A Task-Based Training Module for Enhancing Novice EFL

Teachers' Inclusion-oriented language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

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Abstract

The national Egyptian vision for applying inclusion in mainstream educational systems is part of a global call for *"No One Left Behind"*. The main study aimed to propose a task-based training module for enhancing novice English as Foreign Language EFL Teachers' inclusion-oriented Language Assessment Literacy (LAL). The study followed the one-group quasi-experimental design with its pre-post testing procedure. Participants of the study were (32) novice teachers who work at Red Se governorate, and were grouped into one experimental group. These instruments and materials were used to achieve the study purposes: a questionnaire for inclusion-oriented assessment literacy, a task-based training module, an assessment literacy test, and a reflection e-journal. After validating the instruments, the training module was applied to the participants. Results showed that there were significant mean differences between the participants in the pre and post-testing of their inclusion-oriented assessment literacy. These differences were attributed to both cognitive and practical literacies. The study recommended using the training module of the study in the professional development training programs which should include inclusion-oriented components. The study also recommended that pre-service EFL teachers should be provided with set courses about the instruction of inclusive students, their characteristics, and assessment principles.

Keywords

Task-Based Learning – EFL - Inclusion - Assessment - Literacy

Introduction

Schools aim to provide equal learning opportunities for all students, whatever their backgrounds, abilities, or disabilities. Equality is guided by global law and human rights as raised by the United Nations and UNESCO (Foreman, 2017). In Egypt, this equality is prominent in the Egyptian national vision (2023). Learning equality entails providing a safe environment for learning and real inclusion in the classes.

The Egyptian mainstream education was guided by different laws and degrees that supported inclusion in the different schools. The first decree was in 2008, then in 2015; these decrees provided a national strategy that included mandating the admission of inclusive students with mild disabilities (MOE, 2008, 2015). There has been a national strategy for pre-university education 2014-2030 that aimed at qualifying different numbers of schools every year for the admission of inclusive students. These national procedures cope with the international   Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 2016) that called for a "no-student left-behind strategy". This international pursuit aims to involve all students with mild disabilities in different mainstream education.

Inclusion is a term that has two wide connotations (Nilholm & Goransson, 2017): the first is providing equal learning opportunities

for all students in their classes; the second refers to the admission of students with mild disabilities in mainstream or public schools. Definitions of inclusion used in literature "lack conceptual clarity, this affects the research and studies about attitudes towards it and the proposed practices" (p.633). Inclusion is viewed in this study as a process of involving students at risk, with low abilities, mild handicaps, and other cognition and physical barriers to the mainstream schooling system. It is a process of addressing diversity, human rights pursuit, and equality-oriented practices in different classes.

There have been different studies in Egypt that aimed to develop inclusive students' EFL skills and identify the barriers behind this inclusion (e.g. Aly, 2014; El-Koumy, 2016; Gaad, 2010; Ghoneim, 2014). Fewer studies were conducted in the Egyptian context to develop EFL teachers' competencies, performance, or literacies. One of these few studies was by Bassuouny (2020) which proposed a training program to develop EFL student-teacher performance and attitudes toward inclusion. The study highlighted the need to develop training programs for pre-service and in-service EFL teachers to develop their skills, competencies, and attitudes towards inclusion in their classes. Teachers in inclusive classes need

to develop their literacies to fulfill their vocational duties in inclusive classes.

Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is a key professional requirement for EFL teachers to assess effective intended learning outcomes in their inclusive classes. This literacy refers to the knowledge, principles, and practical skills that EFL language teachers should possess to pursue their educational responsibilities and to perform the assessment tasks (Latif, 2021; Mohammadkhah, 2022; Tajeddin, et al., 2022). O'Loughlin (2013) viewed LAL as knowledge of language in its context, knowledge of assessment and measurement, and training in assessment skills and techniques.

Similarly, Vogt and Tsagari (2024) defined LAL to mean "the ability to design, develop, and critically evaluate tests and other assessment procedures, as well as the ability to monitor, evaluate, grade and score assessments based on theoretical knowledge (p.337). Abdullah (2017) also looked upon LAL as "the basic assessment related knowledge and skills that enable EFL teachers to effectively manage and monitor the learning process in general and their students' progress in particular" (p.48). These definitions stress the procedural as well as the cognitive areas of assessment as a teaching component for EFL teachers in their different classes. Thus, LAL

involves both and knowledge about assessment as well as skills about designing assessment tools and monitoring the assessment.

Assessing inclusive students' language performance and achievement is a challenging competence for EFL teachers. The key barriers to assessing inclusive students as identified by Basyouni (2020) include (a) lack or negative attitudes towards inclusion classes, (b) lack of teacher training programs or assessment training directed to inclusion, (c) schools' inaccessibility and lack of resources and contents, (d) lack of systematic support, (e) lack of legislative and decrees that govern applying inclusion. Teacher training, especially in a pre-service phase, is a key need to prepare EFL teachers with the necessary skills to pursue their professional support in their classes. Providing teachers with knowledge about assessment practices in general and knowledge about inclusion practices, in particular, may result in positive professional development advancements for the teachers and the thus inclusive students as well.

Using tasks in teacher training can enhance their inclusion-oriented practices due to the positive merits of the Task-Based Approach in EFL contexts. In this view, different studies assured the merits of the TBL approach in teacher training at both pre and in-service levels (e.g. Gheith & Mostafa, 2015; Sholeh & Salija, 2023; Zao, 2009). These studies stressed the value of this approach as a

constructive communicative approach that promotes teacher excellence and professional development. Through its pre-, during, and post-task procedures, the benefits of TBL include meaningful participation in the customized task as well as involvement in a completed work plan which can be assessed (Ellis, 2009). Using TBL in teacher education training and programs has evident positive impacts on their competencies.

Therefore, the present study aimed to propose a task-based training module for enhancing EFL Teachers' Inclusion-Oriented Language Assessment Literacy (LAL).

Problem of the Study

a. Context of the Problem

Inclusion is a crucial and significant area in foreign language education due to global and national calls for equality in educational chances for everyone regardless of any barriers. There have been few studies that investigated inclusion in EFL classes though its significant importance (Abdel Hameed, 2010; Ali, 2018; Al-Khateeb, et al., 2016). Careful review of literature about inclusion reveals that it was viewed through different approaches that included developing the skills of the inclusive students (e.g. Awad, 2016; El Zouhairy, 2016; Ghoneim, 2014), pre-service teachers' programs (e.g.

Basyouni, 2020), and in-service teacher training programs (e.g. Abdel Hameed, 2010; El Ashry, 2019; El Komy, 2016).

Enhancing Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) for novice teachers can be advocated through four main domains (Hakim, 2015). These areas are assessment components, concepts, ideology, and practice. He further expressed that LAL can be developed for novice teachers through training programs, training units, workshops, discussion groups, and online resources. In addition, there are few studies that aimed at developing EFL teachers' inclusion-oriented language assessment literacy although there are various studies that dealt with teachers' literacies including assessment literacy (e.g. Giraldo, 2018; Latif, 2021; Mohammadkhah, et al., 2022; Tajeddin, et al., 2022). This shows a need to design training programs and modules to convey recent knowledge, skills, and attitudes to novice teachers to pursue their profession.

As to Task-Based Learning (TBL), there have been different studies that discussed the approach in EFL contexts and utilized it for different language purposes over various types of participants (e.g. Abdullah, 2022; Gheith & Mostafa, 2015; Mahdi, 2020; Saeed, 2021). Most of the literature discussed TBL from a pupil or student-oriented teaching setting; fewer studies utilized the approach over pre-service, in-service, or novice teachers' sampling. This shows a

gap in the literature regarding developing EFL teachers' literacy especially in the area of assessing inclusive students. This could be due to the recent application of inclusion on the one hand and the lack of teacher education programs' coverage for inclusion-oriented issues such as assessment and evaluation.

Accordingly, the problem of the study was stated in the light of the researcher's experience as an EFL trainer and as a mentor in the national assessment literacy program offered by The American University in Cairo AUC as well as the Regional English Language Office RELO. During these trainings, he observed that there was a lack in the theory and practice of inclusion assessment practices in EFL classes in Egypt. Further, there has been a need to train novice teachers on how to assess the English language skills of inclusive students. The novice teachers needed to gain cognitive and practical literacy related to inclusion.

The third source for verifying the problem of the study was a pilot study that aimed to identify the inclusion-oriented assessment practices of EFL teachers. The study utilized a semi-structured questionnaire that included two parts: the first was cognition, and the second is the skills related to inclusion assessment. The questionnaire was validated and it was run over (20) EFL teachers in Red Sea Governorate. Results showed that EFL novice teachers lack various

cognition-oriented literacies such as (knowledge of assessment pillars, validation – scoring ethics- inclusion types – inclusion presents- inclusion as a concept). It also showed that they lacked different inclusion-oriented assessment skills such as (designing valid tests- differentiation of test levels- reliability and validity methods- designing a rubric- designing a checklist- structuring an item).

b. Statement of the Study

Based on the above literature and the obtained results of the pilot study, the problem of the study can be stated as follows:

 Many EFL novice-teachers lacked the necessary knowledge and skills related to inclusion in mainstream schools, as well as they lacked the necessary assessment literacy related to inclusion such as designing the appropriate assessment tools and procedural assessment practices for inclusive students in their English classes.

Aims of the study

The study aimed at the following:

1. Identifying the different inclusion-oriented assessment literacies that are necessary for EFL teachers.
2. Designing a task-based TBL training module for developing inclusion-oriented assessment literacy.

3. Identifying the effect of the task-based training module on the inclusion-oriented assessment literacy of the participants (cognition – practice).

Significance of the study

The current study was thought to be significant for the following:

1. It identified the inclusion-oriented assessment main and sub-literacies that are necessary for EFL novice teachers.

2. It proposed a module based on the Task-based approach which develops EFL teachers' inclusion-oriented assessment literacy (cognitive–practical).

3. The study can be used for better assessment practices for inclusive students at different schools and grades.

4. The module of the study can be used for training both in-service and pre-service teachers for better assessment practices.

5. The study may present an overview of novice- teachers' attitudes about inclusion and assessment literacy.

Questions of the study

The study attempted to answer the following two questions:

1. What are the necessary inclusion-oriented literacies of EFL teachers?

2. What is the effect of a module based on the task-based approach on the participants' inclusion-oriented literacy?

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There would be no statistically significant mean differences between the participants' inclusion-oriented assessment literacy.

   This main hypothesis is divided into the following two sub-hypotheses:

2. There would be no statistically significant mean differences between the participants' inclusion-oriented cognitive literacy.

3. There would be no statistically significant mean differences between the participants' inclusion-oriented practical literacy.

Definition of Terms:

Some terms were repeatedly used in the study; the definitions of these terms are presented as follows:

Task-Based Approach

There have been different views about defining the word (task) and the task based approach. For instance, Oxford (2004) viewed the task in L2 teaching and learning, as an outcome oriented instructional segment or as a behavioral framework for research or classroom learning. According to Nunan (2004), TBL is defined as "an approach to language teaching organized around tasks rather than

language structures". This entails active participation of the students in distinctive stages of gaining knowledge, skills, and attitudes during learning.

Training Modules

Mahmoud (2018) defined the training module as a set of planned and organized activities that are presented in a set time to address the trainees' cognition and experiences which develop their competence and performance. In this study, the training module was viewed as an instructional task-based guide primarily used for teaching sequential procedures and cognition.

Inclusion

There have been various definitions for inclusion which reflect the lack conceptual clarity. Four key concepts of inclusion were added by Goransson & Nilholm (2014) the first is placement "placement of students with disabilities or in need of special support in general educational classrooms". The second is a specified individualized definition of "inclusion as meeting the social and academic needs of students with disabilities or in need of special support". The third is a general definition which states "meeting the social and academic needs of all students". The fourth is a community definition which states "the creation of communities with specific characteristics"

(p.633). The study adopts the second definition due to the scope of the study.

Assessment literacy

Assessment literacy (AL) is defined (Xu & Brown, 2016) as "a basic understanding of educational assessment and related skills to apply such knowledge to various measures of student achievement" (p.1). In this study, assessment literacy referred to the cognition and skills that novice EFL teachers utilized in gathering information about inclusive students' performance to make decisions about their achievement in English.

Novice EFL teachers

The term novice teacher was defined by Kim & Roth (2011) as "a teacher with less than five years of teaching experience" (p.4). The study also views novice EFL teachers as fresh graduates who finished their first academic degree in teaching and did not start their teaching job or whose experience did not exceed five years.

Method:

The methodology used in the design of the study entails the following description of the design, delimitations, participants, and instruments and material of the study.

Design

The researcher used the one-group pre-post-test quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of inclusion-based module in enhancing novice EFL teachers' inclusion-oriented assessment literacy. The following figure (1) represents the treatment followed in the study:

Figure (1): Study design

Pretest	→	Treatment or intervention	→	Posttest
O_1		X_1		O_2

The independent variable is the task-based training module, while the dependent variable is inclusion-oriented assessment literacy. The study follows the pre and post-testing procedure to identify the differences in participants' means after teaching the training module.

Delimitations of the study:

The study was delimited to the following:

1. Novice English language teachers (maximum 5 years of experience) at the basic education level.

2. Academic delimits:

2.1. A Task-based Learning (TBL) approach.

2.3. Inclusion-oriented assessment literacy (cognitive - practical).

3. Spatial delimit: Red Sea governorate, Hurghada educational administration.

Participants:

Participants of the study were (32) novice teachers who were grouped into one experimental group. They were selected according to their teaching experience (0- 5 years), teaching specialization (basic education teachers), and place of work (Hurghada educational administration).

Instruments and Material

The study utilized the following instruments and materials which were designed by the researcher. They were validated in terms of content validity and reliability:

1. A questionnaire for inclusion-oriented assessment literacy. The questionnaire aimed to identify the cognitive and practical literacies oriented to inclusion. It was validated in terms of content validity (jury validation) and reliability (split half). Piloting and calculating the reliability value of the questionnaire ($r = 0.91$) showed the reliability of the instrument and its applicability.

2. A Task-based Training Module. The module was validated through jury validation. The comments of the jury concerning

language, procedures, and content were considered. The final layout of the training module included the following training plan:

Training Sessions	Topics / Content	Tasks
Introductory Session 1	Introduction & Pre-testing	
Session 2	Introduction to Inclusion	Key Concepts - Types
Session 3	Inclusion Bylaws and regulation in Egypt	Bylaws - Decrees
Session 4	Inclusion in FL Classes	Listening -Speaking Reading - Writing
Session 5	Assessment Concepts in EFL Classes	Assessment Types - Formative / Summative- Assessment Tools
Session 6	Assessing Inclusion Students	- Modify tests - Design tests
Session 7	Hands-on Practice	- Types of assessments according to inclusion
Closing session 8	Wrap Up & Post-testing	
Total Hours	6 sessions x 5 hours + 4 Hours tests = 34 Hours	

3. An assessment literacy test. This test aimed to assess the literacies oriented to inclusion. It included 2 parts (cognition – practice). The test was validated through jury validation, and its reliability value was (r= 93), which showed its high reliability.

4. Reflection E-journal. This journal sought to document students' qualitative reflections on the course and to discuss their ideas and questions. Following is the link to the journal: https://academicwritingdrhagag.blogspot.com/2023/07/write-journal-about-what-ideas-about.html.

Literature Review

The following theoretical review discusses three main points: the first is Task-Based Learning (TBL), the second is inclusion, and the third is assessment literacy. During this discussion, both theoretical aspects and pertinent literature are integrated.

a. The Task-Based Approach

Defining a "task" was first presented by Nunan (1989) by defining the task as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than on form" (p.10). This definition was followed by another early definition by Willis (1996) viewing a task as a type activity. He defined a task as "a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome" (p.95). The task entails procedural steps to achieve an objective(s) in a set time.

Stages of the task in the TBL approach include a natural series of stages (Harmer, 2002; Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004), such as

preparation for the task (pre-task), the task itself, and follow-up (According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), these stages fit within the communicative approach compared to the traditional grammar approach. post-task). The traditional approach is called PPP (Presentation- practice – Production), while the Task-Based Language Teaching Approach includes (Pre-task "introduction", Task "production", and Post-task "presentation"). These steps form a systematic and communicative approach for better-intended learning outcomes.

Characteristics of the Task-Based Learning approach were targeted by different studies (Harmer, 2007; Lai & Li, 2011; Nunan, 2004). These characteristics include its value in interactivity and negotiation of meaning, student involvement in authentic materials, classroom language linkage with language practice, performance-based assessment, and stressing language use rather than learning as a class situation in itself. Promoting the benefits of TBA in communication between the students was also stressed by Thouesny & Bradely (2011). Further, Willis & Dave (2007) highlighted the merit of learners' exposure to target language and skills. Similarly, Dabbagh & Kitsantas (2012) stressed its integration between formal learning (inside the institution) and informal learning (outside the school) as a distinctive merit.

In their study, Gheith & Mostafa (2015) investigated the effect of using the task-based learning approach on developing university student-teachers performance in teaching the English language. The study followed the one-group quasi-experimental design and was applied to a group of 3rd-year student teachers at the faculty of education. The task-based module included 12 sessions about teaching literacy that should be applied in classes during their practicum. Results showed the effectiveness of using the TBL approach in developing student-teachers' performance in teaching. It also highlighted the merits of TBL in teacher training.

In a study by Abdullah (2017), TBL was used to promote assessment literacy for EFL in-service teachers. The study was run over 30 preparatory stage teachers at Giza, Egypt. The program was used to develop the in-service teachers; assessment literacy, language, and classroom assessment practices. The study revealed that TBL is an effective approach for developing in-service teachers' assessment literacy and their teaching skills in general.

Taylor (2009) expressed the view that the range and number of stakeholders who require a level of assessment literacy is getting wider. These stakeholders include "university admissions officers, policymakers and government departments, in addition to those professionally engaged with testing and assessment, and teachers" (p. 36). He further claimed that there are few textbooks and learning

materials available for non-specialists or those new or novice assessments. This highlights the importance of designing modules, programs, and training materials for novice teachers to gain assessment literacy in general and inclusion-oriented in particular.

b. Inclusion in EFL Classes

In his study, Arib (2021) explored EFL staff views on inclusive education and learning English as a Foreign Language. The study aimed to reflect on the current status of inclusive education in the Algerian learning environment. Results obtained from the semi-structured interviews showed that while faculty members support and believe in the idea of education for all, EFL teachers have varying perceptions about inclusion in their classes. The study recommended designing teacher training materials for better EFL classes' inclusion practices.

In Egypt, Ali (2018) utilized a mixed methods study that aimed to identify the needs and preferences EFL teachers regarding working with special-need students and inclusive classes. The study also explored the relationship between participants' profile and their needs within the inclusion framework. Although the participants of the study were in-service EFL teachers but the study highlighted the need to conduct training for EFL teachers. This need for training is more important for novice teachers who aim to start their careers in teaching EFL classes and inclusion classes in particular. Further Ali

expressed the view that" In the Arab region, inclusion is newly implemented in education to include students with special impairments and disabilities in mainstream schools; Egypt is among the countries that approved the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) to make inclusive education a right for all SEN students" (p. 166).

In this view, Awad (2016) conducted a study that interviewed school administrators, teachers, and parents of SEN students to examine the extent to which private schools in Egypt apply inclusion and the difficulties faced by different stakeholders. Results showed that unsatisfactory implementation of inclusion in these schools; these results were attributed to the lack of support services and educational tools, less funding, and insufficient professional development programs. This study is one of the early studies that highlighted the need for training programs to train EFL teachers on inclusion-oriented practices and competencies.

c. Language Assessment Literacy

Language assessment literacy (LAL) refers to "the knowledge skills and principles that stakeholders involved in assessment activities are required to master to perform assessment tasks" (Inbar-Louri, 2017, p.257). He further expressed the view that the need for defining a literacy framework in language assessment has arisen "following acknowledgment of teachers' assessment needs as well as

the increase in the number of stakeholders from different disciplines involved in language assessment activities and decision-making". This need for assessment literacy is greater in the context of EFL-inclusive classes due to its relatively new demands. These demands started with the early inclusive education application in mainstream education. Malone (2008) stated that *No Child Left Behind* legislation in the United States, and the widespread implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference CEFR in Europe steered the need for authentic assessment.

According to Davies (2008), language assessment literacy entails knowledge of different theories and various models of language proficiency. It also includes the skills for design and educational measurement, the principles/ethics, and the impact of language testing. Similarly, the present study views assessment literacy as a component that involves mainly cognitive and practical competencies. The following table describes the key elements of assessment literacy.

Table (1): Elements of Key Assessment Literacies. (Giraldo, 2021, p.267)

Knowledge	Skills	Principles
• models describing language ability • frameworks for doing language assessment, e.g., criterion-referenced • purposes and theoretical concepts • relevant theories in second language acquisition and language teaching pedagogy • personal assessment contexts, which include practices and beliefs • critical issues such as ethics, fairness, and impact	*Design of assessment instruments:* • assessment specifications • items and tasks • rubrics with criteria • alternative assessment instruments, e.g., peer-assessment protocols • statistics and score interpretation *Test critique:* • identification of poorly designed items • evaluation of assessment instruments against qualities such as validity and reliability	• ethical use of assessment data • fair treatment of students • democratic practices in which students can share their voice • transparent practices to inform the nature of assessment systems and their consequences • critical stance towards unfair or unethical uses of language assessment • awareness of consequences (both intended and unintended) of assessment systems

The above table (1) shows three main elements of the literacies framework: the first is the knowledge (cognition), and the second refers to the skills (practice), while the third is about the guiding principles. In this study, two main components were included in the questionnaire, the program, and the test which are both cognitive and practice literacy aspects.

LAL as a theoretical framework involves three main literacies, cognition, practice, and principles of language assessment. It is appropriate enough to "analyze professional development initiatives for teachers' LAL because these programs can target and/or impact teachers' knowledge, skills, or principles for language assessment. A specific type of positive impact on teachers can be traced to one of LAL's components; for example, if teachers improve their *design* of peer assessment instruments, this can primarily mean a positive

impact on the *skills* side of LAL" (Ibid, P. 266). The present study was delimited to cognition and practice due to the profile of the participants who studied assessment during their preparation programs; they know the pillars and key principles of assessment. Further, they needed cognition and practices oriented to inclusion.

Various studies in the literature discussed Language assessment literacy in different EFL contexts (e.g. Kremmel et al., 2018; O'Loughlin, 2013; Pill & Harding, 2013; Taylor, 2013). In his review of the key studies that discussed LAL, Giraldo (2018) stated that " Based on my review of the literature, professional development programs for teachers' LAL started to become commonplace in the late 2010s. This is why, out of 14 studies, eight come from 2017 or later" (P.265). Although language assessment literacy is a crucial field in TEFL, few studies have been conducted to develop certain assessment literacy targeted for a certain field such as "inclusive classes".

A study by Zhu and Wang (2014) discussed the different components of professional assessment literacy. It categorized teacher professional competencies into learning competency (learning with an open mind, learning actively, learning from reflection, learning with independent thinking), social competency (persistent, democratic, communicative, cooperative, courageous), educational competency (love for teaching, responsible,

knowledgeable, problem sensitivity, quick response, educational research), and technological competency (use the internet to search and extract information, use ICT and multimedia in education).

For instance, Hakim (2015) conducted a study to investigate the teachers' awareness level and way of practicing the assessment tools in EFL context. The study investigated the perceptions and feedback of (30) female language instructors from (5) different nationalities with varying qualifications and ELT experience. The study utilized a questionnaire to the instructors and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. Results showed that the participants had a clear knowledge about the use of assessment tools; their perceptions about assessment tools were least affected by their teaching experience. The study highlighted the role of assessment training for novice teachers.

There are three different elements for assessment literacy in EFL context as represented by Fulcher (2013); these three elements of assessment literacy as the following figure shows:

Figure (1): Language Assessment Literacy (Fulcher, 2013, p.126)
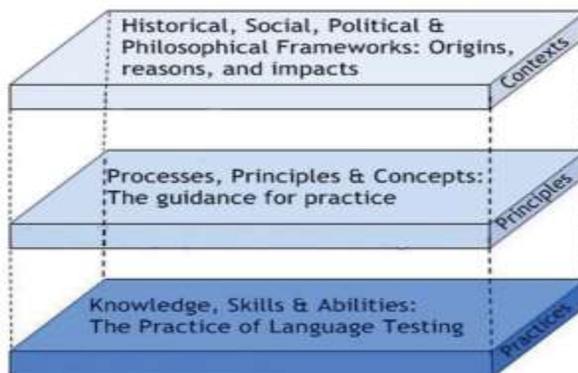
According to Figure (1), language assessment literacy entails different aspects: the first is the context which describes the historical, social, political, and philosophical frameworks. The second refers to the principles that describe the processes, principles, and concepts that guide the following layer. The last is the practice which includes the knowledge, skills, and abilities that represent the practice of language testing.

Results of the study

Results of the study are tackled and discussed in the light of the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be no statistically significant mean differences between the participants' inclusion-oriented assessment literacy. To verify the hypothesis, the following descriptive statistics procedure was run:

Table (2): Descriptive statistics of testing assessment literacy

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre_total	32	6	23	15.63	3.791
post_total	32	13	29	21.37	3.240
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The above table (2) shows the means of the participants before (12.63) and after (21.37) teaching the module. It revealed that the means are greater after teaching the module. This indicates an enhancement in their assessment literacy oriented to inclusion. To verify this difference in means, the following procedure was run:

Table (3): t-test results for cognitive assessment literacy total score

Variables	Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-post Total Score	-5.750-	4.759	.841	7.466-	4.034-	6.835-	31	.000

The above table (3) shows the differences in participants' means (.000) which was significant at level (0.05); the obtained value shows that there are statistically significant means differences between the participants at the cognitive part favoring the post-testing. To verify the effect size of the module, the following statistical treatment was run:

Table (4): Eta Squared Effect Size

Variables	Eta	Eta Squared	Effect
Pre-post Total Score	.556	.309	Large

As the obtained eta squared value (.309) is higher than (0.14), the effect of the independent variable (the module) over the dependent variable (assessment literacy) is large. This result accepts the alternative hypothesis and rejects the null hypothesis. The following two hypotheses aimed to verify the type of development that occurred in each section of the assessment literacy test.

     Second, testing the second hypothesis that predicted there would be no statistically significant mean differences between the participants' inclusion-oriented cognitive literacy. The following table describes the scores of the participants before running t-test statistics.

Table (5): Descriptive statistics for the cognitive literacy variable

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre_cognitive	32	4	18	11.91	3.041
post_cognitive	32	10	21	15.47	2.603
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The above table (5) shows the differences in means of the participants in the pre (11.91) and post (15.47) testing. These scores indicate that there are differences between their mean scores at the cognitive part of the assessment literacy test. The following table (5) describes the t-test analysis of the participants' scores to verify these differences in mean scores.

Table (6): t-test results for cognitive assessment literacy

Pair	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
pre_cognitive - post_cognitive	-3.562-	3.636	.643	-4.873-	-2.252-	-5.542-	31	.000

The above table (6) shows that the t value (-5.542) is significant (.000) at (0.05) level. This means that there was a significant development in participants' cognitive assessment literacy due to the effect of the module of the study. The following statistical procedure discusses the obtained results from the second part of the test (practical literacy).

Third, testing the third hypothesis that predicted there would be no statistically significant mean differences between the participants' inclusion-oriented practical literacy. The following table (7) indicates the description of the participants' scores and their means; it shows their means in the pre-testing of the practical literacy (3.72) and the post-testing (5.91) value.

Table (7): Descriptive statistics for practical literacy variable

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre_practical	32	2	5	3.72	1.143
post_practical	32	1	15	5.91	2.291
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The obtained means indicate that there are differences in the means of the participants and that the mean of the post-testing (5.91) is higher than the pre-testing (3.72); this difference entails a development in the practical literacy of the participants. The

following table (8) shows the mean differences of the participants as tested by t-test statistical analysis.

Table (8): t-test results for practical literacy variable

Variables	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-post Practical Score	-2.188	2.507	.443	-3.091-	-1.284-	-4.935-	31	.000

The above table (8) shows the significance value (.000) in the pre and post-testing of the participants' practical literacy. This value means that there are significant means differences between the participants in the pre and post-testing of their practical assessment literacy favoring the post-testing. The obtained result confirms the alternative of the study. The following section discusses these results with the framework of the pertinent literature.

 Discussion

The results showed developments in the participants' means in the two areas of inclusion assessment literacy (cognition – practice) due to the module based on the TBL approach. These results agree as

well as differ from different studies in EFL literature that discussed these variables. The following is a discussion of these results within the pertinent literature related to the variables of the study.

Developing literacies, skills, competencies, or language areas using TBL is a significant area in the literature that tackles the virtues of this approach. In this respect, the results agree with various studies that proposed programs, training units, modules or courses based on TBL. For instance, the studies of (Abdullah, et al., Gheith & Mostafa, 2015; Sholeh & Salija, 2023, Zao, 2009; Celik, 2017; Hakim, 2015; and Akimove & Malin 2020) highlighted the significance of TBL in language, communication, literacies, and competences' development at different instruction levels. These studies promoted the autonomous and communicative nature of the activities and tasks based on TBL. The present study also promoted these features in a different EFL context which is novice EFL teachers who teach inclusive classes. This TBL-based module of the study also featured the interactivity of the tasks among the participants.

The results of the present study showed the lack of cognitive and practical literacy of novice teachers due to their lack of pre-service training. This result was claimed by Basyouni (2020) stating that" "Pre-service teachers have not had the opportunity to be involved in discussions or debates about inclusive education for

students with disabilities. Moreover, they might not have heard about the changes that have been made at the Ministry of Education "(p.15).   Similarly, Hakim (2015) assured the importance of developing language assessment literacy for novice teachers through training, workshops, and programs that develop cognitive and practical literacies. Results of the study also revealed the gap between teacher education institutions and MOE's current practices related to inclusion. There is a need to pave the way towards a true linkage between current MOE practices and teacher education program ILOs in the TEFL domain.

Comparing the results of the two parts of LAL test shows different developments in the participants' literacy. The first part about (cognitive literacy) showed that the mean of the participants was (15.47) in the post testing compare to the pre testing (11.91). This shows a development in their cognition oriented to inclusion assessment literacy. The second part (practical literacies) also showed a development in participants' skills and practical competencies regarding designing tests, running assessment and designing inclusion-oriented formative and summative practices. These results were shown in the enhancements that happened in their practical skills in the pre testing (3.72) compared to the post testing (5.91). Results show that the development that happened in their performance was more in the cognitive part. This can be due to the

content of the program, which is more cognitive, and the limited time of the training module.

During the tasks, the participants expressed that their knowledge about inclusion was guided by the sequential tasks of the module. These results also agree with the general framework described in the literature about the merits of TBL in its sequential procedures. This result agrees with what Ellis (2009) concluded about the TBL approach:

"1. The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (which means that learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances). 2. There should be some kind of 'gap' (i.e. a need to convey information, to express an opinion, or to infer meaning). 3. Learners should largely have to rely on their resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) to complete the activity. 4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e., the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right)." (p. 223)
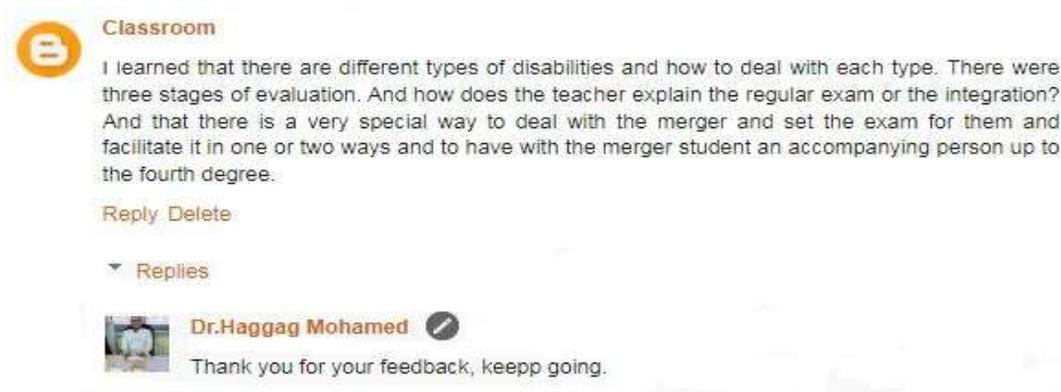
The above merits are consistent with the obtained results of the study as the participants showed developments in their performance in designing the assessment tools and their use. The type of interaction and reflection that they had shown in the online journal confirmed the above merits.

These results add to other studies that highlighted the value of the TBL approach in teacher performance. For instance, Gheith & Mostafa (2015) stressed the importance of using TBL in developing pre-service teachers' performance. Results of the current study confirmed the value of TBL in developing competence next to the performance of the teachers. Differently, the present study highlighted the value of TBL in a different context which is inclusion. Using tasks in inclusive classes can develop teachers' competencies and therefore may affect their performance.

Results also showed authentic adaptations by the participants in the post-testing in the light of the training module. These adaptations were in response to the open-questions test that required designing questions according to the different levels of inclusive students. They were guided by Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive levels and its hierarchy in identifying the different ILOs. These results also compel with similar studies such as the study by Sadioglu et al. (2013) that were concerned with how teachers made adaptations in the evaluation of SEN students through effective grading systems and evaluation tools. They also agrees with a study by Pinar (2014) that highlighted the view that EFL teachers need to be prepared to identify disabilities and to master various literacies to meet these needs. These results were gained through the effective use of the TBL approach, which allows different adaptations over the tasks.

In the qualitative view, the participants also showed their satisfaction and positive attitudes towards the module in their electronic reflective posts on the e-journal. They expressed their views about its interactivity, informative sessions, and the sequential tasks it includes. For instance, Mayada Asaad reported that the module helped her learn more about disabilities, inclusion, exams, and the facilities of special needs students. The following are sample online journal reflection posts:

Figure (2): Sample online journal reflection posts.

Classroom

I learned that there are different types of disabilities and how to deal with each type. There were three stages of evaluation. And how does the teacher explain the regular exam or the integration? And that there is a very special way to deal with the merger and set the exam for them and facilitate it in one or two ways and to have with the merger student an accompanying person up to the fourth degree.

Reply Delete

▼ Replies

Dr.Haggag Mohamed

Thank you for your feedback, keepp going.

Analyzing the qualitative results shows that the following key areas were gained from the module as revealed by the results of the posttest: (a) cognitive inputs about special needs students and their categories, characteristics, classifications, and degrees of disabilities, (b) ideas about tasks to teach English for inclusive students, (c) knowledge about decrees and bylaws that govern inclusive schools,

classes, and exams, (d) effective practices about designing different types of assessment tools and question-construction, (e) positive attitudes about assessment as a tool to help students learn more than to be challenged, (f) satisfying with tasks as graded activities that enhance learning of the students. The above results agree with what Ellis (2009) concluded about the positive effect of TBL on developing meaning negotiation, autonomy, and language skills. These results are also consistent with the conclusions of the study by Hakim (2015) which stressed that assessment literacy development entails developing knowledge, skills, believes and satisfactory attitudes about assessment.

Accordingly, the results add to TBL's merits by adding inclusion as a field to effectively use TBL. Results showed that inclusion-oriented knowledge, skills, and attitudes were enhanced through the use of the module. Participants could enhance inclusion-oriented cognition such as disability characterization, decrees, laws, tests, and types of inclusion. Moreover, they showed positive attitudes about the use of assessment tools in the field of inclusion and how to design them. However, the present study disagrees with Ghoneim's (2014) study which revealed that teachers in public education did not receive appropriate training to deal with the needs of the disabled students. It also disagrees with its claim about teachers' lack the enthusiasm about inclusion classes. This claim is

not in line with the qualitative and qualitative results of the participants which showed enthusiasm and interactive participation.

To sum up, results of the current study support TBL as an effective approach to be used in inclusive classes. Differently, it introduced assessment literacies and attitudinal dimensions that add to inclusion and EFL literature in the Egyptian context.

Implications of the Study

The study can be useful to EFL teachers, inclusion administration, course designers, and TEFL literature as follows:

EFL Teachers: Both pre-service and in-service teachers can use the module of the study in self-training and their professional development regarding assessment. Teachers can make use of the activities in the module to assess their own literacy and extend their knowledge regarding inclusion practices and assessment practices as well.

Inclusion Administrations: administrators and decision-makers of inclusion practices in the Egyptian Ministry of Education can benefit from the tasks in the module for better practices, training, and professional development. They can make use of the decrees and laws included in the module for refining concepts and better practices at the managerial level. Examiners can also make use of the tasks in the module as guiding tasks for the questions included in inclusion

exams and tests. Teachers' academies can also use the module in training teachers who are responsible for inclusive classes.

Course Designers: the module is one of the few modules that link both academic specialization (EFL) and inclusion-oriented practices. The different tasks included in the module can be used by course designers in differentiating assessment practices according to inclusion types.

TEFL literature: the theoretical framework of the study enriched the theory and practice of inclusion and task-based approach in a different EFL context. The Egyptian context of this study adds to other EFL contexts where TBL was used. The study can also improve inclusion and assessment practices in the EFL context about global calls for inclusion.

Recommendations of the Study:

In the light of the obtained results, the study recommends the following:

1. Professional development training programs should include inclusion-oriented components that aim to develop EFL teachers' cognition and skills regarding inclusion.

2. Pre-service EFL teachers should be provided with set courses about the instruction of inclusive students, their characteristics, and assessment principles.

3. Testing and evaluation procedures followed in schools with inclusive students should be reviewed and more accurate measures should be applied.

4. Standardized tests and scales of inclusive students should be an integral part of EFL teachers' preparation programs. EFL teachers should master the skills of classifying and describing the characteristics of the different disabilities.

5. Task-based learning should be a main part of the inclusion classes' materials and activities. EFL teachers may adapt the content of the English course to be taught using the stages of task-based learning to ensure better class involvement.

Delimitations:

There are several limitations to this research that need to be acknowledged and may be taken into account in future investigations into assessment literacy. The first is associated with the nature of the participants (novice teachers with 0-5 years' experience only); the second is only cognitive and practical literacies as identified by the questionnaire as it did not include the affective or attitude dimension.

The third is the inclusion categories as identified by the Egyptian laws and decrees issued by The Egyptian Ministry of Education.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions can be presented:

1. The study provided evidence about using task-based Learning module as an effective tool for EFL teachers' in-service training and professional development regarding inclusion assessment.

2. Teaching inclusive students requires an authentic type of language assessment that should enhance the levels of cognition based on their performance and type of disability, learning difficulties, and achievement levels.

3. EFL teachers need task-based training about assessment literacy in general and assessing inclusive students in particular. The teacher education programs may not consider assessing inclusive students with all their different categories during the methodology courses at the university level.

4. Developing assessment literacy oriented to inclusion includes developing cognitive and practical literacies related to both inclusion and language teaching competencies. EFL teachers need to identify types, characteristics, and knowledge about inclusion on the one hand

and to design, implement, and score the different assessment tools from the other.

5. The different task levels (pre-during-post) can be used for effective communication during training; these levels can be a base for better knowledge refining and meaning negotiation during the tasks.

6. The results of the study provided evidence that the proposed module based on TBL could enhance participants' inclusion and special education-oriented literacy and language assessment-oriented literacy as well. This result is a call to support interdisciplinary studies that can integrate more than one field within one framework.

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