

Alternative Assessment in English Language Teacher Education: A Systematic Review of Pre-service and In-service Contexts

Maftuna Artikova Abdulpattoyevna^{1,2}, Siti Salina Mustakim², Sedigheh Shakib Kotamjani¹

¹ School of Business, Central Asian University, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

² School of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Correspondence: Sedigheh Shakib Kotamjani, School of Business, Central Asian University, Tashkent, 264, Milliy bog St, Barkamol MFY, Mirzo Ulugbek district, Tashkent, 111221, Uzbekistan.

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Abstract

Alternative assessment has attracted growing interest in English language teaching as a tool to facilitate formative, authentic, and learner-centered learning. Despite the growing number of empirical studies on alternative assessment practices, evidence relevant to English language teacher education remains fragmented across contexts and levels of teacher development. To fill this gap, the current study presents a PRISMA-driven systematic literature review that synthesizes results from 37 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025 on alternative assessment practices in pre-service and in-service teacher education in English. Based on the theoretical frameworks of Assessment for Learning (AfL), Assessment as Learning (AaL) and Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), the review analyses (a) the reported types of alternative assessment practices, (b) how the alternative assessment practices are being integrated in the context of teacher education, (c) the reported benefits and challenges of the alternative assessment practices, and (d) the pedagogical, institutional and contextual conditions under which the practices are implemented. The results show that the most common assessment approaches are portfolio assessment, performance-based and competency-based assessment, peer and self-assessment, and reflective practice. Whereas pre-service programs are likely to incorporate alternative assessment through systematic, curriculum-fit approaches, in-service application is usually selective, time-limited, workload-based, and exam-culture-based. The reported improvements include reflective practice, teacher agency, and assessment literacy, as well as ongoing challenges related to reliability, institutional inconsistencies, and belief-practice disparities. The review identifies the key importance of assessment literacy and systemic alignment to maintaining alternative assessment practices and provides implications for teacher education, professional development, and assessment policy reform

Keywords: alternative assessment; English language teacher education; assessment for learning; assessment as learning; language assessment literacy; pre-service and in-service teachers

1. Introduction

Assessment is a key factor in English language teaching (ELT), not only with respect to the mode of measuring learning outcomes, but also to the formation of teaching practices, curriculum, and instructional choices. Summative and test-based methods of assessment have dominated ELT assessment for a few decades, emphasizing efficiency, standardization, and accountability (Brown, 2004; Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Although these methods are used to address institutional and certification issues, they have been widely criticized for their limited ability to assess communicative competence, higher-order thinking, and developmental progress, especially productive skills such as speaking and writing (Black & Wiliam, 2006; Fulcher, 2012).

To address these shortcomings, other assessment methods are becoming increasingly popular in ELT research and ELT pedagogy. Alternative assessment generally refers to formative, authentic, and learner-centered assessment methodologies, such as portfolios, performance-based tasks, project-based assessment, peer and self-assessment, reflective journals, and other classroom-integrated practices (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Gulikers et al., 2004). These methods do not view assessment as a final activity in the measurement process; instead, they view it as a component of learning, fully consistent with instruction and feedback. Empirical studies in language education indicate that alternative assessment has the potential to bring learners to engage, reflect, be autonomous, and learn more effectively, as it makes assessment criteria visible and emphasizes meaningful language use (Vogt et al., 2024, 2016; Koh, 2017). In this review, alternative assessment is used as a general term to describe the following types: formative, authentic, performance-based, and portfolio-based assessments; the term authentic assessment is retained only when the original studies specifically use it.

Recently, the focus in language classrooms has shifted from assessment practices to the role of assessment in teaching English. Teacher education is increasingly required to prepare teachers not only to evaluate their learners effectively but also to develop their judgment, reflection, and knowledge of assessment as a pedagogical resource (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; DeLuca et al., 2016). In this context, evaluation is often understood broadly as assessment for learning (AfL) and assessment as learning (AaL) (Oo & Alonzo, 2023).

AfL focuses on using evaluation evidence to guide instruction and provide learners with formative feedback, whereas AaL emphasizes learners' active role in tracking and controlling their own learning through self-evaluation and reflection (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Wolterinck, 2024; Ndlovu, 2025).

In line with these views is the construct of language assessment literacy (LAL), defined as the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and ethical awareness of teachers regarding the design, implementation, interpretation, and use of assessment (Fulcher, 2012; Xu & Brown, 2016; Chang, 2024). LAL is becoming a primary professional competency in English language teacher education because teachers must navigate the complexities of assessment, the roles of formative and summative assessment, and the pressures of institutional accountability (Cui et al., 2025; Vogt, 2024). Alternative assessment practices are crucial in this process because they give teacher candidates and in-service teachers chances to engage in authentic assessment design, reflective assessment, and principled decision-making (Giraldo & Yan, 2025).

In teacher education, alternative assessment plays a twofold role. It is initially used to evaluate the learning and professional growth of pre-service and in-service teachers through reflective portfolios, practicum-based performance tasks, peer feedback, and competency-based assessments (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Esfandiari et al., 2025). Second, it serves as an educational paradigm, influencing how educators design assessments and how they are expected to implement assessment practices in their classrooms. The alternative assessment is frequently incorporated into pre-service pre-service teacher education contexts, coursework, and teaching practice, where more structured reflection and facilitated feedback are emphasized (Xu & Liu, 2025). Alternative assessment is more commonly used in in-service settings, where it is embedded in routine classroom practice and guided by curriculum requirements, time constraints, and examination-focused assessment cultures (Cheng et al., 2015; Aknouch, 2023; Almutawa, 2025).

Although empirical research on alternative assessment in ELT and teacher education has increased over time, the current literature remains disconnected and context-specific. Individual studies have investigated specific assessment instruments, teaching contexts, or participant groups, usually pre-service or in-service teachers (Esfandiari et al., 2025; Giraldo & Yan, 2025; Wolterinck, 2024; Gebre et al., 2025). Although there are few systematic literature reviews on assessment-related constructs in language teacher education, no review has specifically synthesized research on alternative or authentic assessment practices in English language teacher education. Existing systematic reviews have focused on Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), examining teachers' assessment knowledge, beliefs, competencies, and professional development requirements in language education settings (Pastore, 2023; Lei, 2025). Although conceptually similar to alternative and authentic assessment, especially via its focus on formative assessment, feedback, and reflective practice, (Erdemir & Yeşilçinar, 2021) LAL research does not specifically examine the design, application, and pedagogical functions of alternative assessment instruments, including reflective portfolios, practicum-based performance tasks, peer/self-assessment, and competency-based assessment when applied in pre-service and advanced tier English teacher education programs. As a result, evidence on alternative and authentic assessment practices in ELT teacher education remains fragmented and lacks synthesis, underscoring the need for a systematic review in this field. In the absence of an integrated overview, it is difficult to pinpoint prevailing assessment practices, understand how alternative assessment is applied in teacher education settings, determine the reported benefits and challenges, or identify the institutional and pedagogical aspects that mediate successful implementation. This gap is especially timely as the assessment reform has been urged recently, as the focus in assessment has gradually shifted towards formative and competency-based assessment, and empirical studies have noted that there have been tensions between assessment beliefs and classroom practices held by teachers (Millen, 2025).

To meet this requirement, this study conducts a PRISMA-based systematic literature review of empirical studies on alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education. This study synthesizes the findings of 37 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025. This review is expected to present a holistic, theoretically informed view of the conceptualization, implementation, and experience of alternative assessment across the teacher education continuum.

Based on this, the following research questions are directed by this systematic review:

- RQ1. What are the alternative assessment practices reported in the literature on English language teacher education?
- RQ2. What are the methods of the implementation and integration of alternative assessment practices in pre-service and in-service educators of English language teaching?
- RQ3. What are the advantages and challenges of alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education research?
- RQ4. What are pedagogical, institutional, and contextual variables that either facilitate or limit effective implementation of alternative assessment in English language teacher education programs?

2. Method

2.1 Review Design

To assess the rigor of the methodology, transparency, and replicability of this study, a systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted using the PRISMA 2020 framework (Page et al., 2021). The review aimed to synthesize available empirical studies on alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education, in both pre-service and in-service settings. Only the peer-reviewed journal articles in English were considered to guarantee methodological rigor, quality assurance, and cross-study comparability. As a result, the review did not include grey literature sources (conference proceedings, dissertations, book chapters, and unpublished reports).

Because the literature presented a variety of research designs, learning settings, and assessment methods, a thematic synthesis approach, rather than a meta-analysis, was used, as it is more appropriate for combining qualitative and mixed-methods evidence given the heterogeneity of the studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008). No protocol was registered for the systematic review; however, the review process was predetermined and adhered to PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

2.2 Data Sources and Search Strategy

Three widely used academic databases in applied linguistics and educational research, including ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science, were used to conduct a comprehensive literature search. The rationale for selecting these databases was to provide a broad, complementary range of peer-reviewed research in ELT, assessment, and teacher education.

As a result of database searching, 267 records were retrieved from the ERIC database, 45 records were retrieved from the Scopus database, and 133 records were retrieved from the Web of Science database. The search strategy was the combination of keywords that relate to alternative assessment, such as alternative assessment, authentic assessment, performance-based assessment, portfolio assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment, and the combination of keywords that relate to teacher education, such as English language teacher education, ELT, TESOL, EFL/ESL teachers, pre-service, and in-service. Appropriate use was made of Boolean operators and database-specific indexing conventions. The screening of reference lists for relevant studies was also conducted manually to identify additional eligible publications.

2.3 Timeframe and Scope

Only empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025 were considered in the review. This period was chosen to document the current studies, as they reflect greater interest in assessment as learning, language assessment literacy, and competency-oriented assessment reforms in English language teacher education. At the time of publication, studies published before 2015 were excluded to ensure that the review remained up to date with contemporary pedagogical practices and policy contexts.

2.4 Eligibility Criteria

The articles used in the review were those that reported empirical research where the study design used was either qualitative or quantitative or mixed methods; where the assessment practices studied by the researchers were portfolios, performance-based assessment, competency-based assessment, peer-based assessment, and self-assessment, and were conducted in the context of English language teacher education, including pre-service, in-service, or both populations. Peer-reviewed journal articles that were in English and published within the given time frame were taken into account. We excluded the studies that did not focus on teacher education or were unrelated to ELT contexts. Conceptual and non-empirical studies, conference proceedings, dissertations, and book chapters were excluded from the grey literature to ensure consistency with peer-review standards.

2.5 Study Selection Procedure

The PRISMA methodology was used in the current study, which included identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages. After obtaining the first set of 445 records, duplicates were removed, and the set was then screened. Titles and abstracts were screened to exclude studies clearly irrelevant to the alternative assessment or English language teacher education. Full texts of relevant articles were then searched for and evaluated against the eligibility criteria. Additionally, two new empirical studies identified through supplementary searches were included in the study because they met all inclusion criteria. After this step, 37 empirical studies remained to be synthesized. This study followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). Figure 1 presents the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram illustrating the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of studies.

2.6 Data Extraction and Synthesis

Each study included in the review was then examined using a structured literature matrix to extract key information, including publication details, learning setting, participant characteristics, research design, types of alternative assessment practices, modes of integration, and the study's critical conclusions. Synthesis of the extracted data was conducted thematically in relation to the review's research questions, with particular focus on patterns across pre-service and in-service settings.

2.7 Quality Considerations

Two reviewers independently conducted study screening, data extraction, and thematic coding to enhance methodological rigor and transparency. The authors screened titles and abstracts, then full texts, against the eligibility criteria, followed by discussion and consensus to resolve any discrepancies. A narrative quality appraisal was conducted using modified criteria from established qualitative and mixed-methods appraisal systems (e.g., CASP; MMAT) to assess the clarity of research purposes, the suitability of the research design, the clarity of the analytic process, and the study's credibility. Rather than excluding studies based on numerical scores, methodological quality guided the weighting of evidence in the synthesis, as recommended in systematic reviews of heterogeneous educational research. The methodology aligns with past systematic reviews that combine heterogeneous qualitative and mixed-methods evidence in applied linguistics and teacher education (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

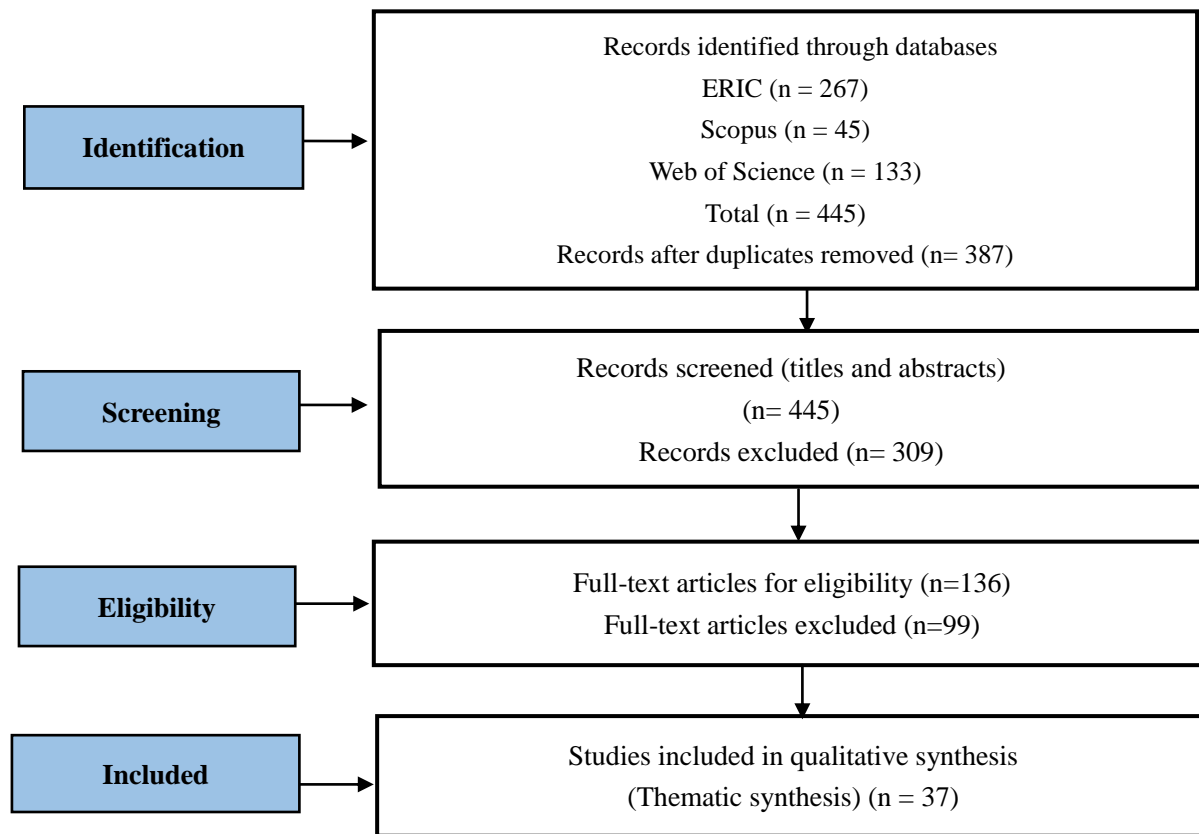


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of study selection

3. Theoretical Framework

The systematic literature review is guided by three theory-based approaches that underpin contemporary assessment practices in language education: Assessment as Learning (AaL), Assessment for Learning (AfL), and Language Assessment Literacy (LAL). These paradigms offer an analytically consistent framework for studying the conceptualization, implementation, and experience of alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education.

3.1 Assessment for Learning (AfL)

The Assessment for Learning (AfL) theory views assessment as an inherent part of the teaching-learning process, rather than a purely summative measure. One of the most significant works, Black and Wiliam (1998), refer to AfL as the systematic application of assessment evidence to inform instruction, provide formative feedback, and facilitate learner development. In this context, assessment serves as a mechanism for identifying learning needs, clarifying learning objectives, and informing pedagogical decisions.

AfL is especially applicable to English language teacher education, since it is well correlated with the developmental quality of teacher education. Pre-service and in-service teachers are not merely tested on their instructional outcomes but also learn to interpret evidence of learning and modify their teaching. Other assessment practices like portfolios, performance-based tasks, and formative feedback cycles are examples of AfL practices in that they incorporate the assessment in the context of natural teaching and focus on improvement over time rather than the test results at a specific point in time (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Gulikers et al., 2004). In the reviewed studies, AfL is an effective lens for interpreting findings on formative feedback, instructional alignment, and reflective teaching practices. Nevertheless, the review also points to tensions between AfL-related practices and cultures of exam-based assessment, where summative accountability often directly limits the implementation of formative assessment (Cheng et al., 2015).

3.2 Assessment as Learning (AaL)

Whereas Assessment for Learning (AfL) focuses on how assessment supports instruction, Assessment as Learning (AaL) emphasizes learners' active involvement in the assessment process itself. AaL makes learners agents in tracking, assessing, and managing their learning through self-assessment, peer assessment, and reflection (Earl, 2013). Simply put, AfL concerns the use of assessment in teaching, whereas AaL concerns its use in learners' self-regulation of learning. This is especially pertinent in English language teacher education, where teacher candidates and current teachers are often in the position of being not only learners but also future evaluators.

Among the studies reviewed, AaL-based practices, including reflective journals, self-assessment activities, and peer feedback, were

associated with the development of the teacher's metacognitive awareness, evaluative judgment, and agency. Such practices can help teachers define quality requirements, critically analyze instructional choices, and own their professional learning journeys. Simultaneously, the review reveals issues related to AaL, including concerns about reliability, emotional discomfort, and a lack of assessment literacy, particularly when self- and peer-assessment are insufficiently scaffolded (Xu & Brown, 2016).

3.3 Language Assessment Literacy (LAL)

Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is a core framework for understanding how Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment as Learning (AaL) are practiced in reality within English language teacher education. LAL is the knowledge, skills, beliefs, and ethical consciousness of teachers associated with assessment design, implementation, interpretation, and application (Fulcher, 2012; Xu & Brown, 2016). In addition to technical competence, LAL involves teachers' knowledge of the purposes, consequences, and contextual constraints of assessment, which influence how assessment principles are applied in the classroom.

Across the reviewed studies, LAL emerged as a critical factor influencing the meaningful adoption of alternative assessment practices in both pre-service and in-service settings. Instructors who were more assessment literate were more qualified to create more authentic performance tasks, establish clearer criteria, interpret assessment evidence, and balance formative and summative requirements. Conversely, low LAL was commonly linked to inconsistent implementation, reliance on traditional testing, and uncertainty about the validity and reliability of other assessments. Notably, the gap between beliefs and practice observed in various studies suggests that promoting AfL and AaL principles alone is insufficient; without adequate assessment literacy and institutional support, educators may be unable to implement formative, learner-oriented assessment. In this respect, LAL is seen to serve as both a conceptual and a practical interconnection through which AfL and AaL can transition to sustainable assessment practice in teacher education.

3.4 Integrating AfL, AaL, and LAL

Combined, AfL, AaL, and LAL offer a detailed theoretical basis for this systematic review. AfL emphasizes the formative and instructional roles of alternative assessment; AaL emphasizes the agency of learners and teachers in the assessment process; and LAL emphasizes that assessment practice is predetermined by professional knowledge and context. These structures help organize the results section and lay the groundwork for the article's discussion of patterns, tensions, and implications.

4. Results

4.1 Characteristics of the Included Studies

The overall corpus, which comprised 37 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025, representing a variety of educational settings across Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. Most studies were conducted in EFL contexts, indicating the international distribution of English teacher education beyond the Anglophone setting, whereas fewer studies were conducted in ESL or bilingual programs.

Regarding participant profiles, the literature included studies involving researchers who focused solely on pre-service English teachers, solely on in-service teachers, and on mixed cohorts across the teacher education continuum. For example, Haggag (2018) studied portfolio assessment among pre-service EFL teachers in a university teacher education program, and Singh et al. (2022) targeted in-service teachers who used alternative assessment in secondary school classrooms. Mixed-population designs, such as those by Farmasari et al. (2025), examined the performance of assessment practices implemented in pre-service education and their subsequent use by novice teachers in practice.

The corpus was very diverse methodologically. Qualitative designs were the most common in the literature exploring teacher beliefs, reflective practices, and assessment literacy, which employed interviews, reflective journals, classroom observations, and document analysis (e.g., Haggag, 2018; Farmasari et al., 2025). Surveys and questionnaires were commonly used in quantitative research to investigate views, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors related to alternative assessment (e.g., Singh et al., 2022). There were also mixed-methods studies in which survey data were used alongside interviews to compare results (Herda et al., 2022).

Alternative assessment was examined throughout the corpus as both an indicator of teacher learning in teacher education programs and a form of pedagogical orientation that influenced how teachers subsequently assessed their learners. This twofold orientation reflects the complex nature of assessment in English language teacher education, both as an evaluative process and as a professional practice model.

4.2 Types of Alternative Assessment Practices in English Language Teacher Education

To answer Research Question 1, thematic analysis indicated that a relatively small set of alternative assessment practices has been studied in English language teacher education research, with portfolio assessment, peer/self-assessment, and performance-based assessment identified as the most commonly studied in both pre-service and in-service settings. Based on the literature review, the most common assessment practice is portfolio assessment ($n = 14$), Peer/self-assessment ($n = 9$), and performance-based assessment ($n = 8$) which can were the most frequently reported practices (see Table 1).

Table 1. Types of Alternative Assessment Practices Identified in English Language Teacher Education

Assessment Type	Number of Studies	Representative Studies
Portfolio assessment	14	Haggag (2018); Singh et al. (2022); Kihwele et al. (2025)
Peer/self-assessment	9	Tatli et al. (2018); Aminin et al. (2025)
Performance-based assessment	8	Heydarnejad et al. (2022); Salma & Prastikawati (2021)

4.2.1 Portfolio Assessment

The most commonly reported alternative assessment practice in both pre-service and in-service English language teacher education situations was portfolio assessment. In the reviewed studies, longitudinal professional development, support for reflective practice, and documentation of coursework and practicum experiences were primarily captured through portfolios. For instance, Haggag (2018) found that the portfolios helped EFL pre-service teachers systematically organize lesson planning, reflective writing, and practicum feedback, thereby facilitating ongoing assessment of their professional development over an extended period. Likewise, Farmasari et al. (2025) found that using portfolios as an evaluation method encouraged systematic reflection on teaching activities and improved alignment between the theory taught in courses and its application in the classroom.

With respect to the use of e-portfolios, various researchers have reported benefits for the development of digital literacy and self-regulated learning. For example, Abrar-ul-Hassan et al. (2021) and Espinoza & Medina (2021) proposed that e-portfolios enable the addition of multimedia, support flexible learning, and foster the development of ICT skills applicable to 21st-century classrooms. Likewise, Khan & Hoq (2021) found that although participants initially struggled with digital tools for creating e-portfolios, they later gained confidence and found e-portfolios useful for instructional planning and assessment. These results indicate that portfolios serve as both a pedagogical mediator, facilitating professional learning paths, and an assessment tool. In a few studies, authors have underlined the positive effects of integrating portfolio assessment on developing teachers' 21st-century skills. For instance, Kihwele et al. (2025) advised portfolios to support both Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment as Learning (AaL) among 120 future teachers in Tanzania. Their findings revealed the importance of a portfolio for supporting goal setting, engagement in feedback, and reflective practice.

Nonetheless, similar challenges in portfolio implementation were also identified in the reviewed literature (Kihwele et al., 2025; Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020). According to Tarwiyah et al. (2021), Singh et al. (2022), and Narayan (2023), although teachers perceived portfolios as a formative tool, their perceptions of the tool were adversely affected by workload, time requirements, scoring validity, and inconsistent assessment criteria. The same tension was observed in other situations in which portfolios lacked explicit rubrics, common standards, or institutional support systems. Ismail & Moriyanti (2025) and Scoupe et al. (2024) pointed out the importance of content development skills, feedback workload, time constraints, and access to digital resources. They further added that institutional and structured support, as well as peer feedback, are critical to the successful operation of portfolios in ELT. Overall, these results indicate that portfolio assessment is best facilitated by clear assessment criteria, manageable workload expectations, and consistent instructional scaffolding, supporting the view that systematic design and guidance are vital components of English language teacher education programs. The review concludes that although portfolio assessment has great potential as an alternative assessment tool in ESL/EFL settings, its implementation depends on teachers' assessment literacy and training, as well as on its systematic incorporation into curricula and assessment policies. Table 2 presents studies related to portfolio assessment.

Table 2. Portfolio Assessment Studies

Authors & Year	Country	Sample	Method	Key Findings
Al-Malki (2016)	Oman	University supervisors	Qualitative (interviews)	Advocated for portfolio use to improve fairness, reflection, and alignment with standards.
Haggag (2018)	Egypt	Pre-service English teachers	Mixed-method	Enhanced didactic competencies and reflection, with digital tools facilitating feedback.
Abdulhamid & Fox (2020)	Canada	Pre-service English teachers	Qualitative	Enhanced language assessment, literacy, and reflection; success required training and feedback.
Tarwiyah et al. (2021)	Indonesia	22 pre-service EFL teachers	Case-study	Supported teaching skills and reflection; peer collaboration enhanced development.
Abrar-ul-Hassan et al. (2021)	USA	Pre-service teachers	Review-based synthesis	Promoted learner agency and critical reflection; success depends on digital access and structure.
Espinoza & Medina (2021)	Chile	19 in-service EFL teachers	Survey and content analysis	Enhanced tech skills and reflection; practical for instructional planning despite time and access barriers.
Khan & Hoq (2021)	Malaysia	55 pre-service ESL teachers	Mixed-method	Promoted pedagogical and ICT skills, reflection, and confidence despite early tech issues.
Oo & Alonzo (2023)	Myanmar	Pre-service EFL teachers	Qualitative	Improved metacognition and planning skills; required more mentoring and structured reflection.
Kihwele et al. (2025)	Tanzania	120 pre-service teachers	Quantitative and qualitative	Promoted AfL and AaL; challenges with print-based format and feedback logistics.
Ismail & Moriyanti (2025)	Indonesia	13 pre-service English teachers	Qualitative	Improved material design and reflection; faced time and knowledge limitations.

4.2.2 Performance-Based and Authentic Assessment

Both pre-service and in-service education in English language teaching were found to use performance-based and authentic assessment practices, where teaching competence was evaluated based on observable teaching performance and not discrete measures of knowledge (Zabar et al., 2025). In the studies reviewed, performance-based assessment was most often conducted through microteaching, simulated classroom tasks, practicum-based teaching demonstrations, and competency-congruent instructional performances.

Ameti (2024) examined teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward performance-based assessment in in-service English language teaching, using a survey conducted at a university language school. The results showed that teachers generally held positive views of performance-based assessment, as they felt it was more effective than other testing methods in highlighting students' strengths and weaknesses and in supporting learning through ongoing classroom activities. Educators noted that performance-based assessment improved students' motivation and engagement, as learners were asked to apply language knowledge in realistic communicative contexts, such as projects and oral presentations.

Nevertheless, Ameti (2024) has also found several challenges in implementing performance-based assessment. The educators noted constraints on time and workload, and an inability to provide detailed, individualized feedback, especially when performance tasks were common or when items were stakes-based. There were also concerns about students' anxiety and the reliability of scoring, particularly in cases where there were no clear performance criteria or rubrics.

In research on in-service teachers, performance-based assessment was commonly used to evaluate teaching decisions, classroom management, and responsiveness to students. Singh et al. (2022) provide an example in which they studied performance tasks that require teachers to demonstrate classroom management strategies and pedagogical judgment in situational contexts, and assess how closely these tasks align with real-classroom requirements. These results indicate that performance-based assessment is valued because it can measure context-sensitive teaching skills that are not easily assessed by standard assessment models.

In later studies, performance-based assessment is placed in competency-based assessment systems. As Salma and Prastikawati (2021) discovered, despite the positive beliefs expressed by teachers of secondary English in Indonesia about performance and authentic assessment, there were significant limitations, such as time demands, workload, and institutional pressures, in the way such practices could be regularly implemented in the classroom. Building on this point of view, Millen (2025) theorized that performance-based assessment measures professional practice readiness, asserting that competency-based teacher preparation programs are gradually aligning the manifestation of competence in teaching performance with demonstrated performance, rather than merely with course completion or mastery of subject-matter knowledge.

4.2.3 Peer and Self-Assessment

In the studies reviewed, peer and self-assessment were consistently used as formative elements of teacher education courses, rather than as standalone summative assessments. These practices were primarily applied in both pre-service and in-service education for English Language teachers to support reflective learning, collaborative knowledge building, and the development of assessment literacy (Vázquez-Colina et al., 2016).

Structured peer assessment was observed to encourage collaborative learning and to increase awareness of assessment criteria in pre-service contexts. According to Haggag (2018), the guided peer feedback activities enabled pre-service teachers to be more critical of lesson quality and evaluation criteria. This tendency is also supported by more recent evidence. In a study by Aminin, Munir, and Leliana (2025), peer assessment in a public speaking course facilitated reflective dialogue and skill development when supported by clear rubrics and the lecturer's mediation; however, it also elicited emotional anxiety and uncertainty about peer evaluation. Similarly, Sahlan (2025) found that combining self-assessment, peer assessment, and tutors' feedback in microteaching, supported by structured debriefing, developed a rich sociocultural learning environment that promoted pedagogical competence and reflection among pre-service teachers.

These findings are also supported by longitudinal evidence. Joh and Plakans (2021) reported in a three-semester study of EFL teacher preparation that repeated peer-assessment experience led to greater trust in peers as assessors, better understanding of assessment criteria, and more positive perceptions of peer feedback. Their results indicate that long-term exposure and scaffolding are the major determinants of normalization of peer assessment and improvement of its perceived legitimacy in teacher education.

Nevertheless, the issues of reliability, fairness, and assessment literacy were consistently raised throughout the research. According to Aminin and Leliana (2025), pre-service and in-service teachers reported that peer assessment was unfair when the assessor was not well-trained or lacked shared standards. Similarly, Joh and Plakans (2021) found that although participants considered peer assessment important in formative learning, they had reservations about using it as a summative assessment because issues of reliability, fairness, and trust in peer judgment were raised in both pre-service and in-service environments.

Taken together, the results suggest that peer and self-assessment are used in English language teacher education mainly as formative support systems. Although portfolios and performance-based assessment were the most commonly reported alternative assessment practices, peer and self-assessment served a supportive purpose in promoting reflection, learner agency, and assessment awareness. Their success, however, was highly dependent on explicit scaffolding, clear rubrics, lecturer involvement, and the development of assessment literacy. An overview of studies addressing performance-based, peer, and self-assessment practices is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Performance-based, Peer, and Self Assessment

Authors & Year	Country	Participants	Method	Key Findings
Joh & Plakans (2021)	Korea	15 undergraduate EFL teacher candidates	Longitudinal mixed-methods case study	Students gradually developed greater trust in peers as assessors; however, their perceptions were shaped by task difficulty, feedback mode, interpersonal relationships, and cultural views of teacher authority
Aminin & Leliana (2025)	Indonesia	26 pre-service English teachers	Qualitative basic interpretative study	Pre-service teachers perceived peer assessment positively as a means of improving speaking skills, critical thinking, and feedback literacy. Challenges included emotional discomfort, fear of offending peers, and uncertainty in applying rubrics
Sahlan (2025)	Indonesia	22 pre-service teachers and 3 lecturers	Qualitative study (interviews, observations, document analysis)	Integrating self-assessment, peer assessment, and tutor assessment with structured debriefing in microteaching fostered reflective dialogue, collaborative learning, and pedagogical competence
Kaya & Özkan (2019)	Turkey	21 pre-service language teachers	Mixed-methods explanatory sequential design	There is a high correlation between student and instructor scores; self-assessment is preferred. Enhanced reflection and learning require structured guidance and support.
Altan (2021)	Turkey	Pre-service EFL teachers (number not specified)	Qualitative study	Reduced exam anxiety, improved teamwork, and content engagement; emphasized the value of collaborative assessment.
Tatli et al. (2018)	Turkey	9 pre-service teachers	Qualitative	Enhanced feedback literacy, reduced critique anxiety, and promoted reflection; required rubrics and training.
Vázquez-Colina et al. (2016)	USA	42 pre-service teachers	Comparative case study (quantitative & qualitative)	Improved assessment literacy and reflective skills were observed in both modes; Students valued peer feedback for developing critical thinking skills and preparing for teaching.

4.3 Integration of Alternative Assessment in Pre-service Contexts

In response to Research Question 2, the synthesized results suggest that alternative assessment practices in pre-service English language teacher education are most frequently incorporated through coursework-based assessment activities, scaffolded peer and self-assessment, and context-sensitive assessment decision-making during learning-to-teach experiences (Cirit, 2015; Joh & Plakans, 2025; Prastikawati et al., 2025).

First, some studies show that alternative assessment is often incorporated into coursework rather than used as an extracurricular activity. For instance, Cirit (2015) reported that Web 2.0-based and other assessment tools were systematically integrated into ELT coursework to facilitate interactive, process-based assessment of learning among pre-service teachers, which extends beyond traditional testing formats.

Second, peer assessment is a recurring, longitudinal practice in teacher preparation programs. Through repeated exposure to peer assessment in a multi-semester longitudinal study, Joh and Plakans (2025) found that pre-service teachers developed a better understanding of assessment criteria, greater confidence in peer judgment, and a more positive long-term perception of peer feedback. Their results suggest that peer assessment is a more productive formative practice when it is maintained, scaffolded, and aligned with clearly defined evaluative standards.

Third, alternative assessment has also been established, whereby participatory and process-oriented designs have been applied to engage pre-service teachers in assessment practices. In a case study of the higher education system in Turkey, Kaya and Özkan (2019) and Farhady & Tavassoli (2021) found that involving pre-service language teachers in other assessment processes encouraged reflection on the purpose of assessment and increased candidates' participation in the assessment process itself.

Lastly, recent findings indicate that, in pre-service contexts, the incorporation of alternative assessment is influenced by both assessment decision-making constraints and beliefs. Prastikawati et al. (2025) found that pre-service EFL teachers' choice of alternative assessment depended on contextual factors, including task feasibility, confidence, and perceived expectations, indicating that institutional and situational conditions are important for the implementation of alternative assessment.

In general, the analyzed literature points out that alternative assessment in pre-service English language teacher education is best incorporated in case it is aligned with the curriculum, presented longitudinally, and supported by transparent criteria, mentoring, and institutional guidance, as the application of the latter is mediated by both pedagogical intentions and realities of the situation (Joh & Plakans, 2025; Çağlayan, 2024).

4.4 Integration of Alternative Assessment in In-Service Contexts

In response to research question 2, the synthesis shows that integration of alternative assessment in in-service ELT situations is selective, hybrid, and constrained by systemic factors. In-service teachers are more likely to integrate formative and performance-based assessment practices alongside traditional summative testing than to replace traditional assessment structures, as is the case in pre-service programs, where alternative assessment is often programmed.

In various settings, educators indicated that they used alternative assessments at the classroom level, although they still used standardized or exam-based assessments for reporting or accountability. As an illustration, Singh et al. (2022) found that performance-based activities, portfolios, peer assessment, and self-assessment were the most common practices used by ESL teachers in Malaysia to facilitate learning, whereas summative examinations remained the predominant practices for grading and formal assessment. On the same note, Purnamasari et al. (2023) indicated that Indonesian secondary school teachers used authentic assessment methods, including oral interviews, projects, and portfolios, but they continued to experience challenges with time, task appropriateness, and curriculum coverage.

One of the themes presented in various in-service studies is the belief-practice gap. Although teachers were generally positive about the use of alternative and authentic assessment, their practice in the classroom was scanty. Min and So (2024) conducted a study in a Korean secondary school, where the principles of performance-based and authentic assessment were supported by English teachers, yet high-stakes examinations, the strictness of the curriculum, and workloads imposed considerable limitations on their further implementation. Similar results were found in the Iranian case by Farhady & Tavassoli (2021), who reported that in-service EFL teachers held positive conceptions of alternative assessment but applied traditional assessment formats in the majority of cases due to institutional expectations and low levels of assessment literacy.

Other studies also identified contextual and structural impediments to in-service adoption. Large class sizes, inadequate professional training, the absence of guidance for assessment, and the mismatch between policy-level assessment reforms and classroom realities have been repeatedly identified by multiple studies as limiting factors (Singh et al., 2022; Purnamasari et al., 2023; Farhady & Tavassoli, 2021). These limitations frequently led to the adoption of alternative assessments for low-stakes formative activities, such as feedback and engagement, rather than for evaluation.

On the other hand, research conducted in the context of professional development or competency-based models showed more enduring and consistent implementation of alternative assessment. Mellen (2025) demonstrated that when competency-based assessment was institutionalized through apprenticeship-oriented teacher preparation and institutional support, in-service teachers could more easily align assessment practices with professional standards and real classroom performance. Such results imply that systematic support and formal professional learning opportunities are of decisive importance for achieving the meaningful adoption of alternative assessment in in-service settings. In general, the evidence suggests that although in-service English teachers are aware of the pedagogical importance of alternative assessment, its applicability is strongly dependent on institutional factors, the compatibility of assessment policies, and continuous professional growth, rather than on individual teachers' beliefs.

4.5 Reported Benefits of Alternative Assessment Practices

Regarding Research Question 3, the analyzed articles have consistently shown that alternative assessment practices have aided the development of reflective practice, increased teacher involvement, and greater professional awareness of assessment processes. This heightened teacher agency, better engagement, and assessment literacy in both pre-service and in-service teachers. Among the most frequently reported effects were improved engagement and motivation, particularly when assessment tasks were perceived as realistic and applicable to real teaching contexts. For example, Herda et al. (2022) reported that performance-based assessment enhanced engagement among pre-service teachers, as the teachers demonstrated teaching competence through realistic teaching activities. On the same note, Fadilah et al. (2023) and Puspitasari (2020) found that project-based and portfolio assessments enhanced the ongoing involvement of in-service teachers by focusing on significant language application and reflective practice.

The other most mentioned theme was the development of reflective practice and assessment literacy. Haggag (2018) demonstrated that a portfolio-based assessment prompted pre-service educators to critically reflect on their instructional choices and to report on their professional development over the years. Farmasari et al. (2025) also observed that reflective journals and self-assessments helped teachers to be more aware of the assessment criteria and learning goals. A number of articles indicated the importance of alternative assessment in promoting teacher agency and professional confidence. Singh et al. (2022) found that peer and self-assessment, supported by teacher involvement in the learning process, facilitated ownership of the assessment and learning processes. Millen (2025) found that performance evaluations aligned with professional standards did not hinder teachers' preparedness and professional identity within the competency framework. Collectively, these results indicate that alternative assessment can contribute to pedagogical performance and to broader aspects of teacher development, such as reflection, agency, and professional development.

4.6 Challenges and Constraints in Implementing Alternative Assessment

With respect to Research Question 3, although the advantages were reported, most researchers identified significant challenges associated with the introduction of alternative assessment practices, particularly regarding workload, reliability, and the prevalence of exam-oriented assessment cultures within institutions. Although positive outcomes were reported, the literature found that considerable issues remain in the adoption of alternative assessment practices. The time and workload were ranked among the most frequently mentioned limitations. Haggag (2018) and Singh et al. (2022) observed that designing, administering, and evaluating alternative assessments required considerable time and that maintaining them amid other teaching duties was challenging.

Reliability and validity issues were also of concern, particularly regarding peer and self-assessment. According to Min and So (2024), educators expressed concerns that peer assessment results lacked fairness and were inconsistent when assessment criteria were poorly defined or insufficiently scaffolded. Kaya & Özkan (2019) also expressed similar concerns, finding that teachers were reluctant to use alternative assessments for high-stakes decision-making.

At the institutional level, several researchers have highlighted the constraints imposed by exam-based assessment cultures. Singh et al. (2022) found that the necessity of using high-stakes testing limited opportunities to engage in formative and authentic assessment, even when teachers sought to use alternative methods. Similarly, Cheng et al. (2015) also pointed out the washback effects of standardized testing on classroom assessment practices.

All these challenges highlight that effective implementation of alternative assessment requires not only teachers' personal beliefs but also systemic consistency across assessment policies, curriculum frameworks, and professional expectations.

4.7 Facilitating and Constraining Factors Influencing Implementation

As an answer to Research Question 4, the synthesis identifies language assessment literacy, professional development, and institutional support as enabling conditions, whereas the lack of training, assessment policies mismatched with alternative assessment practices, and contextual constraints remain obstacles to the long-term enforcement of alternative assessment practices.

In addition to specific advantages and obstacles, the synthesis revealed several crucial issues that supported or limited the introduction of alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education. Language assessment literacy (LAL) was one of them and was found to be a pivotal enabling factor in both pre-service and in-service settings.

Research studies consistently demonstrate that better teacher knowledge and training in assessment enable them to plan meaningful assessment tasks, create clear rubrics, and analyze assessment evidence. To illustrate, Farmasari et al. (2025) found that explicit instruction in assessment principles increased teacher candidates' confidence in using portfolios and performance-related tasks. The same message was highlighted by Xu & Liu (2025), who also noted that low levels of assessment literacy led to teachers' ambivalence about applying authentic assessment.

Professional development and institutional support were also found to be important facilitators. Millen (2025) demonstrated that adherence to the continued professional learning and competency framework enabled more consistent use of alternative assessment. However, the absence of administrative support, the inflexibility of the curriculum, and the insensitivity of assessment policies and classroom practices limited implementation (Singh et al., 2022; Kaya & Özkan, 2019).

Lastly, contextual factors such as class size, teaching load, and assessment culture affected teachers' ability to implement alternative assessment. These results imply that the concept of alternative assessment should be viewed as part of a broader assessment ecology that must be supported at the individual, institutional, and policy levels.

In short, the evidence presented in cross-studies suggests that language assessment literacy, professional development focus, and alignment with the institutional policies are the major enabling factors of effective alternative assessment application, and the absence of training, discrepancy between assessment policy and classroom teaching, and accountability systems based on exams are the most common limiting factors (Fulcher, 2012; Xu & Brown, 2016; Cheng et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2022). The factors operate both pre-service and in-service, contributing to the persistent belief-practice gap observed in the literature.

4.8 Cross-Study Synthesis of Reported Benefits and Challenges

Across 37 reviewed articles, a set of benefits and challenges associated with alternative assessment practices was found to be consistent across studies, irrespective of assessment type or educational setting. The synthesis of the findings provided in the portfolio assessment, performance-based assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment demonstrates that the alternative assessment is commonly linked to improved reflective practice, enhanced teacher agency, and advanced assessment literacy in pre-service and in-service English language teachers (Haggag, 2018; Farmasari et al., 2025; Singh et al., 2022; Joh & Plakans, 2021). It was also reported that these practices contributed to increased learner engagement, metacognitive awareness, and alignment between theory and practice (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Kihwele et al., 2025; Oo & Alonzo, 2023).

Simultaneously, the studies reviewed all identified the structural and practical obstacles that limited the sustainable application of alternative assessment. High time requirements, augmented assessment workflow, and issues with reliability and equity were the most common challenges and were reported most significantly in peer- and self-assessment settings where common assessment criteria and assessment literacy had not yet been well-established (Tatli et al., 2018; Aminin & Leliana, 2025; Min and So, 2024). In in-service conditions, the culture of exam-oriented assessment, strict curriculum, and insufficient institutional support also contributed to the worsening of these challenges, and the need to use alternative assessment became more of a low-stakes formative assessment instead of a formal one (Singh et al., 2022; Farhady & Tavassoli, 2021; Purnamasari et al., 2023).

Collectively, this synthesis shows that although alternative assessment practices may provide significant pedagogical and professional advantages, their success and viability require access to time, well-defined assessment standards, development of assessment literacy, and congruence with classroom practices and institutional assessment policies.

5. Discussion

This review used 37 empirical studies to synthesize evidence and investigate the conceptualization and enactment of alternative assessment practices in pre-service and in-service English language teacher education. The findings are interpreted through the combined lens of Assessment of Learning (AFL), Assessment as Learning (AaL), and Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), and demonstrate the pedagogical possibilities of alternative assessment and the systemic conditions that determine its viability. In various contexts, alternative

assessment emerged not only as a set of instruments but also as a pedagogical mode aligned with formative, reflective, and developmental perceptions of learning. Portfolio assessment, performance-based assessment, and reflective assessment are practices that align perfectly with AfL principles because they integrate assessment into instruction and promote longitudinal professional development rather than a snapshot assessment (Black and Wiliam, 1998, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Nevertheless, such orientation was more effectively achieved within the pre-service programs, where assessment structure is more flexible than in in-service contexts, which are limited by curriculum requirements and high-stakes accountability (Cheng et al., 2015). In terms of AaL, self-assessment, peer assessment, and reflection were linked to enhanced teacher agency, metacognitive awareness, and evaluative judgment, which are key elements of lifelong professional learning (Earl, 2013; Xu & Brown, 2016). Meanwhile, ongoing questions about reliability, fairness, and trust are especially acute in the context of peer- and self-assessment, as AaL practices must be effectively designed, have clear criteria, and be scaffolded to be effective (Joh & Plakans, 2021; Tatli et al., 2018). Language Assessment Literacy became one of the most important explanatory constructs linking the ideals of assessment to classroom practice. In line with previous studies, teachers with higher LAL were well positioned to put alternative assessment to meaningful use, whereas low assessment literacy led to the commonly reported belief-practice gap (Fulcher, 2012; Xu & Brown, 2016). This disconnect is indicative of systemic constraints rather than personal opposition, and underscores the significance of logical professional advancement and institutional fit.

Lastly, the main contribution of this review lies in its comparison of pre-service and in-service settings. Whereas pre-service programs often adopt structured, theoretically informed approaches to alternative assessment, in-service implementation is constrained by contextual realities that may limit innovation. The discontinuity raises significant concerns about the coherence of educational systems in teacher preparation and about how well the assessment practices fostered during preparation programs are sustained in professional practice (Millen, 2025). The results indicate that the gap can be bridged by a more ecological approach to assessment reforms, which would view teacher education, school contexts, and policy environments as interdependent systems. In the absence of this strategy, alternative assessment would tend to be a school curriculum that is not integrated into classroom instruction.

6. Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

6.1 Implications for English Language Teacher Education

This systematic review indicates that alternative assessment practices should be systematically incorporated into English language teacher education programs, rather than presented as a non-systematic instructional strategy. In line with the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), assessment must be structured to encourage continuous professional growth through formative feedback and reflection (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2009).

Teacher education programs should then reflect alternative assessment practices, portfolios, performance-based tasks, and reflective journals throughout coursework and practicum experiences. According to previous studies, teacher candidates who engage in these practices as learners are more likely to internalize assessment principles and apply them in their own classrooms (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; DeLuco et al., 2016). The alternative assessment requires coherence and transparency, which can be achieved only through explicit alignment of learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and instructional activities.

Within the Assessment as Learning (AaL) approach, self- and peer-assessment should be structured and emphasized to help teachers make evaluative judgments and be aware of their metacognitive judgments (Earl, 2013). The practices have been shown to facilitate reflective practice and learner agency when complemented by explicit criteria and reflective prompts (Xu & Brown, 2016).

6.2 Implications for Professional Development and In-service Contexts

The review notes the need for long-term, practice-based professional development to support in-service teachers' implementation of alternative assessment. Although teachers typically express positive attitudes toward formative and authentic assessment, the gap between belief and practice is longstanding, implying that mere conceptual knowledge is insufficient (Fulcher, 2012; Xu & Brown, 2016).

The development of language assessment literacy (LAL) through practical design, implementation, and reflection on assessment activities should therefore be part of professional development. Studies show that teachers' confidence and consistency in assessment increase when professional learning is integrated into classroom routines and reinforced throughout instruction (Giraldo, 2018; DeLuco et al., 2016).

It is also important that there is institutional support. Formative and alternative assessment practices must be legitimized through the alignment of curriculum structures and accountability regimes by school leaders and policymakers. Absent this level of congruence, assessment reforms will, in most cases, not produce long-term change, especially in test-driven cultures (Cheng et al., 2015).

6.3 Implications for Assessment Policy and Curriculum Reform

The policy-level findings underscore the importance of a systemic and ecological perspective on assessment reform. Some policies supporting alternative or competency-based assessment should also include details on implementation, professional learning opportunities, and resources to support teachers' work (Gulikers et al., 2004).

Recent studies on competency-based assessment indicate that assessing teaching against professional standards and through realistic teacher tasks can enhance the consistency between teachers' preparation and their actual practice (Millen, 2025). Policymakers should consider how competency frameworks can be applied at both pre-service and in-service levels to facilitate continuity in assessment practice.

6.4 Limitations

There are several limitations to this systematic review that should be noted. The review was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles in English. First, this could introduce language bias, since articles with negative or non-significant results are less likely to be published in indexed journals. Secondly, there was also publication bias, as articles with positive or significant results are more likely to be published in peer-reviewed journals. Although this methodological selection criterion was adopted to ensure rigor, comparability, and alignment with international quality-assurance standards in applied linguistics research, it may have limited the coverage of locally published or practice-oriented evidence, particularly from underrepresented educational settings. To reduce this risk, references of the included studies were screened manually, but no additional eligible empirical studies published in other languages or in grey literature were found within the scope of this review. Subsequent systematic reviews can be enhanced by incorporating grey literature and multilingual materials to provide a more comprehensive, contextually informed view of alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education.

6.5 Directions for Future Research

The review identifies several future research directions. To better understand how assessment literacy develops and is sustained over time, longitudinal studies that trace teachers' assessment practices from pre-service education through professional practice are required (Xu & Brown, 2016). Design-based and intervention studies may also advance understanding of how specific training in assessment literacy affects teachers' ability to adopt alternative assessment (Fulcher, 2012).

The application of competency- and performance-based assessment systems across various education systems should also be examined in future studies, particularly in exam-oriented, high-stakes educational systems (Cheng et al., 2015; Millen, 2025). A comparative and cross-cultural study would help provide insight into the influence of policy environments on assessment practice.

Lastly, the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence to support alternative assessment in teacher education warrants further study. Although these tools have the potential to improve feedback and lighten the workload, they also have pedagogical and ethical implications that should be systematically examined (DeLuco et al., 2016).

7. Conclusion

In this systematic literature review, empirical evidence from 37 studies published between 2015 and 2025 was synthesized to investigate the alternative assessment practices in English language teacher education in pre-service and in-service settings. Through the lens of Assessment for Learning (AfL), Assessment as Learning (AaL), and Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) as an all-encompassing theoretical prism, the review offers a comprehensive and methodical explanation of how alternative assessment is conceptualized, practiced, and experienced in teacher education.

The results reveal that alternative assessment practices, most commonly portfolio assessment, performance-based and competency-based assessment, peer and self-assessment, and reflective practices, are generally employed as potential facilitators of formative learning, reflective practice, and teacher agency. Nevertheless, the review also identifies distinct differences between pre-service and in-service contexts. Although structured, curriculum-based approaches to alternative assessment are widely used in pre-service programs, in-service practice is often shaped by contextual factors such as time pressure, workload, and examination-based assessment cultures. These conditions contribute to a belief-practice gap, as teachers support formative and authentic assessment but do not consistently implement them.

Across contexts, language assessment literacy is an important enabling condition that may affect the meaningful and viable use of alternative assessment. As has been stressed in the review, the success of assessment reform involves not merely the implementation of new assessment instruments but the consistent coordination of teacher education curricula, professional development, institutional support, and assessment policy. This review provides an evidence-based framework for further research, practice, and policy in English language teacher education by offering a PRISMA-guided synthesis of AfL, AaL, and LAL, thereby addressing a significant gap in the literature.

It is a timely and concrete evidence of the use of alternative assessment conceptualization and implementation across contexts, and this systematic review has been conducted at a time when the English language teacher education field is increasingly called upon to foster formative, learner-centered, and competency-focused practices. The synthesis of research from pre-service and in-service contexts, grounded in the principles of Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning, and Language Assessment Literacy, provides a consistent basis for the review to justify coordinating assessment reform with teacher development. The results of this review can also inform teacher educators, policymakers, and researchers interested in promoting sustainable and meaningful assessment practices, as educational systems worldwide continue to reconsider assessment priorities.

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Author contributions

Dr. Sedigheh Shakib was responsible for the overall study design, supervised the PRISMA process, and led the manuscript write-up. Maftuna Artikova conducted the database searches, screened the studies, and synthesized the data. Dr. Siti Salina Mustakim provided overall supervision and contributed to the study's conceptual guidance. All authors contributed to revising the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

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