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## LOOKING INTO THE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the implementation of authentic assessment from a qualitative approach by observing and interviewing a teacher who are applying the assessment. The procedures by Frey, Smith and Allen (2012) were the foundation for the authentic assessment implementation, and an interview was done to reveal the teacher attitude on the use of authentic assessment. Based on the observation on her evaluation during the teaching process in a listening class, she did not implement one procedure in the assessment, which was disallowing learners to do the next step before being able to finish the task with the correct procedure and the good result. From the interview, she informed that she did not apply this procedure because she believed that the students with low achievement should be assisted in different session after the teaching learning process. It needs to be done to accelerate the accomplishment of the curriculum goal. Furthermore, it was also found that she was not designing the tasks instead she was applying the activities planned in the textbook. She informed that the tasks in the textbook were suitable and categorized as 'authentic' to use in the classroom.*

**Keywords:** Assessment, authentic assessment, curriculum.

### INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Curriculum needs an assessment that can describe the improvement of student learning outcomes. The Decree of Education and Culture Ministry Indonesia No. 81A mentions that in Kurikulum 2013 applies scientific approach because this approach supports the development of students' creativity in the learning process. Frey also said that "assessment is authentic when the tasks, content, expectations, and evaluation methods of the assessment are similar to the meaningful tasks, content, expectations, and evaluation methods outside the classroom in the real world". Therefore, in authentic assessment, all aspects involved in teaching learning process are put in real context. In order to achieve the goal, the teachers have to follow the five steps in teaching and learning process. They are observing, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking. Each of the steps has its own learning activity. These steps are reflected in the authentic assessment.

Authentic assessment is a kind of alternative assessment. Khalanyane and Hala-hala (2014, p. 6) stated that authentic assessment is a form of assessment focused on the evaluation of knowledge and skills of learner in real world. It means that this kind of assessment is used to measure the process and learning outcomes of students' skills (psychomotor) and knowledge (cognitive) in real way. For an assessment to be authentic, the context, the purpose, the audience and the constraints of the test should connect in some way to real world situations and problems (North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction, 1999, p. 12).

From the observation in preliminary study the writer found that six senior high schools in Banda Aceh have implemented K13 curriculum. It is then assumed that the schools apply authentic assessment in the English classroom. Since the writer was interested in investigating the use of authentic assessment in English classroom, the writer intended to have a close look on how the teachers use authentic assessment in one of those schools.

## METHODS

The method used in this research study was qualitative. It draws on the data by applying the open-ended and inductive style of questioning and observation (Greg, Emily & Marilyn, 2012). The researcher observed and describing the implementation of authentic assessment in two meetings (4 x 45 minutes) to 32 second grade students of a senior high school in Banda Aceh. An observation was done under the framework of Frey, Smith and Allen (2009) focussing the procedures on 3 (three) aspects, the context of assessment, the role of students, and the scoring procedures. After that, the researcher interviewed the teacher to reveal her stance on the use of the authentic assessment in her classroom. The teacher in this research study was marked as Respondent Teacher (RT).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the observation, the writer compared the characteristics of authentic assessment used based on Frey, Schmitt, and Allen (2012) with the assessment used by the RT in the classroom. The following table provides a more detailed description of the results of the observation.

**Table 1.** Result of observation.

<i>Aspects</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
I.	Context of Assessment		
	A. Realistic activity or context		
	1. Closely connected to the world	√	
	2. Tasks are meaningful, challenging, and engaging	√*	
B.	Performance Based		
	1. Leading to produce a performance or a creation of a product.	√	
	2. Kinds of performance based task used by the teacher:		
	- Constructed response	√	
	- Products	√	
C.	Cognitively complex	√	
	Engaging in complex tasks and higher –order thinking skills		
II.	The Role of Students		
	A. Formative assessment		
	1. Continuous assessment	√*	
	2. Providing feedback to students to control their own learning.	√	
	3. Analyzing student <sup>i</sup> work	√	
	B. Collaborative		
	1. Working together.	√	
	2. Learning is student-driven	√	
	C. Defense		
1. Defending their answers or performance	√		
III.	Scoring Procedures		
	A. Multiple indicators or portfolios		
	1. The assessment cover <sup>ii</sup> 3 learning objectives taxonomy	√	
	2. Encouraging interdisciplinary perspectives	√	
	B. Criteria known by the student		
	1. Explaining the scoring criteria	√	
	2. Well understood	√	
	3. Self-assessment and peer assessment	√	
	C. Mastery expectation		
	1. The task and scoring are designed to provide feedback on whether the student has mastered a skill or ability.	√	
2. Defined criteria	√		
3. Disallowing to do the next task before perfect mastery		√*	

Based on Table 1, the aspect of the assessment that was not fulfilled was III.C3, where the RT did not disallow the learners to do the next assessment before they accomplished the previous one. She

justified in the interview that the low achievement students should be assisted in the remedial session, at the end of the semester. Rather than reinforcing the low achievement students in the learning process, the remedial session was viewed to be more appropriate as it provides the low achievement students opportunity to further discuss their problems and obtain the reinforcement from the teacher.

In point I.A.2, the teacher provides the students with meaningful, challenging, and engaging activities. During the observation, the researcher found that the teacher was mostly relied on the textbook. Most of the activities in the learning process were guided by the textbook. She confirmed in the interview that the activities set in the textbook were 'real', and closely connected to the students' real world. The exercised designed in the textbook reflected the students daily life activities such as withdrawing money from the ATM. Moreover, In point II.A1 the teacher should conduct a continous assessment but during the observation, there were only some students were asked to perform their work. Due to the limitation of time, the teacher only randomly called the representatives of each group to present their work.

From this study we found that in implementing the authentic assessment, the teacher did not conduct one aspect and the other two aspects did not fully fulfilled the authentic assessment theory of Frey, Schmitt, and Allen (2012). In the classroom, the teacher did not provide the reinforcement for the low achievement students. They were offered to join the remedial session in the afternoon. Moreover, the mastery statements relates to individual aspects identified within programs of study that have been fully achieved (Lily & Peacock, 2014). It can be understood that the ability of learners does not compare to the group, but compared against criteria. The authentic assessment urges the teacher to put their particular attention to the students' language development individually. Having only one students to represent the group in performing the task will not measure the students individual ability . Furthermore, It is true that the 'real' exercises in the textbook has been designed to fulfill the curriculum demand. However, relying only on the textbook can not give the students 'real' experiences using the language. Frey (2013) defines 'real' as the 'world' of the language users. It means that the teacher should pay attention to the 'world' of the students, and bring it into the classroom. Having the students solved their problems by using the English languages will be one of the ways to bring 'real' or authentic situation of the use of the language.

The interview also revealed that the teacher used authentic assessment in every meeting. There always exists an assessment in everyday learning process. Shepard stated that (2000) assessment plays an integral role in teaching and learning. The teacher used the authentic assessment as the need in teaching process because everyday students show their progress in learning. The progress leads to the attainment of the language skills. Therefore, it should be assessed.

The teacher also did various types of authentic assessment. However, she only applied one of them in every meeting. It depends on the material needed. Furthermore, the teacher also measured the students' weaknesses and needs. Identifying areas of weakness in students are crucial to developing the quality of classroom teachers (Ballard & Bates, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

Even though there were limitations in this study, we believe that this study can contribute in some ways to the development of the implementation of authentic assessment in language classrooms. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the teacher knowledge and experience reflect to their teaching learning process. It is not only teachers assess students but also the teachers need also to continously assess themselves authentically.

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