs was analysed using the QDA Miner Lite software.

9. Results and data analysis

9.1. Results of the pre-post reading and writing test

Table 1 below reveals results derived from the pre-administration of the experimental and the control group reading and writing test. As the table shows, there is no significance differences between the two groups before the implementation of the intervention which means that the two groups were equivalent as the T value of the total scores of test results was .161 at a non-significant level (.721) with a very close mean identified for both groups.

Table 1

Mean-Comparisons (T. Tests) Between Total Scores of the Experimental and Control Group on the Pre-Administration of the Reading and Writing Test

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Total Score of the reading and writing test	Pre-Experimental	25.12	5.908	.161	.721
	Pre-Control	25.38	6.152		

N. Control Group = Experimental Group= 26 DF= 50

On the other hand, Table 2 below shows the mean-comparisons (T. Tests) between total scores of the experimental and control group on the post administration of the reading and writing test. It is clear that the post administration results were in favour of the experimental group as the T value of the test total scores is 6.436, significant at .001 level.

Table 2

Mean-Comparisons (T. Tests) Between Total Scores of the Experimental and Control Group on the Post Administration of the Reading and Writing Test

Variable	Group	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Total Score of the reading and writing test	Post Experimental	34.54	3.765	6.436	.001
	Post Control	25.69	5.911		


N. Control Group = Experimental Group= 26 DF= 50

9.2. Results of the students' semi-structured interviews

Data collected from the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with nine students by the end of the intervention was transcribed then coded using the QDA Miner Lite software. The table below generated by software shows the coding frequency of students' semi-structured interviews.

Table 3

Coding frequency of students' semi-structured interviews

	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases	Nb Words	% Words
 Benefits						
• sharing	4	25.0%	1	100.0%	142	28.5%
• contribution	1	6.3%	1	100.0%	39	7.8%
• guiding	1	6.3%	1	100.0%	39	7.8%
• helpful	2	12.5%	1	100.0%	74	14.8%
• more learning	3	18.8%	1	100.0%	11	2.2%
• great idea	1	6.3%	1	100.0%	16	3.2%
• discussion	2	12.5%	1	100.0%	74	14.8%
• critical thinking	1	6.3%	1	100.0%	18	3.6%
• test design	1	6.3%	1	100.0%	26	5.2%





















Interviewees total number = 9

It is clear that the highest percentage registered in the above table is in favour of the codes “sharing” (25 %) and “more learning” (18.8 %) which the majority of the students considered them as the most important benefits they gained from the intervention.

9.3. Results of students' reflection learning logs

Each student recorded her reflection by the end of each unit; therefore, four reflections were produced per each student. Using the QDA Miner Lite software, three main thematic codes were extracted: things I have learnt, things I need to do and know about and things I liked about this course. Table 4 below presents the percentage of the sub-codes under each of the three main codes.

Table 4
Coding frequency of students' reflection learning logs

	Count	% Codes	Cases	% Cases	Nb Words	% Words
 Things I have learnt						
 writing test items	4	12.5%	1	100.0%	84	5.8%
 giving feedback	2	6.3%	1	100.0%	26	1.8%
 sharing my ideas	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	16	1.1%
 think differently	6	18.8%	1	100.0%	78	5.4%
 contact the author	2	6.3%	1	100.0%	27	1.9%
 write an extended definition essay	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	20	1.4%
 Things I need to do and know about						
 search the internet	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	13	0.9%
 rubrics types	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	14	1.0%
 endangered languages	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	37	2.6%
 write more test item types	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	18	1.2%
 different types test items	2	6.3%	1	100.0%	8	0.6%
 Things I liked about this course						
 sharing ideas	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	20	1.4%
 being responsible	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	22	1.5%
 reflecting on my learning	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	19	1.3%
 be an expert	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	43	3.0%
 switching roles	1	3.1%	1	100.0%	9	0.6%
 gaining confidence	5	15.6%	1	100.0%	100	6.9%

Data presented in table 4 above indicates that the highest percentage registered for what students have learnt during the course was in favour of “think differently” (18.8 %), “gaining confidence” (15.6 %) and “writing test items” (12.5 %).

10. Discussion and implication

The present study has explored the effect of implementing a new form of formative assessment on enhancing EFL freshman students' reading and writing skills. Four questions were leading the study: What is the effect of EFL freshman students' involvement in the test generation on their reading and writing achievement level?, what is the effect of EFL freshman students' involvement in scoring rubrics design on their reading and writing achievement level?, how far are EFL freshman students' reflection learning logs effective in increasing their self-assessment skills and learning ownership? and how far are EFL freshman students satisfied with contributing to the assessment practices implemented during the analytical reading and writing course?

Results derived from the post reading and writing test administration highly indicated the improvement in students' achievement level as the mean scores of the experimental group (34.54) exceeded that of the control group (25.69) in the post administration of the test. Having the T value significant at the level .001 means that the change in the experimental group level is due to the intervention. As reported by students during the semi-structured interviews, their high performance was in favor of the items they constructed as this practice increased their sense of being responsible for their academic achievement and for their own learning. Students' endeavors to produce test items kept them well informed of the specific details of the syllabus and increased their analytical skills. They had a highly positive attitude towards their participation in test construction, scoring rubrics design and in the learning process as a whole as quoted:

"I still remember my first class with this instructor, I was so quiet and never contributed in any of the classes. Now after all these feedback sessions, I have gained the confidence to be more fluent and to share my ideas."

"I was surprised when my instructor asked me to write sample test items to be considered in our next major exam. I couldn't believe that I can write any, but when I tried, I discovered that it helped me think differently of what I have learnt."

Having students write their own tests and setting the scoring rubrics encouraged their involvement in learning because they experienced a positive change in the way they viewed taking tests. More students reported feeling good or prepared for tests after being a part of the intervention which is in line with Sanchez-Elez et al. (2014) results who concluded that students' participation in test item generating creates

positive channels of communications among students and their teachers and increased students' final results. During their preparation for the course project, participants of the present study revealed sense of ownership of their learning which was very clear when they contact the real authors of the assigned articles and had an open discussion with them about all the ideas mentioned in the articles. Moreover, students' responses during the semi-structured interviews indicated their positive attitudes towards their participation in test construction and in being involved in the learning process. These results were validated when compared with students' reflection learning logs which revealed a clear indication on their positive attitudes towards the whole process. Similar to what Fullana et al. (2016) revealed in their study, participants of the current study reported that reflective learning helped them to gain more confidence and become responsible for their learning.

Implications of the results derived from the present study provide instructors of freshman level with new forms of assessment that they can try to rethink their students' level of involvement in the learning process. They need to believe in switching roles and to give their students the full responsibilities in the learning process. In spite of the reflections produced by participants of the current study, still instructors need to train their students on reflective writing to be able to express themselves clearly. As some students indicated lacking of time to be able to produce what is required, it might be better for the higher management within higher education institutions to revise the reading and writing course outcomes and assessment procedures.

11. Conclusion

The study concludes that students must be active participants in designing their quizzes, tasks and tests. They should be encouraged to contribute to their learning instead of collecting evidence for their instructor. They should be given responsibility for using assessment data to monitor and improve their own learning. It has been witnessed that test anxiety has been reduced among the participants; however, results cannot be generalized due to the small sample size and gender constraints as the implementation was only on the female section. It is recommended to replicate the study on a larger sample size which encounters both female and male students. In addition, trying these assessment forms on other disciplines to check their effectiveness.

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