

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL 1 KUALA CENAKU

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Abstract

Teaching and learning are not complete without assessment which is needed to measure the students' capability and achievement in language learning. Assessment is an essential activity and as an integral part of teaching learning process and it is used to see whether the teaching and learning process can run as expected and reach the desired objectives. One particular form to assess the students' reading comprehension is by using authentic assessment. Authentic assessment requires demands on teachers' professional skills since it calls for independent judgment and interpretation of student performance. It takes times and careful planning to be used effectively. However, most teachers do not feel adequately prepared and mastered in assessing their students by using an authentic assessment. The problems appear while the teachers start to apply it. The main contribution of this study is to determine the problems of two English teachers in implementing and applying an authentic assessment on reading comprehension. Using descriptive qualitative method and semi-structured interview administered to five English teachers, the researcher observes directly to confirm the data obtained from English teachers who use authentic assessment in their reading comprehension class and this study highlights some findings those are the teachers' problems in implementing an authentic assessment. Based on the observation and interview the researcher finds several difficulties that faced by the teacher in preparing, applying and implementing the authentic assessment on students' reading comprehension.

Keywords: assessment, authentic assessment, reading comprehension

Introduction

The purpose of teaching reading is to develop students' competence in reading skills that cover the basic standard competence in Curriculum-Base Competence. In education field, reading is the key to enlarge knowledge since it presents various information of students' need in learning. As Levine et al (2010) stated that reading is one of the most important skills that should be acquire for English as second language students because it can develop language intuition and determine academic success for completing certain purpose such as gaining information or validate existing knowledge, enjoyment or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. It means that through reading a text, the readers can gain knowledge and information about many things.

Nowadays, Senior High School students are mostly taught reading comprehension through genre. It contains knowledge about language features, generic structure, and other characteristics that build a reading text perfectly. Since the students always face reading through genre, it forces the teachers to find the source of material that can develop students' communicative competence. One of the components of communicative competence is socio-cultural knowledge that relate to day-to-day living, share values, belief, histories, taboos of certain social group (Reid, 2012). In relate to this, authentic material is believed as the best material for teaching cultural aspects because it can bring outside world and reality.

It is generally true that using authentic material in reading should be evaluated by authentic assessment. Authentic assessments in reading tend to

enrich students with the real world tasks that emphasizing students skill for the real-problem solving. Authentic assessment in reading comprehension will give opportunity for students to be creative learners and enable them to develop specific graduate attributes (Wiggins, 2003). In regard to this, teachers have to design the real world condition to assess students' knowledge and comprehension on reading text. The authentic assessment describes the multiple forms of assessment that reflect students learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally relevant classroom activities (Malley and Pierce 1996).

In fact, in Vocational High School Kuala Cenaku Riau province, most English teachers are used to apply traditional assessment in measuring students' reading achievement. According to the researcher observation and interview with some English teachers, they said that that using authentic assessment is more difficult and complicated than traditional assessment. In designing authentic assessment, they should considered three essential factors such as firstly; it should clear articulating that expected learning out-comes of the unit. It means the teachers have to provide the assessment with clear criteria and performing standard. Secondly, authentic assessment should represent the real world condition such as in describing problems, finding placement in authentic setting, and designing learning environment. Finally, it requires managing the assessment load that includes students' situation, large portfolios and report.

In regard to the phenomena above, the researcher assumes that authentic assessment is important in connecting students learning and applies essential knowledge and skill to the real world tasks and problems. Moreover, investigating the teachers problems in applying authentic assessment in reading comprehension is necessary be conducted. Therefore, the researcher interest in figure out a research by the title: 'The Implementation of

Authentic Assessment in Vocational High School 1 Kuala Cenaku

Thus, this present research, is trying to investigate teachers' implementation in authentic assessment. This research is important because It is expected that English teachers, in particular, can apply the authentic assessment in assessing student comprehension in reading class in order to assess how deeply an individual student understand a certain curriculum-related selection. Besides, authentic reading assessment identifies the key feature of good assessment.

Methodology

This study uses descriptive qualitative research to find out the teachers' implementation of authentic assessment in Vocational high school. According to Gall and Borg (2003: 290, in Jalaludin, 2009), "Descriptive research has yielded much valuable knowledge, about opinions, attitudes, and practices." Furthermore, Heigham and Crooker (2009) states that qualitative research entails collecting primarily textual data and examining it using interpretive analysis. The participants involved in this study are five in service teachers of primary and secondary schools and chosen purposively. Since the design of the study is descriptive research, therefore, the technique for collecting the data in this research used interview. Lambert (2012) suggests that interview is an efficient way to elicit in-depth information of someone's experience, perspectives, and opinions. Interview is not only asking questions and the interviewee answer them but also the researcher has to engage actively in the conversation focused on the study. This research used semi-structured interview, where the researcher is allowed to ask additional question and discuss additional topics related to the issue discussed (Lambert, 2012).

The analysis used in this research is thematic analysis (Gomm, 2004). The thematic analysis codes each conversation based on the theme. The steps in thematic

analysis are (Gomm, 2004): deciding what themes will be; deciding what will count as evidence of a theme; coding a transcript to indicate this passage is an example of this theme and that passage is an example of another theme; and the last, presenting the data result. The data were analyzed very carefully by making transcription, giving themes, and coding them

Findings and Discussion

1. Teachers' Understanding about Authentic Assessment

All teachers know that authentic assessment is the method to measure students' ability. They gave their own understanding about the term authentic assessment. All of the respondents agree that authentic assessment is the way or method which is often used by teachers to evaluate or measure students' ability.

"Authentic Assessment is requiring knowledge and skills in the real-life setting." (Respondent 3)

"Authentic Assessment helps the students to interact with the real life." (Respondent 4)

Looking at their responses, it is clear that most EFL teachers understand about the term assessment that they always conduct in the classroom.

2. The Importance of Assessment

Assessment gives benefits for both teacher and student. All teachers have their different perspective of the importance of authentic assessment. Some argued that authentic assessment is important to evaluate the learning in the classroom. The others claimed that assessment is important to know the students' ability and to reflect the teachers' teaching and students' learning.

"Assessment is important to evaluate teachers' teaching and students' learning. assessment gives teachers reflection to know the quality of their teaching. in addition, assessment can also help students to recognize their weaknesses and strengths so that they can determine the strategies to improve their learning." (Respondent 4)

"Assessment has many benefits for teachers and students. As a teacher, based on my experience, I can reflect my own teaching during the instruction. Assessment also gives the opportunity for students to determine their level. Students will be able to decide the learning strategies and style for them to improve the learning process and outcomes." (Respondent 1)

Therefore, it is clearly stated that assessment gives huge contribution to the teaching and learning process. As Dhindsa et al. (2007) state, assessment is a key component of teaching and learning, "a systematic process of data gathering" about students' progress.

3. The Types of Authentic Assessment Implemented by the Teacher

Various kinds of authentic assessment is available, the teachers can practice some of it. It depends on the teacher itself.

"Story telling is used to get the literal meaning is simply what is the text says. It is what actually happens in the story." (Respondent 1)

"Oral Interview is used to evaluate meaning by telling the readers about the information outside the text, so the readers should analyze what is being read. The readers must form opinion base on the information, then they should an evaluation that supported with the evidences on a text."

(Respondent 3)

4. The Difficulties on the Implementation of Authentic Assessment

All things are never away from problems. Some obstacles may occur during the assessment. All respondents agree that they have ever had several problems during the authentic assessment. Some of them claimed that scoring and making the evaluation criteria sometimes confusing them. Another said that the problems often occur in authentic assessment is when there is inappropriateness of assessment being used and the material during the instruction or unit.

"The common problems occurred in authentic assessment is when scoring and making the criteria of assessment." (Respondent 1)

“I think, teachers often ignore the appropriateness of instruction with authentic assessment. This because the limited time. In addition, teachers usually assess the productive and receptive skill in the same way.” (Respondent 3)

“Time, washback effect, and the kind of authentic assessment often become the problems during assessment. They sometimes make teachers confused.” (Respondent 4)

Thus, it is clear that those problems often occur when teachers assess students' ability. One of the respondents said that the effect of the washback is sometimes confusing the teachers. Teachers should be as creative as possible to make students aware of the importance of the whole aspects (learning goals, instruction, and assessment).

Conclusion

Most of the teachers have a positive perception toward the quality of the authentic assessment that they gave to the students. There are five criteria of a good assessment they are practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback.

The authentic assessment that was usually used by the teachers in reading class was not practical yet since the assessment that was usually used was complicated, especially in scoring process. But it had been fulfilling the criteria of reliability and validity of the assessment.

Based on the result, it is suggested to the teachers to consider about all of the criteria of a good authentic assessment. While in the practicality and authenticity of the assessment, the teachers should do some improvisation in the assessment method that they were usually used, to make the assessment become more practice.

For further research, it is good to find out a good method in doing authentic assessment since a good assessment can show the students about the development of the students' skill in learning English. The method should be based on the criteria of a good assessment that are practicality,

reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback.

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