

## **An Investigation of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) in Higher Education: A Case Study of GFP Instructors at the University of Buraimi**

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### **Abstract**

The current quantitative research aims to investigate the University of Buraimi General Foundation Program (GFP) instructors' knowledge and practices of applying Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA). It aims to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of LOA, their practices of applying LOA principles, and the principle of LOA that is more applied by them than the rest of LOA principles. This research is significant as there is a dearth of studies of LOA principles and practices in literature. One electronic questionnaire was used to collect data. 23 teachers participated in the study for the academic year 2022/2023. The convenience sampling procedure was used to choose the participants. SPSS (version 23) was used to analyze data. Results show that GFP instructors have knowledge in identifying the skills to be assessed when they design tasks and recognizing the role of talk-in-interaction in structuring and mediating learning more than the rest of the investigated aspects. Results further show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of designing real-world tasks that are aligned with the course's learning outcomes, students' involvement in the assessment process by explaining rubrics criteria, and learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward by offering feedback that is linked to the purpose of the assignment and specific criteria are higher than the other aspects of the LOA principles. Furthermore, results show that the principle of learners' involvement in assessment processes is more applied by GFP instructors than learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward and the learning-oriented assessment tasks inclusion principles respectively. The results' implications and the research avenues were discussed.

**Keywords:** Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA), LOA Tasks, Learner's Evaluative Capacity, Learners' Involvement in Feedback and Feedforward, General Foundation Program (GFP)

### **1. Introduction**

Assessment has shifted in the past few decades from exam culture and measurement-oriented aspects of classroom assessment to learning culture and learning-oriented aspects of classroom assessment (Fazel & Ali, 2022). It has been shifted from psychometric testing, a type of testing that focuses on the product of learning, to edumetric assessment, a kind of assessment that focuses on the process of learning (Farhady, 2021). One type of assessment that serves this trend is Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA). LOA was established by Carless in 2007. It was defined by him (2007) as a kind of assessment "which is characterized as denoting assessment processes in which its learning elements are emphasized more than its measurement ones" (p. 3). Keppell and Carless (2006) stated that LOA is about "putting learning at the center of assessment and reconfiguring assessment design so that the learning function is emphasized" (p. 4). This kind of assessment is essential as it increases the assessment throughout the course, gives learners ongoing feedback, provides clear evidence

of students' progress, and promotes learners' autonomy (Baimbetova, 2022). The goal of LOA is to promote students' learning and to measure and interpret what they have learned.

LOA has three crux principles, including learning-oriented assessment tasks, a learner's evaluative capacity, and learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward. Learning-oriented task principle emphasizes the importance of making the assessment tasks authentic and aligned with the course's objectives. They should emphasize project-based learning. They have to be learning opportunities for students to apply what they have learned. They should support their learning and promote their thinking skills and awareness. They should activate group work (Ali, 2013; Alsowat, 2022; Fazel & Ali, 2022; Wicking, 2022). They should be designed based on quality criteria to be valid and reliable (Ali, 2013; Alsowat, 2022). The learners' evaluative capacity principle, on the other hand, focuses on the importance of giving learners an opportunity to assess their performance by themselves (self-assessment) and their peers (peer assessment) (Alsowat, 2022; Carless, 2007; Fazel & Ali, 2022; Wicking, 2022). Learners have to be engaged in the assessment criteria and expectations by giving them exemplars (Alsowat, 2022; Carless, 2007; Fazel & Ali, 2022). As for learners' involvement in feedback and the feedforward principle, this principle concentrates on giving the learners timely, forward-looking, and actionable feedback on their performances. It focuses on the significance of giving learners an opportunity to apply the given feedback in the original task and other tasks. Applying the feedback in many similar tasks to the original one is called feedforward (Ali, 2013; Alsowat, 2022; Carless, 2007; Fazel & Ali, 2022). Feedforward gives learners exposure to assessment which will develop their learning expectations. It requires effective teaching strategies, exemplars, explicit processes, and peer and self-assessment (Alsowat, 2022).

Abasaïd and Ferreira (2022) and Al Azzani (2021) stated that although there are many attempts to reform higher education in terms of quality and quantity either in Oman or the Gulf region to graduate learners with knowledge and skills needed in private and public sectors, graduate learners show poor academic and professional performances. According to them (2022), students lack knowledge and soft skills, such as critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies. Ali (2013) stated that assessment in higher education is vital as it provides information about students' learning, students' progress, teaching quality, and the accountability of a program and institution. Farhady (2021) mentioned that the reformation of education in the 80s and 90s shifted from learning as a product to learning as a process. It was shifted from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. On the other hand, testing was shifted from students measuring language products as an outcome of learning, into an assessment that assesses students' involvement in the process of learning. It was shifted into an assessment that assesses students' ability to apply what they have learned in real-world situations. This trend aimed to help learners have a sustainable capacity for self-directed learning and move assessment from assessment of learning, the assessment whose priority is certification, ranking, and accountability, to assessment for learning, the assessment whose priority is to promote students' learning. Ali (2013) has mentioned that LOA was considered "one of the most popular tools of "assessment for learning" to promote student learning and scaffold teaching" (p. 3). Scaffolding through such type of assessment

takes place by showing the students how well they are, and how to control and assure the quality of their learning by doing similar tasks to the original task to construct their learning gaps gradually. The difference between this kind of assessment and others, including formative assessment, dynamic assessment, alternative assessment, teacher-based assessment, assessment for learning, and classroom-based assessment, is that other types of assessment focus on the process and the outcome of learning greatly while LOA emphasizes connecting learning and assessment to inform learning and instruction together. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate LOA in Oman as the only assessment that combines learning with assessment as Alsowat (2022) stated. In literature, there is only one research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, which explored the idea of LOA in Oman. It emphasized the potential of applying this kind of assessment, a learning-oriented assessment, in a specific college. In the literature of other contexts, Fazel and Ali (2022) stated that little research investigates teachers' implementation of LOA. Therefore, the motivation of the current study is to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge and practices in applying LOA as the only assessment that combines learning with assessment. It aims to add new insights for all stakeholders of applying LOA specifically the strengths and weaknesses of applying it. The present research will answer three research questions: What is the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA)? What are the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of applying Learning-Oriented Assessment principles: learning-oriented assessment tasks, learners' involvement in assessment processes, and learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward? And which principles of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) are more applied by GFP instructors at the University of Buraimi? The researcher expects that GFP teachers have sufficient knowledge and good practices in learning-oriented assessment. The researcher expects that the LOA tasks principle is the most applied principle of LOA by GFP instructors.

The current paper is divided into five sections. It will start by presenting the literature review of the LOA, and it will be ended by the research methodology, the results that were found, the discussion of the results, and the conclusion of the study respectively.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Definitions**

Although there are many attempts to reform higher education in terms of quality and quantity either in Oman or the Gulf region, to graduate learners who have knowledge and skills needed in private and public sectors, graduate learners show poor academic and professional performances. Farhady (2021) stated that learning and assessment have shifted from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning and from the assessment of the product to the assessment of the process. This trend aimed to help learners to have a sustainable capacity for self-directed learning and to promote students' learning. Therefore, the motivation of the current study is to investigate LOA in Oman as the only assessment that combines learning and assessment together. In literature, there is only one research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, concerning LOA in the Omani context. In contrast, most research studies in other contexts focused on the theoretical side of LOA, not the practical one. Most

research emphasized designing the frameworks and models to apply LOA in general or in relation to some skills of English. Most of them focused on defining the concepts and their principles. Little research emphasized either teachers' or learners' perspectives and practices of LOA. The motivation of the current research is to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge and practices of LOA.

As stated earlier, the concept of LOA appeared in early 2007 by Careless. Careless (2007) defined it as a kind of assessment "which is characterized as denoting assessment processes in which its learning elements are emphasized more than its measurement ones" (p. 3). Similarly, Purpura (2004, as cited in Fazel & Ali, 2022) defined LOA as "the collection and interpretation of evidence about performance so that judgments can be made about further language development." (p. 2). In addition, Turner and Purpura (2015, as cited in Fazel & Ali, 2022) asserted that LOA is the learning that "prioritizes learning when considering the interrelationships across instruction, assessment, and learning" (p. 2). The current research depends on Careless's definition of LOA.

## **2.2. Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA): theoretical underpinnings**

### **2.2.1. Carless's Learning-Oriented Assessment Framework**

Carless's LOA framework is a framework that deals with integrating assessment with learning. It suggests that there are two main aims of an assessment, including the certification, the evaluation of student achievement, and the evidence of student's performance and learning. The intersecting circle between these two functions (certification or the evidence of their performance and learning) takes place when they work efficiently. One could overlap the other. However, the purpose of LOA is to strengthen the evidence of their performance and learning, not certification. It aims to strengthen the learning aspects in the process of assessment by reconciling and integrating formative and summative tensions. That could be achieved by focusing on good assessment principles, including LOA tasks, a learner's evaluative capacity, and learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward (Carless, 2007). Learning-oriented task principle emphasizes the significance of assessment tasks to be tasks for productive learning and assessment simultaneously. Tasks based on the LOA framework have to be aligned with a course's objectives. They have to be authentic and in groups. They have to be a learning opportunity for students to apply what they have learned. They should support and promote learners' thinking skills and awareness. (Ali, 2013; Alsowat, 2022; Fazel & Ali, 2022; Wicking, 2022). They should be designed based on quality criteria to be valid and reliable (Ali, 2013; Alsowat, 2022). In contrast, the learners' evaluative capacity principle focuses on the importance of giving learners an opportunity for both self-assessments, an assessment where learners assess themselves by themselves, and peer-assessment, an assessment where learners assess each other (Alsowat, 2022; Carless, 2007; Fazel & Ali, 2022; Wicking, 2022). The principle further focuses on the significance of engaging learners in the assessment criteria and expectations by giving them exemplars (Alsowat, 2022; Carless, 2007; Fazel & Ali, 2022). As for learners' involvement in feedback and the feedforward principle, this principle concentrates on giving the learners timely, forward-looking, and actionable feedback on their performances. It focuses on applying feedback to the original task and other tasks. Feedforward is a step when

a teacher gives the learners a chance to apply the feedback in many similar tasks to the original one (Ali, 2013; Alsowat, 2022; Carless, 2007; Fazel & Ali, 2022). Alsowat (2022) stated that feedforward gives learners exposure to assessment, and that will develop their learning expectations. It requires effective teaching strategies, exemplars, explicit processes, and peer and self-assessment.

### **2.3. Past studies: a review**

#### **2.3.1. Overseas research studies**

Fazel and Ali (2022) performed a qualitative cross-contextual research study on twenty teachers in two different contexts, Canada and Malaysia, to explore teachers' knowledge and usage of LOA in higher education. A semi-structured interview was the primary research instrument. Results showed that teachers did not have sufficient knowledge of LOA and its principles. Their practices were without LOA merits and were not aligned with LOA principles.

Wicking (2022) conducted a qualitative research study to explore six teachers' beliefs and practices of LOA principles, including LOA tasks, students' engagement with feedback, and the development of evaluative expertise. Results showed that teachers think that learning-oriented tasks are the most important principle, followed by students' engagement with feedback and students' evaluative expertise. In addition, results showed that teachers believe that well-created tasks primarily increase students' motivation and make their lessons enjoyable. However, teachers were not sure whether students could assess their work and the work of their peers. Moreover, they were unsure of how to engage students with meaningful feedback. The study suggested that examining the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practice through reflective engagement could promote LOA in the classroom.

On the other hand, Alsowat (2022) performed a quantitative research study to explore 162 EFL teachers' knowledge, practices, and challenges of implementing LOA in EFL classrooms. The teachers' Learning-Oriented Assessment Questionnaire (TLOAQ) was the main research instrument to collect data. Results showed that teachers had a moderate level of knowledge of LOA. They did not apply the principles of LOA effectively. Moreover, results showed that EFL teachers encountered personal, contextual, and organizational challenges in implementing LOA, such as insufficient training, large classes, and exam-oriented culture.

In contrast, Farhadi (2021) investigated LOA in virtual classroom contexts to argue whether LOA is a learning-centered approach that makes the integration of teaching, learning, and assessment possible or not. Results showed that the advantages of LOA outweigh the challenges. They showed that implementation of the LOA requires changing the education system and the culture of assessment in community education. Policymakers and administrators should make decisions based on the results of research studies on the process's reality and complexity. Infrastructure should be suitable to apply the decisions. In addition, results showed that it is necessary to know teachers' needs and help learners

understand the assessment values. Learners have to understand that the purpose of the assessment is not to give grades only but to enhance students' learning and learning rate. Parents have to encourage learners in critical thinking and learning. They have to cooperate with the educational authorities. Educators have to understand the great responsibility in education while policymakers and parents have to understand the value of the assessment. Results further showed that LOA does not reduce the stress of the exam only but how much learners achieve. It encourages self and peer assessment and learning. It encourages how to work in a group and take the agency of a work. Results showed that LOA develops students' self-regulation. It reduces academic dishonesty.

### **2.3.2. In the Omani context**

Ali (2013) conducted qualitative research on 25 teachers to explore whether the teacher at a college in Oman has the potential to support the idea of LOA in an English Language Teaching (ELT) setting or not, the reasons for supporting the idea, the way of implementing it, and the possible challenges that they could encounter to implement it. Open-ended questions were used to collect data. Findings showed that teachers supported the idea of implementing LOA because they thought it could help learners to learn actively. However, findings showed that teachers and learners should be trained on how to use the principles and techniques of self-evaluation, peer assessment, and portfolio assessment. They believed that tasks should be aligned with a course's goals and objectives and that timely feedback is essential to scaffold students' learning.

After reviewing the literature, it was found that there is no clear definition of LOA. It was found that there is a need to be more studies that show LOA origin, or the way of implementing it in various educational contexts. It was obvious that there are still initial attempts to design the models and frameworks of LOA. There is a dearth of studies that investigate teachers' knowledge, practices, and needs in the light of LOA or draw a picture of LOA based on the perceptions of teachers and learners. Therefore, the current research will fill this lacuna and will investigate the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge and practices of LOA.

## **3. Research methodology**

### **3.1. Research design and context**

The current quantitative research aims to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge and practices of using LOA. The present research data is primary. The researcher collects them by herself. They were collected in the academic year 2022/2023 using one electronic questionnaire. The research was performed on the General Foundation Program (GFP) instructors at the University of Buraimi. General Foundation Program (GFP) is a program that is designed to prepare the annual high-school graduates for their specializations by developing their English, math, computing, and study skills. In the program, learners must pass three levels before starting their specializations. The teaching process at the University of Buraimi depends on a student-centered approach. The assessment at GFP is based mainly on formative and summative assessments, including quizzes, exams, writing reports, assignments, and presentations.

### **3.2. Participants and sampling**

The number of teachers in the GFP program was 30 teachers (males: 50% (N= 15), females: 50% (N= 15). A total of 24 teachers participated in the current study. The male participants shaped 54.2% (N=13) of the sample while the female participants comprised 45.8% (N=11). The number of teachers who were teaching level one is 16.7% (N= 4: T= 13). The number of teachers who were teaching levels two and three, on the other hand, is 25% (N=6: T= 10) and 54.2% (N=13: T= 4), respectively. In contrast, the number of teachers who were teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses is 4.2% (N=1: T= 3). The convenience sampling procedure was used to choose the study's participants. This type of sampling was utilized because the research had fewer rules to follow. Participants had to be teachers in GFP and use formative and summative assessments. This sampling procedure was further used because there was a need at the time of conducting the research for a readily available sample. The process of selecting the participants started by sending email invitations to the targeted sample. Teachers who showed the desire to do the research were sent the link to the questionnaire. The emails were written by the researcher herself. The researcher emailed invitations because this way was the best way to make sure that the responses that will be received will be from the targeted sample (for more information, see the data collection section).

### **3.3. Research instrument**

To collect data for the current research, one electronic questionnaire was employed. To design the questionnaire, the researcher read the literature to understand the topic and the area of the research. After understanding the topic, the research instrument was designed. The current research depends on the Teachers' Learning-Oriented Assessment Questionnaire (TLOAQ) which was done by Alsowat in 2022. The current research 34-item questionnaire consists of a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). The questionnaire consists of five sections. The first one aims to collect the demographic data of the participants specifically their age, gender, number of years of experience, level of education, and the number of the level they teach in GFP. The second section aims to measure teachers' knowledge of LOA. The third section, however, aims to measure teachers' practices of LOA tasks. The fourth section aims to measure teachers' practices of involving students in assessment processes. The fifth section, in contrast, aims to measure teachers' practices of engaging students in feedback and feedforward. All items of the current research instrument were checked again to be suitable for the current research context.

The researcher deleted item 1 of the teacher's knowledge of the LOA section, item 9 of the teacher's practices of LOA assessment tasks, and item 5 of the teachers' practices of engaging students in feedback and feedforward section as they are not suitable with the research questions. In addition, the last section of the questionnaire (TLOAQ) was deleted.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the current research instrument, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software (version 23) was utilized. The result of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient showed that the correlation of the instrument items is highly

significant (less than 0.05). However, the result of Cronbach's alpha is .964 (see Table 1). This indicates that the research instrument enjoys excellent reliability. In addition, to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the researcher makes sure that the participants have only one opportunity to participate in the study. The researcher further informs them of the research purpose.

**Table 1**

*Reliability statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.964	.966	34

**3.4. Data collection**

To collect data, the researcher read the literature and tried to understand the topic and see the available research instruments that could be used to measure the research area. After designing the current research instrument and gaining the research ethical approval, the instrument's feasibility, validity, and reliability were measured by conducting a pilot study. After making sure that the current research instrument's feasibility, validity, and reliability were acceptable, the questionnaire was distributed. The questionnaire distribution started by using email invitations. As an illustration, the email was written by the researcher herself. It includes the research topic and research objective to achieve the research credibility. It includes the invitation for research participation and the main research ethical considerations. The participants were informed that they had the complete freedom to participate in the study or not and the collected data would be utilized only for research purposes. Furthermore, the participants were informed of their responses' confidentiality and participation anonymity. After collecting data, they were saved in Excel format. A total of 24 teachers participated in the study. 23 questionnaires were investigated. One questionnaire was discarded because of its sloppy completion.

**4. Results**

**4.1. Descriptive statistics**

**4.1.1. Question one: What are University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA)?**

To answer question one, the calculations of the mean (M), minimum (Min.), maximum (Max.), and Standard Deviation (SD.) were conducted. Table 2 shows the results.



**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics of the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA)*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I recognize the potential role of feedback in triggering learning processes and achieving success.	23	2.00	5.00	4.3043	.82212
I am familiar with similar concepts (e.g., assessment for learning, alternative assessment, formative/continuous assessment).	23	3.00	5.00	4.3478	.71406
I recognize the role of integrating assessment in instruction.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3478	.71406
I acknowledge the synergies across assessment, instruction, and learning.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3043	.63495
I recognize how to identify the skills to be assessed when I design tasks.	23	3.00	5.00	4.5217	.66535
I recognize the role of talk-in-interaction in structuring and mediating learning.	23	3.00	5.00	4.5217	.59311
I recognize the potential agents of self, peer, teacher, materials, and curriculum in assessment.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3913	.58303
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Table 2 shows that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of identifying the skills to be assessed when they design tasks, and their knowledge of recognizing the role of talk-in-interaction in structuring and mediating learning (M= 4.5217) are higher than their knowledge of recognizing the potential agents of self, peer, teacher, materials, and curriculum in assessment (M= 4.3913), their knowledge of similar concepts like an assessment for learning, alternative assessment, formative and continuous assessment (M= 4.3478), their knowledge of recognizing the role of integrating assessment in instruction (M= 4.3478), their knowledge of recognizing the potential role of feedback in triggering learning processes and achieving success (M= 4.3043), and their knowledge of acknowledging the synergies across assessment instruction and learning (M= 4.3043) respectively.

**4.1.2. Question two: What are the University of Buraimi GFP teachers' practices of applying Learning-Oriented Assessment principles: including learning-oriented assessment tasks, involving students in assessment processes, and learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward?**

To answer this question, the mean (M), minimum (Min.), maximum (Max.), and Standard Deviation (SD.) were calculated from the three principles. Table 3 presents the calculations of the mean (M), minimum (Min.), maximum (Max.), and Standard Deviation (SD.) of the first principle, including LOA tasks.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive statistics of the University of Buraimi GFP teachers' practices of applying the learning-oriented assessment principle, including learning-oriented assessment tasks*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I assign a variety of tasks involving individuals, pair work, and group work.	23	2.00	5.00	4.3913	.83878
I provide interactive activities.	23	3.00	5.00	4.4783	.59311
I use tasks for both instruction and assessment.	23	4.00	5.00	4.3913	.49901
I use learner-learner collaborative discussion and decision-making tasks.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3913	.72232
I include assessments embedded in instruction for learning goals and learning embedded in assessments for better performance goals.	23	3.00	5.00	4.2609	.68870
I make assessment tasks as learning tasks.	23	3.00	5.00	4.5652	.72777
I provide real-world tasks related to learning outcomes.	23	3.00	5.00	4.6087	.58303
I offer tasks that require time and effort to complete.	23	3.00	5.00	4.4348	.66237
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Table 3 shows that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of designing real-world tasks that are aligned with the course's learning outcomes (M= 4.6087) are higher than their practices of making assessment tasks as learning tasks (M= 4.5652), their practices of providing interactive activities (M= 4.4783), their practices of assigning a variety of tasks involving individuals, pair work, and group work (M= 4.3913), their practices of using tasks for both instruction and assessment (M= 4.3913), their practices of using learner-learner

collaborative discussion and decision-making tasks (M= 4.3913) and their practices of including assessments embedded in instruction for learning goals, and better performance goals (M=4.2609) respectively.

To find the University of Buraimi GFP teachers' practices of applying the LOA principle, involving students in assessment processes, the mean (M), minimum (Min.), maximum (Max.), and Standard Deviation (SD.) were calculated. Table 4 presents the results.

**Table 4**

*Descriptive statistics of the learning-oriented assessment principle: involving students in assessment processes*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I promote students' interaction with the teacher and peers.	23	2.00	5.00	4.4783	.84582
I help students monitor their performance.	23	3.00	5.00	4.4348	.66237
I encourage students to self-assess to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3913	.72232
I encourage learner autonomy (i.e., motivating students to study independently and actively engage in-class activities).	23	3.00	5.00	4.5652	.58977
I guide students' reflection on how to improve their learning based on assessment information.	23	3.00	5.00	4.5217	.59311
I share success criteria with learners (clear instructions, rubrics, etc.).	23	3.00	5.00	4.5217	.59311
I place students into instructional groups for differentiated instruction, an instruction that tailors lessons to meet each student's individual interests, needs, and strengths.	23	2.00	5.00	4.1304	.86887
I involve students in self-assessment both in and outside class.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3043	.82212
I explain rubrics criteria to students.	23	3.00	5.00	4.6087	.65638
I teach students to use scoring rubrics in different assessment tasks.	23	3.00	5.00	4.4783	.66535
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Table 4 shows that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of involving students in the assessment process by explaining rubrics criteria to students (M= 4.6087) is higher than their practices of encouraging learner autonomy, by motivating them to study

independently and actively (M= 4.5652). Moreover, it is higher than their practices of guiding students to reflect on how to improve their learning based on assessment information (M= 4.5217), sharing success criteria with them (M= 4.5217), promoting students' interaction with the teacher and peers (M= 4.4783), teaching them to use scoring rubrics in different assessment tasks (M= 4.4783), helping them to monitor their performance (M= 4.4348), involving them in self-assessment both in and outside class (M= 4.3043), and placing them into instructional groups for differentiated instruction, an instruction which tailors lessons to meet each student's individual interests, needs, and strengths (M= 4.1304), respectively.

To find the University of Buraimi GFP teachers' practices of applying the LOA principle, learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward, the mean (M), minimum (Min.), maximum (Max.), and Standard Deviation (SD.) were calculated. Table 5 presents the results.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive statistics of the learning-oriented assessment principle: learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I provide feedback both in and outside class.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3478	.57277
I offer feedback linked to the purpose of the assignment and specific criteria.	23	3.00	5.00	4.5217	.59311
I provide feedback focused on learning rather than on marks.	23	2.00	5.00	4.3913	.78272
I ask students to assess peers' performance on tasks to give feedback.	23	1.00	5.00	4.0870	.99604
I provide written descriptive feedback.	23	1.00	5.00	4.0435	1.10693
I offer opportunities to give and receive feedback.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3913	.65638
I provide feedback that consists of wrong and correct answers.	23	2.00	5.00	4.3478	.88465
I provide detailed feedback on a skill.	23	3.00	5.00	4.3043	.76484
I put learners in the feedback, loops feedback, and feedforward.	23	3.00	5.00	4.1304	.75705
Feedforward is a task that is similar to the original task to reconstruct a student's learning gap.					
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Table 5 shows that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of involving learners in feedback and feedforward by offering feedback that is linked to the purpose of the assignment and specific criteria (M= 4.5217) is higher than their practices of offering

opportunities to give and receive feedback (M=4.3913), providing feedback that is focused on learning rather than on marks (M=4.3913), providing feedback both in and outside class (M= 4.3478), providing feedback that consists of wrong and correct answers (M= 4.3478), providing detailed feedback on a skill (M= 4.3043), putting learners in the feedback loops feedback and feedforward (M= 4.1304) and providing written descriptive feedback (M=4.0435) respectively.

**Question three:** Which principle of LOA is more applied to GFP instructors at the University of Buraimi than the rest of the principles?

To answer this question, the total LOA principles were conducted. Table 6 shows the results.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive statistics of the total Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA) principles*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Including Learning-oriented assessment tasks	23	26.00	40.00	35.5217	3.97572
Involving students in assessment processes	23	30.00	50.00	44.4348	5.46747
Learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward	23	26.00	45.00	38.5652	6.05149
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Table 6 shows that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors apply the LOA principle, involving students in assessment processes, (M= 44.4348), more than LOA principles: learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward (M= 38.5652) and including LOA tasks (M= 35.5217) respectively.

## 5. Discussion

The current research results show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of identifying the skills to be assessed when they design tasks, and their knowledge of recognizing the role of talk-in-interaction in structuring and mediating learning are higher than their knowledge of recognizing the potential agents of self, peer, teacher, materials, and curriculum in assessment. They are higher than their knowledge of similar concepts like an assessment for learning, alternative assessment, formative and continuous assessment, their knowledge of recognizing the role of integrating assessment in instruction, their knowledge of recognizing the potential role of feedback in triggering learning processes and achieving success, and their knowledge of acknowledging the synergies across assessment instruction and learning respectively. This result implies that GFP instructors of the University of Buraimi have the general knowledge of assessment that activates the measurement function, not the measurement and learning ones together. They have the knowledge of psychometric assessment, the assessment that focuses on the product of learning, more than the edumetric assessment, a kind of assessment that focuses on the process of learning. This result is in a

similar vein to Fazel and Ali (2022) who explored teachers' knowledge and found that teachers did not have sufficient knowledge of LOA and its principles.

Results further show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of designing real-world tasks that are aligned with the course's learning outcomes are higher than their practices of making assessment tasks as learning tasks, their practices of providing interactive activities, their practices of assigning a variety of tasks involving individuals, pair work, and group work, their practices of using tasks for both instruction and assessment, their practices of using learner-learner collaborative discussion and decision-making tasks and their practices of including assessments embedded in instruction for learning goals, and better performance goals respectively. This result suggests that the GFP instructors do not control the intersecting circle of LOA properly. They apply the assessment tasks to provide evidence of student's performance, not to provide learning and evidence of students' performance at the same time. This result could also imply that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors focus on assessment tasks that contain measurement-oriented aspects, not learning-oriented aspects. This result is in the same line with Fazel and Ali (2022) and Alsowat (2022) who found that teachers did not apply LOA effectively. Their practices were without LOA merits and were not aligned with LOA principles.

Results also show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of involving students in the assessment process by explaining rubrics criteria to students is higher than their practices of encouraging learner autonomy, by motivating them to study independently and actively. Moreover, it is higher than their practices of guiding students to reflect on how to improve their learning based on assessment information, sharing success criteria with them, promoting students' interaction with the teacher and peers, teaching them to use scoring rubrics in different assessment tasks, helping them to monitor their performance, involving them in self-assessment both in and outside class, and placing them into instructional groups for differentiated instruction, an instruction which tailors lessons to meet each student's individual interests, needs, and strengths, respectively. This result implies that the assessment practices by GFP instructors are for certification, not for certification and learning together. This results suggests that GFP instructors might not control the intersecting circle of LOA properly. Their practices focus on measuring performance, not developing evaluative capacity. This result could imply that GFP instructors practice the psychometric process of assessment, not the edumetric one. Their practices emphasize the product of learning, not the process of it. This result further suggests that GFP instructors follow the teacher-centered method, not the student-centered one. This result is in the same line with Fazel and Ali (2022) and Alsowat (2022) who found that teachers do not apply LOA effectively. Their practices were without LOA merits and were not aligned with LOA principles.

Moreover, results show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of involving learners in feedback and feedforward by offering feedback that is linked to the purpose of the assignment and specific criteria is higher than their practices of offering opportunities to give and receive feedback, providing feedback that is focused on learning

rather than on marks, providing feedback both in and outside class, providing feedback that consists of wrong and correct answers, providing detailed feedback on a skill, putting learners in the feedback loops feedback and feedforward and providing written descriptive feedback respectively. This result implies that GFP instructors' practices of assessment are directed to provide evidence of student's performance. However, they did not activate the actionable feedback. They could assess students' work, but they do not concentrate on timely and forward-looking feedback to help students reach the targeted expectations of a course. This result is in accordance with Wicking (2022) who found that teachers were unsure of how to engage students with meaningful feedback. This result, in addition, is in the same line with Fazel and Ali (2022) and Alsowat (2022) who found that teachers do not apply LOA effectively. Their practices were without LOA merits and were not aligned with LOA principles.

Results, furthermore, show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors apply the LOA principle, involving students in assessment processes, more than LOA principles: learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward and including LOA tasks respectively. This result suggests that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors try to involve students in the learning process and develop their self-directed skills. However, they do not give them an opportunity to practice the reflective practice, they do not help them to criticize a situation, think, and act. This result is not in the same vein as Wicking (2022) who found learning-oriented tasks are the most important principle, followed by students' engagement with feedback and students' evaluative expertise.

This research study recommends all curriculum designers design books applying learning-oriented assessment. Tasks could be designed in a way that enhances learners to achieve a specific outcome gradually. Tasks should activate project-based learning. They should also enhance the evaluative capacity of learners. Furthermore, professional development programs should raise awareness of such types of assessment. Teachers have to know LOA principles and enhance their practices of them. Therefore, students' competencies could be improved, and the job market requirements could be met.

## **6. Conclusion**

This quantitative research aims to investigate the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge, and practices to apply LOA. It aims to answer three questions: What is the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' knowledge of LOA? What are the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of applying LOA principles? And which principle of LOA is more applied to GFP instructors at the University of Buraimi? Results show that students' involvement in assessment processes as the LOA principle is more applied than learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward and the LOA tasks inclusion principles respectively. Results further show that the University of Buraimi GFP instructors' practices of designing real-world tasks that are aligned with the course's learning outcomes, students' involvement in the assessment process by explaining rubrics criteria, and learners' involvement in feedback and feedforward by offering feedback that is linked to the purpose

of the assignment and specific criteria are higher than the other aspects of LOA principles. Furthermore, results show that GFP instructors have knowledge more in identifying the skills to be assessed when they design tasks and recognizing the role of talk-in-interaction in structuring and mediating learning than the rest investigated aspects.

Notwithstanding the current research study has shed light on the knowledge and practices of LOA of the GFP instructors at the University of Buraimi, the results cannot be generalized. It would be good if the research was done on a sample that is bigger than the current research sample. In addition, the research has followed the quantitative research design. It would be better if the data were collected by following the mixed method. Conducting interviews could expand the findings' understanding of the current research. Furthermore, it would be good if the research could be able to find the reasons why teachers focus on the assessment that emphasizes the product, not the process. Future research avenues could be conducted on students' self-regulation or self-directed skills and LOA.

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**List of abbreviations**

<b>N</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
	EFL	English As a Foreign Language
	ELT	English Language Teaching
	ESP	English For Specific Purposes
	GFP	General Foundation Program
	LOA	Learning-Oriented Assessment
	M	Mean
	Max.	Maximum
	Min.	Minimum
	N	Number
	SD.	Standard Deviation
	SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
	TLOAQ	Teachers' Learning-Oriented Assessment Questionnaire