Teachers' Perceptions on Assessment for Learning in Geography: An Exploratory Approach

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Assessment for Learning (AfL) plays a crucial role in the effective teaching and learning of Geography, offering educators a means to enhance student achievement. Through ongoing evaluations involving verbal and written exercises, AfL not only readies students for summative Assessment of Learning (AoL) but also supports them in grasping complex Geography concepts, features, and processes, as evidenced by examination performance. Over the last five years, as indicated by the Examinations Council of Lesotho, persistent challenges have emerged in this regard, potentially stemming from inadequacies in assessment strategies. This study delves into the perceptions of Geography teachers concerning Assessment for Learning. Employing a qualitative approach, the research utilizes non-participatory observations and in-depth interviews to collect data. The study is grounded in Gregory's Theory of Perception and Keeping Learning on Track Theory of Action, offering theoretical frameworks for analysis. The findings reveal that teachers face obstacles when implementing Assessment for Learning, including time constraints and issues related to classroom overcrowding. Notably, a significant insight is the lack of both Assessment knowledge and Pedagogical Content Knowledge among teachers. As a resolution, it is recommended that comprehensive assessment training be provided for both pre-service and in-service teachers, addressing these identified gaps.

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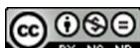
INTRODUCTION

Assessment serves as an educational tool aimed at improving performance and motivating learners. It offers valuable insights to both teachers and learners regarding progress in the learning journey (Brink & Bartz, 2017). As stated by Watson (2019), assessment involves systematically collecting information to monitor progress and make informed decisions.

Summative assessment, also known as Assessment of Learning (AoL) (Umar, 2018), is a widely used assessment type. To prepare learners for AoL, Assessment for Learning (AfL), also referred to as formative assessment, is employed. Throughout this study, the term AfL will be used.

AfL is an ongoing assessment approach that identifies learners' needs and enhances instruction and learning (Oyinloye & Imenda, 2019). Moreover, AfL continuously monitors students' learning progress, providing feedback to both learners and teachers with the aim of improving instruction. Consequently, assessment and teaching are interlinked and cannot be separated. To effectively implement AfL, teachers should possess pedagogic content knowledge (PCK) and be acquainted with various AfL practices (Kultsum, 2017).

In Lesotho's secondary schools, AfL is employed to prepare learners for AoL. In the context of Geography, students are assessed on their understanding of geography concepts, features, processes, ability to observe, collect and record geographic data, and capacity to make reasoned judgments about the environment (NCDC, 2020). Nonetheless, a gap in the teaching and learning process appears to exist, as the Examinations Council of Lesotho has repeatedly indicated over the past five years that learners were unfamiliar with the geography syllabus.

Studies such as Cisse et al.'s (2021) revealed challenges Canadian schools face in implementing AfL due to issues like overcrowded classrooms. Biyela (2019) observed that overcrowded classrooms hinder the teaching and learning process, affecting students' concentration and teachers' ability to attend to all students during class exercises. Similarly, Leong et al. (2018) argue that East Asian countries struggle with AfL implementation due to a lack of assessment literacy among teachers, a phenomenon observed in certain South African schools where teachers demonstrate limited understanding of AfL pedagogical practices (Kanjee, 2020). A study in Ethiopia by Ayanwale et al. (2023), and Moges (2018) analyzed instructors' assessment practices in higher learning institutions. A similar study is needed in the context of Lesotho's secondary schools due to learners' apparent unfamiliarity with the geography syllabus. Investigating the reasons behind this is crucial. Therefore, this study examines teachers' perceptions of AfL in Geography as a potential contributor to this issue.

This paper is structured as follows: Firstly, it presents the problem statement and Literature Review, encompassing the theoretical lens, empirical review. This is followed by the study's methodology, findings, and discussion. Lastly, the paper concludes by identifying study limitations and suggesting areas for future research.

Current Study

In the field of Geography teaching and learning, the performance of students largely relies on how teachers assess their learning outcomes. When learners are assessed using diverse strategies throughout the learning process, they are more likely to comprehend the content and achieve better results. The purpose of assessment is to identify any gaps in the teaching and learning process and to prepare students for examinations. Following the examinations, the Examinations Council of Lesotho provides reports that highlight areas of poor performance and suggest ways to improve in those areas. For instance, the reports may address the inappropriate usage of geographical terminology, such as using "up and down" instead of "fluctuate". Despite the annual assessment reports sent by the Examinations Council of Lesotho to schools, learners continue to struggle in Geography. This indicates that Geography teachers may not be effectively utilizing these reports to reflect on their practices and improve the teaching and learning experience. Consequently, learners' performance continues to suffer. As a result, students who aspire to pursue careers in Geography may lack the essential knowledge of specific geographical terminology, which serves as the foundation for various concepts in Geography. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of assessment for learning in the field of Geography.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Underpinning Theories
This study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Gregory's theory of perception and the Keeping Learning on Track theory of action. The first theory elucidates the process through which information is internalized and interpreted to shape perceptions (Gregory, 1972). Gregory's theory of perception posits that perception is a constructive process involving inferences and interpretations based on prior knowledge and experiences. To perceive something, individuals must internalize information through sensory receptors, which combines with existing stored information derived from experiences.

Furthermore, Gregory contends that experience plays a significant role in interpreting sensory data compared to the sensory image itself (Kamugisha, 2021). In the context of this

study, it implies that teachers' perceptions of Assessment for Learning in Geography may rely on their prior experiences and how they integrate it into their teaching practices. Those who have employed AfL might view it as an optimal approach for teaching and learning Geography. However, it is important to note that Gregory's theory of perception does not directly elucidate the dynamics of AfL; instead, it focuses on the process by which teachers' perceptions are shaped. This leads us to another theory that offers a more comprehensive understanding of AfL dynamics.

The Keeping Learning on Track (KLT) theory aims to identify fundamental AfL practices, evaluate their impact, and suggest measurement methods (Educational Testing Service, 2009). The KLT theory underscores the roles of teachers and learners in enhancing student learning. It underscores the teacher's responsibility to adapt instructional processes to meet learners' specific needs, contingent on their pedagogic content knowledge (PCK). Thum et al. (2015) argue that adjusting instruction to accommodate learners' needs can significantly enhance their learning outcomes. This aligns with Kultsum's (2017) affirmation that teachers with strong PCK tend to facilitate improved student performance.

The theory also underscores the importance of continuous assessment in the classroom. Assessment for Learning (AfL) is especially suitable here as it allows ongoing evaluation of students' comprehension and knowledge. According to Crystal et al (2022), assessing students' understanding helps teachers pinpoint gaps in the learning process and effectively address them. Additionally, the KLT theory emphasizes the value of promoting peer-to-peer learning and cultivating student responsibility for their own learning.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a deliberate process wherein teachers utilize assessment evidence to adjust instructional methods, and students adapt learning strategies (Brink & Bartz, 2017). It employs methods like observations, practical demonstrations, written tasks, self-assessment, and peer assessment to evaluate learners (Schildkamp et al., 2020). This procedure grants teachers' insights into student challenges, enabling them to enhance instruction and thereby elevate student learning. AfL centers around three vital aspects: learners' projected direction, their current standing, and the pathway to advance towards learning objectives (Vero & Chukwuemeka, 2019). AfL places learners at its core by furnishing information about their existing knowledge and desired learning goals (Crystal et al., 2022). Hence, constructive feedback holds a pivotal role in AfL (Prashanti & Ramnarayan, 2019). Feedback that highlights strengths and areas for improvement motivates learners to enhance their performance.

Through self-assessment and peer assessment, students actively engage in the learning process, comprehending content (Schildkamp et al., 2020). A supportive teacher-learner relationship is essential for this active participation. Effective assessment hinges on this relationship (Schellekens et al., 2021). In heterogeneous classrooms, AfL assists teachers in ensuring all learners operate at suitable levels. Understanding students' strengths and weaknesses enables teachers to customize their approach to address distinct needs, negating grouping solely based on abilities. Moreover, AfL facilitates immediate instructional adjustments. This adaptation can be initiated through activities or topic summaries that gauge students' comprehension levels, offering critical insights for prompt instructional modifications (Brink & Bartz, 2017; Mphats'oane et al., 2023).

Factors Affecting Assessment for Learning in Classrooms

Numerous studies have investigated the hurdles encountered by educators when incorporating Assessment for Learning (AfL) into the teaching and learning process. These studies (AlMofti & Khaldoon, 2020; Areekkuzhiyil & Professor, 2021; Cisse et al., 2021; Moges, 2018; Musa & Islam, 2020) uncover a range of obstacles. For example, Musa & Islam (2020) identified inadequate assessment knowledge and training in Bangladesh, leading to difficulties in implementation. Similarly, AlMofti & Khaldoon (2020) discovered that teachers in Iraq struggle due to limited

comprehension of assessment concepts and differentiating AfL from Assessment of Learning (AoL). Additionally, Iraq's exam-centric system hampers AfL, as teachers prioritize completing the curriculum. In Ethiopia, Moges (2018) found that while educators acknowledge the significance of AfL, they encounter challenges in promoting student engagement. Conversely, Cisse et al. (2021) observed time limitations and increased workloads in Canada. Moreover, overcrowded classrooms exacerbate AfL challenges (Kasani et al., 2020), making it difficult to provide personalized feedback.

Similarly, inadequate AfL knowledge results in prioritizing content delivery, hindering active learning (Musa & Islam, 2020). Addressing diverse learning needs becomes challenging without strong assessment skills (Cisse et al., 2021). The teacher-student ratio constrains AfL implementation, compromising the quality of feedback (Cisse et al., 2021). Moreover, time-consuming AfL activities affect lesson coverage (AlMofti & Khaldoon, 2020; Quyen & Khairani, 2017), while classroom assessment bias persists, influenced by intelligence, gender, socioeconomic status, language, and religion (Areekkuzhiyil & Professor, 2021), perpetuating inequalities. Finally, resistance to diverse techniques due to inadequate preparation or adherence to a single approach obstructs AfL integration (Cisse et al., 2021; Musa & Islam, 2020). In conclusion, AfL implementation encounters various challenges, including insufficient knowledge, time constraints, classroom size, bias, and resistance. Grasping these challenges is essential for effectively embracing AfL in education.

Implications of Assessment for Learning on Learners and Their Learning
Prior research conducted by Ayanwale et al. (2018), Huisman (2018), and Orheruata (2019) underscores that the implementation of Assessment for Learning (AfL) leads to enhanced learning achievements and heightened learner confidence. AfL holds significance for both educators and learners, offering insights into known and unknown areas. As the instructional process unfolds, teachers employ these insights to refine the quality of teaching and learning (Huisman, 2018). Kıncal & Ozan (2018) emphasize that AfL prioritizes learners and their learning, aiming to enhance the instructional process. Huisman (2018) contends that relying solely on oral questions inadequately informs the instructional approach. He advocates incorporating supplementary methods like written assignments, projects, and demonstrations. These methods validate learner feedback and assist teachers in tailored planning based on individual needs. Through AfL, learners actively construct knowledge by engaging with teachers and peers, thus assuming ownership of their learning (Kincal & Ozan, 2018). Furthermore, as the learning process advances, learners become adept at recognizing their learning challenges (Orheruata, 2019). These challenges can be promptly addressed as learners seek further clarification. Nevertheless, learners often exhibit reluctance to pose questions within the classroom environment.

Impact of Assessment for Learning-on-Learning Achievement
Assessment for Learning (AfL) is associated with enhancing learners' academic achievement. As highlighted by Crystal et al. (2022), AfL is a continuous process wherein teachers consistently adjust instruction based on learner feedback. This results in the utilization of pedagogical approaches that can potentially enhance learners' performance. Similarly, Ferdinal & Isramirawati (2021) agree that AfL positively impacts academic performance by assessing learners at each learning stage and promptly addressing any issues. Crystal et al. (2022) further contends that AfL aids teachers in pinpointing areas where learners require support. Through various techniques, AfL enables educators to identify the underlying causes of learners' misconceptions. For instance, as learners are assessed, they provide feedback through their written or verbal expressions. This feedback assists in dispelling misconceptions. Additionally, AfL clearly outlines instructional objectives, helping learners assess their progress and alignment with classroom activities. Consequently, it motivates them to strive for achievement.

Similarly, feedback encourages learners to invest more effort in their work. According to Ferdinal & Isramirawati (2021), feedback monitors students' progress and inspires improved performance. Over time, awareness of weaknesses and strengths can lead to enhancement. AfL's flexibility in addressing learners' diverse levels of understanding can also contribute to improved academic achievement (Crystal et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

Philosophical Lens

This study is situated in the philosophical lens of interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is grounded in the belief that knowledge is subjective and reality is relative, as emphasized by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017). This perspective acknowledges that knowledge is socially constructed and that multiple realities exist. Accordingly, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) assert that understanding the observer's viewpoint is crucial, with a focus on comprehending individuals and their interpretations of the world around. Creswell and Creswell (2018) highlights that within this paradigm, research revolves around participants' perspectives on the phenomena being studied. Moreover, the interpretive paradigm recognizes the importance of understanding a phenomenon through the diverse viewpoints of research participants, as highlighted by Cohen et al. (2018). Given that teachers play a central role in the assessment process, determining what, how, and when to assess, it becomes crucial to explore their perceptions of assessment. Researchers working within this paradigm can delve into individuals' experiences in-depth using qualitative designs and methodologies (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Consequently, conducting in-depth interviews with open-ended questions emerges as an appropriate method and instrument for generating data on teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon being investigated.

Design and Approach

The research utilized a qualitative methodology, which entails the collection of non-numerical data and places emphasis on attaining a comprehensive understanding. As outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research entails the researcher investigating phenomena or issues by drawing upon the viewpoints of the participants. Also, a case study design was employed to analyse a specific instance. Cases are delineated by distinct time and activity constraints, with researchers collecting data within a specified timeframe (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, Akhtar (2016) points out that the goal of a case study is to acquire precise information about the complete phenomenon.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A non-probability sampling technique was utilized. As stated by Taherdoost (2016), "case studies tend to focus on small samples and are intended to examine a real-life phenomenon." The sample consisted of two Mapoteng region schools and four teachers. These teachers were purposively selected due to the exclusive provision of Geography in Mapoteng.

Instruments

- **Semi-structured Questions**

  This instrument comprises predetermined questions that may not follow a specific order (Adosi, 2020). Some questions might arise during the interview. Semi-structured questions facilitate further exploration and discussion of responses. In this context, semi-structured questions were deemed suitable, allowing participants to address multiple dimensions within a single question.

- **Observation Checklist**

  The observation checklist includes specific elements to be observed by the researcher in the classroom. As mentioned by Adosi (2020), an observation checklist assists in monitoring

participants' behavior. For this study, the checklist focused on observing teachers' behaviors related to ongoing learner assessment.

Methods of Data Generation

- In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews involve the researcher posing a series of questions about a phenomenon and collecting participants' responses (Trigueros, 2017). These interviews enable participants to convey their thoughts, emotions, and motivations, generating data on their viewpoints and experiences. Geography teachers underwent in-depth interviews using semi-structured questions to gather their opinions on Assessment for Learning. The interviews allowed participants to provide detailed insights, with clarification sought when necessary.

- Participatory Observation

Geography teachers were observed using an observation checklist to examine their assessment practices during the teaching and learning process. Specific attributes were marked per minute using tally marks.

Method of Data Analysis

For analysis, Atlas.ti software was employed to conduct an inductive thematic analysis. Data sets were imported from Microsoft Word into the software, following the six steps of inductive thematic analysis (Stranges et al., 2014). Research flowchart below shows the research procedure.
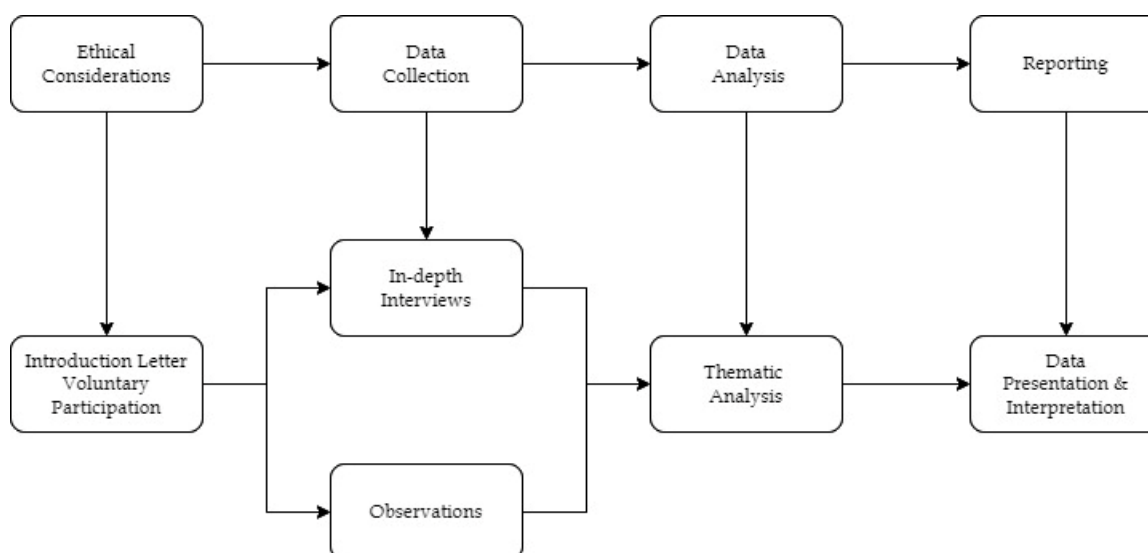

Figure 1. Research flowchart

Trustworthiness: refers to the issue of quality of the study and the value of the research outcome in a qualitative study (Chowdhury, 2015). To establish trustworthiness in this study, the researchers adopted the following for categories: Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility: concerned with the accuracy of the findings and how the conclusion made is real (Forero et al., 2018). It is assured through strategies such as triangulation and peer checking. The study triangulated interviews with observations to ensure that the findings are true and believable. Moreover, other researchers were engaged to ensure that the data analysis was done appropriately.

Dependability: refers to the consistency of the study if it were to be replicated in the same context with the same participants (Shenton, 2004). The study explicitly explained the methods and procedure used to ensure audit trail and provided the limitations.

Confirmability: refers to the objectivity and neutrality of the researcher in the study (Anderson et al., 2014). It ensures that the findings are based on participants; experiences and ideas not the researcher's biasness (Shenton, 2004). In the context of this study, the researcher had a research assistant to eliminate biasness. Further, the methodological triangulation was incorporated to get a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

Transferability: refers to "how well the study conclusions can be applied to other similar context" (Mabuza et al., 2014). To ensure transferability in this study, a detailed description of the site, participants and data collection procedure was provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results
Theme one: Factors affecting AfL

This section presents the findings extracted from the in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted with the aim of investigating the factors that impact Assessment for Learning (AfL) in Geography classes, comprehending teachers' viewpoints on AfL, and pinpointing methods to improve learning via AfL. The themes that surfaced during the data analysis were guided by the research questions.
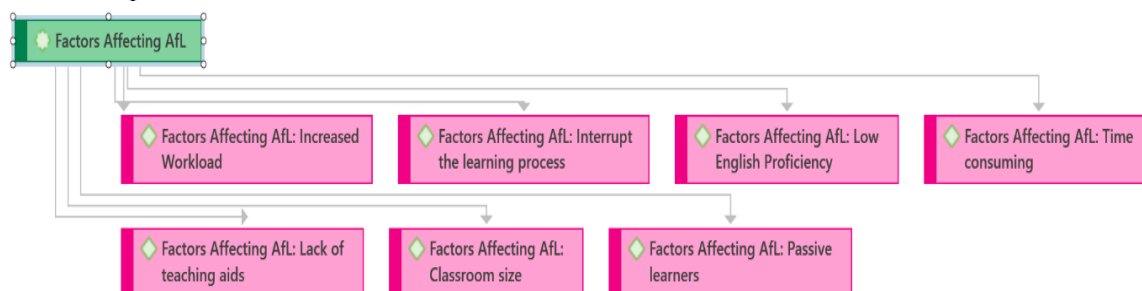

Figure 2. Factors affecting AfL

This theme explores challenges faced by teachers during AfL implementation. To deepen our understanding of these issues, the theme was subdivided, as shown in Figure 1 above. Responses from these subthemes indicate that teachers indeed encounter obstacles that hinder their goal attainment. Notably, the most prevalent challenge is the time-consuming nature of AfL, with educators often investing substantial time in addressing learners' misconceptions. Additionally, the feedback revealed that catering to a diverse classroom poses demands. Participant 4 articulated, "Instilling the skill into learners and repeating the concept is time-consuming." The responses tied to the subtheme "Time Consuming" are presented in the Figure 3.
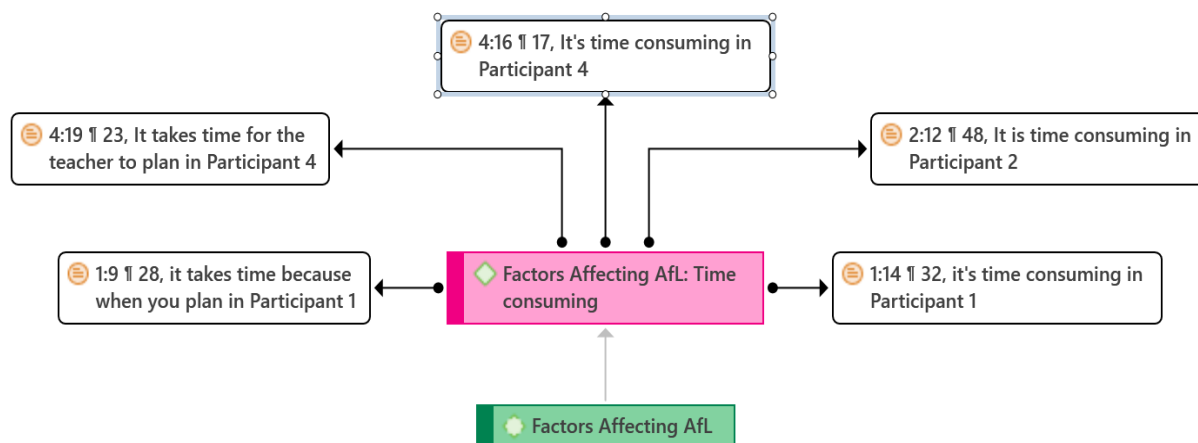

Figure 3. Time consuming

Theme two: Teachers' perceptions on AfL

The second theme delves into teachers' perceptions of AfL. The responses reveal that teachers possess a solid understanding of AfL and its role in education. They also underscored their active integration of AfL within their classrooms. For instance, Participant 2 asserted, "I consistently employ it in my class." Furthermore, the participants emphasized that AfL primarily serves as a diagnostic tool. Participant 4 highlighted, "It's used to ascertain the achievement of set objectives." Similarly, Participant 3 stressed that it enables the teacher "to evaluate students' grasp of the concept."

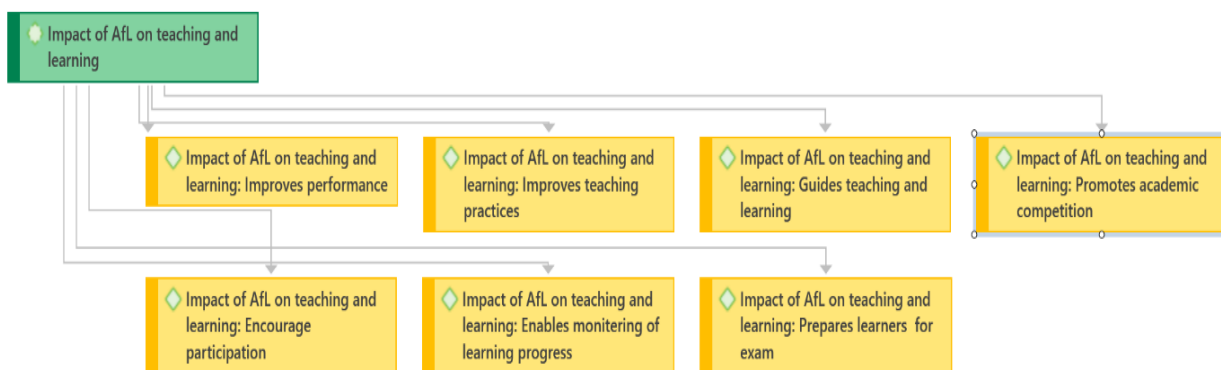### Theme three: Impact of AfL on Learning

Figure 4. Impact of AfL on learning

The analysis also revealed that AfL has a favorable effect on the teaching and learning journey. Figure 4 depicts teachers' responses, affirming that AfL undeniably affects their teaching and learning practices. One noteworthy impact identified is the capability to oversee the learning progression, as highlighted by the responses in the subsequent subtheme.
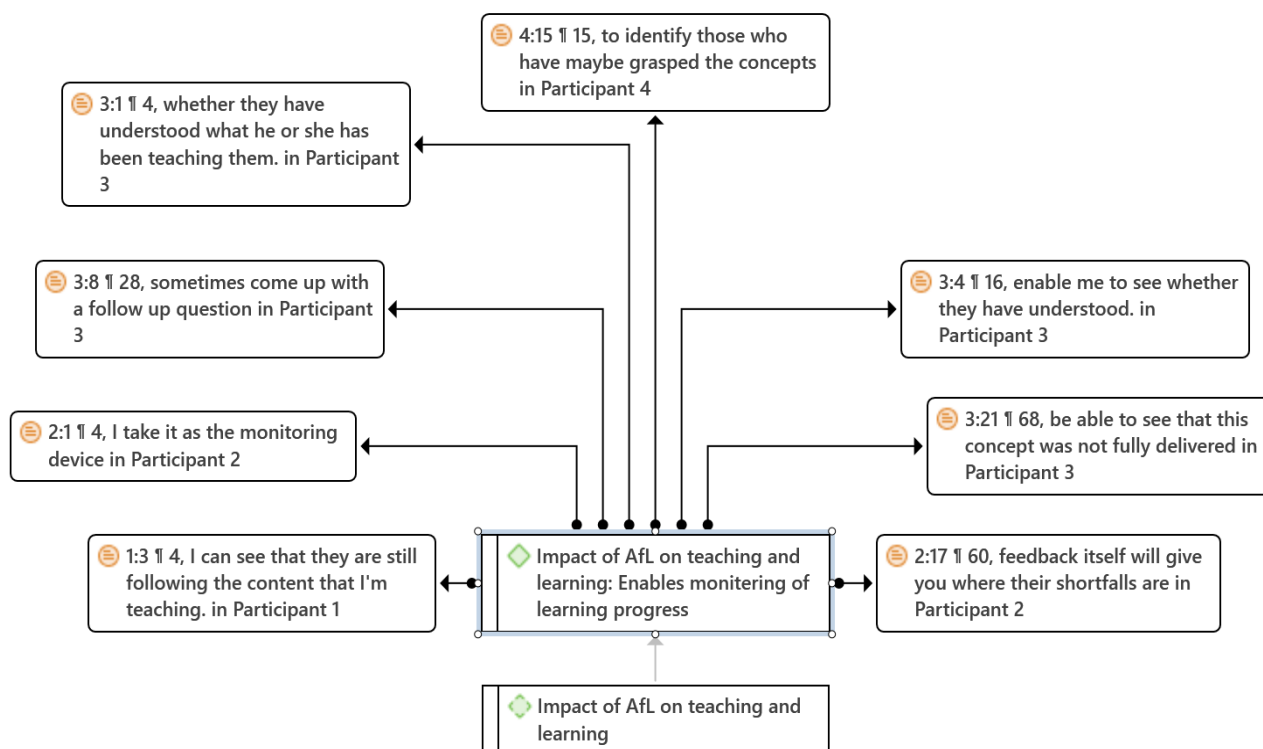

Figure 5. Monitoring of learning progress

To offer supplementary evidence regarding the influence of AfL on learning, Figure 5 displays participants' responses. They highlighted how AfL empowers them to track learning advancement within their classrooms. For instance, Participant 3 remarked, "On occasion, I formulate follow-up questions to ensure they reach the desired understanding."

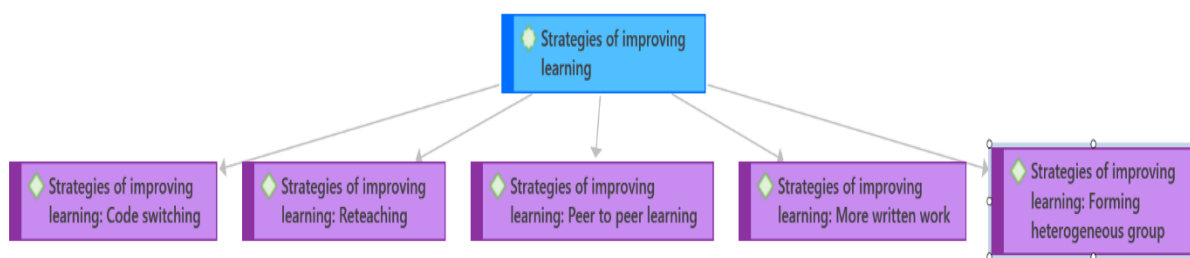**Theme four: Strategies of improving learning**

Figure 6. Strategies of improving learning

This theme investigates the strategies utilized by teachers to improve learning. The responses from participants unveiled their utilization of diverse methods, including re-teaching concepts, facilitating code switching among learners, fostering peer-to-peer learning, forming heterogeneous groups, and assigning additional written tasks to students. Figure 7 below depicts the distinct subtheme of "Re-teaching".
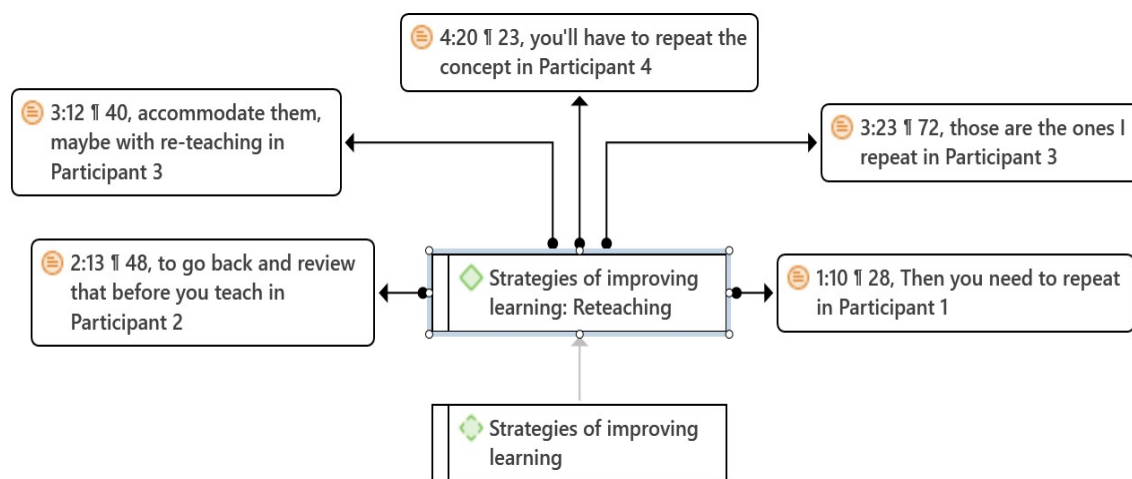

Figure 7. Reteaching

Figure 7 demonstrates that the participants give precedence to re-teaching concepts to ensure comprehensive comprehension among all learners. They underscored their practice of not progressing to the next concept until learners have attained a firm grasp of the current one.
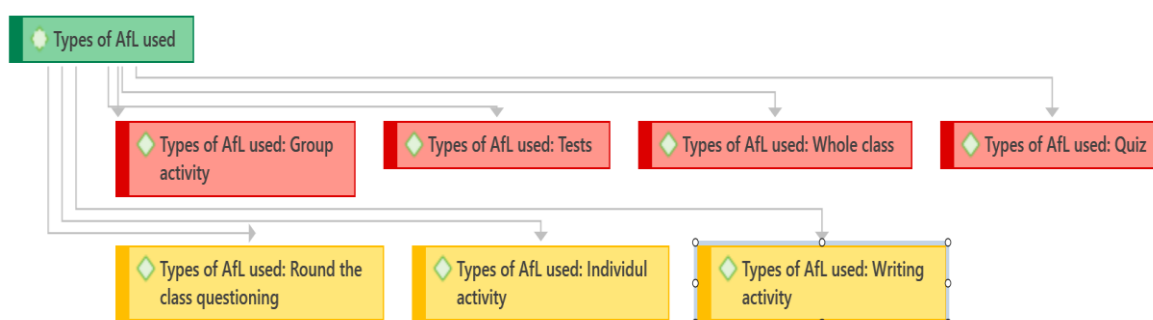
Theme five: Type of AfL used

Figure 8. Types of AfL

This theme explores the different forms of AfL utilized by the participants in their classrooms. The responses indicate that teachers employ various assessment methods based on their preferences. These methods include group activities, tests, whole-class questioning, quizzes, round-the-class questioning, and individual activities.
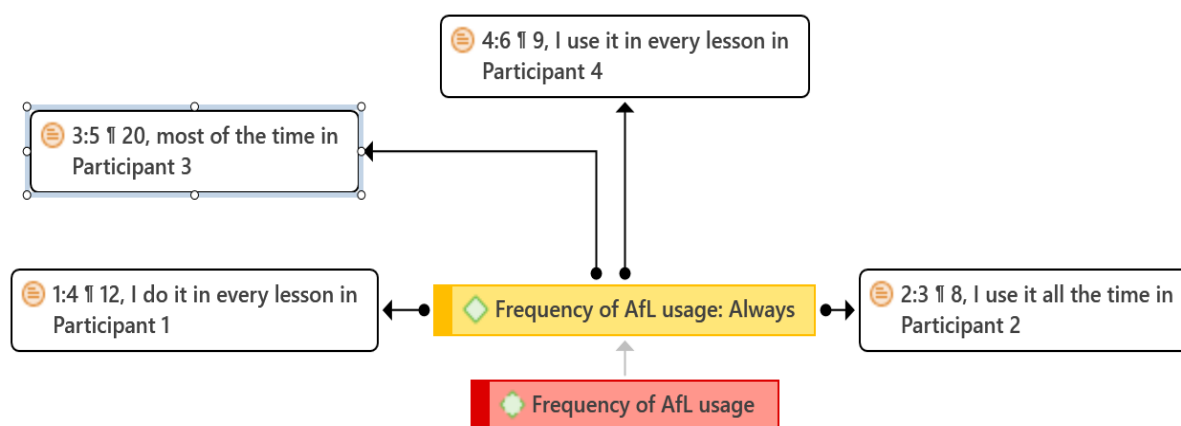
Theme six: Frequency of Afl usage

Figure 9. Frequency of AfL usage

The theme explored the frequency of utilizing AfL in the classroom. The responses, illustrated in Figure 9, indicated that teachers consistently integrate AfL within their instructional settings.

Findings from the observation
This section showcases the findings derived from classroom observations, presented in a tabular format. The table illustrates teachers' practices in the classroom while implementing AfL.

Table 1. Occurrence of assessment attributes

Attribute	Participant 1		Participant 2		Participant 3	Participant 4
Teacher facilitating learning	Occasionally	Often	Always	Often	Often	Often
Appraisal	Occasionally	Occasionally	Occasionally	Occasionally	Never	Never
Addressing learners' needs	Occasionally	Occasionally	Never	Never	Occasionally	Occasionally
Whole class questioning	Occasionally	Occasionally	Never	Never	Occasionally	Occasionally
Round the class questioning	Never	Occasionally	Never	Never	Occasionally	Occasionally
Individual activity	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Group activity	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Teacher not facilitating learning	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never
Monologues	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never	Never

Key**:** Always- 21-35, Often- 11-20, Occasionally- 1-10, Never- 0

As shown in Table 1 above, the practices of four geography teachers were observed during their teaching sessions. Participant 1 underwent observation twice, revealing a predominant

reliance on whole class questioning, occasionally selecting respondents randomly for questions. Individual or group activities were absent, resulting in a less interactive classroom environment.

Participant 2 also underwent two observations, effectively engaging learners through questions and reinforcing their responses as needed. This participant encouraged volunteering and short presentations on topics like physical weathering, with the class contributing additional information. Nevertheless, whole class questioning remained the primary method of continuous assessment, and learner-initiated questions were infrequent.

A single observation was conducted for Participant 3, revealing a lesson with limited interactivity, as only 10 out of 50 students actively participated. The participant predominantly employed whole class and round-the-class questioning as assessment methods.

In contrast, Participant 4 facilitated the class more dynamically, occasionally employing whole class and round-the-class questioning. Despite efforts to involve quieter students, only a few responded, resulting in overall limited class engagement.

Discussion

Research question 1: How do teachers perceive Assessment for Learning in Geography?

The study's findings demonstrate a shared understanding among participants regarding Assessment for Learning (AfL). They perceive it as a method to monitor progress within the teaching and learning journey. This perspective resonates with Brink and Bartz's (2017) description of AfL as a deliberate process utilizing learners' feedback to shape instructional practices. According to participants, AfL affords them the means to gauge learners' grasp of taught concepts. This finding reinforces the study's underlying theory, which posits that feedback facilitates both teachers' and learners' monitoring of the teaching and learning process (William, 2009, cited in Thum et al., 2015). Additionally, participants indicated their awareness and utilization of AfL strategies in their classrooms. However, this discovery contradicts the observations made during the study, which revealed a prevalent reliance on the question-and-answer approach. The findings further underscore that teachers perceive AfL as a continuous process to be integrated daily in the classroom. This perception aligns with the theory, as William underscores the significance of teachers frequently assessing and subsequently adjusting the learning process as needed.

Research question 2: What are the factors affecting Assessment for Learning in Geography teaching and learning?

The study's findings underscore that teachers encounter challenges when integrating Assessment for Learning (AfL) into their classrooms. Participants highlighted that the size of their classrooms poses an obstacle, hindering their ability to cater to individual learners. This observation aligns with the conclusions drawn by AlMofti & Khaldoon (2020) and Kasani et al. (2020), who noted that a high student count limits collaborative opportunities. Similarly, Cisse et al. (2021) affirmed that large class sizes curtail teachers' mobility for personalized follow-ups.

Furthermore, the findings unveiled that AfL practices demand considerable time and effort. Participants noted that incorporating AfL necessitates substantial time for lesson planning, often requiring them to revisit concepts when learners struggle to grasp them. However, these observations contrast with those of Cisse et al. (2021), who found that teachers might be hesitant to adopt AfL due to insufficient lesson planning. Additionally, Quyen & Khairani (2017) posits that teachers might be reluctant to embrace self and peer assessment due to perceived time constraints. Additionally, the study's findings indicate that implementing AfL practices can disrupt the initial teaching and learning plan. Participants reported having to deviate from their original plans to address learners' immediate needs. These observations align with Akinboboye and Ayanwale (2021) insights that certain schools prioritize an examination-focused culture, potentially hindering the adoption of AfL practices as they are perceived to impede syllabus completion. Quyen & Khairani (2017) suggests that teachers play a pivotal role in overcoming

these challenges. However, they require motivation, support from school management, and adequate knowledge and skills in assessment practices.

Research question 3: How does Assessment for Learning affect learning achievement in Geography?

The findings obtained from this study underscore the positive influence of Assessment for Learning (AfL) on academic performance. Participants stressed that AfL enables them to revisit and simplify complex concepts, resulting in enhanced comprehension and learning outcomes. This outcome aligns with the theoretical framework of Keeping Learning on Track, proposed by William (2009, as cited by Thum et al., 2015), which posits that AfL strategies foster peer support and active engagement, ultimately bolstering learning achievement. Correspondingly, these results resonate with Moges's (2018) work, accentuating the significance of AfL in addressing learners' individual requirements and enriching the learning experience. Participants emphasized that AfL assists in identifying struggling students and tailoring interventions to cater to their distinct needs.

Interestingly, the findings drawn from non-participant observations mirror Moges's (2018) assertion that an insufficient grasp of fundamental assessment principles hampers the integration of diverse assessment techniques. During observations, participants primarily relied on whole-class questioning and refrained from deploying a range of strategies to evaluate students, thereby limiting student engagement. This outcome resonates with the observations of Akinboboye and Ayanwale (2021a) and Musa & Islam (2020), highlighting that educators often focus primarily on content dissemination. In this study, the participants did not incorporate writing exercises for learners, which could impact their familiarity with domain-specific language and potentially compromise their learning achievements.

Moreover, the observations' outcomes diverge from the interview responses where participants claimed to employ a variety of AfL strategies. Nevertheless, the classroom observations revealed a dominant reliance on sporadic whole-class questioning. As noted by Kultsum (2017), teachers equipped with pedagogic content knowledge of their subject tend to employ a diverse array of teaching and assessment strategies. In summary, this study underscores AfL's potential to enhance academic performance while uncovering incongruities between participants' self-reported practices and their observed classroom conduct. This discrepancy suggests a necessity for further exploration and support to ensure the effective implementation of diverse AfL strategies within the educational setting.

CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore geography teachers' perceptions of Assessment for Learning (AfL). The findings indicate that teachers' level of assessment knowledge could impact their implementation of AfL practices. The theoretical foundation of this study underscores the significance of fundamental assessment practices in effectively evaluating learners. However, it was noted that teachers seemed to lack this knowledge, leading to a limited reliance on question-and-answer evaluation. Moreover, the findings suggest that participants lacked pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Only one participant mentioned utilizing fieldwork for teaching and assessing learners, an essential approach in geography education. Strong PCK in the subject empowers teachers to integrate diverse assessment strategies more proficiently. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education organize assessment training programs for in-service teachers, while institutions of Higher Education enhance their assessment training programs for pre-service teachers. Equipping future educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to adeptly utilize AfL strategies in their teaching is crucial.

Limitations and Future Directions

Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing corpus of research on Assessment for Learning. It offers valuable insights into teachers' perceptions and practices concerning AfL

within the context of geography education. These findings can enrich ongoing discussions on effective assessment practices and guide forthcoming research endeavours in the field. The research was conducted solely in Mapoteng, within the Berea district; thus, the applicability of the findings to other districts or regions might be limited. Additionally, the study's sample size was small, potentially impacting the representativeness of the results. Future investigations should consider encompassing a broader spectrum of geographical locations to ensure wider relevance of the findings. Moreover, larger and more diverse samples should be included in subsequent studies to yield comprehensive and robust outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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