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## Primary School Teachers' Views on Contemporary Assessment Tools\*

Hüseyin İŞERİ\*\*

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Behsat SAVAŞ\*\*\*

### Abstract

This study aims to examine primary school teachers' existing knowledge of contemporary assessment tools, their learning needs, and the gains they achieved following a structured in-service training program. The research used a qualitative case study design. The participants consisted of 43 volunteer primary school teachers working in the Konak district of İzmir, Türkiye. Data were collected through forms based on the KWL technique (What I know, What I want to learn, What I learned) and analyzed using content analysis.

The findings indicate that teachers' initial knowledge was largely limited to performance- and product-oriented tools such as portfolios and rubrics, while their awareness of diagnostic and process-oriented assessment tools was relatively low. Teachers' learning needs primarily focused on becoming familiar with new assessment tools, integrating them into classroom practices, and receiving guidance on their practical applicability. Following the training, a significant increase in teachers' knowledge and awareness of tools such as structured grids, scoring rubrics, word association tests, and diagnostic branched trees was observed. The results suggest that practice-based professional development activities are effective in enhancing teachers' assessment literacy.

**Keywords:** Contemporary assessment tools, primary school teachers, assessment literacy

### Introduction

In contemporary educational paradigms that emphasize the knowledge, skills, and competencies required in the twenty-first century, assessment and evaluation have evolved beyond merely determining what students know. They have transformed into a multidimensional structure that also encompasses the assessment of higher-order cognitive and affective skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and self-regulation (Brookhart, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2014). This transformation has increased international interest in

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\*\* Classroom Teacher, Mimar Sinan Primary School, Türkiye, E-mail: [huseyiniseri@gmail.com](mailto:huseyiniseri@gmail.com)  
ORCID: [orcid.org/0009-0002-8580-806X](https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8580-806X) (Corresponding)

\*\*\* Dokuz Eylül University, Buca Faculty of Education, Department of Primary Education, Türkiye, E-mail: [behsat.savas@deu.edu.tr](mailto:behsat.savas@deu.edu.tr) ORCID: [orcid.org/0000-0003-3164-9745](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3164-9745)

formative, authentic, and performance-based assessment approaches that place the learning process at the center (Black & William, 2009; Shepard, 2019).

Students are assessed through various methods such as project-based assignments, peer assessment, self-assessment, portfolios, performance-based tasks, checklists, and other open-ended approaches (Zimbicki, 2007).

Traditional assessment tools (e.g., multiple-choice tests, short-answer questions, true–false items) remain limited in their ability to reveal students' complex thinking processes, conceptual structures, and their ability to apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Stiggins, 2007; Boud & Falchikov, 2007). These tools are mostly outcome-oriented and insufficient in generating diagnostic feedback to guide teachers during the learning process (Harlen, 2013). In contrast, contemporary assessment approaches consider evaluation an integral part of instruction and aim to generate continuous data to support learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

In this context, contemporary assessment tools such as rubrics (analytic scoring guides), portfolios, concept maps, structured grids, diagnostic branched trees, word association tests, as well as self- and peer-assessment, stand out as powerful instruments that can comprehensively reveal students' learning processes (Andrade, 2005; Ruiz-Primo & Shavelson, 1996; Brookhart, 2013). Through these tools, students' misconceptions can be identified, their performance evaluated in authentic contexts, and their active participation in learning encouraged (Panadero, Jonsson, & Botella, 2017; Wiggins, 1998).

The theoretical foundation of contemporary assessment and evaluation is largely based on constructivist learning theory. According to the constructivist approach, learning occurs not through passive reception of information but through active construction of knowledge through experience, interaction, and reflection (Anderson, 1998; Kaufman, 2004). Within this framework, assessment is viewed not merely as a grading process but as a pedagogical tool that guides, supports, and deepens learning (Shepard, 2000). Therefore, the effectiveness of constructivist-based curricula is closely related to teachers' competencies in implementing assessment practices consistent with this understanding.

International education policies also support this transformation in assessment and evaluation. OECD reports define student assessment systems as one of the key policy instruments that enhance instructional quality, enable the monitoring of learning outcomes, and strengthen equity in education (OECD, 2013, 2015). Similarly, Eurydice (2009) reports emphasize that formative and continuous assessment at the compulsory education level is an integral part of the teaching–learning process. At the European Union level, diversifying assessment tools and improving teachers'

assessment competencies are considered core components of sustainable education policies (Halász, 2016).

However, numerous international studies indicate that teachers experience various difficulties in integrating contemporary assessment tools into classroom practice. Teachers' lack of conceptual knowledge, limited practical experience, large class sizes, time constraints, and the quality of in-service training are among the main factors contributing to these difficulties (DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016; Xu & Brown, 2016; Brookhart, 2011).

This situation has brought the concept of assessment literacy to the forefront. Assessment literacy is defined as teachers' ability to select, develop, implement, and interpret appropriate assessment tools and use the resulting data to improve instruction (Stiggins, 1999; Fulcher, 2012). Teachers with high levels of assessment literacy are known to use formative assessment more effectively, monitor student learning through multiple sources of evidence, and adjust their instructional processes accordingly (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010).

In Türkiye, recent curriculum reforms—particularly the Türkiye Century Education Model—have redefined assessment and evaluation as a process-based, evidence-driven approach and encouraged the systematic use of contemporary assessment tools. However, the successful implementation of this approach in classroom settings largely depends on teachers' competencies in recognizing, applying, and interpreting these tools.

Primary school teachers, in particular, play a critical role at the elementary level, where the foundations of students' academic and affective development are established. The assessment approaches used during this period directly influence students' attitudes toward learning, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic motivation (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Therefore, examining primary school teachers' knowledge of contemporary assessment tools, their learning needs, and the gains they achieve through professional development is of great importance.

The aim of this study is to qualitatively investigate primary school teachers' current knowledge of contemporary assessment tools, their learning expectations regarding these tools, and the gains they achieve after the learning process is implemented. The study is expected to contribute to the literature on assessment literacy and to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving teacher education programs and in-service training practices.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study was designed as a descriptive research study. Data were collected through open-ended questions based on the KWL approach. The qualitative data obtained were coded and converted into numerical data during the analysis process and subsequently analyzed using statistical techniques.

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This approach is consistent with research practices in which qualitative data are quantified to enable statistical analysis (Creswell, 2014). This process made it possible to identify patterns and distributions within the data in a more systematic manner.

### Research Sample and Participants

**Table 1**

*Frequency Distribution*

Teachers' Years of Experience	f	%
1–10	4	9.3
11–20	14	32.5
21 years and above	25	58.1
Total	43	100

A 32-hour local in-service training program on the characteristics and use of contemporary assessment tools was delivered to 43 volunteer teachers working in the Konak district of İzmir. At the beginning of the instructional process, participants were given a form incorporating the KWL technique. The primary school teachers were asked to complete the first two columns at the beginning of the training, and the final column at the end of the instructional process. The columns included the questions: “What do you know?” “What do you want to learn?”, and “What have you learned?”. In the personal information section, teachers were asked about their years of professional experience.

Among the 43 primary school teachers who completed and submitted the form in full, years of professional experience ranged from 1–10 years, 11–20 years, and 21 years and above (Table 1).

### Research Instruments

The effectiveness of the instructional process was grounded in the situations expressed through the KWL technique. This technique is important for determining learners' prior knowledge of the topic to be presented and for generating data to evaluate the instructional process (Ogle, 1986).

### Data Collection

At the beginning of the instructional process, participants were provided with a form based on the KWL technique. The primary school teachers were asked to write their responses in the first two columns at the beginning of the training (“What do you know?” and “What do you want to learn?”) and in the final column at the end of the instructional process (“What have you learned?”). In the personal information section, teachers were asked to indicate their years of professional experience.

### Analysis of Data

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data. In descriptive analysis, data are organized and summarized according to predetermined themes or questions, allowing for a systematic presentation of the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

In this study, the three main questions formed the basis of the analysis. The responses were coded under these questions and presented in terms of frequencies and percentages. Primary school teachers' prior knowledge levels, learning needs, and post-implementation learning outcomes regarding contemporary assessment tools were examined through cross-tabulations generated using MAXQDA 24. Frequencies (f) and percentages (%) were interpreted together. The total number of participants included in the analysis was 43.

### Validity and Reliability

According to the inter-coder agreement file, the mean agreement rate was calculated as 93.49% (min = 82.86%; max = 100.00). The mean Cohen's Kappa value was  $\kappa = 0.914$  (min = 0.000; max = 1.000). A  $\kappa$  value within the range of 0.81–1.00 indicates very high / almost perfect agreement in coding. This finding demonstrates that the themes were consistently constructed and that the findings are highly reliable.

## Results

**Table 2**

*Distribution of Responses to Teachers' Knowledge of Contemporary Assessment Tools*

<b>Measurement Tools</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Portfolio	13	30.23	Digital assessment	8	18.60
Rubric / Analytic Scoring Guide	13	30.23	Peer assessment	6	13.95
Rating scales	8	18.60	Process assessment	4	9.30
Word association test	7	16.28	Performance assessment		
Concept map	6	13.95	Formative and summative assessment	2	4.65
Structured grid			Self-assessment	2	4.65
Diagnostic branched tree	2	4.65	Individualized assessment	1	2.33
Checklist			<b>Other Opinions</b>		
Project			Only stated that they had knowledge	12	27.91
Artificial intelligence	1	2.33	Receiving feedback	2	4.65
Web 2.0 tools			I know how to use it		
			Does not know how to use it	1	2.33
			High validity and reliability		

This question aimed to reveal participants' existing knowledge repertoire regarding contemporary/alternative assessment tools. The findings indicate that teachers' knowledge is concentrated on a limited number of tools, while a substantial proportion of responses remain at the "general statement" level. The fact that portfolios and rubrics were reported at the highest rates (30.23%) suggests that participants are more familiar with performance-based and product-oriented assessment approaches. The results further indicate that primary school teachers have relatively higher familiarity with commonly used contemporary assessment tools such as portfolios and rubrics;

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however, a considerable proportion of them perceive their knowledge as limited and express a need for deeper conceptual understanding.

It is evident that participants' knowledge is concentrated on only a few tools, particularly portfolios and rubrics, which are the most well-known contemporary assessment instruments. However, the fact that approximately one-third of the participants merely "stated that they had knowledge" indicates that although they possess some conceptual awareness, they lack systematic knowledge regarding the types of tools, their purposes of use, and implementation procedures.

This situation demonstrates that teachers often recognize contemporary assessment tools at a nominal level, but have limited knowledge about how to pedagogically integrate these tools into the assessment and evaluation process.

**Table 3**

*Distribution of Responses to Teachers' Learning Needs Regarding Contemporary Assessment Tools*

<b>Measurement Tools</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<b>Other Opinions</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
AI-supported tools	3	6.98	I want to learn new assessment tools	17	39.53
Structured grid	2	2	How different assessment tools can be used in lessons	11	25.58
Diagnostic branched tree			Applicability of new assessment tools	6	13.95
Mind maps			Conducting authentic assessment in my lessons	4	9.30
Smart tests			Identifying and addressing deficiencies related to assessment tools	3	6.98
Vee diagram	1	2.33	Learning useful and enjoyable tools		
Rubric (analytic scoring guide)			I want to learn the tools included in the Türkiye Century Education Model	2	2
Checklist			Learning objective assessment techniques	1	2.33
<b>Assessment Methods</b>			I want to learn more about rubrics		
Digital portfolio assessment					
Peer assessment	1	2.33			
Self-assessment	3	6.98			

The findings related to Question 2 indicate that teachers have strong motivation to learn about contemporary assessment tools; however, they need practice-based, structured support to use these tools effectively in classroom settings. The most dominant expectation was "learning new assessment tools" (39.53%), followed by the need for guidance on "how different assessment tools can be used in

lessons” (25.58%). This finding suggests that teachers require not only conceptual knowledge but also concrete examples of practice that can be directly integrated into instructional processes.

The prominence of the “applicability” theme (13.95%) indicates that teachers take contextual constraints such as time management, class size, scoring workload, criterion setting, and documentation into account. In addition, the themes “conducting authentic assessment in lessons” (9.30%) and “identifying and addressing deficiencies” (6.98%) suggest that teachers are beginning to position assessment not merely as a grading tool but as a formative process that supports learning.

Furthermore, although at lower frequencies, the expression of demands for more specific tools such as AI-supported tools, structured grids, diagnostic branched trees, digital portfolios, rubrics, and checklists indicates that teachers are open to diversifying their assessment repertoires. Overall, these findings demonstrate that teachers hold positive attitudes toward contemporary assessment tools; however, they also reveal a need for systematic professional development support in terms of pedagogical implementation knowledge and technical competence.

**Table 4**

*Distribution of Responses to Teachers’ Learning Regarding Contemporary Assessment Tools*

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Structured grid	42	97.67
Rubric (analytic scoring guide)	33	75.72
Word association test	30	70.31
Diagnostic branched tree	28	64.90
Peer assessment	26	59.49
Checklist		
Gaining information about new tools	23	54.08
Concept map	21	48.67
Self-assessment		
Rating scale	19	43.27
Types of rubrics		
Concept map	16	37.86
Use of new tools in lessons		
Addressing knowledge gaps		
Performance assessment	14	32.45
Eliminating misconceptions		
Vee diagram	12	27.04
Portfolio assessment		
Advantages and disadvantages of assessment tools	5	10.82
Differences among assessment tools		
Learning conceptual definitions		
Mind map		

**Note:** Percentages are calculated based on the total number of responses, as participants were allowed to provide more than one response.

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The findings indicate that the implemented learning process substantially enhanced teachers' knowledge and awareness of contemporary assessment tools. In particular, the high proportion reported for the 'structured grid' (97.67%) suggests that teachers made notable gains in understanding diagnostic and conceptually oriented assessment tools with which they had previously had limited familiarity. Overall, these results demonstrate that the study largely achieved its objective of expanding teachers' assessment tool repertoires.

The high frequencies reported for tools such as rubrics (75.72%), word association tests (70.31%), and diagnostic branched trees (64.90%) indicate that teachers have begun to move beyond solely product-oriented assessment tools toward instruments that reveal students' thinking processes, conceptual relationships, and learning deficiencies. This finding suggests a shift in assessment understanding from the traditional "outcome determination" approach toward formative and diagnostic assessment perspectives.

The substantial learning gains observed for participant-centered assessment techniques such as peer assessment (59.49%), checklists (59.49%), and self-assessment (43.27%) further demonstrate that teachers have developed a tendency to actively involve students in the assessment process. Such tools are among contemporary approaches that support students in assuming responsibility for their learning, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, and developing self-regulation skills.

Another noteworthy aspect of the findings is that teachers emphasized not only specific tools but also process- and professional development-oriented gains such as "gaining information about new tools" (54.08%), "using new tools in lessons" (37.86%), and "addressing knowledge gaps" (37.86%). This indicates that the learning process fostered sustainable professional development rather than a mere temporary increase in knowledge.

In contrast, the relatively low frequencies reported for more theoretical dimensions, such as portfolio assessment (10.82%), the advantages and disadvantages of assessment tools (10.82%), and conceptual definitions (10.82%), suggest that teachers prioritized directly applicable classroom practices over abstract theoretical knowledge. This finding is consistent with the teacher education literature, which indicates that practice-oriented content is more effective in promoting teacher learning.

Overall, the findings related to the "What have you learned?" question demonstrate that teachers not only became familiar with contemporary assessment tools but also developed a functional understanding of how to use them in instructional processes. This result highlights that structured and practice-oriented professional development activities are effective instruments for enhancing teachers' assessment literacy.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that primary school teachers' knowledge and use of contemporary assessment tools can change following practice-oriented in-service training. Prior to the training, teachers tended to rely on more familiar tools such as portfolios and rubrics, while making more limited use of tools that reveal students' conceptual understanding and learning processes. This pattern is consistent with studies showing that teachers often work within a limited repertoire of assessment methods and tend to favor tools with which they are already familiar (DeLuca et al., 2016; Brookhart, 2011).

The identified learning needs suggest that teachers are not only interested in becoming familiar with new assessment tools, but also require concrete guidance on how to implement these tools in classroom settings. Xu and Brown (2016) similarly report that teachers may possess basic conceptual knowledge of assessment, yet experience difficulties in translating this knowledge into classroom practice. In this respect, the needs identified in this study point not only to gaps in knowledge but also to a need for structured, practice-oriented support.

Following the training, teachers began to incorporate a wider range of assessment tools, particularly those that make students' learning processes more visible. Giraldo (2021) likewise demonstrates that practice-based professional development can influence teachers' use of assessment tools. In addition, the increased use of peer and self-assessment reflects a shift toward a more formative and participatory understanding of assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Panadero et al., 2017).

However, the relatively limited development observed in the use of more complex tools such as portfolios suggests that not all aspects of assessment literacy can be developed through short-term training. Heritage (2010) and Popham (2009) emphasize that the effective use of such approaches requires sustained and long-term professional learning.

Overall, the findings suggest that practice-oriented in-service training can support teachers in diversifying their assessment practices, particularly in adopting tools that focus on students' learning processes. However, developing a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of assessment appears to require continuous professional development. In this regard, teacher education programs should incorporate practice-based learning opportunities, including microteaching applications and applied activities focused on contemporary assessment tools. In-service training should be designed as an ongoing, school-based process. Furthermore, integrating digital and AI-supported assessment tools into teacher education may contribute to the improvement of assessment practices.

### Research and Publication Ethics

In this study, all rules specified in the "Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions" were followed. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", have been carried out.)

**Ethics committee permission information**

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