

METHODOLOGY

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# Promoting self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy of EFL learners through authentic assessment in EFL classrooms

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## Abstract

The present research tried to prompt self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy of EFL learners through authentic assessment in Iranian EFL classrooms. To do so, 57 Iranian EFL learners were chosen and assigned to two equal groups; the Experimental Group (EG) and the Control Group (CG). Then, three questionnaires were administered to assess the respondents' self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy before doing the treatment. After that, the EG received the treatment via using authentic assessments whereas the CG received the instruction through non-authentic assessments. After teaching 15 English passages to both groups, three post-tests were administered to them to determine the effects of the treatment on their self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy. Lastly, the attitude questionnaire was given to the EG students to assess their attitudes toward implementing authentic assessments in EFL classes. The outcomes of ANCOVA revealed that there were significant differences between the post-tests of the EG and the CG. The results displayed that the EG noticeably outdid the CG in self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy post-tests. In addition, the results showed that the EG held a positive attitude toward using authentic assessment in EFL classes. It can be concluded that applying authentic assessment in EFL classes can bring about constructive impacts for EFL learners. The findings of this investigation can be extremely valuable for EFL teachers and material designers to consider the impacts of authentic assessments and invest more in using these sorts of assessments.

**Keywords:** Authentic assessment, Autonomy, Self-efficacy, EFL learners, Self-regulated learning

## Introduction

Assessment is a vital aspect of language learning and teaching. One type of assessment is the authentic assessment which is a process-oriented method of assessing students' communicative competencies, cognitive skills, and affective learning by incorporating reflective assessment methods into pertinent activities in the classrooms (for instance, language portfolios, communicative performance assessments, and self-assessments) (Finch, 2002; Karunanayaka & Naidu, 2021). It emphasizes curriculum objectives, improving personal competence, and integrating instructions

and assessments. Mueller (2005) considers authentic assessment as a style of assessment in which testees are urged to take on real-world tasks that show how they have applied fundamental knowledge and abilities. The activities are either exact duplicates of or comparable to the kinds of issues that adults or professionals encounter in the real world.

When authentic assessments encourage pupils to apply their knowledge and abilities to novel circumstances or to complete activities from the real world, they are thought to be more realistic (Capperucci, 2019; Villarroel et al., 2017). Before use, the authentic assessment's principles must be meticulously examined to create a structure that is compatible with the nature of the courses or subjects being evaluated. Thus, it is essential to take into consideration philosophy, psychology, linguistic perspective, theories, principles, and other relevant information. As a result, substantial planning must go into the conception and implementation of authentic assessment in teaching and learning (Butler, 2020; Ferguson, 2018).

Real-world exercises that highlight students' aptitude for tackling genuine problems are a common feature of authentic exams, which tend to benefit pupils. Authentic assessment can provide students with the chance to learn creatively and help them build certain graduate-level skills (Wiggins, 2003). To assess students' knowledge and comprehension of reading texts, teachers must create real-world scenarios. The term "authentic assessment" is referred to a diversity of evaluation methods that take into account students' performance, learning, motivation, and attitudes concerning instructional pertinent classroom activities (Forsyth & Evans, 2019; Kwiatkowska, 2010).

Performance evaluations, portfolios, writing samples, student self-assessments, projects and exhibitions, conferences and interviews, experiments or demonstrations, responses to readings, observations, peer evaluations, and journals like language-learning logs, dialogue journals, acculturation logs, etc. are just a few examples of alternatives that fall under the category of authentic assessment (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). When utilized properly, authentic evaluation can have priceless advantages, especially when it comes to giving people the information they need to reflect and make decisions. While authentic assessment requires that students be informed of the evaluation criteria in advance, it also provides a significant deal of opportunity for transparency (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010; Janse van Rensburg et al., 2021). Above all the benefits, however, may be that it aids in integrating excellent teaching and assessment. We concur with Tudor (2001) that the field of language teaching has grounds to be proud of the accomplishments made in the last four or five decades when educators can achieve this.

One type of authentic assessment is the portfolio which is defined as a compilation of student's work, which demonstrates how much effort they have put into their work, their progress and achievement in their learning, and their reflection on the materials chosen for the portfolio (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Portfolio also provides learners with opportunities to learn from their own errors in writing. Learners are involved in the revision process, which facilitates their thinking and organizational skills. Reflection is very crucial here as it contributes to students' 'real' learning. Learners can reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their writing with the use of portfolio assessments. In this respect, portfolio assessments serve as a learning tool as well as an assessment tool (Cinkara & Au, 2019).

Using authentic assessment can increase the autonomy of the students in different contexts. Learner autonomy is the independent pursuit of knowledge (Bakar, 2007). It is the capability and competence to assume control and take greater responsibility for their education (Smith, 2008). Independent of the input of teachers, autonomous learners arrange and monitor their learning processes, create learning targets, and employ ways to evaluate the results (Lengkanawati, 2017). Independent of their teachers, autonomous learners are accountable, persistent, resourceful, and proactive in their language learning decisions (Lin & Reinders, 2019; Villarroel et al., 2019). They learn more effectively thanks to this independence than they would if they actively relied on their teachers (Rao, 2018). It lessens students' reliance on teachers and increases their capacity for self-reflection, which is a useful technique for learning from both successes and failures (Bensons and Voller, 2014; Nieminen et al., 2022).

For improving their foreign language learning and developing communicative competence without the help of a teacher, students need to be more active, participatory, and accountable in their language learning. This is because the main objective of learning a foreign language is to apply it for various communicative purposes (Najeeb, 2013; Tumasang, 2022). The decision to learn rests with the individual students (Rao, 2018). From this quick overview, it is clear that learner autonomy refers to an independent learning process where students define their own learning objectives, plan their own learning, assume more responsibility for their learning, and self-reflect on their progress.

Authentic assessment can also develop EFL learners' self-efficacy. According to Cubukcu (2008), self-efficacy is referred to students' confidence in their capacity to accomplish tasks effectively. The way students assess their academic competency is a quality that Pajares (2006) adds to the definition above. Self-efficacy has an impact on our choices, actions, and attempts when dealing with difficulties as an affective variable (Bandura, 1986; Rezai et al., 2022). It influences how anxious we feel when performing tasks. As a result, our behavior choices are influenced by our level of self-efficacy. Insofar as pupils with higher levels of self-efficacy put out more effort and are more persistent than students with lower levels, it is believed that self-efficacy is a more reliable forecaster of accomplishment and success than other pertinent factors. Self-efficacy affects how emotionally responsive a person is. When faced with challenges, people with poor self-efficacy could see the condition as more demanding and challenging than it actually is. Individuals may experience greater levels of anxiety and stress as a result, which could demotivate them while they attempt to overcome the difficulties (Marrahí-Gómez & Belda-Medina, 2022; Rahimi & Abedini, 2009).

In addition, using authentic assessment can improve self-regulation learning in EFL contexts. Self-regulation is "the act of choosing an objective for oneself and involving in behavioral and cognitive processes that result in goal achievement," according to Bandura (1986, p. 79). "Learning that arises from learners' self-produced cognition and behaviors that are systematically focused towards the fulfillment of their learning objectives is referred to as self-regulation (or self-regulated instruction)" (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2003, p.59).

Self-regulated learning respects both personally directed learning styles, such as discovery learning, and social learning styles, such as asking for assistance from peers, parents, or instructors (Zimmerman, 2008). Giving pupils the skills to self-regulate leads to

their academic success and lifetime learning (Postholm, 2011; Young, 2005). Self-regulation can help students develop better study habits, enhance their learning abilities, and apply learning techniques to increase their academic knowledge (Newman & Newman, 2020; Carter Jr et al., 2020).

Regarding the importance of the defined variables, this study tried to examine the effects of authentic assessment on Iranian EFL students' self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy. Doing this study can be significant as it covers a topic that has not been worked on yet in Iranian EFL contexts. Also, it includes the variables that are related to the psychological aspects of language learning. In addition, this study can generate positive results for EFL learners, teachers, and material designers.

## Literature review

### Theoretical background

Assessment is a systematic information-gathering technique. It is a crucial component of the learning-teaching process which assists instructors to assess their instructional strategies and gives them the necessary data on the advancement of the students. Assessment, as defined by Huhta (2008), is "all sorts of processes utilized to help people (e.g., quizzes, informal observations, interviews, self-assessments, and tests)" (p. 469). To track student growth and gauge their capacity to grasp fundamental abilities, teachers should regularly evaluate their students.

One sort of assessment is authentic assessment. The best way to define authentic assessment is to include replicas of the real professional world in the assessment activities (Larkin, 2014). With meaningful assessment, students are given the chance to exercise cooperation, networking, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving skills. According to a sociocultural perspective, genuine assessment gives students a chance to study with their classmates since it promotes social growth through engagement in deep learning (Bohemia et al., 2012). This viewpoint is related to Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development, in which skills like reflective reflection, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking are frequently used in classroom genuine assessment (Joshua and Xiao, 2022; Kricsfalussy, 2018; Namaziandost et al., 2022).

The characteristics of authentic assignments, which engage students through collaboration with their classmates in a social learning setting, were discussed by Koh (2017). Problem-based learning and learner-centered pedagogy are both used for learning in this situation. Students are introduced to the notion of pedagogy which stands for developing peer assistance, cooperative learning, and exchanging thoughts through working with and being evaluated by peers (Herlo, 2014). The social-constructivist approach, which was influential in creating twenty-first century class assessments and leading to the application of authentic assessments in the classrooms, was not just a product of Vygotsky.

Mueller (2008) defined authentic assessment as a type of assessment in which testees are required to complete real-world activities that determine important applications of fundamental skills and knowledge. Therefore, authentic assessments are the tasks that call for students to show real-world performances in a meaningful way that is the application of the core of their knowledge and abilities. In agreement with the aforementioned viewpoint, Barnawi (2022) and Shojaei et al. (2022) likewise link true judgment

to authentic judgment. Students must demonstrate learning results in the form of real-world skills to receive an authentic assessment from us; these abilities should not only be learned in the classrooms or be made up; they must also be used in daily life.

Authentic assessment during the learning process can gauge, monitor, and assess every facet of learning outcomes (which fall under the psychomotor, affective, and cognitive domains), both as the culmination of a learning process and in the form of adjustments and the development of activities, as well as learning acquisition during the learning process in and outside of the classrooms (Bhatti et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2022). This is consistent with the viewpoint expressed by Nurgiyantoro (2015), who claims that genuine assessments place a high value on simultaneously evaluating the process and the results. As a result, the full performance of pupils in the sequences of learning tasks can be evaluated objectively, as is, and not just based on the outcomes.

The qualities of authentic assessment in practice, according to Muslich (2011), are inseparable from classroom learning, a reflection of the actual world, utilizing a variety of measuring tools, techniques, and criteria, and are holistic and comprehensive, including several domains (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). Real-world circumstances and tasks are used to reflect and gauge a student's performance in authentic assessments (Agastya et al., 2022). In this genuine evaluation, make an effort to push pupils to use fresh academic knowledge and abilities in practical contexts for a particular goal. Pupils are the primary agents in the process of learning since they are required to employ analyses, applications, and syntheses in addition to learning by rote and understanding abilities (Azizi et al., 2022; Larsari, 2021).

The term "authentic assessment" refers to an evaluation that takes the form of a procedure for gathering diverse data that might give a general picture of student learning development. The evolution of knowledge acquired and the accomplishment of the process of learning are all outlined in the implementation of learning (Abdul Aziz et al., 2020; Azizi & Namaziandost, 2023). Doing regular and ongoing evaluations is one of the things that are carried out to be able to manage the quality of instruction. Widana et al. (2021) claimed that the evaluation system is a crucial part of education and that the learning milieu is an external aspect in determining learning results. Since they have an effect on students' attitudes and the learning programs used, evaluations of student learning are crucial for educators to do, but they must be done carefully.

In agreement with the aforementioned viewpoint, Paisal and Yen (2019) asserted that assessment is a crucial component of the learning process and that the assessment model should be compatible with the instructional strategy employed in the classroom. The evaluation approach used to gauge whether learning objectives were met must be consistent with the actual learning process. Students acquired knowledge and abilities are evaluated through authentic evaluation. The traits of the assessment activities, which measure performance and skills and are ongoing, combined, and can be applied as feedback, can be used formatively, summatively, or during and after the learning process.

Also, based on Widana et al. (2021), authentic assessment involves the instructor gathering data on the progress and success of learning through a variety of methods that can indicate, verify, or otherwise clearly show that the learning objective has been properly grasped and accomplished. Furthermore, Sutadji et al. (2021) assert that authentic evaluation enables instructors to evaluate higher-order thinking, in contrast to conventional

exams that concentrate on memory facts and other superficial information. The process of learning and progress and learning outcomes can all be assessed authentically by instructors. As a result, authentic assessment is the process of gathering, reporting, and utilizing data on the learning consequences of students while employing assessment, incessant execution, and genuine, precise, and reliable evidence as a form of public responsibility (Wiyaka, 2020).

An instructor must select the assessment tool(s) or technique(s) that best illustrate the practical and theoretical knowledge and abilities acquired by the target panel of pupils while also aligning with the learning outcomes. It was important to create a menu of the sorts, forms, approaches, and instruments to assist teachers in the planning, creation, and implementation of assessments after deciding in favor of authentic assessment (Dixon, 2022). Today's classrooms employ a variety of reliable evaluation methods, including the following:

There are eight different kinds of genuine assessment, based on O'Malley and Pierce (1996, p. 11–14):

1. Oral interviews

Teachers may ask pupils probing questions to find out how well they understand particular linguistic concepts. The questions here allow for spoken responses from the pupils. Interviews between students may also be conducted; in this situation, the teacher's job is to watch and provide helpful criticism.

2. Retelling

Students create oral reports or writings that are scored according to language proficiency or subject as well as rubrics to determine reading strategies, comprehension, and language growth. The key concepts of the text will be retold by the pupils as they read or listen to it. After then, teachers and students can quiz each other on the text to find out how well each other knows the subject.

3. Writing sample

Students write letters, essays, newspaper articles, research papers, and other written materials. For instance, it can be graded using criteria such as rubrics or specialized scales that contain writing standards that can assess a student's mastery of the task or piece of work.

4. Exhibitions and projects

Students work independently or in groups to construct projects, which are then presented orally and in writing. Presentations or oral/written reports by students are observed, graded, and assessed using rubrics and oriented scales and metrics.

5. Demonstrations and experiments

To utilize practical or theoretical knowledge in situations in real life, learners are wanted to follow specific steps. After observing the outcomes of these experiments, they are then required to draw conclusions and/or make revisions, updates, word changes, etc. to develop themselves. Students may be inspired to contribute or exchange the knowledge they have discovered with their peers through demonstrations. By doing this,



students get experience with real-world scenarios and get to work on their oral and written communication abilities.

#### 6. Constructed response items

Students must formulate their comments by either evaluating the circumstance or the information provided or by providing justifications, examples, ideas, etc. The responses can be brief—one sentence—or longer—an essay or report—requiring the pupils to go into further depth.

#### 7. Teacher observation

To make sure that the students are focused on the tasks at hand and producing results, teachers watch their pupils' work and pay attention to their everyday interactions. To enable teachers to provide feedback and monitor the learning process, it is strongly advised to record observations with anecdotal notes or rating systems.

#### 8. Portfolios

It is a deliberate gathering of learners' work or artifacts demonstrating their mastery or competency in particular subject areas, as well as their gradual self-observations of their own advancement. It is a great approach to show how the children have improved over time.

The portfolio assessment is a purposeful and systematic collection of student's work that is intended to show progress over time. Portfolio assessment has been used as an alternative approach to standardized testing for more than two decades (Biglari et al., 2021). It commonly refers to a print or web-based dossier, where students regularly revisit and evaluate their learning trajectories by way of multimodal artifacts (Muin et al., 2021). Portfolio assessment in education aims to equip learners with self-reflective capacity so that they can monitor, review, and improve their academic performances independently of the teacher's instructed guidance (Cho, 2021).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) recommend using the following types in addition to the ones already mentioned: self- and peer-evaluation applying rubrics planning to engage learners in the assessment process and concentrate on what was conducted well and what needs to be modified while offering suggestions for development. This kind of evaluation enables students to learn from one another's perspectives and hone their analytical and problem-solving abilities. Performance tasks that are typically indistinguishable during education and allow instructors and students to learn what they have learned and what additional steps need to be taken are other suggested tools. According to Burke (2009), journals and graphic organizers are two distinct types of authentic assessment that emphasized helping students become more independent and self-directed learners. Burke (2009) also recommended applying teacher-generated tests on the condition of providing the questions and tasks to assess skills and knowledge in real contexts.

### Empirical background

The efficacy of portfolio-based assessment as a type of authentic evaluation in EFL contexts was examined by Taki and Heidari (2011). Forty Iranian EFL learners participated in the study. They were split into groups of 20 each for the CG and EG conditions. The

EG composed essays on five predetermined subjects taken from their coursebook. Two raters reviewed each student's writing to assess its concepts, structure, voice, word choice, sentence flow, and writing conventions. Students were given one additional chance to edit their writings before receiving new corrections. The CG students only wrote once, and their teacher was the only one to edit it. For evaluating the participants' reflections and self-evaluation, a questionnaire was also asked of them. The study's findings suggested that portfolio-based writing assessment enhances both language learning and writing skills. Also, it demonstrated that almost all students are happy with this technique of assessment and that it aids in students' self-evaluation.

The usefulness of portfolio evaluation in improving the expository writing skills of L2 learners was explored by Roohani and Taheri (2015). The EG and CG classes were made up of 44 undergraduate EFL students from two institutions' two writing classes, and the pretests and post-tests were expository writing tasks. The EG students were trained by using portfolio assessment practices whereas the CG students received instruction using the conventional methods of learning and evaluation. The EG participants outperformed the CG participants in terms of their expository writing abilities in general and the sub-skills of focus, support, and organization in particular, based on the outcomes of the research. Yet, there were no appreciable differences in how well the two groups performed when it came to writing conventions and vocabulary.

Research on the implementation of authentic assessment in EFL-speaking classrooms was done by Inayah et al. (2019). An English instructor and 28 pupils from a class at one of Banda Aceh's junior high schools served as the study's subjects. The data in this research came from observations and document analyses and falls under the descriptive qualitative approach heading. According to the study's findings, teachers employed a variety of techniques to evaluate their students' speaking abilities, including (1) attitude evaluation, (2) knowledge assessment, and (3) skill assessment. According to the findings of the research, authentic assessment can be utilized to evaluate learners' speaking abilities and must also be applied to evaluate other language acquisition skills.

At MTS, Afriadi et al. (2021) looked into the implementation of authentic assessments in speaking classes. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach. Direct interviews with subject instructors and questionnaires were applied to gather the data. The teaching and learning processes of three English teachers were watched as examples, while 43 eighth-grade students served as the survey's respondents. According to the findings of this study, accurate evaluation was required to evaluate language learners and determine their aptitude for learning languages, particularly English.

To determine how frequently authentic evaluation was used in English language schools, Ahmed et al. (2021) conducted a research. The problem was solved quantitatively in this study, and 95 instructors took part in the research. The outcomes revealed that the teacher participants understood the value of authentic assessment and had even attempted to utilize it to supplement informal observations in the classroom. Yet, the majority of respondents continued to use the conventional types of evaluation more frequently when it came to employing the formal sorts of assessments.

Anjarsari and Febriani (2022) looked into how authentic assessment could help students in online English literature courses improve their reading comprehension. With the type of case study utilized in this study, a qualitative methodology was applied.



Interviews and online class observations provided the research data (semi-structured). Participants in this study were purposefully chosen from among English education instructors at a university in West Java. The authentic evaluation was applied by the lecturer in online learning for English literature courses, according to the findings of the class observations. The instructor employed text-based teaching techniques, occasional references from journals, and Zoom Meetings for learning media. Via examples of replies to students' written literary works as a type of presentation activity, it was demonstrated that using authentic assessments enhanced the reading skills of the students.

The literature reviews show that using authentic assessments can help students develop their English language learning. Also, the literature review indicates that there is a paucity of empirical research on the effectiveness of using authentic assessments in developing Iranian EFL learners' self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy. Therefore, this survey attempted to discover the effectiveness of authentic assessment in promoting self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy of Iranian EFL learners. Accordingly, the following research questions were posed:

RQ1. Is Iranian EFL learners' self-regulated learning promoted by using authentic assessment?

RQ2. Is Iranian EFL learners' self-efficacy promoted by using authentic assessment?

RQ3. Is Iranian EFL learners' autonomy promoted by using authentic assessment?

Based on the research questions, three null hypotheses were offered:

HO1. Iranian EFL learners' self-regulated learning is not promoted by using authentic assessment.

HO2. Iranian EFL learners' self-efficacy is not promoted by using authentic assessment.

HO3. Iranian EFL learners' autonomy is not promoted by using authentic assessment.

## **Method**

### **Design of the study**

A quasi-experimental design including a pre-test, a post-test, and an attitude questionnaire was used in this study. There were one control group and one experimental group in this study. The dependent variables of the study were self-regulated learning, attitude, autonomy, and self-efficacy and the independent variable was authentic assessment.

### **Participants**

According to the outcomes of the Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT), 57 participants were chosen from a panel of 79 learners. They were chosen from the Melal English Language Institute in Ahvaz, Iran, based on a non-random sampling method. The respondents' level of English proficiency was intermediate, and they ranged in age from 18 to 28. Persian was the participants' first language, and because of the gender segregation in

Iran, we could select only male students. Two equal groups—the CG and the EG—of the target participants were chosen at random.

### Instruments

The OQPT was the first tool utilized in the current study. The individuals were homogenized using this test. Knowing what level (e.g., elementary, pre-intermediate, or intermediate) her participants were at helped the researcher better comprehend them. Based on the test's 60 multiple-choice questions, 57 intermediate students were regarded as the target participants of the current research.

The Self-Regulatory Strategies Scale (SRSS), which was created by Kadioğlu et al. (2011) to evaluate the participants' self-regulation abilities, served as the second and most crucial tool for data collection. The SRSS was a 6-point Likert scale with the following response options: never, very rarely, occasionally, frequently, and constantly. The SRSS has eight dimensions and 29 statements in all. The Cronbach's alpha formula results revealed that the SRSS's dependability was .82.

The Ghonsooly and Elahi (2008) self-efficacy questionnaire served as the study's additional tool. There were 14 5-point Likert-type questions on this survey, with answers ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." "Strongly disagree" is given a value of 1, while "strongly agree" is given a value of 5. Four English professors confirmed the questionnaire's validity, and Cronbach's alpha ( $r=0.87$ ) was used to determine its reliability. It must be noted that the research's pre-test and post-test used the aforementioned tools.

The information regarding the students' autonomy was gathered by the researchers via a questionnaire. The researchers adjusted and updated the questionnaire that Chan et al. (2002) had created. 30 questions on the survey covered cognitive, metacognitive, and social skills important to the growing autonomy of the learners. Thirty students participated in the questionnaire's pilot study. ELT specialists endorsed its validity. Moreover, the questionnaire's level of dependability ( $=0.88$ ) was good. It should be emphasized that the study's pre-test and post-test used the aforementioned questionnaires. The effects of employing authentic assessment on the students' self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy were assessed again after the instruction.

The last tool of the research was an attitude questionnaire administered to the EG students to check their ideas about utilizing authentic assessment in EFL classes. This measuring scale was prepared by the researchers by studying the related literature on authentic assessments. It had 15 5-point Likert items to show the degree of disagreement and agreement from 1 to 5 which were highly disagree, disagree, no idea, agree, and highly agree. The results of Cronbach's alpha indicated the reliability of this tool was 0.89.

### Data collection procedure

To conduct this study, the OQPT was first administered to the respondents to assess their level of ability in the English language. Out of 79 individuals, 57 were chosen to represent the study's target group. Following that, the individuals were randomly split into two groups: CG and EG. Following that, both groups received the self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-regulation questionnaires as study pre-tests. Then, the members of

the EG received the treatment via using authentic assessments. The students in the CG, on the other hand, did not receive authentic training; instead, they were instructed to utilize conventional assessments. Eleven reading texts were trained for each group; in each session, 1 text was instructed. In the first session, the idea of portfolio assessment and the purpose and the basic components of the portfolio were explained. The other sorts of alternative assessments such as self-assessment and peer assessment and their importance in the process of collecting portfolios were also explained. Another vital task in the portfolio system was portfolio compilation. The participants were required to include these main and mandatory elements in their portfolios. They were required to complete 11 reading passages of different genres.

The aforementioned questionnaires were used once more after the instruction to determine how the participants' self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-regulation were affected by the use of authentic evaluation. Finally, the attitude questionnaire was administered to the EG participants to measure their attitudes toward using authentic assessments in EFL classes.

There was a total of eighteen 45-min sessions required for the instruction. The OQPT and the questionnaires were given in the first four sessions; the participants received the treatment in the following 10 sessions; in three sessions, the participants of the two groups were given the aforementioned questionnaires to assess the effects of the treatment on their self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-regulation. In the last session, the attitude questionnaire was given to the EG group.

### Data analysis

To evaluate the collected data, SPSS software, version 22, was utilized. The descriptive statistics were first computed. Second, ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) was performed to assess how the intervention influenced the participants' sense of autonomy, self-regulation, and self-efficacy. The data from the attitude questionnaire were analyzed by using one sample *t* test.

### Results

The necessary data were gathered, and then the researchers used those data to analyze the results. It should be mentioned that the data were normal according to the results of the one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test; accordingly, the parametric statistics such as ANCOVA and one-samples *t* test were run to get the final results. The following tables show the specifics of the findings:

The EG's mean score was 46.21, while the CG's was 34.44, as shown in Table 1. On the self-efficacy post-test, it appears that the EG performed better than the CG. The

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics for both groups on the post-tests for self-efficacy

Groups	Mean	Std. deviation	N
CG	34.44	7.43	29
EG	46.21	12.62	28
Total	40.22	11.82	57

one-way ANCOVA test was applied to the following table to see whether the difference between the self-efficacy post-test results of the two groups was statistically significant:

According to Table 2, Sig is .00, which is less than 0.05, indicating that there was a significant difference between the two groups' self-efficacy post-test results. On the self-efficacy post-test, the EG outperformed the CG.

The descriptive data for both groups on the self-regulation post-tests are shown in Table 3. The EG's mean is 83.03, while the CG's mean is 58.62. On the self-regulation post-test, it appears that the EG outperformed the CG. One-way ANCOVA test in the following table might be used to accept or reject this claim:

Given that the Sig (0.00) value in Table 4 is less than 0.05, the difference between the two groups is significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). Because of the training they had received, the EG actually outperformed the CG on the self-regulation post-test.

The EG's mean score was 78.85, while the CG's mean score was 45.82, as shown in Table 5. On the autonomy post-test, it appears that the EG outperformed the CG. In the following table, the One-way ANCOVA test was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the autonomy post-tests of the two groups:

**Table 2** Inferential statistics of both groups on the self-efficacy post-tests

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Corrected model	3864.82	2	1932.41	26.34	.00
Intercept	174.61	1	174.61	2.38	.12
Pre	1892.67	1	1892.67	25.80	.00
Groups	1837.73	1	1837.73	25.05	.00
Error	3961.20	54	73.35		
Total	100,069.00	57			
Corrected total	7826.03	56			

**Table 3** Descriptive statistics of both groups on the self-regulation post-tests

Groups	Mean	Std. deviation	N
CG	58.62	11.32	29
EG	83.03	29.59	28
Total	70.61	25.26	57

**Table 4** Inferential statistics of both groups on the self-regulation post-tests

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Corrected model	16,233.81	2	8116.91	22.47	.00
Intercept	241.68	1	241.68	.66	.41
Pre	7742.10	1	7742.10	21.44	.00
Groups	7799.19	1	7799.19	21.59	.00
Error	19,499.68	54	361.10		
Total	319,955.00	57			
Corrected total	35,733.50	56			

**Table 5** Descriptive statistics of both groups on the autonomy post-tests

Groups	Means	Std. deviations	N
CG	45.82	7.93	29
EG	78.85	26.49	28
Total	62.05	25.44	57

**Table 6** Inferential statistics of both groups on the autonomy post-tests

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Corrected model	20,204.40	2	10,102.20	33.97	.00
Intercept	303.91	1	303.91	1.02	.31
Pre	4663.12	1	4663.12	15.68	.00
Groups	14,767.20	1	14,767.20	49.65	.00
Error	16,058.44	54	297.37		
Total	255,743.00	57			
Corrected total	36,262.84	56			

Table 6 shows that Sig is .00, which is less than 0.05, indicating that there was a significant difference between the two groups' autonomy post-test results. The EG conducted better on the autonomy post-test than the CG, as seen in the table.

All mean scores of the items in Table 7 are higher than 3.00. This means that the students' attitudes toward using authentic assessments were positive. All the students agreed on all statements in the questionnaire because all items had mean scores higher than 3.00 (Table 8).

As seen, the mean score of all items is 4.30 and their standard deviation is 0.20. This indicates that the students of the EG had favorable attitudes towards using authentic assessments in EFL classes.

Table 9 displays that  $t$  is 83.29,  $df$  is 14, and Sig is 0.00 which is smaller than 0.05. This implies that the participants held positive attitudes toward applying authentic assessments in Iranian EFL classrooms.

In summary, the results show that the EG outdid the CG on the three post-tests of self-regulated learning, autonomy, and self-efficacy. Furthermore, the outcomes indicate that the EG presented a positive attitude toward applying authentic assessment in EFL classes.

## Discussion

The collected data were evaluated to find answers to the study questions and the outcomes indicated a difference between the post-test outcomes for the experimental and control groups. Based on the results in the previous section, the EG students conducted better on the post-tests for self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-regulation. The outcomes demonstrated that utilizing authentic assessments could aid EFL students in fostering self-efficacy, autonomy, and self-regulation. In addition, the findings revealed that the EG confirmed the effectiveness of the authentic assessment on their language learning by presenting a positive attitude towards authentic assessment in EFL classes.

**Table 7** Students' attitudes toward using authentic assessments

	Highly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Highly agree	Mean
1. Authentic assessments support students in getting self-directed learners	0	1	2	12	13	4.32
2. Authentic assessments develop the autonomy of EFL learners	1	1	5	10	11	4.03
3. Authentic assessments enhance EFL learners' self-efficacy	0	0	5	8	15	4.35
4. Authentic assessments reduce the anxiety of EFL students	0	2	1	10	15	4.35
5. Authentic assessments assist students to have more interactions with each other	0	0	1	9	18	4.60
6. Authentic assessments increase EFL learners' language learning motivation	1	2	0	10	15	4.28
7. Authentic assessments are superior to the traditional assessments	0	0	1	13	14	4.46
8. Authentic assessments lead to successful language learning	1	1	2	12	11	4.00
9. I want my teachers to use authentic assessments in my English classes	0	1	1	10	16	4.46
10. Authentic assessments help students to show their abilities in real-life contexts	0	0	1	12	15	4.50
11. Authentic assessments help learners be creative learners	1	0	2	15	10	4.03
12. I think that authentic assessments are more attractive and motivating for us	0	2	2	12	12	4.21
13. Authentic assessments provide students a platform to learn together with their peers	0	0	2	7	19	4.60
14. I think authentic assessments encourage cooperative learning among students	0	2	2	8	16	4.35
15. Authentic assessments can yield precious benefits in EFL classes	1	2	1	13	11	4.10

**Table 8** Descriptive statistics of one-sample test of the questionnaire

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Questionnaire	15	4.30	.20	.05

**Table 9** Inferential statistics of one-sample test of the questionnaire

	Test value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
					Lower	Upper
Questionnaire	83.29	14	.00	4.30	4.19	4.42

The results of this investigation are endorsed by those of earlier studies. Anjarsari and Febriani (2022), who studied the use of authentic evaluations in boosting students' reading comprehension in online learning for English Literature courses, for instance,



complement our findings. Their study revealed that using authentic assessment as a sort of presentation task could improve learners' reading skills by providing evidence of reactions to students' written literary works. Furthermore, the findings of Biglari et al. (2021) showed that the portfolio assessment, a type of authentic assessment, produced a construction impact on Iranian EFL students' autonomy at both upper-intermediate and advanced levels is consistent with the findings of the current study. They also revealed that portfolio assessments generated a constructive important impact on the writing skills of Iranian EFL students.

Furthermore, our findings are in keeping with those of Inayah et al. (2019), who inspected the use of authentic assessment in an EFL-speaking classroom. They concluded that implementing authentic evaluation was a useful tool for improving speaking ability in EFL learners. Afriadi et al. (2020), who confirmed the benefits of employing authentic evaluation on the improvement of speaking abilities in EFL students, concur with the current results, which are also in line with them. The results obtained are also consistent with Taki and Heidari's (2011) study on the efficacy of portfolio-based assessment as a kind of authentic evaluation in EFL contexts. They discovered that writing proficiency and language learning benefited from portfolio-based assessment. It also showed that it helped students' self-assessment and almost all participants were satisfied with this type of assessment.

Our findings are consistent with those of Roohani and Taheri (2015), who looked at the efficacy of portfolio evaluation as a sort of authentic evaluation of L2 learners' expository writing skills. According to their findings, the EG's participants fared better than those in the control group in terms of their ability to write expository essays in general and their sub-skills of organization, support, and focus in particular. The outcomes are also consistent with Askarzadeh and Mall-Amir (2020) Amir's findings that portfolio assessments can effectively measure EFL students' critical thinking and speaking abilities.

The success of authentic assessment can be attributed to a number of beneficial characteristics. For instance, using authentic assessment techniques can help students develop their character and skills since they expose them to real-world situations. This means that teachers should assess students appropriately using real-world examples from their daily lives if the authentic assessment is being used to develop their language abilities. Also, the value of authentic assessment affects instructional choices and involves kids in assessing their own work. The procedure is tailored to the learner and teaching approach. When students take formal norm-referenced tests, the process is monitored less frequently. Both teachers and students become learners when assessment and instruction are integrated. Although students are more self-directed, driven, and focused on learning, teachers concentrate on what and how to teach. The aforementioned characteristics may be the cause of the EG's superior performance on the post-tests compared to the CG.

Furthermore, authentic assessment gave teachers and students the power to make decisions. Thus, it is our duty as educators to comprehend the components of excellent authentic assessment. Genuine assessment can be thought of as a methodical, organized gathering of data that the teacher uses to track the development of the students' content-area knowledge, skills, and attitudes. As authentic assessment necessitates collaboration

between the instructor and student to generate successful teaching and learning processes, it is not just the responsibility of the teacher to do it (Arikunto, 2002).

Students can always effectively demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a genuine evaluation. According to Moon (2005), authentic assessment possesses the following traits: focusing on key concepts, big ideas, or skill-specific abilities; conducting an in-depth assessment; being simple to carry out in a classroom or school situation; emphasizing product quality or performance of the single answer; helping pupils build their skills and learning mastery; having criteria that are known, understood, and agreed upon by pupils and instructors before the assessment initiates; and offering numerous opportunities for students to demonstrate that it. Furthermore, according to Haryono (2009), instructors and students have responded well to the implementation of authentic assessment in schools. Compared to conventional evaluation methods, more authentic assessment results can reveal information on constant learning consequences (paper and pencil tests). The benefits of an accurate assessment that has been presented can serve as reasons for the outcomes we have attained.

The improvement of students' English language acquisition depends heavily on authentic assessment. It is a powerful educational strategy as well as an assessment tool that can show that a person has the necessary information and abilities. Authentic assessment can be employed as a suitable mechanism in the EFL environment since teaching, learning, and assessment are interconnected. It has a favorable impact on the autonomy, self-efficacy, and self-regulation of EFL students' language skill development as well as on these traits. In actuality, assessment must be viewed as a cooperative formative process that aids students in setting a goal to advance their skills. The learners take charge of their own education. At the same time, they learned how to be self-governing and autonomous which is the purpose of the assessment and learning.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that adopting authentic evaluation methods can give valuable insight into the learning process. Together with receiving feedback from teachers, student's participation in the assessment process and self-evaluation are seen as additional opportunities for them to practice their independence and close the knowledge gap between what has been taught and what has been learnt. Researchers have a technique for evaluating, diagnosing, and providing feedback in the authentic assessment that engages learners, helping them to become more independent, accountable, and creative. It should be noted that in authentic assessment, learners can be encouraged to develop their general English proficiency as well as other skills and sub-skills by giving them feedback and involving them in the learning process.

This research has some limitations; the participants of the research included male students; the outcomes may not be generalizable to the female learners. Due to some limitations, only 57 students were included in our study. This research selected the intermediate students and the other levels were not included in the present research. This study can be repeated with participants who have a stronger command of the language, as learners at higher levels are expected to demonstrate a greater capacity for retrospective assessment and awareness of their skills. Hence, it is possible to compare the two alternative assessment types from their standpoint as well. Moreover, a similar study

with more people of both sexes can be conducted. Also, to strengthen the validity and dependability of their findings, future research can collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

#### Abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ANCOVA	Analysis of covariance
OQPT	Oxford Quick Placement Test
SRSS	The Self-Regulatory Strategies Scale
ELT	English Language Teaching
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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#### Authors' contributions

All authors have made equal contributions. The author(s) read and approved the final manuscript.

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#### Availability of data and materials

The authors state that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article.

#### Declarations

##### Competing interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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