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## 7. ASSESSMENT LITERACY OF TURKISH TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

*A Comparative Study*

### INTRODUCTION

Current instructional practices emphasize the integration of assessment and instruction, with the goal of educational practices that combine teaching with an on-going analysis of student progress towards instructional goals (Airasian, 1991). In spite of the importance of assessment, many teachers are often involved in assessment-related decision-making processes without having enough background or training in assessment (Popham, 2009; DeLuca, 2012; Lam, 2015; Mede & Atay, 2017). As a consequence, according to Stiggins (2010), “assessment illiteracy abounds” (p. 233). Teachers are found not to be able to judge the quality of their own assessment tasks (Bol & Strage, 1996). The fact that teachers’ assessment strategies and practices are affected by their beliefs about the purpose and nature of assessment seems obvious (Brown, 2009; Delandshere & Jones, 1999). Through discussions about what is meant by assessment literacies, we can open up our practices to develop shared understandings rather than assuming that we share common needs and knowledge.

The extent of how well teachers, policy officers, teacher educators, researchers and professional bodies support the development of teacher assessment literacies can be measured by the development of assessment literacies. Developing teacher assessment literacy should be part of the ethical and moral responsibility to provide opportunity for all students to receive quality education. Despite the importance of assessment in education, most research in Turkey on finding out teachers’ beliefs about teaching methodologies, skills, learning theories (Borg, 2003, 2018; Phipps & Borg, 2009) and there is little focus on the beliefs of teachers’ on assessment. Thus, in the present study our aim was to compare the assessment literacy levels of two groups of teachers: teachers who are entitled with formal assessment roles and responsibilities and teachers without any specific formal assessment roles and responsibilities in Turkey at a private universities preparatory school.

It would be important to compare if teachers’ beliefs change by taking on responsibilities on assessment. Since there is limited training on assessment and most teachers who do not have had any roles in the area of assessment are not

equipped with preparing tests, providing feedback and using assessment as tool to boost student learning (Mede & Atay, 2017) which are a core area in ensuring quality in language education. It might be crucial to put more emphasis on researching two different groups of teachers' conceptions on this area and make suggestions regarding teacher education and teacher training programmes as part of professional development in Turkey.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Teacher Assessment Literacy*

Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, and Arter (2012) define classroom assessment literacy as necessary knowledge and skill for compiling data about students' achievement and for effectively utilizing the assessment process and the assessment to enhance students' achievement. Assessment is an integral part of instruction, and effective instruction cannot take place without good assessment of students. Studies have indicated that when teachers integrate their assessment knowledge with their instruction, students benefit a lot in terms of academic success, metacognitive functions, and motivation for learning (Black & William, 1998; Gardner, 2006; Willis, 2010).

There are three goals of the educational assessment of students and teachers need to be clearly informed about these: assessment *for* learning, assessment *of* learning and assessing *as* learning (Earl, 2005). Assessment for learning refers to formative assessment conducted by teachers who regularly monitor the progress of students based on learning objectives (Stiggins, 2005). Teachers can scaffold students' learning through ongoing provision of feedback by regarding the strength and weakness of each. In this type of assessment, elicited evidence is used by teacher to adjust their ongoing instructional activities, or by students to adjust the ways they are trying to learn something. Assessing of learning is used to accommodate what the students know and are able to perform. The outcomes of such assessment, in the form of marks or grades, reveal whether the instruction is successful as specified in the curriculum objectives. Finally, assessment as learning refers to type of assessment that places the emphasis on individual learning. Thus, assessment is conducted so as to enable the individuals to assess their own learning.

Lately, there has been a call for an increased emphasis on formative assessment designed to assist learning (William, 2011). Regarding this issue, William (2011) claim that "there is a strong body of theoretical and empirical work that suggests that integrating assessment with instruction may well have unprecedented power to increase student engagement and to improve learning outcomes" (p. 211). Therefore, pre-service and in-service teachers need to be aware of new trends in assessment which affect student learning. All in all, classroom assessment yields important data for teachers regarding students' learning; this data leads to further development and improvement of teachers' instruction and revision of curriculum content to