

## Shifting towards Online Assessment: A New Promising Gate in the Higher Educational Level

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### Abstract

The current paper attempts to afford an evidence-based background on the prevalence, benefits, cons, challenges, and importance of online student assessment at higher educational level. This study is significant as it would assist teachers when applying online assessment. The COVID-19 pandemic compelled almost most universities and higher institutions to suddenly adopt online learning and assessment. In this spectrum, this research paper tries to answer the following question: to what extent the application of the appropriate online assessment is challenging in higher educational institutions? The central set hypothesis states that adopting the practical online assessment meets several challenges that hinder its application in higher educational institutions; however, they do not make its use impossible. To gain empirical data, an emailed questionnaire was sent to the sample. The sample of this research comprises 183 higher education teachers from Algeria. They belong to different faculties and departments. Their selection was based on cluster sampling techniques. The obtained results were treated using the statistical package for social sciences SPSS. The findings prove the existence of some hindrances that harden the application of the online assessment. Also, teachers reveal that they adopted several online assessing techniques and both formative and summative assessments. Ultimately, teachers recommend the organization of courses to improve their use of the online assessment in general. Besides, teachers highly approve of using anti-plagiarism detectors to ensure academic integrity and limit learners' potential misconduct in online assessment.

**Keywords:** Academic integrity, COVID-19 pandemic, challenges, higher education institution, hindrances, learners' misconduct, summative assessment

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## Introduction

The impacts of the pandemic COVID19 affected all sectors almost all over the world. The educational system was not immune from the damages that highly impacted its continuity. The UNESCO (2020a) found that the ultimate solution to limit the disturbance that occurred in this area of life can be limited to the adoption of online teaching. This sole solution emerged as: it preserves human life and at the same time facilitates learning. Zhang, Wang, Yang, and Wang (2020) note that the unprepared shift and remote toward this type of learning faced several hindrances such as the poor infrastructure in the majority of countries, teachers' and students' limited experience in online teaching and learning, besides the inconvenience of working at home.

Teachers find this shift a challenging viewing the remarkable lack of guidance, instructions, and even institutions' guidelines. In the same spectrum, Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, and Santiago's findings (2017) categorize the possible impediments that may face this type of teaching and learning into three main categories. These categories are related to teachers, learners, and content development. Figure one summarizes these categories.

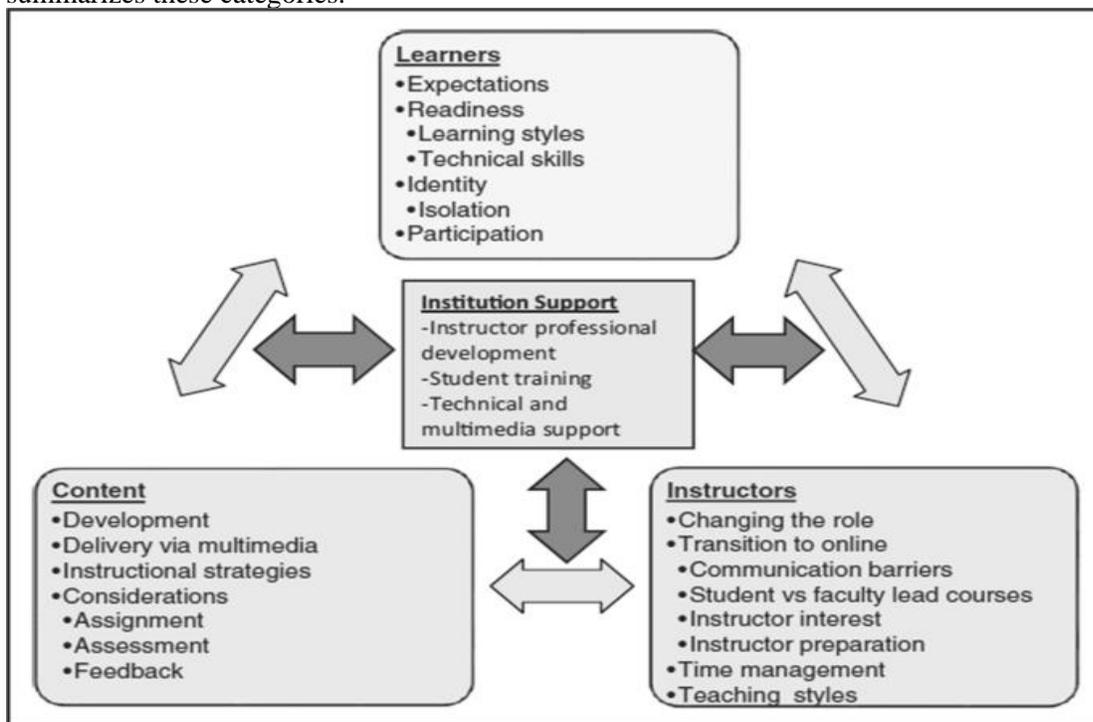


Figure 1. Three major components and the related issues in an online education environment. Adopted from "Challenges of remote assessment in higher education in the context of COVID-19: a case study of Middle East College" by Guangul, Suhail, Khalit & Khidhir, 2020.

As figure one demonstrates, assessment is considered one of the problems that could be met during online teaching. Viewing its paramount significance, assessment should reach its goals to assist in achieving the predetermined objectives of the circular.

The higher educational system adopted online teaching during the COVID19 pandemic. The sudden change toward this type of learning in the teaching/ learning process caused some hindrances viewing several factors. Among the variety of obstacles met during this shift, the main issue considered in this paper is investigating the possible deterrents that teachers met during the online assessment of learners. Hence, the main aim of this research is to reveal the main problems that may face teachers when applying online assessment. For this reason, this current research tries to answer the following crucial question:

- To what extent the application of online assessment is challenging in higher educational institutions?

Also, the two following specific questions are addressed:

- Should teachers rely on the same instructions in the online assessment as in the face-to-face assessment.?
- What are the benefits that could be gained through the use of the online formative and summative assessment

Regarding the research question, the following hypothesis is set as the central hypothesis of this research paper:

- Adopting the practical online assessment meets several challenges that hinder its application in higher educational institutions.

### **Objectives**

Besides the main aim of this study, this research tries to attain the following objectives:

1. Facilitating the use of the appropriate online assessment for teachers.
2. Enlightening teachers according to some experiences about the efficacy of online learning and assessment.
3. Collecting information about the suitable tool that teachers can use to assess different subjects.

### **Literature Review**

For the sake of clarity, a brief review of literature about the main concepts treated in this research is provided.

### **Importance of Assessment**

Assessment is regarded as the central part of students' experience as it frames their learning (Brown & Knight, 1994). Several researchers hold that the leading purposes of assessment are guiding and directing learners learning, boosting the quality of the teaching/ learning process, and promoting the development of the academic programs (Corcoran, Dershimer, & Tichenor, 2004; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005). Additionally, the assessment targets learners' acquired knowledge and, on some occasions, the skills that they have been adopted through learning i.e., their achievement. Generally, the assessment assists in

providing grades or scores that are interpreted and related to specific norms or criteria or both to decide the efficacy of the learning /teaching process and learners' understandings. Ultimately, assessment "is about several things at once" (Ramsden, 2003, p. 177).

### *Importance of Assessment in the Higher Educational Level*

Assessing learners in the higher educational context attempts to attain three specific outcomes. Educationalists such as Archer (2017) and Capsim (2020) summarized these objectives in the following:

- Supporting learning process
- Executing accountability
- And granting certification, progress, and transfer.

Archer (2017) believes that relying on both formative and summative assessments in addition to constructive feedback is considered as a way to consolidate learning. Also, the same researcher notes reported that assessment promotes accountability, mainly if it is related to either national or international benchmarks. For him, this measure will boost the test's credibility. Finally, assessment in the university context is perceived as a way to get the final certificate.

### *Types of Assessment in Higher Education*

Researchers like Taras (2005) and Yorke (2007) believe that assessments in the higher education context are designed to be both formative and summative. Broadly, assessment refers to the continuous and systematic process of measuring, monitoring, and improving the quality of learning (Fernandes, Flores, & Lima, 2012; Parker, Fleming, Beyerlein, Apple, & Krumsieg, 2001; Yambi, 2018). The same researchers held that assessment assists in measuring the degree of objectives' attainment.

The difference between summative and formative assessments is the purpose behind their use. Formative assessment is administered to collect the needed information and feedback about what learners have learned. On the contrary, the summative assessment focuses on providing corresponding grades to learners about the overall curricula. Therefore, a significant proportion of university assessments seeks to provide both information and grades. However, Yorke (2003) asserts that the unification of curricula in higher education is considered the central aspect of favoring summative rather than the formative one.

The second common type of assessment in universities is continuous assessment. This type of assessment has also been named the coursework in both the United Kingdom and Ireland (Heywood, 2000). This suggested name was common before the inclusion of summative and informative tests in the vocabulary of assessment. Many researchers encourage adopting this type of assessment as it boosts the learning through the provided feedback and motivates the learner to be more dedicative to education (Trotter, 2006; Isaksson, 2007). However, educationalists such as McDowell et al. (2005) warn about using

the continuous assessment type with more summative function and purpose as it risks depriving learners of the sum of constructive feedback.

### ***Online Learning***

Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, online learning is a novelty almost all over the world. This global crisis compelled the world to adopt this type of learning, and UNESCO (2020a) introduced online learning as a unique tool to ensure continuity of learning at all levels. The findings of Moore and Kearsley (2012) proved the efficacy of distance learning, and they summarize the pros of this kind of learning in the following:

- increase access to learning and training as a matter of equity
- provide opportunities for updating skills of the workforce
- improve the cost-effectiveness of educational resources
- improve the quality of existing educational structures
- enhance the capacity of the educational system
- balance inequalities between age groups
- deliver educational campaigns to specific target audiences
- provide emergency training for key target areas
- expand the capacity for education in new subject areas
- offer combination of education with work and family life
- add an international dimension to the educational experience

(p. 8)

To sum it up, the possible benefits generating from adopting this type of learning are numerous. For instance, the flexibility of learning that offers assistance in overcoming some psychological aspects as fear and intimidation besides other points can be promoted by this learning. Another essential factor to consider the online learning is the low learning costs. A significant proportion of universities requires, unlike few universities, fees on individuals who wish to study.

King and Boyatt (2014) highly insist on the importance of the role of universities and institutions of higher education in granting different resources and pedagogical opportunities for teachers to improve their use of online teaching and avoid any possible ineffective teaching choices or technology devices to appear modern and innovative.

### ***Online Assessment***

One of the vital elements in the teaching and learning online process is learners' assessment. As in the face-to-face teaching and learning process, online assessment assists teachers in making decisive decisions that impact learners and the teaching process itself. In this regard, researchers such as Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006) highlighted that assessing learners online:

is an important issue to consider in online teaching and learning. Managing student assignments, providing feedback to students, and assessing students' learning are all key factors. While the online format presents some challenges to instructors, it also may encourage the development of new learning and teaching techniques. (p.103)

The researchers note that teaching is not sufficient unless accompanied by the necessary assignments, feedback, and assessments. These are helping elements or tools that assist in verifying and checking the degree of attaining the predetermined educational goals. Also, the same researchers shed light on the difficulty of assessing learners virtually. This difficulty can be related to several factors. Robles and Braathen (2002) believe that many teachers attempt to provide different structures of assessments that could be meaningful and practical. In this respect, Marshall (2003) holds that the online assessment techniques should not consist of the same basics of the exceptional traditional teaching and learning assessments to ensure their efficacy.

#### ***Characteristics of the online Assessment and Technique***

Two main features are needed:

##### ***Changing the Instructions***

Liang and Creasy (2004) encourage teachers to modify the instruction provided in the online assessment comparing the traditional one. These changes would fit the virtual environment and its necessities. Researchers like Robles and Braathen (2002) justify this urged need to the fact that as the changes occur in the way of interaction and the learning paradigm, i.e., from face to face to online learning, new changes would be generated in learning itself, and logically to the assessment methods and techniques.

##### ***Adopting Continuity and Systematic Assessments***

Robles and Braathen (2002) assert that the online assessment should be continuous and systematic. This way will ensure the immediate detection of any misunderstandings for both learners, and teachers. Also, it indicates the need to change the teaching strategy and provides an opportunity to accompany learners' through constructive, detailed and immediate feedback.

##### ***Pros of the Online Assessment***

The online assessments offer benefits for both teachers and learners. In this respect, the accuracy of the rapidity of obtaining the grades is the first gain (Farmer, 2005). The same researcher adds that the electronic results compared to the traditional way of grading learners require less effort from teachers. Consequently, teachers focus more on the courses' content and offer more feedback. Another benefit that can be related to online assessment is boosting learners' centred learning. In general, online teaching is the

appropriate setting that highly manifests learner-centered learning, and as a result, the online assessment will be emphasized (Bartlett, Reynolds, & Alexander, 2000).

### ***Techniques of the Online Assessment***

A myriad of techniques that could facilitate the online assessment was suggested. Many researchers stress the importance of structuring the online assessment. In this respect Tallent-Runnels, Thomas, Lan, Cooper, Ahern, Shaw, and X. Liu. (2006) hold that “is an important issue to consider in online teaching and learning. Managing student assignments, providing feedback to students, and assessing students’ learning are all key factors. While the online format presents some challenges to instructors, it also may encourage the development of new learning and teaching techniques” (p. 103).

The following is a summary of some techniques that facilitate the application of online assessment.

1. Promoting realistic scenarios for learning.
2. Adjusting educational goals that fit with those scenarios.
3. Using a variety of software.
4. Ensuring that teachers manipulate and receive some instructor-based training that assists them with the appropriate interaction in different and unexpected learners’ reactions.

These techniques should be preceded by ensuring teachers’ possession of the needed academic competencies. Additionally, teachers should consider providing some pedagogical tasks, particularly in the online learning environment. For instance, teachers should take the responsibility of engaging learners who face the fear of using technology in learning, motivating learners to cope with both synchronous, and asynchronous learning, and inviting them to interact in online communities with both teachers and learners. Broadly, teachers should consider and develop the learner-instructor relationship (Perrin & Mayhew, 2000).

Undeniably, online learning is a more stimulating type of learning as it highly encourages the learner-centered approach adoption. Consequently, this type of learning puts more burdens on learners’ shoulders to explore, discuss, ask questions, and make meaningful connections. Indeed, applying the online assessment requires the implication and adherence to some well-determined pedagogical justification to not fall into the trap of using it just to appear innovative (Abubakar & Adeshola, 2019; Sweeny et al., 2017).

### ***The Sudden Adoption of Online Learning***

The preventive measures taken by responsible all over the globe because of the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic imposes the adoption of online learning at all educational levels (Martinez, 2020). This shift towards this digital academic experience and learning was improvised. Lederman (2020) noted that most learners and teachers were not prepared during this unprecedented current situation. Consequently, Tam and El-Azar (2020) argued that resilience must be built into our educational systems to facilitate the effective integration of learners and teachers in online learning.

## **Methods**

The nature of the subject under investigation requires the descriptive method. In this regard, the needed data was compiled using an emailed questionnaire.

## ***Participants***

The population of this research paper consists of Algerian university teachers as this study targets the adoption of online assessment at the higher educational level. The sample selection depends on the probability sampling techniques as it offers all members of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample (Brown, 1947). Notably, the selection was based on the cluster sampling techniques as our populations' subjects are fragmented over large geographical areas (Davis, 2005). The sample consists of 183 higher education teachers. The Study occurred during the academic year 2020-2020 in Algeria.

## ***Instruments***

This study was based on the data collected from an online survey-based questionnaire. It was designed depending on Google Forms and sent to teachers via their professional emails. This questionnaire was administered to teachers to collect their opinion, perceptions, and viewpoints about the use of online assessment. It consists of 15 questions divided into two main sections: section one considers teachers' general information using five questions. Also, the second section encompasses nine questions that analyze teachers' use of the online assessment.

## ***Research Procedures***

The obtained data from the Likert scale questions were collected, coded, and treated using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The analyses are based on analyzing frequency distribution. Also, the obtained data were interpreted with content analysis and descriptive analysis among qualitative research methods. This questionnaire was administered to a sample of 20 teachers who did not belong to the sample of this study. This step was considered to check the reliability of questions, namely the Likert scale questions. The questionnaire reliability was tested depending on Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.966 as calculated by Cronbach's alpha. This denotes that the reliability coefficient of the study questionnaire is significant, and thus the questionnaire is reliable.

It is worthy of mentioning that the questionnaire was sent to other teachers to provide us with the necessary feedback before administering it to the targeted sample. This measure was considered to ensure the test validity.

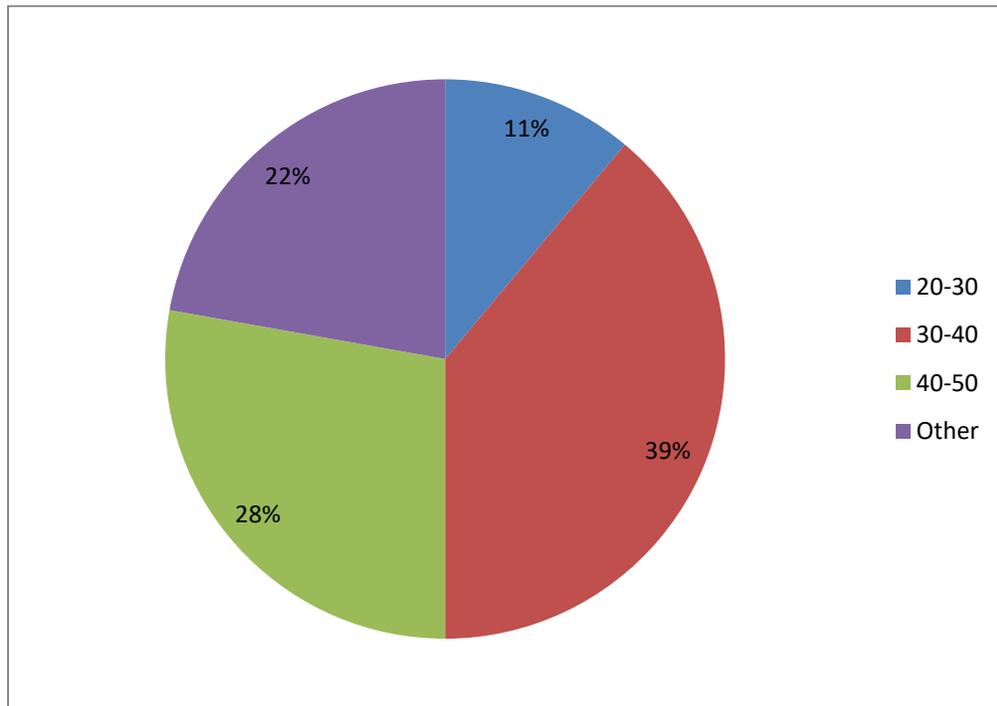
## **Findings**

### ***Section One: Teachers' General Information***

This section was created to collect information about teachers that may have effects on the subject under investigation.

*Item one: Teachers' Age*

This item was included to unveil to what extent teachers' age may impact their perception of online assessment. The total of the received answers is 183. Figure two illustrates the obtained results.



*Figure 2. Teachers' age*

Teachers' significant proportion's age (39%) is estimated to be ranged between 30-40 years as the mode of this question was= 2. Also, a considerable number (28%) reports that their age ranged between 40 – 50. 22% of the respondents selected "Other", which indicates that their age is supposed to be more than 50 years, whereas only 11% of the respondents' age is ranged between 20-30 years.

*Item Two: Teaching Experience*

Believing that teachers' teaching experience affects the learning process in general and the assessment in particular, this item was integrated. The obtained results indicate the following table one :

*Table 1. Teachers' teaching experience*

Teaching Experience	Less than 5 Years	05 - 10 years	10 - 15 years	20 -25 years	More than 30
Number of Participants	10	71	51	20	31
Percentage of Participants	5.6%	38.9%	27.8%	11%	16.7%
Mode = 2					

The mode of the answers to this question was = 2, which refers to the fact that the significant proportion of participants (38.9%) have between 05 and 10 years of experience while 27,8% of teachers have 10 and 15 years. Also, 16.7 % of the respondents report that they have more than 30 years of experience. Furthermore, 11% of teachers have between 20 and 25 years of experience, and only a minority has 5.6% less than five years of experience.

#### *Item Three: Academic Qualification*

This item was selected and included in the questionnaire to consolidate teachers' answers in item two. As it is known, not only teachers' experiences assist them to be knowledgeable about several important details that assist in boosting teaching and choosing the practical assessments tools but also, their academic tasks such as supervision of thesis, dissertations, and being a member in reading committees. These tasks are granted to teachers according to their academic qualifications.

Undeniably, such academic activities will enlarge teachers' perceptions when teaching and selecting the appropriate tools and type to assess learners effectively. The answers to this questions are reported in table Two.

Table2. Teachers' *academic qualification*

	Professor	Associate Professor A	Associate Professor B	Senior Lecture A	Senior Lecture B

Number of Participants	35	47	16	85	0
Percentage of Participants	19.3%	25.6%	8.9 %	46.2%	0%
Mode= 4					

The answers of this question demonstrate that the mode= 4 points out that the majority of teachers (46.2%) are senior lecturer A. 25.6% of them are Associate Professor A. Also, the results show that the number of participants who selected professors is (19.3%). In comparison, only 8.9% of them are senior lecturer B. Remarkably, none of the teachers is an Assistant Professor B (0%).

*Item Four: Specify the Faculty, the Department you belong to*

The purpose behind unveiling teachers' teaching faculties and departments attempts to collect multiple answers that could construct practical knowledge that may contribute and assist teachers from any faculty and department. The results show that the respondents belong to different departments and faculties: 48% Faculties of Foreign languages (departments of English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Italian languages), 16% Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences (management department), 14% Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science (Department of Computer Science), Faculty of law and Political Sciences (Departments of Law) (12%) and Medicinal Sciences (10%). The obtained results are tabulated in the following table.

	Faculties of Foreign languages (departments of English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Italian languages)	Faculty of Management and Economic Sciences (management department)	Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science (Department of Computer Science)	Faculty of Law and Political Sciences (Departments of Law)	Medicinal Sciences
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Number of Participants	88	29	26	22	18
Percentage of Participants	48%	16%	14%	12%	10%
Mode= 1					

*Item Five: Have you adopted online teaching before the COVID19 pandemic?*

The purpose of this item to check to what extent teachers used online learning before COVID-19 pandemic. The finding of this question will unveil if teachers have prior experience, particularly with the online assessment. Interestingly, the reported answers indicate that half of the teachers did not use it before the pandemic and the same number of the respondents use online teaching before the pandemic.

### **Section Two: Online Assessment**

*Item one: What type of assessment did you adopt before the COVID19 pandemic in the face-to-face teaching?*

*Item two: What type of assessment did you adopt after the COVID19 pandemic in the online teaching? (The academic year 2019-2020)*

Item one and two were integrated to explore the type of assessment teachers used during the face to face and during the online teaching/learning processes. The obtained results of the items are represented in table 4.

Table 4. *Types of the used assessment*

	During the Face-to -face Courses		
	Formative Assessment	Summative Assessment	Both
Number of Teachers	31	41	112

Percentage of Teachers	16.7%	22.2%	61.1%
During the online Courses			
Number of Teachers	51	51	81
Percentage of Teachers	27.8%	27.8%	44.4%
Mode=1			

*Item three: In which subject did you use the online assessment?*

*Item four: What type of online assessment tool did you use?*

*Item five: Did you rely on scoring rubrics? Elaborate.*

Broadly, the questionnaire encompasses these items to unveil what tools teachers used to assess learners' performances according to the subjects they taught.

Teachers' answers denote that the subjects that they covered during the academic year 2019/2020 were:

- Islamic subjects
- Emailed research projects
- English Academic Writing
- English grammar
- ESP
- English Language
- Ethnography of Communication
- Database systems and Java Programming
- Ethics of teaching
- Ethics of doctors
- Presentation skills
- English Phonetics
- Research Methodology
- Teaching language skills
- American Civilization
- French / translation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54% group / individual Oral Presentations through Google Meet and Zoom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55% Emailed Assignment (Open-Ended Questions).</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% Online written assignments and reports limited by a short time (No more than one hour)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% Emailed individual/ group project work assignment.</li> <li>• 32% emailed essay</li> <li>• 43% Emailed tests using Google Form (Open-Ended Questions).</li> </ul>
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*Item six: When using the online assessment, did you rely on the same instructions as in face-to-face assessment? Elaborate.*

This item was integrated to disclose teachers believe on using the same instructions when assessing learners online. The obtained results are represented in table five.

Table 5. Teachers' use of the same instructions in online and face-to-face course

	Yes	NO
Teachers' Number	162	20
Teachers' percentage	89%	11%
The Mode=1		

*Item seven : On a scale of 5, to what extent did the online assessment meet the preselected objectives of your assessment?*

Table 6. Teachers' satisfaction concerning the use of online assessment and its meet of the preselected objectives

	completely satisfied.	very satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	slightly satisfied	not at all
Teachers' Number	00	51	81	31	20
Teachers' percentage	00%	27.8%	44.4%	16.7%	11.1%

## The Mode=3

Item eight: According to your own experience, what are the pros and cons of using the online assessment? Justify your answer

Item nine: What were the difficulties encountered when using the online assessment? Specify in what stage exactly: Preparation, sending it to students, or correcting it.

The main common answer reported in item eight was: the lack of human social relationships and interaction between learners and their teachers and with their peers. Teachers maintain that face-to-face teaching/learning develops, supports and boosts certain social behaviours that empower the exchange of knowledge and experience between learners and thus assist in creating an educational environment that helps them learn effectively. This latter was not absent in the online learning setting, but it was insufficient, particularly with novice learners' classes.

Additionally, some teachers report that online assessment may harm learners' integrity. Broadly, the pros of online assessment were summarized in the following:

1. Logistically, the teacher will not need invigilators.
2. It can be done at any time and any place.
3. It can be swift evaluation and unbiased marking.
4. It saves paper and time.
5. It offers an opportunity to provide detailed feedback in a variety of formats.

Results of item nine are displayed in the following table.

Table 7. Teachers' encountered difficulties in the online courses

	During preparation	During assessment	both
Teachers' Number	4	179	00
Teachers' percentage	2%	98%	0%
Mode=2			

Item 10. Suggest any recommendations about the use of the online assessment

For the sake of improving the adoption of the online assessment, this question was included. Teachers report that their primary demand is the need for immediate training to boost the online learning/ teaching process and, of course, assessment. This finding reinforces King' and Boyatt's (2014) findings. Also, teachers suggest enhancing the available formal platforms to

motivate students to respect the digital protocols. Teachers add that the online assessment remains unsatisfactory as long as learners do not have equal access to the ICT and Internet. Consequently, thought leaders and policymakers should improve the infrastructure to support the online learning environment. In this respect, some teachers suggest considering some previous successful experiences in other countries to gain time and effort.

Additionally, some respondents recommend creating banks of tests in each field. Each bank consists of some well-designed tests available for students to use whenever they choose to. Consequently, learners will know where they stand and perhaps what areas they need to improve on.

### Discussion

The discussion of the answers in the first section denotes that variance in teachers' age exists. This variance is considered as a source that could provide us with different viewpoints according to the differences between generations. Also, teachers' teaching experience variety adds more reliability to the obtained answers, and their experience enables other teachers to have more practical measures to fit the different situations or obstacles. Teachers' academic qualifications, and the various departments where they teach, prove the existence of divergence in perceptions that will lead to possible generalization of the obtained results. The answers of the respondents in item five prove that half of the teachers possess ICTs skills.

The discussion of the second section denotes the following:

- During the face-to-face learning: only 16.7% used the formative assessment, and 22.2% opted for the summative assessment. These findings consolidate Yorke's (2003) findings where this researcher notes that favouring the use of summative assessment rather than the formative results from the unification of curricula in higher learning. Interestingly, more than half of teachers (61.1%) used both ways of assessing learners.
- Similar to the face-to-face type teaching, teachers, when using online learning, opted for both types of assessment in online learning (44.4%). What attracted our attention is that the percentage of using either the informative or summative assessment augmented, and its value was equal to 27.8%.

What could be concluded here is that teachers favour blending both kinds of assessment in both types of teaching. These findings confirm Archer's findings (2017), in which he believes that relying on both formative and summative assessments consolidates learning. Additionally, in the online teaching/learning process, teachers tend to use more informative or summative assessments than face-to-face learning. Additionally, teachers, who report that they used the formative assessment, note that they regularly use it systematically. Particularly at the early phases of adopting online learning to provide them with the necessary feedback about learners' understanding of the subjects and their acceptance of teaching tools/ methods. These findings affirm Robles and Braathen's (2002) findings that adopting continuity and systematic assessments are mandatory when using online teaching and assessment. Also,

from the provided answers, it is noticed that teachers relied on the results of the assessment to receive from learners and offer them with the needed feedback to boost the quality of the online courses. Teachers add that this feedback was effective as they were used to adjust the educational goals that fit the teaching context.

The results of item three of this section prove the existence of various subjects taught by teachers. This result would provide us with practical suggestions to be applied in any educational field. Also, the obtained results in item four prove the existence of various assessment tools that teachers used to assess their learners. These findings confirm with Robles' and Braathen's (2002) findings that teachers try to provide different assessments' structures that could be meaningful, practical and fulfil the needed educational goals. Teachers add that they used these tools first as formative assessment, and then they selected the ones where learners are assessed best to use them in the summative assessment. The majority of teachers (60%) opted for the emailed individual/ group project work assignment. Teachers related the choice of this assessing tool to the significant number of learners, reaching 300 students per level. Also, 54% of the respondents indicate that they used to group / individual Oral Presentations through Google Meet and Zoom. They add that this method ensures certain reliability of the assessments as learners are assimilating a face to face teaching/ learning situations. Almost all the respondents (98%) prefer to use Open-Ended Questions as they believe that these types of questions assist learners in being accurate and specific when providing the answers.

Also, teachers notice that learners' rate of plagiarism is lowered when using this type of question. In this spectrum, 55% of teachers used the emailed assignment (Open-Ended Questions) in Word files, and 43% used the emailed tests using Google Form (Open-Ended Questions) as they found this latter more practical and fits the online teaching. A considerable number of teachers (32%) adopted the assessment using emailed essays. Those teachers note that they found plagiarism among learners' answers though they attracted their attention to this dangerous phenomenon several times. Only 20% of the respondents used the online written assignments and reports limited by a short time (No more than one hour) to ensure that they answered their assignment by themselves.

Teachers' answers in item 5 reveal that 78% of them used scoring rubrics to grade learners online. They hold that they used it online more than in the face to face assessment. Also, the most common criteria in those scoring rubrics are coherence, cohesion and originality. The responses of this item consolidate the answer of the following item.

Teachers insisted that they align with the courses and program learning outcomes through their answers in item six. This result confirms Abubakar and Adeshola (2019), Sweeny et al. (2017) finding the need to obey certain pedagogical justification when opting for the online assessment. A significant proportion of teachers (89%) acknowledges the need to adopt new parameters and instructions that differ from face-to-face teaching. They add that this need is mandatory to respect and preserve ethical values such as avoiding cheating and plagiarism. In this respect, teachers (35%) hold that they tend to rely more

on the analytic type of questions. Also, to avoid such a discouraging phenomenon, teachers related their answers in item four to this item, namely their dependence on online written assignments and reports limited by a short time (No more than one hour) and individual or even group synchronous evaluations.

Also, teachers believe that each educational environment or context has its peculiarities that should be highly considered, especially in a similar transitional phase. In this respect, teachers' answers confirm Liang' and Creasy's (2004) findings.

It is worthy to remind the readers that both the online learning/teaching process and online assessment were an obligation rather than a choice viewing the disturbance caused by the pandemic. The answers provided in this item denote the mode, which was three. This result shows that teachers (44.4%) are moderately satisfied as they believe that the online assessment moderately succeeded in reaching the predetermined educational goals. Also, 27.8% of them rated very satisfied, 16.7% slightly satisfied, and 11.1% selected not at all. Teachers' additional comments on this item prove that the poor infrastructure concerning this type of learning and assessment was the main hindrances that harden the total attainment of the preselected educational goal. Also, some teachers admitted their lack of experience in using the online medium or tool to teach and assess learners. Teachers add that they found that using the online assessment requires the adoption of different plagiarism detectors, and it was time-consuming regarding the traditional methods. Interestingly, none of the respondents rated completely satisfied.

The lion share of teachers' answers in item nine was: Correcting learners' assignments was the most challenging step. The difficulty lies in correcting the content and waiting for them to send their answers; sometimes, they send their works beyond even the extensions of deadlines and check the percentage of plagiarism. Teachers add that they resent students' works on many occasions and ask them to redo them as their first works were not accepted as they show a high percentage of plagiarism. Among the encountered difficulties, teachers assert that students did not respect the recommendations/instructions of formatting. Only a few respondents (2%) found challenges when preparing the content of the assessment.

### **Recommendation**

Among the common suggestions and recommendations provided by the participants in this research are as follows:

-The immediate need to organize courses to cover the teachers' needs and practice the different ways of the online assessment.

-The development of the infrastructure should be prioritized by thought leaders and policymakers.

-Adopting more than an assessment tool when assessing learners.

-Changing the instructions provided in the online assessment even if the online course content is similar to the face-to-face course.

-Depending on the regular and systematic formative assessment to adjust the courses' contents.

### Conclusion

This research seeks to assist the teachers in using the online assessment to reach predetermined educational goals. It attempts to answer the following research question: To what extent is online assessment challenging in higher educational institutions? The findings of this research insist that a sum of difficulties meets the teachers from different departments and several faculties when applying this type of assessment. Also, teachers who possess different academic grades and whose teaching experience varies highly associated the appearance of those hindrances to the immediate, unexpected and surprising shift toward such online teaching/ learning process and the accompanying online assessment.

Additionally, teachers acknowledge the importance of the formative assessment to develop and adjust the teaching process according to learners' needs and expectations and the need to use different instructions from those used in the face to face assessment.

Moreover, teachers stress the signification of adopting more than just one online assessment tool to obtain more reliable results. Finally, teachers insist on the urgent need to use Anti-plagiarism software to ensure academic integrity. In the same spectrum, teachers call for collaboration with some technical engineers to supply them with techniques and measures that may decrease learners' misconduct during the online assessment.

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