

## Exploring EFL Written Expression Teachers' Perspectives towards The Use of Digital Scoring Rubrics to Assess Students' Writing Skill

استكشاف وجهات نظر أساتذة التعبير الكتابي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية اتجاه استخدام نماذج التقييم الرقمية لتقييم مهارة الطلاب الكتابية

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### ABSTRACT:

The present study aims at exploring EFL written expression teachers' views and perspectives towards using one of the ICT tools in assessing students' writing skill called the digital scoring rubric. For the sake of gathering relevant data to the study and achieving its objectives, the quantitative method has been used. A questionnaire was administered to a purposive sample that consists of eleven (11) teachers of Written Expression at the Department of English, University 8 Mai 1945, Guelma, Algeria, and the data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

The findings indicated that the majority of participants had positive attitudes towards the benefits of using electronic rubrics in assessing the writing ability of EFL learners; however, they confirmed that some challenges impeded the application of this process in the Algerian University, especially the internet access and the lack of teacher training in using appropriate tools for assessing students' writing electronically. Therefore, it is highly recommended to organize workshops for teachers and to suggest useful steps that would help them in using effective assessment procedures in the digital age; particularly, for assessing the writing skill in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Teachers' Perspectives, Assessing Writing Skill, Digital Scoring Rubric, Written Expression.

### الملخص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف وجهات نظر أساتذة التعبير الكتابي باللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية اتجاه استخدام أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصال في تقييم مهارات الكتابة لدى الطلبة ما يسمى بنموذج التقييم الرقمي. من أجل جمع بيانات ذات صلة بالدراسة وتحقيق أهدافها، تم إستعمال المنهج الكمي من خلال إعطاء استبيان لعينة مستهدفة تتكون من أحد عشر (11) أستاذا للتعبير الكتابي في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة 8 ماي 1945، قالمة، الجزائر و تحليل البيانات كما ووصفا. أشارت النتائج إلى أن أغلبية المشاركين كانت لديهم مواقف إيجابية تجاه فوائد استخدام نماذج التقييم الإلكترونية في تقييم القدرة الكتابية لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ لكنهم أكدوا أن بعض التحديات تعيق تطبيق هذه العملية في الجامعة الجزائرية خاصة خدمات الإنترنت ونقص تدريب الأساتذة على استخدام الأدوات المناسبة لتقييم مهارة الكتابة لدى الطلبة إلكترونياً. لذلك يوصى بشدة تنظيم ورشات عمل للأساتذة واقتراح خطوات مفيدة تساعدهم في استخدام إجراءات التقييم الفعالة في العصر الرقمي؛ خاصة المستعملة لتقييم مهارة الكتابة في القرن الحادي والعشرين.

كلمات مفتاحية: وجهات نظر الأساتذة، تقييم مهارات الكتابة، نموذج التقييم الرقمي، التعبير الكتابي.

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## **1- Introduction:**

Mastering the writing skill has always been a demanding task for foreign language learners, this would yield teachers and course designers to search about the possible procedures which may help both of them keep abreast about this important language learning skill. More importantly, teacher's feedback on students' writing is of a prominent role in writing instruction and assessment; this is mainly due to the extreme editing and revising activities that students are required to do while producing a particular written text. Therefore, there is an extreme need to minimize this burdensome task for teachers of writing. During the 21st century era, and due to the advent to technological advancements, many college institutions started to implement electronic tools and applications in the process of assessing the writing skill in the digital age. Accordingly, the present paper relies on the use of a questionnaire to find out the attitudes of EFL teachers of writing at the Department of English, University 8 Mai 1945 Guelma towards the use of one of the useful electronic tools, namely digital scoring rubrics which might aid them in organizing assessment criteria for different writing tasks in virtual learning, and would make the process of assessment easier and transparent.

## **2- Background of the Study**

In the field of teaching and assessing the writing skill, there were different teaching approaches and assessment tools. However, due to the use of ICT tools in education, assessing the writing skill incorporated the use of electronic and online measurement tools that would be appropriate to the demands of the digital age. Therefore, this section tries to highlight the major concepts, issues, and research interests relevant to assessing the writing skill in general, and to the use of digital scoring rubrics in assessing students' writing skill in particular.

### **2-1- Assessing the Writing Skill**

The purpose of this section is to trace the history of writing assessment in education in order to come up with a clear vision of how it emerged as a separate discipline, and what it specifically covers. To begin with the origin of the term "assessment", the latter comes from the Latin French word "assidere" which denotes the action of sitting beside a person (Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters, 1992: i); hence, in the educational field, it means to sit down with the students in order to discover their background knowledge and their performance in specific learning tasks (Alsina et al. 2017: 148). Furthermore, According to Yancey (1999), writing assessment history can be presented through three stages, starting from objective tests during the first stage from 1950-1970, then moving to essay holistic procedures during the second from 1970 – 1986, after that, the last assessment era according to her marked the spread of portfolio assessment from 1986 till current studies on alternative assessment. Furthermore, she divided these eras into 1950-1970 first period, 1970-1986 second period, and 1986-present as the final period of writing assessment history.

During the first wave of assessing writing in the history of education (1950-1970), there was no actual use of the term “assessment”, rather the term “testing” has dominated the field of assessing students’ proficiency level in general, and the writing skill in particular. This has been well-illustrated by Hamp-Lyons (2002: 9) who clarified that during 1950s and 1960s, most classroom assessments in general, and writing assessment in particular were highly influenced by the use of objective tests or standardized testing procedure.

During the second era (1970-1986), more direct assessment procedures flourished in the field of writing assessment especially holistic scoring writing tests that have been widely used by composition scholars. Huot (1990: 238) confirmed that the publication of Cooper and Odell in 1974 entitled as *Evaluating Writing*, marked the first years of adopting direct assessment procedures in writing instruction and assessment. Therefore, both holistic and analytic scoring procedures started to be applied in assessing students’ writing in the classroom.

Edward M. White is considered as one of the proponents of holistic scoring, in his article: *Holisticism* in 1984, he has emphasized the importance of incorporating this procedure in assessing and scoring students’ writing products due to its scoring easiness in comparison to multiple-choice testing. Therefore, this enthusiastic procedure was thought to be an alternative to indirect writing assessment and to achieve more reliable and valid results, however, as argued by Weigle (2002: 114), holistic scoring has also resulted in unreliable scores because giving one score from the overall general impression of the rater does not provide a clear diagnostic information about the real performance of writers.

Holistic scoring shortcomings directly led to the introduction of analytic scoring procedure in assessing writing which focuses on giving sub-scores to separate sub-skills of writing. According to Ghalib and Al-Hattami (2015: 227), analytic scoring involves dividing the writing ability into different sub-skills such as: organization, vocabulary, content, and mechanics. The test rater gives scores to each category separately, and then calculates the whole score of the written sample.

In spite their usefulness in providing positive washback for the test taker, analytic scoring has also proven to take longer time in the marking process than holistic scoring. Hughes (1989: 105) pointed out that rater’s focus on different aspects of writing takes more time to arrive at a final score, but he believed in the efficiency of analytic scales or rubrics in raising writer’s awareness of the essential skills that help them develop their writing performance.

Accordingly, in order to find alternative forms to standardized testing and objective tests, famous scholars in the field of writing assessment started to apply portfolio-based assessment in teaching and assessing writing which marked the third wave of writing assessment, for example Hamp-Lyons began to work with portfolios in writing classes in 1987. Hamp-lyons and Condon (2000: 15) asserted that the term “portfolio-based assessment” started in the mid-1980s to exist as an alternative to standardized and traditional forms of assessment. It means examining a collection of students’ written samples around a particular period of instruction.

The term ‘alternative assessment’ started to be used during the last decade of the twentieth century, and it has been used interchangeably with other concepts such as;

performance assessment and authentic assessment. These concepts focus on assessing the learners' overall performance in writing, and their main goal is to spur the students to apply what they know in order to show what they can do in performance tasks and problem-solving tasks.

## **2-2- The Use of Digital Scoring Rubrics**

The use of scoring rubrics has flourished during the second and third periods of writing assessment when both analytic procedures and portfolios were used in evaluating students' writing ability. To identify the roots of the term "rubric", Selke (2013) stated that it dates back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when the terms 'rubrica', 'ruber', or 'rubrike' were used to mean the red colour. During that time, particular parts of religious manuscripts are highlighted in the red colour to show importance or instructions. Subsequently, the use of assessment rubrics has been translated to the educational context to refer to a series of guidelines for both students and teachers in the learning, teaching, and evaluation processes.

Assessment rubrics have been defined variously in the educational literature, for example; Cooper and Gargan (2009) have explained a rubric as organized into a series of standards or guidelines that should be followed when giving feedback on students' writing. Besides that, there must be an explanation for each assessment criterion in order to determine how it can be attained in the students' written samples, more specifically, this explanatory process can be done by assigning levels or grades in each criterion. Meanwhile, Moskal (2000) has illustrated that scoring rubrics are tools for scrutinizing the quality of different activities such as the writing task, and ensured that they increase the objectivity of the writing assessment process due to the pre-defined criteria for evaluation. Therefore, when teachers use scoring rubrics, they can easily achieve better evaluation results which would reflect the real performance of learners' in a particular task, hence, both transparency and easiness are the most useful advantages of scoring rubrics in the educational field.

There are important types of scoring rubrics in assessing learners' writing ability. As it was mentioned previously, Weigle (2002) differentiated between holistic scoring rubrics and analytic scoring rubrics. The former are applied when the test rater gives one whole grade for all assessment criteria in one writing sample; however, the latter specifies various categories of assessment standards with scales and grades, so that the instructor gives single grades for different aspects of the writing sample, and then, ends up by calculating all the grades in order to get one whole mark that would represent the students' performance.

Scoring or assessment rubrics have been proven to be beneficial in assessing students' writing by different research studies in this field. For example, a study has been conducted by Becker (2011) on examining the kinds of rubrics that are followed while measuring students' writing performance in Intensive English programs at US universities. In this study, forty-three directors were exposed to both a questionnaire and an interview which resulted in confirming the efficiency of analytic and holistic rubrics, and in raising directors' attention towards their

effective use in writing assessment. Additionally, Ghalib and Al Hattami (2015) have tried to differentiate between holistic and analytic rubrics in evaluating the writing ability of thirty English undergraduates in Yemeni university. This study has proven that analytic rubrics are more useful than holistic rubrics in the process of assessing students' writing.

In line with previously mentioned researches, Beyreli (2009) has conducted a study during 2007-2008 school year in Istanbul in order to determine the objectivity of using the same analytic scoring rubric by six raters. The latter were involved in assessing narrative texts written by 200 students at the sixth and seventh grades. The findings of this study indicated that there is a high degree of concordance among raters in using the same analytic rubric. Hence, the researcher has recommended some pedagogical implications at the level of Turkish primary schools. For example, he stated that Turkish language teachers should use analytic rubrics at the beginning the year in order to find out learners' weaknesses and strengths in the writing process, so that, they can cover them appropriately during the whole year. Besides that, he further illustrated that teachers' guide books should not contain only holistic rubrics, but also analytic ones due to their efficiency in assessing students' writing skill.

During the 21st Century and due to the proliferation of new technological tools and their incorporation in the field of higher education in general, and in teaching and assessing writing in particular, scoring rubrics took their electronic form and started to be used as digital or electronic rubrics. In addition to that, new web applications started to serve as platforms for developing and using e-rubrics in assessing writing tasks such as Chrome and Moodle applications.

Due to the newness of this area of study, a limited research literature has been found, to mention but a few; Raddawi and Bilikozen (2018) have conducted an exploratory study on professor's attitudes towards the use of e-rubrics in assessing writing through a virtual course management system in one of the Emirates' universities. The iLearn management system has been adopted in this university since 2013, with an integration of e-rubrics for each course in order to assess students' writing abilities. The above mentioned researchers used a survey with twenty-one faculty members and a semi-structured interview with three volunteers. The results confirmed the simplicity, easiness, objectivity, consistency, and transparency of using e-rubrics to evaluate students' writing skill. Meanwhile, important challenges were reported by the participants such as; technical difficulties when they use the virtual platform, and restrictions of using the same e-rubric for a particular assignment which may need more evaluation criteria to be considered.

Moreover, Lallmamode, Mat Daud, and Abu Kassim (2016) tried to develop an e-rubric to be used in electronic-portfolio assessment; the rubric was based on Bachman's (2005) "Assessment Use Argument". The study took place in the department of teaching English as a second language in the International Islamic University of Malaysia. In this context, students need to do a research project and submit an e-portfolio by the end of the semester. Hence, thirteen raters were involved in grading Thirty-eight e-portfolios using the designed rubric, after the analysis and interpretation of the findings, the researchers admitted that the rubric

was useful, effective, practical, valid, and reliable in assessing students' writing performance. They also recommended the involvement of students in the process of e-portfolio assessment by integrating both self and peer-assessment rubrics.

Therefore, the current research paper tries to uncover the gap in EFL teachers' attitudes towards using electronic or digital rubrics to assess Algerian EFL learners' writing at the university level. Gathering and analyzing relevant data about this issue would be beneficial to improve the process of teaching and assessing the writing skill in Algerian universities, and would aid teachers in coping with new tools of assessment that are used worldwide in the 21st Century era of education.

### **3- Research Methodology**

The present study uses the quantitative method of research and a questionnaire as the main research tool in order to elicit relevant information about teachers' perspectives towards using e-rubrics to assess students' writing skill. The questionnaire has been perceived by Dornyei (2002: 10) as the major research tool that can be used in the field of social sciences. Additionally, since an experimental study requires a longer research paper than the present one, the writer tried to tackle this issue from teachers' perspectives and this illustrates the choice of a questionnaire as a quantitative research tool.

#### **3-1- Research Aims**

Due to the challenging role of written expression teachers in giving feedback to students' writing; the present research aims at obtaining data about EFL written expression teachers' attitudes and perceptions about the use of e-rubrics in the process of responding to students' written products during the digital era. Additionally, it seeks to suggest some useful techniques that would raise their awareness about the usefulness of digital scoring rubrics in assessing students' writing.

#### **3-2- Research Questions and Hypotheses**

On the one hand, this study inquires about the following questions and tries to give answers that would benefit academics in writing research and higher education.

- Do EFL written expression teachers integrate ICTs in writing assessment?
- Are teachers aware of the usefulness of analytic scoring rubrics in assessing students' writing products?
- What are the challenges that would face teachers while integrating e-rubrics in their writing classes?

On the other hand, in the present research, it has been hypothesized that:

H: If digital scoring rubrics have been proven to be useful in assessing students' writing skill (by scholars and researchers in this field), then EFL written expression teachers at Guelma University would have positive perspectives towards their role in writing assessment.

### **3-3- Sample of the Study:**

The main variable in this research paper is written expression teachers' perspectives and attitudes towards the kinds of writing assessment tools, so that, a purposive sampling technique has been used to select the sample of the study. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2002: 115), the purposive sample is chosen according to the needs of the researcher who wants to gather relevant data from the most experienced informants in a particular field. Therefore, the sample of the present study contains eleven teachers who are/ have been teaching the written expression course in the department of English at the University 8 Mai 1945 Guelma. This sample almost represents all teachers of written expression in the department, and it is not a random sample that may result in inappropriate data from teachers who have never taught the written expression course, and who may provide irrelevant information to the study.

### **3-3- Research Tool**

In order to accomplish the aims of the research and find reasonable answers to the research inquiries, teachers' views towards the use of digital rubrics in scrutinizing students' writing ability were gathered through a questionnaire that has been conducted with eleven (11) written expression teachers.

The questionnaire consists of 13 items which ask respondents to answer using multiple-choices, short-answers, or long-answer. The first questionnaire item tends to inquire about teachers' qualifications and grades, in order to know what degrees they hold as teachers of English as a foreign language in the Algerian context. Additionally, the second question goes further to specify teachers' experiences in teaching English as a foreign language, this would indicate the amount of knowledge and the teaching skills they have while teaching English. More specifically, the researcher continues to ask informants about their experience in teaching written expression, in order to have a close idea concerning their familiarity of various instructional and assessment techniques.

Moreover, question five inquires about the kind of the scoring method that is used by teachers while assessing and grading students' written products. Besides that, in question 6 the researcher wants to know the assessment criteria that are used by teachers while giving feedback to their students. After that, question seven tends to ask teachers whether they order those criteria in a scale or not. Moving deeply in the core of the current study, in the questionnaire item number eight; the possibility of introducing a scoring rubric to the students is questioned.

More significantly, and in relation to the main aim of this research, the items from nine to thirteen are relevant to the use of ICTs in assessing students' writing, in particular; the use of e-rubrics and their degree of efficiency in minimizing teachers' burden, and raising students' awareness of their writing weaknesses and strengths. Nevertheless, challenges and obstacles in

implementing this kind of assessment tool can be identified when teachers respond to the last two questions in this survey.

#### **4- Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings:**

##### **4-1- Data Analysis and Interpretation:**

In order to come up with research findings and results, teachers' responses were gathered electronically through administering the questionnaire<sup>1</sup> via the Android Application Google Forms. This application helped to organize the items in one form attaching it to a link that can be copied and shared with the sample participants. After that, the participants used the same link and form to fill in their answers anonymously and clicked on the bottom 'send' in order to send the answers to the researcher. Finally, participants' answers were summarized in the form either in the icon 'responses' or 'summary' of the findings. The latter have been checked by the researcher, represented in tables and figures, and analyzed in the following paragraphs qualitatively and quantitatively.

Q1. Choose you educational qualifications from the list below.

- Master
- Magister
- PhD Student
- Doctorate

**Table 1. Teachers' Qualifications**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Master	03	11	27.3%
Magister	06	11	54.5%
PhD Student	02	11	18.2%
Doctorate	00	11	00.00%

The results displayed in Table (1) indicated that the majority of written expression teachers (54.5 %) who took part in this survey hold a Magister degree, while 27.3 % of informants have a Master degree. Moreover, only two participants are in their career of preparing their PhD theses; however, no teacher of written expression holds a Doctorate degree. The findings imply that the majority of teachers were exposed to their Master or Magister curricula which contain considerable background knowledge about the nature of the writing skill, its teaching procedures, and how it can be assessed. Meanwhile, the absence of more experienced teachers is mainly due to the department's need to cover more important modules in Master degree by Doctors and Professors of English language. Hence, part-time teachers who hold Master degree were requested to teach courses such as written expression and grammar.

Q2. How long have you been teaching English as a foreign language?

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<sup>1</sup>[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeANJ6FZeOZ5djvihWtmUbwL3mWZJnCm10KlhUqQV-PHRKUHQ/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeANJ6FZeOZ5djvihWtmUbwL3mWZJnCm10KlhUqQV-PHRKUHQ/viewform?usp=pp_url).



- Less than 3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

**Table 2. Teaching Experience**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Less than 3years	02	11	18.2%
3-5 years	02	11	18.2%
5-10 years	06	11	54.5%
More than 10 years	01	11	09.1%

As shown above in Table 2. , six teachers have from five to ten years experience in teaching English as a foreign language, in addition to one teacher who has been teaching English for more than ten years. However, 18.2% of the informants represents both teachers who have an experience of less than three years, and teachers who have been teaching English from three to five years. This is mainly linked to the previous question because there are PhD students and teachers who recently got their Master degree; hence they have less experience in teaching English as a foreign language. Putting it altogether, most of the respondents are familiar with the teaching and learning process in the department of English and can be called upon when a research problem is raised.

Q3. Is it your first-time experience in teaching written expression?

- Yes
- No

**Table 3. Teachers' Experience in Teaching Written Expression**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Yes	08	11	72.7%
No	03	11	27.3%

The data which is displayed in Table (3) above revealed that eight teachers were already teachers of written expression while only three informants stated that they were beginners in teaching this course. The latter category may consist of part-time teachers who hold a Master degree and who volunteered to teach the course when the department was in need to that. The interpretation of this data will be correlated with the next question when respondents have given more details about their teaching experience.

Q4. If your answer is NO, how long have you been teaching written expression?

Eight respondents who reported that they have a teaching experience in writing instructions have also stated in their responses to this question the exact number of years. More specifically, the results revealed that two teachers were teaching written expression for five years, while two other participants declared they taught this course for five year, and two teachers indicated that they were teachers of writing for one year. Meanwhile, there was one teacher with seven years of experience, and another teacher with two years of experience.

These results illustrate that the majority of the participants involved in the present study have a considerable experience in teaching and assessing the writing skill at the university level, hence, their answers would be beneficial for the researcher to determine the efficiency of assessment tools.

Q5. When assessing students' written products, which method do you prefer to use?

- Holistic scoring
- Analytic scoring

**Table 4. Teachers' Methods of Assessment**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Holistic Scoring	01	11	9.1%
Analytic Scoring	10	11	90.9%

As shown in Table 4., almost all written expression teachers use analytic procedure for assessing students' writing. This indicates their high degree of awareness about the importance of assessing all the aspects of the writing task such as; mechanics of writing, coherence, cohesion, style, and methodology. This would lead to more consistent and transparent grades for different levels who are assigned the same writing task.

Q6. What are the characteristics of students' writing do you usually focus on while providing feedback?

In this question, teachers are asked about the assessment criteria they generally emphasize while reflecting on students' writings. The criteria that were given to the informants are: content, organization, language mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation), style, methodology, and format. The results indicated that 100% of the sample chose all the criteria; this implies that written expression teachers in this study context take into consideration the different components of a successful writing task.

Q7. Have you ever tried to organize assessment criteria in a table of scales and grades?

**Table 5. Organizing Assessment Criteria in Rubrics**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Yes	09	11	81.1%
No	02	11	18.2%

Table 5. above displays the results of the gathered data from Q7 when respondents were asked whether they organize assessment criteria in a rubric. The findings indicated that 81.8% of answers represent teachers who make up tables or scales for assessing students' writing; however, only 18.2% of the respondents reported that they do not use scoring rubrics or scales; it can be noticed here that one teacher from the last category is the one who declared previously in Q5 that s/he uses holistic scoring procedure by giving just one grade to the students' written product. Therefore, these statistics imply that even though the majority of written expression teachers at the present context design and use analytic rubrics, there are other part-time and

less experienced teachers who have never used a rubric for assessing students' writing. This implies that there is an extreme need to raise their awareness in this area of study.

Q8. Do you provide learners with a rubric according to which they compare their answers, your comments, and their grades?

**Table 6. Teachers' Use of Rubrics for Students' Self-Assessment**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Yes	09	11	81.8%
No	02	11	18.2%

The results revealed that the same teachers who use scoring rubrics for grading students' work also give students rubrics for self-assessment and for reflecting on teachers' comments and feedback. This indicates that teachers believe in the efficiency of scoring rubrics in raising students' satisfaction with their achievements, and their role in establishing transparency in the assessment process.

Q9. Do you use computer-based tools in writing instruction and assessment?

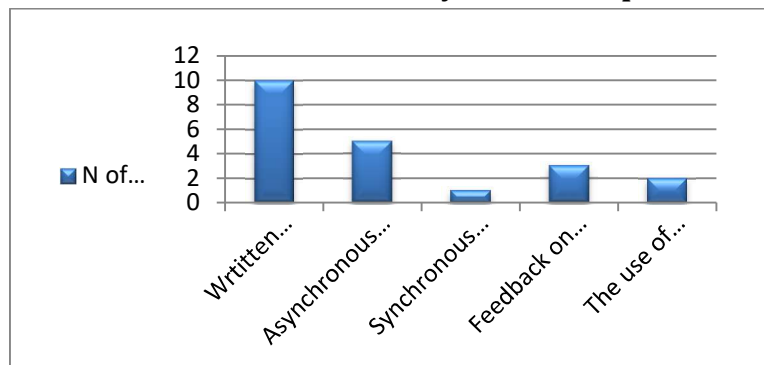
**Table 7. The Use of Computer-based Tools in Teaching and Assessing Writing**

	Number	Total	Percentage
Yes	07	11	63.6%
No	04	11	36.4%

This question is mainly related to teachers' integration of ICTs in teaching and assessing the writing skill in higher education. The data represented in Table 7. Show that 63.6% of teachers highlighted their use of electronic tools in teaching and assessing writing; whereas, 34.4% of them declared their non use of ICTs in their written expression courses. This reveals that although there is a considerable number of teachers who are trying to up-date their writing courses in the digital era; there is also an important part of the teaching staff who need to be more convinced and more trained to use digital tools appropriately and successfully in their courses.

Q10. Which of the following assessment procedures do you usually follow while responding to students' writing?

**Fig 1. Assessment Procedures Used by Written Expression Teachers**

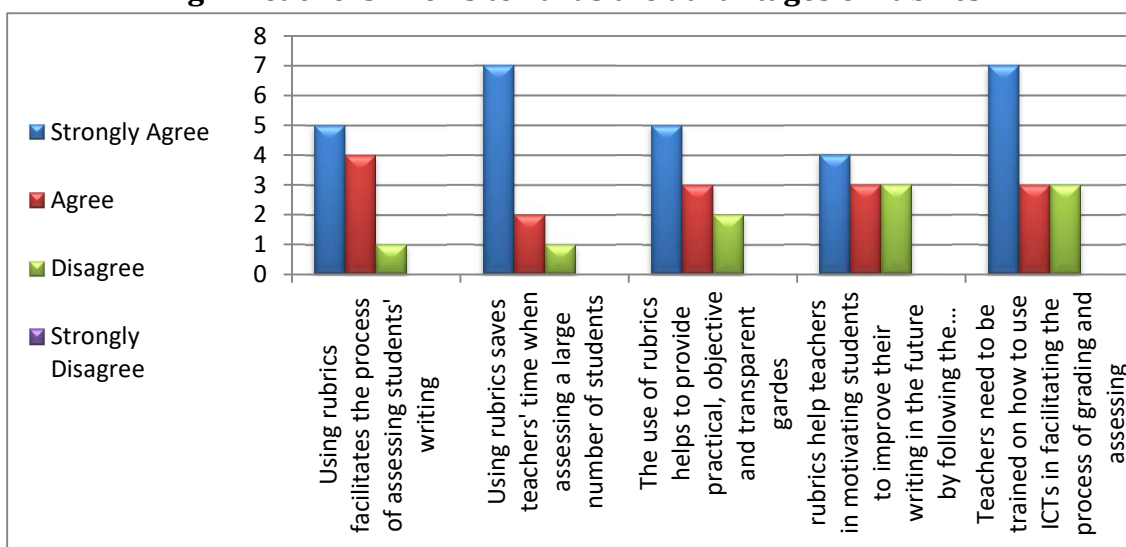


This question gives teachers multiple choices from which they can select more than one assessment procedure. The results displayed in Figure 1. Show that ten teachers use written

feedback in the classroom while five teachers indicated that they also rely on asynchronous feedback via emails. Besides that, three teachers reported their use of the word processor to give comments on typed paragraphs and essays. However, only one teacher gives students feedback in online platforms synchronously, and two teachers selected the use of e-rubrics. These findings illustrate that EFL written expression teachers rely on a mixture of assessment procedures when assessing students' writing abilities; nevertheless, as far as the aim of this study is concerned, there is a lack in using e-rubrics among the participants. Hence, there is a pertinent need for raising teachers' awareness about the advantages of using this digital tool in writing assessment.

Q11. Indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

**Fig 2. Teachers' Views towards the advantages of rubrics**



Teachers' responses to this question as displayed in Figure 2 showed that the majority of teachers either strongly agree or agree with the all the statements which are about the benefits of using rubrics and the role of ICT tools in the process of assessing writing. Whereas, only one teacher has chosen the option "disagree", this is mainly related to previous questions when one or two respondents reported that they have never used rubrics. Meanwhile, the findings implied that the majority of EFL writing teachers at Guelma University believe that rubrics can help teachers in assessing students' writing by saving time and energy, enhance practical, objective, and transparent assessment process, in addition to guide students improve the quality of their written products. Nevertheless, teachers recommended the organization of teacher training workshops in order to develop teachers' skills in using ICT tools appropriately and efficiently while teaching and assessing the writing skill.

Q12. What are the challenges that would face teachers when using electronic rubrics to assess students' writing?

As derived from teachers' answers to this question, most of the teachers explained the most convenient barriers that can be faced when implementing digital tools in general and e-

rubrics in particular during the process of assessing writing. Two major problems have been highlighted by teachers' responses; the first one is the lack of internet access, while the second one is teachers' unfamiliarity with new digital tools and how they can be integrated in educational settings. Accordingly, teachers have suggested organizing teacher training workshops in order to equip them with the necessary ICT skills to create and use digital rubrics for writing assessment purposes at the university level. Besides that, ameliorating internet access at the university context would help both teachers and learners use these tools in hybrid and blended learning contexts.

#### **4-2- Discussion of Findings:**

According to the obtained data and its analysis and interpretation, it can be noticed that the majority of EFL written expression teachers at the department of English, University 8 Mai 1945 Guelma, are well-qualified in teaching English as a foreign language in general, and in teaching writing in particular. The findings also indicated a high degree of familiarity with the use of different assessment tools among them the analytic scoring rubrics. When using rubrics, the participants of this study stated that they took into consideration all the aspects of the writing skill such as: content, style, mechanics, coherence and cohesion, and format. As far as the use of computer-based tools in teaching and assessing writing is concerned, according to the survey results; it can be concluded that most of the teachers integrate technology-based instruction and assessment with traditional teaching techniques. However, there are few teachers who really tried to use e-rubrics in writing assessment; which necessitates raising their awareness about their benefits and how they are created and used. This would clearly answer the first research question that has been asked at the beginning of the study.

In order to answer the second research question, the findings of Q11 clarified that most of written expression teachers in the current study firstly reported that analytic rubrics might be useful and efficient in achieving more practical and objective assessment. Secondly, they can also motivate learners to improve their writing ability when they are used for self-assessment and satisfaction with their marks. Thirdly, they would minimize teachers' burden in assessing a large number of students' papers. Finally, they result in more valid and reliable assessment in the 21st Century. Meanwhile, the participants' answers to Q12 gave significant answers to the third research question. They have argued that two major hindrances faced them while implementing digital tools in writing instruction and assessment which are: the lack of internet access and their unfamiliarity with useful electronic tools in this area of study. Therefore, they pointed out that teacher training workshops are of a paramount importance because they would enhance teachers' awareness of the appropriate digital tools that are used in teaching and assessing the writing skill around the world.

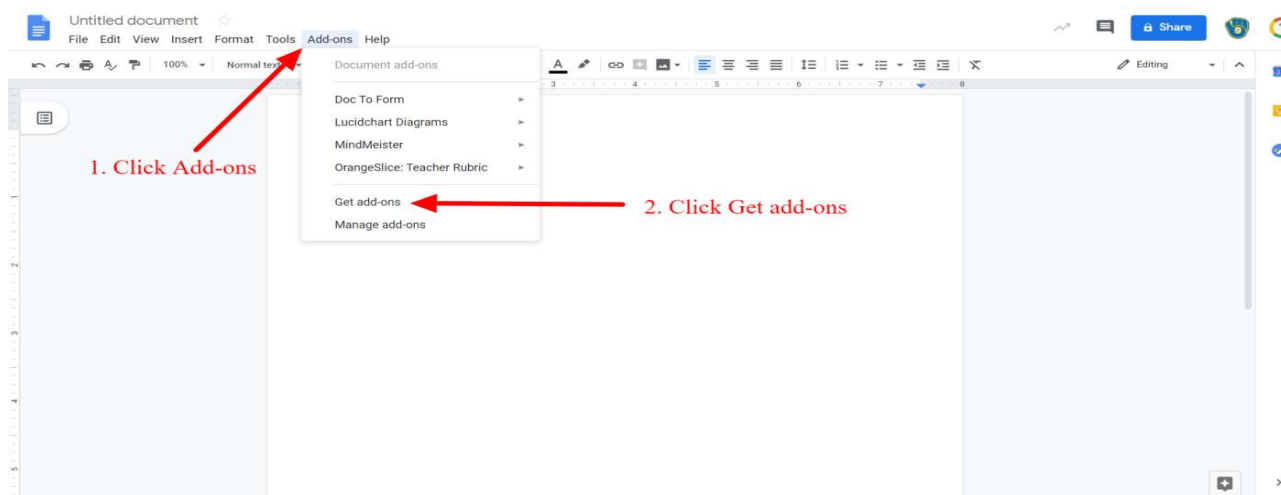
Consequently, the hypothesis that was stated in this research can be confirmed with some limitations. This can be illustrated by teachers' positive perspectives towards the efficiency of digital scoring rubrics in writing assessment; however, they claimed that they cannot apply

them appropriately due to the lack of ICT training and the university requirements and conditions.

The present research paper ends up by a few steps for creating and using e-rubrics for assessing students' written paragraphs and essays via the use of the Orange Slice Teacher Rubric Add-on in Google Docs application. As it has been stated by Senel (2021), Orange Slice Teacher Rubric was introduced by Matt Buchaman; a teacher at Angola High School; it works with Google Docs application in order to give electronic comments and grades automatically for students' submissions at different ages and levels. In order to create a digital rubric using this Add-on, teachers need to follow the steps which are explained and displayed in the figures below. All figures were taken from: Jung, Greg, 2019, Orange Slice Teacher Rubric Add-On.

- Open a Google Doc either from Google Drive or Google Docs applications in Chrome.
- Click on Add-ons in the Google Doc.
- If the Chrome Store does not contain this Add-on, "Get Add-ons" will appear and the teacher needs to click on it.

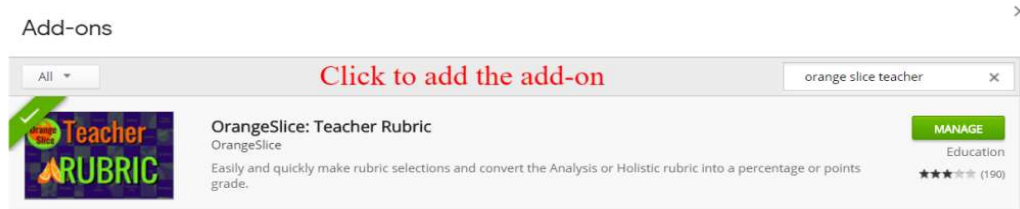
**Fig 3. Steps 1, 2, and 3 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**



(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

When the teacher clicks on Get Add-ons, a search appears where s/he needs to write Orange Slice Teacher Rubric, when it appears; it should be downloaded to include it in the Chrome Store.

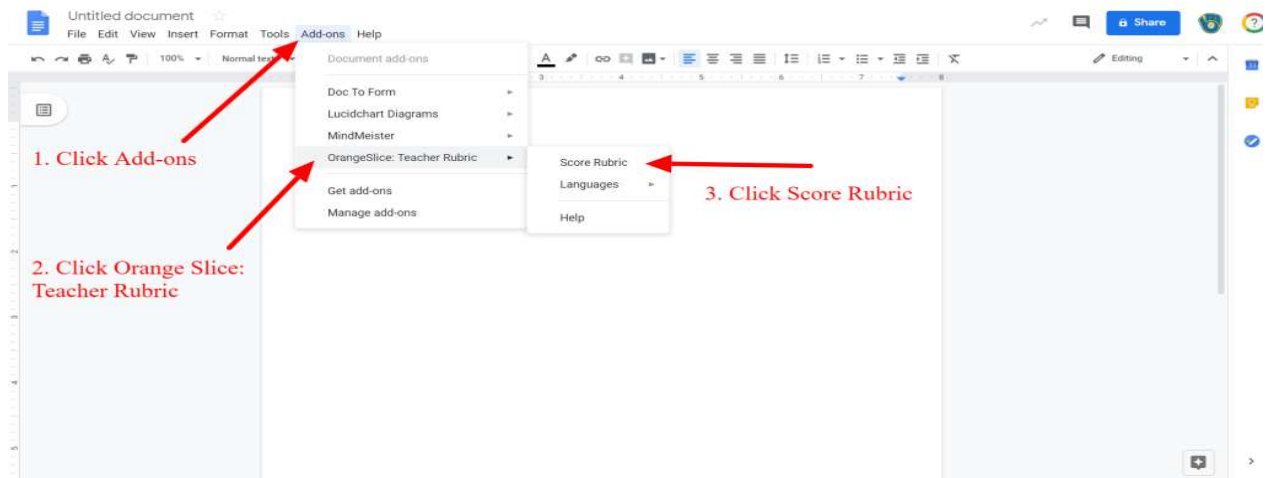
**Fig 4. Step 4 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**



(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

When the rubric is downloaded, it can appear in Add-ons in Google Doc. In order to start using it, the teacher clicks on Add-ons, then on Orange Slice Teacher Rubric, and on score rubric.

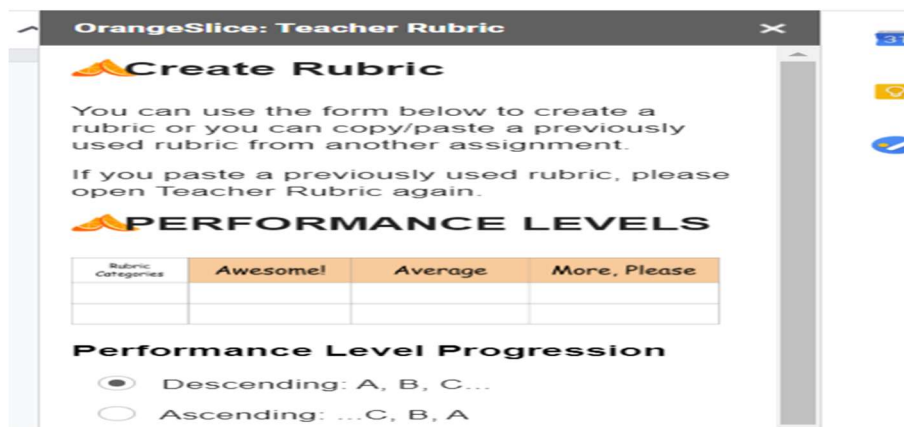
**Fig 5. Step 5 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**



(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

A menu will appear on the right side of the document with steps and settings.

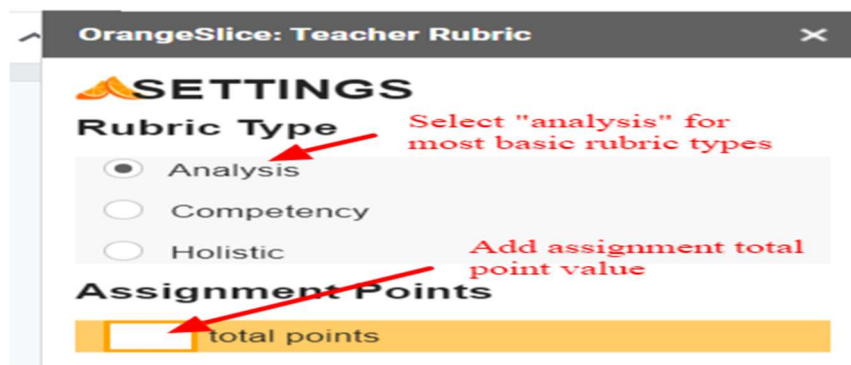
**Fig 6. Step 6 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**



(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

The teacher needs to choose types of e-rubric (holistic or analytic).

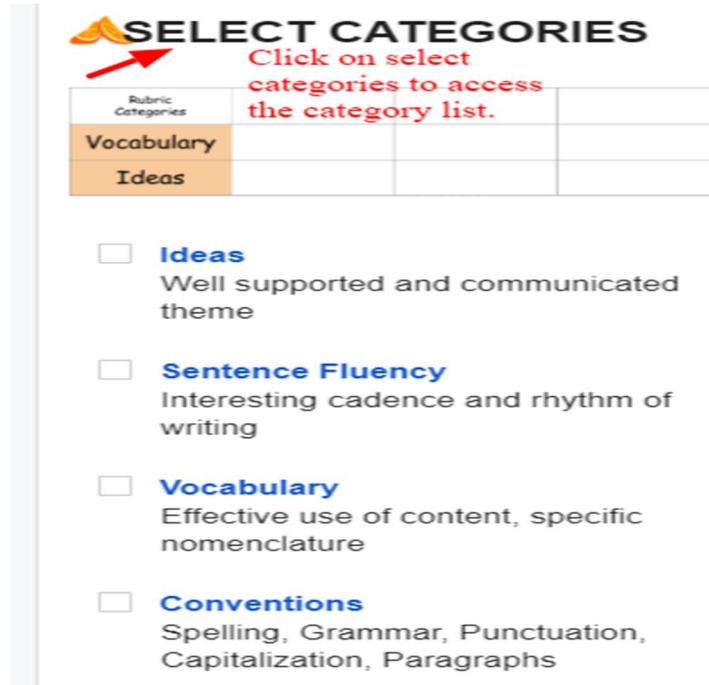
**Fig 7. Step 7 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**



((OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

s/he gives titles for the criteria of assessment, and assigns levels for each category according to an overall grade for the writing task.

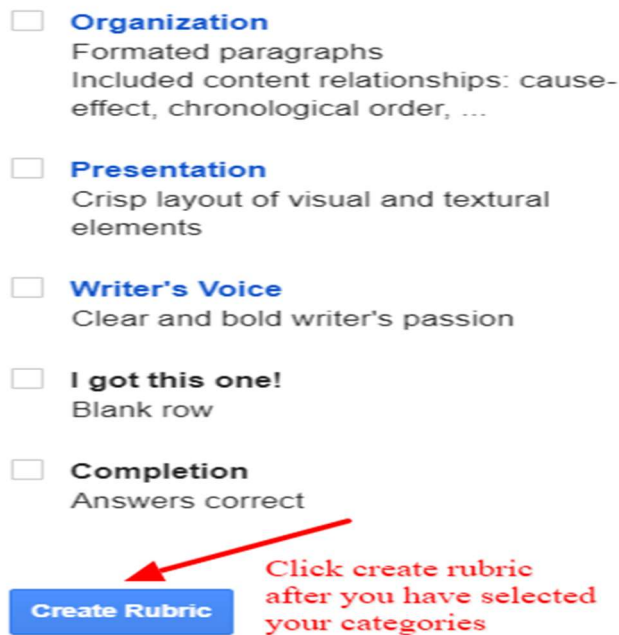
Fig 8. Step 8 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric



(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

When all the rubric settings are fixed, the teacher clicks on create and the rubric shows up in the document.

Fig 9. Steps 9 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric

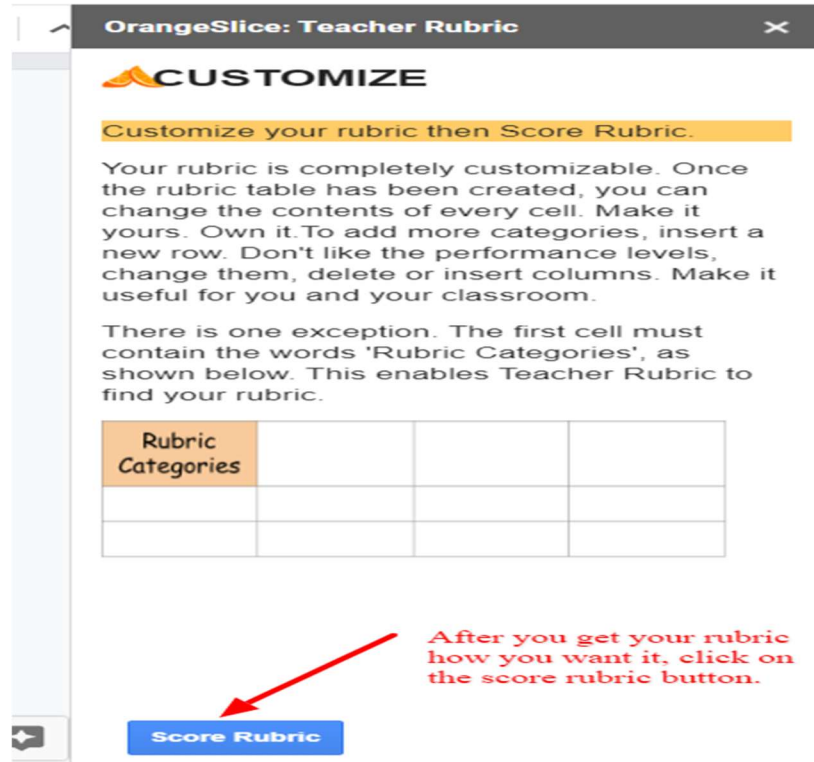




(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

In order to use the rubric to grade students' texts, the teacher needs to click on score rubric in the right side of the document.

**Figure 10. Step 10 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**



(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

- The teacher reads the student's text, and clicks on the appropriate level in each category according to the quality of writing.
- When the teacher selects the levels of each assessment category, s/he clicks on process grade and the overall grade of the student's written product will automatically appear above the rubric table, with a space for additional electronic comments.

**Fig 11. Step 11 to create Orange Slice Teacher Rubric**

Rubric Categories	A	B	C
Sentence Fluency	Reads smoothly, Transitions flow, Varied & purposeful beginnings	Varied & purposeful beginnings, Missing transitions, constructed sentences and/or variation	Repetitive, Flat, Some awkward phrasing
Vocabulary	4 (or all) vocab words used correctly	3 vocab words used correctly	2 vocab words used correctly
Organization	Main Idea, 7 to 5 Supporting Details, Conclusion	Main Idea, 4 to 3 Supporting Details	Main Idea, 2 Supporting Details

(OrangeSlice Teacher Rubric Add-On: Greg (2019), n.p)

## **5- Conclusion:**

The current study has investigated the attitudes and perspectives of Algerian EFL written expression teachers at the department of English, University 8 Mai 1945, Guelma towards the use of digital or electronic scoring rubrics, and their role in the process of assessing EFL students' writing skill. After conduction a survey with eleven (11) teachers, analyzing and interpreting the data, the findings have revealed that the use of assessment rubrics whether in their traditional or digital forms have been perceived by the participants in the study as being beneficial, objective, reliable, and transparent. However, due to the lack of internet access and teachers' lack of training in using ICT tools to assess writing; the present research paper ends up by a few steps for creating and using e-rubrics for assessing students' written paragraphs and essays via the use of the Orange Slice Teacher Rubric Add-on in Google Docs application.

Consequently, Orange Slice Teacher Rubric is a free Add-on that can work appropriately with Google Classroom, Google Drive, and Google Docs for assessment purposes in educational settings. Moreover, there is also Orange Slice Student Rubric which can be used for self/peer-assessment among learners of English as a foreign language. Thus, written expression teachers would provide students with Orange Slice Student Rubric with the writing assignment; so that, students check the different aspects of their writing before submitting a final draft. After that, teachers use Orange Slice Teacher Rubric to give grades and comments, applying this procedure would help in improving students' writing abilities, and in minimizing teachers' burden in assessing a large number of submissions. Orange Slice Teacher Rubric is not the only web application that helps in creating e-rubrics for assessment, there is also Doctopus Goobric web application which is very efficient in designing digital rubrics easily within Google Applications. Besides that, Moodle platform for e-learning provides teachers the opportunity to create and use e-rubrics within virtual assignments in its management system. Therefore, These ICT tools are beneficial for teachers, scholars, and researchers all over the world and need further experiments to investigate their effect in the learning-teaching process.

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