



Understanding Classroom Assessment Practices and Learning Motivation in Secondary EFL Students

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The use of classroom assessment as a means of promoting student learning is strongly supported by current international educational research and policy. The purpose of this study was to examine what classroom assessment practices secondary English as a foreign language (EFL) students experience, and how such assessment experience may cater for their English learning motivation. To capture students' classroom assessment experiences, a questionnaire was developed based on constructs related to classroom assessment in the literature. Students' learning motivation in the EFL course was then measured by the Student Learning Motivation Questionnaire adapted from Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008). The results showed that although teacher-controlled performance-oriented assessment was most used in the EFL classroom, teacher-student interactive-informal assessment and student self-assessment emerged as best predictors of students' intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward the EFL course. The study thus revealed that not all types of classroom assessment practice were equally motivational. Implications of the results for creating a more meaningful learning-oriented assessment environment in the EFL classroom are discussed.

Keywords: classroom assessment practices, English learning motivation, English as a foreign language, formative assessment, secondary EFL students

Introduction

There has been significant research and development in classroom-based assessment in the past two decades largely prompted by concerns about the negative 'backwash' effects of external examinations upon teaching and assessment in the classroom (Biggs, 1998), and a growing awareness of the importance and the formative for-learning potential of classroom assessment in student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Leung, 2009). McMillan (2013) views classroom assessment as a broad and evolving conceptualization of a process that teachers and students use in collecting, evaluating, and using evidence of student learning for a variety of purposes, including diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses, monitoring student progress toward meeting desired levels of proficiency, assigning grades, and providing feedback. As such, McMillan's conceptualization of classroom assessment depicts teachers and students as playing active roles in selecting and constructing opportunities for assessment that both

formatively support and motivate learning as well as summatively gauge learning progress (Rasooli, Zandi, & Deluca, 2018), which is congruent with a socio-cultural understanding in which assessment is a dynamic process shaped by teachers, students, curriculum, pedagogy, and the learning culture (Rasooli et al., 2018).

In the area of second or foreign language education, Knoch and Macqueen (2017) make the case that assessment processes are present in all second language classrooms, regardless of the approach to instruction. These assessment processes range from observations, class discussions, peer and self-assessment, moment-by-moment teacher decisions and responses on the one hand, to the formal delivery of tests and examinations on the other (Knoch & Macqueen, 2017; Purpura, 2016). The bulk of this research on classroom L2 assessment has so far focused on teacher knowledge and beliefs (e.g., Choi & Leung, 2017; Davison & Leung, 2009; Leung, 2009; Rea-Dickins, 2007), the influence of external assessment and reporting regimes on classroom practices (e.g., Davison, 2004), and teacher assessment cognitions, practices and grading decisions (Cheng, Rogers, & Wang, 2008; Cheng & Sun, 2015). The importance of the topic has been further highlighted by some recent theoretical frameworks that outline the actual classroom assessment processes and practices. For example, Hill and McNamara (2012) proposed a comprehensive framework of classroom assessment illustrating questions related to the teacher perspective, such as what teachers do, what teachers look for, and what theory or standards they use. While these theoretical frameworks of classroom assessment processes provide important guidance in teacher classroom assessment development practices, “the way forward in classroom-based assessment is not only on elaborating teacher assessment processes but also, and importantly, developing greater understanding of the facets of classroom-based assessment through the lens of the learners” (Rea-Dickins, 2007, p. 515). Rea-Dickins noticed that except for a number of studies examining self- and peer-assessment in promoting teaching and learning, relatively fewer studies have concentrated on second/foreign language learners and adopted a learner and learning focus. Against this backdrop, this paper reports on an exploratory study conducted to investigate what classroom assessment practices EFL students experience, and how these assessment practices may cater for their learning motivation, especially within the secondary school context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in an Asian setting. It is expected that this paper contributes to knowledge about students’ classroom assessment experience in an EFL context and how it can be effective in enhancing their learning motivation.

Literature Review

Theorizing Classroom Assessment

As a result of increased attention towards constructivist/socio-cultural theories of learning, the assessment internal to the classroom as opposed to large-scale high-stakes testing has become of interest to the research world (Turner & Purpura, 2016). While there is not yet an agreement on the nature of and specific methods or procedures associated with classroom-based assessment, an increasingly popular view of classroom assessment is that it is a critical component of daily classroom teaching that directly affects student learning (Brookhart, 2001; McMillan, 2008). Advocates (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998; Stiggins, 2005) believe that classroom assessment creates the conditions for the type and quality of instructional practices engaged in by educators and learning strategies and behaviors exhibited by students (Stefanou & Parkes, 2003), and contributes to the main aim of education, which is to develop the capacity of each student to become an effective, independent and responsible learner (Black, 2015). A most frequently cited definition of classroom assessment in the literature is that it is a dynamic, cyclical process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by students and their teachers to decide where the students are in their learning, and where they need to go and how best to get there (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; McMillan, 2013). More recent conceptualization of classroom assessment foregrounds the role of

both formal and informal feedback derived from dialogic teaching in class and interactive dialogue with peer students in regulating students' learning in a classroom assessment environment which offers opportunities to develop the capacity of each student to become a motivated and self-regulated learner (Carless, 2017; Swaffield, 2011). Consequently, the commonly perceived benefits of classroom assessment practices include not only offering opportunities for meaningful task engagement that leads to use of effective learning strategies and development of higher-order skills but also fostering a potentially more positive motivational orientation for students than other forms of assessment.

Research on Classroom Assessment Practices

Since classroom assessment is widely assumed to encompass a broad spectrum of activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to improve teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998), it is generally believed that classroom assessment practices are multifaceted and multidimensional (Rodriguez, 2004). Of particular relevance to the present study is thus how the constructs of classroom assessment practices have been operationalized in previous studies in both mainstream education and second/foreign language education. This section therefore reviews what typical classroom assessment practices have been researched in general education and second/foreign language education, and how these practices can be used in correlational research to explain variance in student learning attitudes and performance.

There is a body of research studies conducted in the US (e.g., McMillan, 2001; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003) that examined teachers' classroom assessment practices. For example, in Zhang and Burry-Stock's study, the measures employed to measure assessment practices used by American school teachers covered a wide range of constructs from using paper-pencil tests, communicating assessment results, ethics and grading to using performance assessment. In these studies on classroom assessment practices, researchers tended to integrate assessment methods and grading practices. Unlike Zhang and Burry-Stock study, McMillan (2001) separates teacher assessment practices from teacher grading practices in his study of the actual classroom assessment and grading practices of secondary teachers in America. The teacher assessment practices McMillan explored consisted of four components: 1) constructed-response assessments, 2) teacher-made or off-the-shelf assessments, 3) grouped quizzes with objective assessments, and 4) major exams. These constructs operationalized in the McMillan study were replicated in a study with Chinese secondary English teachers by Cheng and Sun (2015) who found that the types of assessment methods teachers used could be predicted by the factors that they considered for grading.

Other researchers tend to focus on correlations of students' assessment beliefs or perceptions of assessment tasks to classroom assessment practices or environment. For example, to study relationship between assessment conceptions and practices, Brown, Irving, Peterson, and Hirschfeld (2009) developed a list of 12 different assessment practices covering a range of traditional testing, teacher grading of homework, teacher-student interactions, alternative performance assessments, self- and peer-assessments all of which are considered commonplace in New Zealand schooling (Brown et al., 2009). Relying on multidimensional scaling analysis, Brown et al. categorized these 12 assessment practices into two clusters: 1) test-like assessments; 2) interactive-informal assessments. Brown et al.'s study found that New Zealand students perceived test-like assessment practices as improving learning, but informal-interactive assessment practices as being irrelevant to improvement of learning. Cheng, Wu and Liu (2015) explored the relationship between students' perceptions of assessment tasks and classroom assessment environment within the university context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in China. The instrument they used in their study was based on Dorman and Knightley's (2006) Perceptions of Assessment Tasks Inventory (PATI) and Alkharusi's (2011) Classroom Assessment Environment inventory. Dorman and Knightley's PATI subsumes 5 scales: 1) congruence with planned learning, i.e., the extent to which assessment tasks align with the goals, objectives, and activities of the learning program; 2) authenticity, i.e., the extent to which assessment tasks feature real-life situations; 3) student consultation, i.e., the extent to which students are consulted and informed about the forms of assessment

tasks being employed; 4) transparency, i.e., the extent to which the purposes and forms of assessment tasks are well-defined and clear to the learner; and 5) diversity, i.e., the extent to which all students have an equal chance at completing assessment tasks. Alkharusi's (2011) Classroom Assessment Environment inventory includes two scales. The first scale focuses on classroom assessment practices that improve student learning and mastery of content materials. The second scale focuses on harshness of assessment, grading, public evaluation and recognition practices.

One line of research examined the correlation of classroom assessment practices to student learning attitudes or motivation and performance. For example, Rodriguez (2004) evaluated the relationship between assessment practices and the role of student effort and motivation as a moderator of achievement. In this project, assessment practices in relation to mathematics classrooms were investigated in two facets: *Homework Practices*; *Other Assessment Practices*. Within each set of practices, assessment practices were further categorized along two dimensions: 1) tools, i.e., the types of classroom assessments; 2) the uses of the assessment information, and related activities. Under the facet of *Homework Practices*, the types of assessments studied include workbook worksheets, textbook problems, tests, oral reports, journal writing; the uses of the assessment information and related activities include contributing to class discussion, giving feedback to whole class, students correcting each other's work. Under the facet of *Other Assessment Practices*, the types of assessments studied include teacher-made tests, observation of students, student responses in class, externally created exams; the uses of the assessment information and related activities include giving feedback to class, grouping students, diagnosing learning problems, planning future lessons. Another study that investigated the correlations between teacher classroom assessment practices and students' motivation and attitude is the Hao and Johnson study (2013) that looked at how teachers' uses of various types of classroom assessments were differentially related to their fourth-graders' reading literacy motivation and attitude. Teachers' various classroom assessment practices investigated in this study were operationalized as containing two scales: 1) The paper- and pencil-based writing assessment scale that is composed of short-answer questions and paragraph-length writing; 2) The oral communication assessment scale that is composed of listening to students read aloud, determining reading accuracy, oral questioning students, oral summary or report, and meeting with students to discuss.

Also, worth mentioning are two qualitative studies of classroom assessment practices in foreign language education context. Cheng, Rogers, and Wang (2008) reported on an interview study to explore university instructors' assessment methods (i.e., selection vs. supply methods) that the instructors used, as well as the purposes each assessment was used for, the source of each method used, and when instructors used each method. Relying on a detailed empirical study of two Australian school classrooms where students aged 11 to 13 were studying Indonesian as a foreign language, Hill and McNamara (2012) generated a comprehensive framework for researching classroom based assessment processes. The assessment processes captured in their study range from explicit, planned, formal assessment activities to less visible, unplanned, instruction-embedded assessment activities.

In summary, the research reviewed above shows the complexity and richness of classroom assessment practices. Clearly, there are differences in how classroom assessment practices were operationalized in these studies, depending on subject area, participants, and research context of each particular study. Studies on the relationship between assessment practices and students' learning attitudes or motivation revealed mixed results. Furthermore, within a particular context, there appeared to be infrastructural as well as individual factors that can influence teachers' assessment approaches and practices (Leung, 2004). All such differences make direct comparison and conclusive generalizations difficult. Nevertheless, the research studies reviewed here provide significant methodological insight for the current study reported in this article.

Classroom Assessment Practices and Students' Learning Motivation

One of the overarching theoretical frameworks that is often used to illustrate the role of assessment in enhancing students' motivation to learn is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT

classifies motivation into intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Within SDT framework, intrinsic motivation refers to doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity simply for its instrumental value. Ryan and Deci describe amotivation as the state of lacking an intention to act. According to Ryan and Deci, amotivation results from not valuing an activity, not feeling competent to do it, or not believing it will yield a desired outcome. Drawing on SDT and other motivational theories, Harlen and Crick (2003) group motivational variables as related to assessment into three categories. The first category relates to motivational variables such as self-esteem, self-concept, and test anxiety. The second category relates to motivational variables such as effort, interest in and attitude toward subject. The third category relates to motivational variables such as goal-orientation, self-efficacy, and locus of control. Applying Harlen and Crick's (2003) categorization of motivational variables in analyzing effect of assessment tasks to students' motivational effort, Brookhart, Walsh, and Zientarski (2006) reported that within a particular classroom assessment environment, teacher assessment practices impact students' learning processes by shaping study behaviors and academic self-efficacy, enabling self-adjustment and organizing and securing the storage of knowledge and skills.

In keeping with the motivational theories discussed above, some researchers in general education, educational assessment, L2 assessment and/or acquisition have suggested a variety of strategies to use classroom assessment to motivate students' learning. Keller (2008) proposed four classroom conditions that are believed to effectively motivate students. These four conditions can equally be applied to assessment as being a subset of the classroom learning environment: 1) Motivation to learn is promoted when a learner's curiosity is aroused due to a perceived gap in current knowledge; 2) Motivation to learn is promoted when the knowledge to be learned is perceived to be meaningfully related to a learner's goals; 3) Motivation to learn is promoted when learners believe they can succeed in mastering the learning task; 4) Motivation to learn is promoted when learners anticipate and experience satisfying outcomes to a learning task. These four major characteristics of classroom conditions facilitating students' motivation are also mirrored in Dörnyei's (2007) six strategies for establishing motivational teaching practices in the EFL classroom: 1) making learning stimulating and enjoyable; 2) presenting tasks in a motivating way; 3) setting specific learner goals; 4) protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence; 5) creating learner autonomy; 6) promoting self-motivating learner strategies.

Meanwhile, assessment researchers such as Stiggins (2005) particularly emphasize that involving students in the process of assessment and keeping them in touch with the accumulation of evidence of their own increasing proficiency can be an effective way to motivate students. Involving students in designing assessment criteria, encouraging and helping students track their progress along performance continuums can bring about students' internal sense of motivation. When students engage in self-assessment and directly observe their own improvement, they are more likely to display long-term motivation and persist in the face of difficulty (Cheng & Fox, 2017). Formative assessment is also assumed to bring about students' internally held sense of responsibility for their own academic success as it provides opportunity for students to receive constructive feedback from their teachers and classmates. Dörnyei (2007) also highlights the impact of feedback on students' motivational state: 1) motivational feedback can have a gratifying function that can increase learner satisfaction and lift the learning spirit; 2) By communicating trust and encouragement, motivational feedback can promote a positive self-concept and self-confidence in the student; 3) Motivational feedback prompts the learner to reflect constructively on areas that need improvement.

In summary, the relationship between assessment and motivation has been a topic of interest and debate among researchers in both general education and L2 assessment. This relationship, however, is more often assumed than grounded in empirical research work particularly in an EFL context. The focus of the paper reported in this study is therefore to empirically investigate the extent to which different types of classroom assessment contribute to secondary EFL students' English learning motivation. Given the long-standing urban-rural educational disparity that exists in the distribution of educational resources (e.g., teacher training, facilities and equipment, and teaching style) throughout the region where this study

was conducted, we also examine whether there are significant differences between an urban and rural school in terms of students' classroom assessment experiences and their EFL learning motivation. The study thus aims to address the following research questions:

1. What classroom assessment practices do secondary students report in relation to their EFL course?
2. How are various forms of classroom assessment practice related to these students' learning motivation in the EFL course?
3. Are there significant differences in classroom assessment practices and students' learning motivation in the EFL course between a rural and urban secondary school?

Method

Participants

Using a convenience sampling method, a total of 198 senior secondary grade two students from two secondary schools in an Asian region were recruited and participated in this study. The students completed a questionnaire concerning classroom assessment practices and another questionnaire concerning students' classroom EFL learning motivation, which will be described below. One school is located in a provincial capital city and the other in the countryside. We selected these two schools because schools here generally fall into two broad categories: urban schools and rural schools. The reason we chose to recruit senior grade 2 students was two-fold: 1) they may have a richer repertoire of assessment experience than their peers in senior grade 1 to reflect on when asked to participate in this research; 2) Senior grade 3 students across schools in this region are typically focused on preparing for the national college entrance examination and hence have a different pedagogical approach.

After removing those with straight-lining responses (i.e., same answers on a series of rating scales or the answer patterns presented like a Christmas tree; Vannette, 2015), 196 valid surveys were used for analysis for this study. Specifically, of the 196 students, 96 were from a rural school, 100 were from an urban school; 109 were male, 86 were female, and 1 did not state gender; the age of the participants ranged from 14 to 19 with $M_{\text{age}} = 16.12$ years, $SD_{\text{age}} = 1.13$ years. Before the students completed the questionnaire, they were informed that the questionnaire was anonymous so that they could not be identified from the results. They were also assured that their responses would not affect their status in their English courses.

Instruments

Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire

Since there was not an existing instrument that could be used for gathering information on secondary students' experience of EFL classroom assessment practices, a Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire (CAPQ) was developed for this study. The items in the CAPQ were scored on a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 = not at all used, 2 = seldom used, 3 = used occasionally, 4 = used often, and 5 = used very often. The items in the CAPQ originated from three major sources. First, Black and Wiliam's (1998) constructs related to classroom assessment formed an important source. Second, some questionnaire items were developed from interview data that was also part of the present project in which twenty senior secondary students were interviewed about the assessment practices they experienced in their EFL classroom. Third, some items came from a literature review on classroom assessment research studies reviewed above (e.g., Brown et al., 2009; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003). The initial draft of the CAPQ was subjected to a content validation process done by a group of six experienced secondary EFL teachers for clarity and completeness of covering most, if not all, assessment practices commonly used in

Asian secondary EFL classrooms. An item was retained only if the majority of teachers in the group agreed that the item was appropriate to be used to evaluate students' experience of EFL classroom assessment. As a result of this validation process, 22 items were retained. We then piloted the questionnaire to a group of secondary EFL students. Based on the students' responses to items as well as their written comments we further made some slight changes to the wording of some items in the CAPQ, and then, the 22-item CAPQ was finalized.

Student Learning Motivation Questionnaire

To measure students' learning motivation in the EFL course, we developed the Student Learning Motivation Questionnaire (SLMQ) which was adapted from Guilloteau and Dornyei's (2008) Student Motivational State Questionnaire. Guilloteau and Dornyei's questionnaire targets school students' situation-specific motivational disposition related to their EFL course in South Korea and contains the following three main scales: a) Attitudes toward the English course; b) Linguistic self-confidence; and c) EFL-classroom anxiety. We believed that these motivational scales were also applicable to our secondary school context, given the similar nature of English as a taught foreign language in both Korea and here. Following a similar content review process described above for the CAPQ, the 16-item SLMQ questionnaire for this study was further subjected to a pilot test with a class of 25 secondary students to gather additional feedback about the clarity of the items of the questionnaire. The finalized 16-item SLMQ for this study employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Data Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis with Principal Component Analysis and Promax rotation was performed to empirically explore the underlying factor structures of the 22-item CAPQ and the 16-item classroom SLMQ. The Kaiser's eigenvalues-greater-than-one criterion (Kaiser, 1960) was used to determine the number of factors. The reliabilities of the CAPQ and SLMQ were evaluated by internal consistency coefficient with the Cronbach's α coefficient, for which, a value greater than 0.6 and 0.7 suggests acceptable and good reliability respectively (George, 2011).

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test for any statistically significant differences between the two groups of students on each set of factors derived from factor analysis. The Cohen's d statistic was used to identify whether the size of the difference was meaningful with some suggested benchmarks being small (up to .3), medium (.5) or large (.8 or more) (Cohen, 1988). Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r) analysis was carried out to analyze the relationship between the classroom assessment practices factors and the student classroom EFL learning motivation factors. Furthermore, multiple regression analyses were applied to reveal the effects of assessment practices on student EFL learning motivation with the factors of assessment practices as predictors and each factor of student EFL learning motivation as the dependent variable.

All these analyses were performed with IBM SPSS 22.0 (SPSS, Inc, Chicago, IL), and the level of significance was set at $p < .05$.

Results

Classroom Assessment Practices Secondary EFL Students Experienced

The underlying factor structure of the 22-item CAPQ was examined by exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic was 0.826, exceeding the minimum adequacy value of 0.50 (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Osterlind, 2001), and Bartlett's spherical test showed a significant chi-square value of 1471.79 ($p < .001$), which, when taken together, indicated that the data were appropriate for a

factor analysis (George, 2011). Results showed a clear 22-item factor structure with 6 factors which could account 61.24% of the total variance. Note that, although one item (i.e., *Students' portfolios was used to check on their learning progress*) loaded on two factors, the larger loading was on the fifth factor which was clearly about "Teacher Monitoring" (see Note a, Table 1). This item was thus retained. The factor structure and the loadings of 22-items on 6 specific factors are presented in Table 1.

The six factors for assessment practices in the EFL classroom identified were: 1) Student Self-Assessment; 2) Performance-Oriented Assessment; 3) In-Class Diagnostic Assessment; 4) Teacher Scaffolding; 5) Teacher Monitoring; 6) Interactive-Informal Assessment. A Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.875 was found for the total items selected for assessing classroom assessment practices. Cronbach alpha reliability for each of these factors is also reported in Table 1.

Secondary EFL Students' Learning Motivation in the EFL Course

The underlying factor structure of the 16-item SLMQ was also examined by using exploratory factor analysis. The KMO statistic was 0.879, exceeding the minimum adequacy value of 0.50 (Tabachnick et al., 2001), and Bartlett's spherical test showed a significant chi-square value of 1708.19 ($p < .001$), which, when taken together, indicated that the data were appropriate for a factor analysis (George, 2011). All items were clearly loaded on four specific factors (Table 2). The 16-item 4-factor EFL learning motivation model could explain 69.33% of the total variance.

The four factors for students' learning motivation identified were: 1) intrinsic motivation; 2) attitudes toward the English course; 3) EFL classroom anxiety; and 4) lack of self-confidence. A Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.899 was found for the total items selected for assessing student EFL learning motivation. Cronbach alpha reliability for each motivation factor is reported in Table 2.

Effects of School Type on Classroom Assessment Practices and Student Learning Motivation

The two schools that were involved in this study were a rural and urban school. Table 3 shows the results of MANOVAs conducted for classroom assessment practices and student learning motivation by school type (i.e., rural or urban). For the effect of school type on assessment practices, significant multivariate main effect was found, $F(6, 185) = 18.39, p < .01$ (Wilks' $\lambda = 0.626, \eta^2 = .374$). Furthermore, univariate results showed this effect to be significant for in-class diagnostic assessment, $F(1, 190) = 43.18, p < .01$; and teacher scaffolding, $F(1, 190) = 18.83, p < .01$; but not for student self-assessment, $F(1, 190) = 0.539, p > .05$; performance-oriented assessment, $F(1, 190) = 0.809, p > .05$; teacher monitoring, $F(1, 190) = 3.026, p > .05$; and interactive-informal assessment, $F(1, 190) = 0.016, p > .05$. For the effect of school type on student learning motivation, a non-significant main effect was revealed, $F(4, 190) = 1.56, p > .05$ (Wilks' $\lambda = 0.968, \eta^2 = .032$).

TABLE 1

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Classroom Assessment Practices Questionnaire

Classroom Assessment Practices	Loadings	Reliability
Student self-assessment		.792
1. Students decide on and share their learning objectives and goals	.853	
2. Students evaluate each other's learning performance	.692	
3. Students evaluate their own learning performance	.663	
4. Avoiding teaching to the test when preparing students for tests	.542	
Performance-oriented assessment		.687
5. Essay questions	.757	
6. Oral reading/dictation	.695	
7. Fill-in-the-blank or short answer questions	.566	
8. Standardized tests	.561	
9. Teacher's use of a variety of questioning techniques to assess student understanding of the course content	.451	.702
In-class diagnostic assessment		
10. In class, teacher used group discussion to check student understanding of the subject knowledge	.843	
11. Teacher assessed group class discussion	.717	
12. Teacher's use of quizzes after a unit of instruction to check on students' learning of specific knowledge items and skills	.478	
Teacher scaffolding		.750
13. Teacher-guided students' reflection on how to improve their learning based on assessment information	.876	
14. Teacher-guided students' writing of journals	.665	
15. Teacher provided students with guidance to help them improve their assignments	.560	
Teacher monitoring		.628
16. Concept mapping was used to evaluate student learning to inform instruction	.772	
17. Teacher provided written feedback without assigning grades	.553	
18. Teacher communicated assessment criteria and steps to students in advance	.515	
19. Students' portfolio was used to check on their learning progress	.426	.484
Interactive-informal assessment		.597
20. Teacher assessed students through observation		.748
21. Teacher evaluated oral questions from students		.721
22. Teacher assessed individual student class participation		.652

Note. ^aLoadings less than .4 were suppressed; ^bBold type indicates items selected for representing the respective factor according to item loadings.

TABLE 2

Exploratory factor analysis of the student learning motivation questionnaire

Motivation	Loadings	Reliability
Intrinsic motivation		.892
1. Learning English is a challenge that I enjoy	.922	
2. English is one of my favorite subjects at school	.897	
3. I enjoy learning English very much	.850	
4. I enjoy my English lessons	.709	
Attitudes toward the English course		.852
5. I often think about how I can learn English better	.910	
6. I really put my best effort into trying to learn English	.831	
7. In the English lessons I try to learn as much as I can	.830	
8. I am willing to work hard at learning English	.602	
EFL-classroom anxiety		.829
9. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class	.858	
10. I feel uncomfortable if I have to speak in my English class	.794	
11. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class	.726	
12. I am afraid other students will laugh at me when I speak English	.678	
Lack of self-confidence		.755
13. I am worried about my ability to do well in English	.784	
14. I often feel discouraged when I am learning English	.748	
15. I would rather spend time on subjects other than English	.623	
16. Learning English at school is a burden for me	.620	

Note. ^aLoadings less than .4 were suppressed; ^bBold type indicates items selected for representing the respective factor according to item loadings.

TABLE 3

Results of MANOVAs: Assessment Practices and Learning Motivation by School

	Factors	Rural school	Urban school	<i>F</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Assessment Wilks' $\lambda = 0.626$ $F(6, 185) = 18.39^{**}$ $\eta^2 = .374$	Student self-assessment	3.10(0.96)	3.20(0.87)	0.539	0.107
	Performance-oriented assessment	4.18(0.61)	4.10(0.57)	0.809	0.131
	In-class diagnostic assessment	3.99(0.72)	3.28(0.77)	43.18**	0.954
	Teacher scaffolding	3.28(0.93)	3.85(0.90)	18.83**	0.630
	Teacher monitoring	2.81(0.72)	3.01(0.84)	3.026	0.253
Motivation Wilks' $\lambda = 0.968$ $F(4, 190) = 1.56$ $\eta^2 = .032$	Interactive-informal assessment	3.52(0.86)	3.53(0.79)	0.016	0.018
	Intrinsic motivation	3.48(0.97)	3.72(0.92)	-	-
	Attitudes toward the course	3.75(0.80)	3.99(0.70)	-	-
	EFL-classroom anxiety	2.51(0.96)	2.51(1.01)	-	-
	Lack of self-confidence	2.32(0.88)	2.27(0.83)	-	-

Relationships between Classroom Assessment Practices and Student Learning Motivation

Correlation coefficients between classroom assessment practices and student learning motivation are presented in Table 4. The absolute values of correlation coefficients between the factors from classroom assessment practices and the factors from student learning motivation ranged from .044 to .330. More specifically, almost all dimensions of the assessment practices were positively correlated to two dimensions of learning motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation and attitudes toward the English course) with correlation coefficients ranging from .133 to .287, while all dimensions of the assessment practices (except teacher monitoring which showed a correlation coefficient of .044 with lack of self-confidence) were negatively correlated with the remaining two dimensions of learning motivation (i.e., EFL classroom anxiety and lack of self-confidence) with correlation coefficients ranging from .069 to .330.

TABLE 4
Correlation between Assessment Practices and Learning Motivation

Motivation	Assessment Practices					
	Student self-assessment	Performance-oriented assessment	In-class diagnostic assessment	Teacher scaffolding	Teacher monitoring	Interactive-informal assessment
Intrinsic motivation	.287**	.287**	.153*	.260**	.133	.284**
Attitudes toward the course	.214**	.147*	.120	.116	.053	.209**
EFL-classroom anxiety	-.330**	-.088	-.167*	-.235**	-.046	-.241**
Lack of confidence	-.240**	-.069	-.164*	-.142*	.044	-.247**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

The results of multiple regression analyses by using all assessment practice dimensions to predict each dimension of the student learning motivation showed that *interactive-informal assessment* ($\beta = .162$, $p < .05$) was the only significant predictor that positively predicted *intrinsic motivation* ($R^2 = .142$); *student self-assessment* ($\beta = .193$, $p < .05$) was the only significant predictor that positively predicted *attitudes toward the English course* ($R^2 = .069$). Furthermore, *student self-assessment* ($\beta = -.317$, $p < .01$) and *interactive-informal assessment* ($\beta = -.166$, $p < .05$) significantly negatively predicted *EFL-classroom anxiety* ($R^2 = .162$). Also, *student self-assessment* ($\beta = -.252$, $p < .05$) and *interactive-informal assessment* ($\beta = -.238$, $p < .01$) significantly negatively predicted *lack of confidence* ($R^2 = .148$). *Teacher monitoring* is the only assessment practice in this study that significantly positively predicted *EFL-classroom anxiety* ($\beta = .214$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .162$) and *lack of confidence* ($\beta = .288$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .148$). Details of the regression models can be found in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Regression Models Reporting Unstandardized (*B*) and Standardized Beta's (*b*) and Standard Errors (*SE*) for Predictors of Learning Motivation

Predictor	Student Learning Motivation											
	Intrinsic motivation			Attitudes toward the course			EFL-classroom anxiety			Lack of confidence		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Student self-assessment	.164	.096	.156	.161	.080	.193*	-	.098	-	-	.086	-
Performance-oriented assessment	.250	.133	.153	.053	.111	.041	.341	.136	.317**	.237	.120	.252**
In-class diagnostic assessment	-	.095	-.036	-	.079	-.002	-	.096	-.054	-	.085	-.080
Teacher scaffolding	.111	.086	.111	.010	.073	-.013	.139	.090	-.134	.065	.079	-.071
Teacher monitoring	-	.101	-.095	-	.084	-.108	.266	.102	.214*	.312	.090	.288**
Interactive-informal assessment	.188	.095	.162*	.141	.079	.152	.199	.097	-.166*	.248	.085	.238**
<i>R</i> ²				.142			.069			.162		

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 6

Descriptive Statistics of Assessment Practices and Student Learning Motivation

	Mean	SD
Assessment practices		
Student self-assessment	3.16	.91
Performance-oriented assessment	4.14	.59
In-class diagnostic assessment	3.62	.82
Teacher scaffolding	3.58	.96
Teacher monitoring	2.91	.79
Interactive-informal assessment	3.53	.82
Student learning motivation		
Intrinsic motivation	3.60	.95
Attitudes toward the course	3.87	.76
EFL-classroom anxiety	2.51	.98
Lack of self-confidence	2.30	.85

Discussion

This study identified six types of classroom assessment practices secondary students experienced in their EFL classes: 1) student self-assessment; 2) performance-oriented assessment; 3) in-class diagnostic assessment; 4) teacher scaffolding, 5) teacher monitoring; 6) interactive-informal assessment. Performance-oriented assessment obtained the highest mean score (4.14), suggesting that the EFL students experienced these teacher-controlled and performance-oriented assessment practices most often. The mean scores for in-class diagnostic assessment, teacher scaffolding, and interactive-informal assessment were all above 3.50, suggesting that, on average, these assessment practices were moderately commonly used in the EFL students in this study, whereas student self-assessment (3.16) and teacher monitoring (2.91) appeared to be used less often.

This study revealed that students experienced teacher-directed subject-performance assessment most often. Such a dominant use of performance-oriented assessment may be related to the prevailing belief in

Asian school educators and practitioners that such traditional subject performance assessment provokes enough pressure for student to learn (Qi, 2005), and this type of subject-performance assessment practice tended to be perceived as contributing to student learning improvement and making teacher/student/school accountable in the current high-stakes environment for educational assessment in Asia (Cheng et al., 2008). Stefanou and Parkes (2003) remind us about the negative consequences of test-preparation-oriented assessment which include (a) narrowing of the curriculum to include only that which is assessed by the tests; (c) fragmentation of the curriculum, leading to an inert knowledge base for the students; and (e) truncation of students' learning strategies, resulting in the use of primarily lower order learning skills. An implication of the results of this study is thus that teachers need to be made aware of the role assessment can play in student learning. This means that work to support EFL teachers' professional development needs to be provided to ensure that they have the intention and the capability of setting assessment tasks which encourage higher order learning strategies among the students

One of the relatively less frequently used assessment practices reported by the participants in this study is student self-assessment. This result was expected given the prevalent use of subject performance assessment in the EFL class which was in the form of school-based internal tests and quizzes used to prepare students for the high-stakes examinations. However, it is possible that even if there is a supportive assessment policy framework that allows student-centred assessments to count towards part of the high-stakes qualifications system, there may still be the challenge to persuade teachers that such activities can improve learning and are reliable. Meanwhile, students may also have difficulty effectively carrying out these assessment activities in the classroom as the literature suggests that some students, especially weak students, do not engage in self-assessment as a regular, ongoing process (Brookhart, 2001). Consequently, how to best prepare both EFL teachers and students in student-centred assessment implementation to enable them to effectively carry out these assessment activities in the classroom remains to be addressed.

In the literature of assessment for learning, interactive-informal assessment (e.g., teacher observation, spontaneous questioning, etc.) is often recognized to give a clear picture of what is really happening within the learning activity or course (Leung, 2004; Ruiz-Primo, 2011). Among the classroom assessment practices investigated in this study, interactive-informal assessment appeared most powerful in predicting students' intrinsic motivation in the EFL course. This suggests that the more interaction-oriented assessment practices such as dialogic feedback in the daily EFL classroom, the more likely EFL students are to develop intrinsic motivation toward English learning. Significantly, these results are consistent with a socio-constructivist view of assessment that argues that assessment feedback is most effective when it is cyclical and involves a dialogue (Carless, 2011; Dörnyei, 2007). The results lead us to concur with the current emphasis on the role dialogic assessment practices play in helping students to develop their ability to monitor, evaluate and regulate their learning (Cheng & Fox, 2017; Stiggins, 2005). The results also lead us to agree with the suggestion in the L2 assessment literature that dynamic, contingent and non-contrived EFL or ESL teaching-learning interaction that analyzes and evaluates students' situated performance needs to be held to be at the heart of effective teaching and learning (Leung, 2004).

In addition, the finding about the positive relationships between student self-assessment and various aspects of their learning motivation documented in this study is consistent with the theory that agency for learning resides with the student, and that self-assessment empowers students to guide their own learning and develop self-regulation skills needed for success in school (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). The finding is particularly encouraging, given the ongoing debate on how assessment for learning (AfL) practices can be established in a Confucian culture (Carless, 2011). Such outcome can be particularly useful in persuading skeptics of the value of student peer- and self-assessment practices, and in this sense promotion of student self-assessment can contribute to development of positive attitude, learning quality enhancement, and gaining in students' confidence to engage in meaningful learning. The result supports Gibbs' (2016) criticism of emphasis in much current higher education on teachers designing all aspects of courses, specifying all outcomes and assessing student learning achievement, with no involvement of the learners themselves. Note that only one third of the students in this study reported 'often' or 'always' experiencing

these assessment practices. For example, the frequencies of ‘often’ or ‘always’ evaluating their own learning performance were 24.9% and 14 % of the students respectively. Clearly, the full value of student self-assessment practices in these two schools in empowering students to guide their learning and become responsible and effective learners (Black, 2015; Davin & Donato, 2013; Gan & Yang, 2018; Littlewood, 2018) is yet to be realized. Given its contribution to positive course attitude and learning confidence identified in this study, and its important role in self-regulation which is widely recognised as a hallmark of competent disciplinary practice (Zimmerman, 2002), there is a pressing need for wider student self-assessment implementation within the two schools.

It is intriguing to consider why teacher monitoring contributed significantly positively to EFL classroom anxiety and most positively to students’ lack of self-confidence. Teacher monitoring in this study refers to assessment practices such as use of student portfolio work to assess their learning progress. In a personal communication with some English teachers in the two schools involved in this study, it was found that those teacher monitoring practices often involved publically ranking students based on students’ results in end-of-the-unit tests or mid-term or end-of-term examinations, which created considerable anxiety and pressure to students who had to compete with each other. Brookhart (2001) reminds us that if assessment has been judgmental, rather than informational, and the assessment was not good, some students may simply consign themselves to the ‘not a good student’ category; however, if assessment has been informational, students may learn to use assessment information as a guide or check for their own self-assessment. The findings of this study thus indicate a need for school administrators and teachers to improve the way current teacher monitoring practices are conducted.

Finally, the generally higher level of intrinsic motivation and more positive attitude toward the EFL course on the part of students from the urban school documented in this study may be due to two possibilities. First, urban schools tend to be equipped with better teaching and learning resources throughout the region where this study was conducted. Second, for students studying in rural schools, their English learning is almost exclusively confined to the classroom, whereas students studying in urban schools are usually able to get access to a wider range of English learning and use opportunities in both naturalistic and classroom settings. The result that students from the rural school probably experienced in-class use of quizzes more often whereas students from the urban school experienced teacher-guided student-centered learning activities more often suggest that teacher instruction in the rural school’s English course might highly focus on ensuring students’ direct grasp of subject content knowledge and skills while teacher instruction in the urban school’s English course might often be accompanied with innovative pedagogical practices such as teacher-guided student reflective learning activities.

Conclusion and Implications

This study has drawn on research in general education, L2 assessment, and L2 motivation to investigate the relationships between various EFL classroom assessment practices and students’ learning motivation, thereby contributing to knowledge about what classroom assessment practices students experience in an EFL context as well as the influences of classroom assessments on learning motivation. The study found that teacher-student interactive-informal assessment and student self-assessment were the best predictors of students’ intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward the EFL course. These findings are congruent with a growing recognition in research that meaningful assessment is at the heart of effective classroom teaching and learning. Currently in most schools across Asia, however, assessment practices such as interactive-informative assessment and student self-assessment do not count towards the school qualifications assessments and may even be ignored by the EFL teachers. This study suggests that it is time to shift attention to these interaction-oriented and feedback-giving assessment practices, and focus more on the students’ views of assessment (Yu & Jin, 2014; Wallace, 2018), although classroom teachers may face a great challenge in experimenting with such innovative meaningful assessment that is increasingly viewed as the part and parcel of caring and whole person education. Consequently, given the

crucial roles teachers play in meeting the emerging needs of their students, professional development work needs to be implemented to raise teachers' awareness of the vision, volition, and ability needed to effect changes to deeply embedded testing practices that characterize much of the current teaching and learning in secondary EFL classrooms.

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