CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES IMPLEMENTED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS AT MTS.N 2 BONDOWOSO

Moch. Imam Machfudi
Dosen Tetap Jurusan Tarbiyah STAIN Jember

Abstract

The attempts to improve student's achievement in learning English vary in many ways. One of the attempts is assessment. This research aims to describe the assessment techniques implemented by the English teachers at MTs. Negeri 2 Bondowoso. The central purpose of Classroom Assessment is to empower both teachers and their students to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. This research is qualitative in nature. The research result shows that there is a significant change on students' achievement in learning English.
Introduction

Kata Kunci : Assesment and Techniques

INTRODUCTION

There should be an attempt to link assessment with the major goals of teaching and learning English at schools. Previous to this, the result of research should meet practical guidelines for teachers how to assess students' progress in learning. And thus what will be found in the research should give major points for teachers to implement the findings. And the assessment which is classroom based should be in line with the goals i.e. to improve students learning achievements. So, the attempt to link the assessment to major changes occurring in research and practice is essential.

Through practice in Classroom Based Assessment, school become better able to understand and promote learning, and increase their ability to help the students themselves become more effective, self-assessing, self-directed learners. Simply put, the central purpose of Classroom Assessment is to empower both teachers and their students to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. Now it is becoming very important to implement assessment based on the classroom teaching. As a matter of fact, it will reflect the authentic assessing point to know and to communicate whether a student has achieved learning aims. This evaluating system will help students improve their capacity and ability in English. Thus, it

is important to note here that this research is entitled "Classroom Assessment Techniques Implemented by English Teachers at MTs.N 2 Bondowoso"

Discussion

Classroom Assessment's purpose is to improve the quality of student learning, not to provide evidence for evaluating or grading students. The assessment is almost never graded and are almost always anonymous. Classroom Assessments have to respond to the particular needs and characteristics of the teachers, students, and disciplines to which they are applied. What works well in one class will not necessary work in another. Below the figure of assessment, evaluation, and reporting proposed by Hill (1998):

(Figure : assessment, evaluation, reporting)

The Authentic Assessment

In this research the term *Authentic Assessment* means to describe the multiple forms of assessment that reflect students' learning, achievement, motivation, and attitude on instructionally-relevant classroom activities. In this research, the assessment includes performance, portfolios, and the other approaches or techniques used by the teachers of MTs.N 2 Bondowoso in the academic year 2009/2010.

Based on preliminary observation, the assessment done by teachers was aimed to increase students' achievement of English. So it was understandable what have been doing by the teachers i.e. the assessment was mostly on process. The teachers want to get a precise evaluation result, so accurate and effective assessment done was aimed to this essential process. It was done to ensure that English Language Learning students gain access to instructional program that meets their need.

Authentic assessment refers to assessment tasks that resemble reading and writing in the real world and in school (Hiebert, Valencia & Afflerbach, 1994; Wiggins, 1993). Its aim is to assess many different kinds of literacy abilities in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which those abilities are used. For example, authentic assessments ask students to read real texts, to write for authentic purposes about meaningful topics, and to participate in authentic literacy tasks such as discussing books, keeping journals, writing letters, and revising a piece of writing until it works for the reader. Both the material and the assessment tasks look as natural as possible. Furthermore, authentic assessment values the

thinking behind work, the process, as much as the finished product (Pearson & Valencia, 1987; Wiggins, 1989; Wolf, 1989). Students are learning and practicing how to apply important knowledge and skills for authentic purposes. They should not simply recall information or circle isolated vowel sounds in words; they should apply what they know to new tasks. For example, consider the difference between asking students to identify all the metaphors in a story and asking them to discuss why the author used particular metaphors and what effect they had on the story. In the latter case, students must put their knowledge and skills to work just as they might do naturally in or out of school.

More important, however, is that ongoing assessment makes visible, and values, growth over time. Instead of focusing solely on achievement, both achievement and growth are considered important. For example, imagine a struggling fourth-grade student. When she entered fourth grade she knew only a few sight words, used consonants and context to decode unknown words, and enjoyed reading predictable first-grade books. At the end of the year, portfolio evidence of running records, audiotapes, book logs, observation checklists, and teacher conferences indicates that she can independently read narrative and informational books at the third-grade level. Her word identification strategies now include word families, word parts, and vowel sounds, as well as context and an expanded repertoire of sight words. She still enjoys reading and has broadened her selections beyond predictable books. Ongoing assessment provides valuable information about the progress of this struggling learner. Although she still is not performing like average fourth-grade students, we have evidence of her growth.

Formal and Informal Assessment

If assessment is authentic, ongoing, and integrated with classroom instruction, then it is easy to see that it will take many different forms (Stiggins, 1994; Valencia, 1990). Some assessments are more formal, others more informal.

- **Formal-Assessment** Some formal assessments provide teachers with a systematic way to evaluate how well students are progressing in a particular instructional program. For example, after completing a four- to six-week theme, teachers will want to know how well students have learned the theme skills and concepts. They may give all the students a theme test in which students read, answer questions, and write about a similar theme concept. This type of assessment allows the teacher to evaluate all the students systematically on the important skills and concepts in the theme by using real reading and writing

experiences that fit with the instruction. In other situations, or for certain students, teachers might use a skills test to examine specific skills or strategies taught in a theme.

Teachers, parents, and administrators might want to know how well students are reading and writing in general, independent of the specific instructional program. This requires a different type of formal assessment. Sometimes, school districts use a standardized norm-reference test or a state test that is administered to only certain grade levels or only once a year. Other times, teachers want similar information, but would like some flexibility in when and how often they conduct the assessment. For example, they might want to know how well students are reading and writing at the beginning, middle, and end of the year compared with other children at the same grade level. This type of benchmark or anchor test helps teachers determine how well students are progressing over the entire year, and it provides useful information to parents and administrators. Two points of comparison are available, the student's growth over time, and the student's performance as compared with his or her grade-level peers.

Because this type of formal classroom assessment is more flexible than traditional norm-referenced tests, teachers can use out-of-level tests to determine student progress. If specific students are performing far below or above grade level, the teacher can give the assessment that best fits with students' needs. In addition, the flexibility allows the teacher to observe students closely as they work and to modify the assessment as needed.

- **Informal-Assessment** Other forms of authentic assessment are more informal, including special activities such as group or individual projects, experiments, oral presentations, demonstrations, or performances. Some informal assessments may be drawn from typical classroom activities such as assignments, journals, essays, reports, literature discussion groups, or reading logs. Other times, it will be difficult to show student progress using actual work, so teachers will need to keep notes or checklists to record their observations from student-teacher conferences or informal classroom interactions. Sometimes informal assessment is as simple as stopping during instruction to observe or to discuss with the students how learning is progressing. Any of these types of assessment can be made more formal by specifying guidelines for what and how to do them, or they can be quite informal, letting students

and teachers adjust to individual needs. In some situations, the teacher will want all students to complete the same assessments; in others, assessments will be tailored to individual needs. All present good assessment opportunities.

It is important to use a variety of forms of assessment. For some students, written work is difficult, so too much reliance on it will put them at a disadvantage. Similarly, particular activities or topics will inspire excellent performance in some students and frustrate others. Including a variety of types of assessments will ensure that students are provided with ample opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and that teachers have the information they need to construct a complete, balanced assessment of each student.

Techniques And Strategies In Classroom Assessment

To begin Classroom Assessment it is recommended that only one or two of the simplest Classroom Assessment Techniques are tried in only one class. In this way very little planning or preparation time and energy of the teacher and students is risked. In most cases, trying out a simple Classroom Assessment Technique will require only five to ten minutes of class time and less than an hour of time out of class. After trying one or two quick assessments, the decision as to whether this approach is worth further investments of time and energy can be made. This process of starting small involves three steps (Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/assess-1.htm : downloaded; 27 may 2009)

Step 1: Planning

Select one, and only one, of your classes in which to try out the Classroom Assessment. Decide on the class meeting and select a Classroom Assessment Technique. Choose a simple and quick one.

Step 2: Implementing

Make sure the students know what you are doing and that they clearly understand the procedure. Collect the responses and analyze them as soon as possible.

Step 3: Responding

To capitalize on time spent assessing, and to motivate students to become actively involved, "close the feedback loop" by letting them know what you learned from the assessments and what difference that information will make.

Five suggestions for a successful start:

1. If a Classroom Assessment Techniques does not appeal to your intuition and professional judgment as a teacher, don't use it.
2. Don't make Classroom Assessment into a self-inflicted chore or burden.
3. Don't ask your students to use any Classroom Assessment Technique you haven't previously tried on yourself.
4. Allow for more time than you think you will need to carry out and respond to the assessment.
5. Make sure to "close the loop." Let students know what you learn from their feedback and how you and they can use that information to improve learning.

The Types Of Assessment In Secondary School

There are a wide variety of assessments presented in Angelo and Patricia, each of them have a different "best use", a different learning purpose, and can be used by instructors in different manners. Longer techniques can be performed outside of class and may or may not include instructor grading. In each case, the major purposes for the techniques include assessment of:

- Content comprehension
- Analytic thinking
- Student learning skills/processes
- Students' attitudes toward class activities

The assessments chosen should be determined by the specific content/ learning to be measured and the purposes of the instructor. In general, it is not a good idea to use too many different techniques in one semester. Student responses are more useful when the students are comfortable with a particular technique and understand it.

Some strategies of classroom assessment are being done by the teacher of lower secondary school, in this case Islamic Junior High School (MTs.) In

general there are various types of classroom assessment to collect the information about student's progress or achievement. The techniques of collecting the information basically aimed at gathering the students' study progress or learning achievement based on standard of competence. Following are the techniques usually implemented by school teachers at MTs. Negeri 2 Bondowoso:

a. Performance

Performance assessment is a term that is commonly used in place of, or with, authentic assessment. Performance assessment requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and strategies by creating a response or a product (Rudner & Boston, 1994; Wiggins, 1989). Rather than choosing from several multiple-choice options, students might demonstrate their literacy abilities by conducting research and writing a report, developing a character analysis, debating a character's motives, creating a mobile of important information they learned, dramatizing a favorite story, drawing and writing about a story, or reading aloud a personally meaningful section of a story. For example, after completing a first-grade theme on families in which students learned about being part of a family and about the structure and sequence of stories, students might illustrate and write their own flap stories with several parts, telling a story about how a family member or friend helped them when they were feeling sad.

The formats for performance assessments range from relatively short answers to long-term projects that require students to present or demonstrate their work. These performances often require students to engage in higher-order thinking and to integrate many language arts skills. Consequently, some performance assessments are longer and more complex than more traditional assessments. Within a complete assessment system, however, there should be a balance of longer performance assessments and shorter ones.

This kind of assessment is believed to be more authentic than written test and this reflects the student's real ability. The more the teacher observe the student's performance, the clearer the student's ability seems to have. This assessment result then is tabulated in a table of score which refers to the student's performance by using table of *"likert scale"* or a checklist, for example, excellent, very good, good, fair, less, etc. Much research is still needed on the effect of specific accommodations on ELL test performance. Addition work is also needed to see if accommodations other than those designed for students with disabilities would work better with ELLs. In the meantime, school districts, states and/or test

developers could modify test questions to reduce unnecessary language complexity in their assessments.

b. Portfolio

Portfolios are particularly useful for ongoing assessment (Valencia, 1990; Wolf, 1989). They provide concrete evidence to document growth over time. They help students, teachers, and parents celebrate individual students' accomplishments, regardless of how they compare to other children or to grade-level expectations. In addition, using ongoing assessment can improve teaching and learning by providing timely feedback. When students and teachers frequently assess how well they are doing, they can adjust instruction, effort, and practice. The potential to succeed is enhanced.

Portfolio is one of the best strategies for self-evaluations in terms of practicality. Students can practically improve their ability by reflecting day-to-day tasks, and they can evaluate their achievement on their own. However, "like all beneficial innovations, its greatest benefits come when it not entered into lightly or unquestioningly, but when critical eyes are brought to bear upon it, demanding enlightenment and thereby helping to ensure excellence" (Hamp-Lyon&Condon, 1993).

What is a portfolio assessment might be an important question, below simply quoted two meanings of portfolio.

- Portfolio construction is essentially a cyclical recursive process which includes three domains; meta-linguistic, affective, and meta-cognitive
- Portfolio is relevant to assessment, and development

O'Malley (1996) states that portfolios mean different things to different people. although there is no single definition of portfolio that will suit everyone, here will define the essential elements of a portfolio and describe different types of portfolios being used in classrooms today. The essential elements of portfolios include:

- **Samples of Student Work:**
  We know that most portfolios consist of a sample of student work that shows growth over time. The sample can consist of writing samples, audio or videotapes, mathematic problems, social study reports, or science experiments. The contents may depend on student or teacher preferences, the purpose of portfolio, or the instructional goals the portfolio is designed

to reflect (O'Malley, 1996: 35).

Although portfolios may differ considerably from one classroom to another, they can nevertheless be used as systematic collections of student work. Systematic collections need to be carefully planned just like instruction. That is, if we plan our instructional goals, objectives, materials, and activities, we should also plan a way to gather evidence of student achievement toward learning goals.

- **Student Self Assessment:**

  Without self-assessment and reflection on the part of the student, a portfolio is not a portfolio (e.g. Paulson, 1991; Tierney, 1991; Valencia 1990, in O'Malley 1996). A portfolio is a unique opportunity for students to learn to monitor their own progress and take responsibility for meeting goals set jointly with the teacher. Portfolio that call for reflection on the part of student lead to several outcomes: student takes responsibility for knowing where they are with regard to learning goals; they broaden their view of what is being learned; and they begin to see learning as a process, thereby getting a developmental perspective on their learning.

- **Clearly Stated Criteria:**

  Students need to know how their work will be evaluated and by what standards their work will be judged. Specifying criteria and standards and providing representative samples of what these look like helps students set goals and works toward them. Rather than making students guess at how the teacher is grading and applying criteria, the teacher involves students in setting the standards and clarifying them.

There is a crucial question toward using portfolio as a tool of measuring student achievement in language class i.e. "Why use portfolio?" The answer of this question at least shown in these two lines:

(1) to provide training for students to improve language ability and to show student's achievement through self-evaluation

(2) To provide reflection and feedback for teachers to give to the students.

The activities of this assessment can be seen as follows:

- To describe
  - to provide evidence (product)
    1. to describe experiences (activities, plans, trips, writings,

meetings, social gatherings, learning tasks, projects, watching and listening to English programs through DVDs, VCDs, etc)

2. to express feelings, thoughts, reaction to experiences, personal observation, etc.

- to explain a particular product
- to make connection between products

- To reflect
- To give feedback
- To consolidate experience

And thus it can be said that *portfolios* are particularly suitable for the development of reflective learning and for formative assessment process of language learning. However, there are difficulties associated with the lack of standardization of the content of portfolios and implication on evaluation and pedagogic practice.

c. Project

Project assessment means assessing a task or assignment which should be finished by a student in a particular time assigned. The assignment is in the form of investigation from planning until reporting which also includes data collection. Typically, classroom assessments represent time saved in class since the instructor presents one or two examples and then can continue on with new material; sometimes, the questions can even be answered in the context of motivating the new material. From the students' perspective, an immediate response to confusing questions allows a quick correction and students soon learn to take the process seriously. The whole process increases the trust between instructor and student; the instructor demonstrates concern for the student's learning when implementing the technique and simultaneously receives information about the students' on-going attention to the course.

The goal of classroom assessment techniques is to "take the temperature" of the class learning environment more frequently than practical if using graded, extended activities. Since the use of technology introduces new variations into the classroom, it is even more important to understand the dynamics of the classroom. When you find an assessment technique that works for you, it becomes a very comfortable and certainly revealing practice which can help determine the

direction of your teaching.

A project task given by the English teacher assigns students to make a particular writing material such as a narrative story about student's activities or a story about their picnic during holiday. Then they submit at the end of the lesson or at a certain time they agreed together between teacher and students. The materials given are varied in accordance with the lesson given in a particular time. The task could also in the form of oral task. For example, the students are asked to tell their friends in turn in front of the class or in small groups then the teacher observes and take note to what is happening in the class. The teacher should also take note when a student makes error and then the teacher make error correction at the feedback stage.

Now that so much assessment is situated in daily classroom life, there are numerous opportunities to engage students in the assessment process. They can compare their work over time, create evaluation criteria for a project, discuss their strategies for reading difficult texts, work with peers to evaluate and revise a piece of writing, and judge their reading preferences and habits by reviewing their reading journals. When students are collaborators in assessment, they develop the habit of self-reflection. They learn the qualities of good work, how to judge their work against these qualities, how to step back from their work to assess their own efforts and feelings of accomplishment, and how to set personal goals (Reif, 1990; Wolf, 1989). These are qualities of self-directed learners, not passive learners. As teachers model, guide, and provide practice in self-assessment, students learn that assessment is not something apart from learning or something done to them, but a collaboration between teachers and students, and an integral part of how they learn and improve (Frederikson & Collins, 1989).

Instruction using technology, whether the use is incidental to the material, concurrent with the coursework, or the substance of the course, introduces its own variations in the learning process. In the discussion above, some "standard" learning assessment techniques were recast for use in a classroom with a technological component. The remaining techniques are ones that apply directly to the technological interfaces in the classroom – although they too could be modified to a more general setting. The three general attributes of teaching with technology which must be measured are:

- The use of technology in support of other content

- The use of technology as the content being assessed
- The impact of distance learning/ general use of technology.

d. Self Assessment

One of the techniques usually used by the teacher to be self implemented by their students is self assessment. O'Malley (1996) states that effective assessment involves students and enables them to see possibilities for reflection, redirection, and confirmation of their own learning efforts. Students often need support in understanding the importance of self-assessment, in becoming independent evaluators of their own progress, and in setting goals for future learning.

In order for students to evaluate their own work or performance, they need to be able to see examples of good work and understand by what standards it has been judged. This means that you need to work with students to specify the criteria by which different kinds of work will be evaluated. For example, you could discuss the elements of good oral proficiency, reading comprehension, writing, problem solving, or working in groups. In helping students to evaluate their own work, you can also provide sample of exemplary work (called benchmarks) and less than exemplary work. These examples let students see what good work looks like and develop a clear idea of how their samples of student performance from each quarter or grading period in a notebook, or use samples of student performance from a previous year and share these with students. The example of a self assessment technique is as follows:

What a good writer can do?

I can plan before I write

I can write about real things

I can write stories with a beginning, middle, and end

I can ask other to read my work

I can write in complete sentences

I can leave spaces between words

I can make my handwriting easy to read

Resources: O'Malley (1996: 40), adapted for the research at MTs. N 2 Bondowoso

A Brief Description Of Applicability Of Assessment

There are two questions in the context of applicability of the classroom assessment techniques that are usually asked i.e. "how far does the assessment technique give positive contribution in the students' achievement of a certain material? And probably "is it worth applied?" The first can be explained in detail in chapter IV, but the second question may be more difficult to explain since the techniques require suitability of the time and classroom situation at each school. A school may vary the assessment technique dependently based on these following criteria:

- What is the purpose of doing a classroom assessment technique, or what do you want to learn from a classroom assessment.
- What do you want to choose a Classroom Assessment Technique that provides feedback.
- Is it consistent with your teaching style, and can it be easily implemented in your class.
- What activity you want your students do during the class session or after you do the assessment.
- After class, can you review the results and decide what changes, if any, what is the follow up activity.

We can see the purpose of applying the classroom assessment techniques between school and students in the following table:

Teacher	Student
• Provide short-term feedback about the day-to-day learning and teaching process at a time when it is still possible to make mid-course corrections. • Provide useful information about student learning with a much lower investment of time compared to tests, papers, and other traditional means of learning assessment. • Help to foster good rapport with students and increase the efficacy of teaching and learning.	• Help them become better monitors of their own learning. • Help break down feelings of anonymity, especially in larger courses. • Point out the need to alter study skills. • Provide concrete evidence that the instructor cares about learning.

• Encourage the view that teaching is a formative process that evolves over time with feedback	

At the first class meeting, many college teachers ask students for general information on their level of preparation, often requesting that students list courses they have already taken in the relevant field. This technique is designed to collect much more specific, and more useful, feedback on students' prior learning. *Background Knowledge Probes* are short, simple questionnaires prepared by instructors for use at the beginning of a course, at the start of a new unit or lesson, or prior to introducing an important new topic. A given *Background Knowledge Probe* may require students to write short answers, to circle the correct response to multiple-choice questions, or both.

CONCLUSION

The most important thing of all the techniques in assessing students' achievements especially in English lesson vary in a broad sense, but give opportunity for both teachers and learners to improve learning. The efforts of classroom assessment techniques that have been done by the teacher showed a good result at the improvement of the English lesson. Based on the research result, the assessment done by teachers was aimed to increase students' achievement of English. So it was understandable what have been doing by the teachers i.e. the assessment was mostly on process. The teachers want to get a precise evaluation result, so accurate and effective assessment done was aimed to this essential process. It was done to ensure that English Language Learning students gain access to instructional program that meets their need. And in this research the assessment has given good result at students' improvement in English lesson.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Balitbang, Depdiknas. 2002. *Kurikulum Hasil Belajar: Kompetensi Dasar Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Inggris.* Jakarta.

Bogdan, R.C. and S.K. Biklen. 1998. *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brown, H Douglas. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Florez, Mary Ann Cunningham. June 1, 1999. *Improving Adult English Language Learners' Speaking Skills*. ERIC Digest.

Forest, Heather .2000. *Story Telling in the Classroom Concepts and Activities*. (http://www.storyartsOrg/classroom/index.html accessed May 11, 2003).

Gebhard, Jerry G. 1996. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language or Second Language*. Michigan: The University of Michigan.

Gower, Roger. Et.al. 2005. *Teaching Practice Handbook*. Oxford: MacMillan Education

Harmer, Jeremy. 1998. *How to Teach English*. Edinburgh: Edison Wesley Longman Limited.

Heinich, et al. 1982. *Instructional Media*. Canada: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Hill, Bonnie Campbell, et,al. 1998. *Classroom Based Assessment*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon Publishers, Inc.

Huda, Nuril. 1999. *Language Learning and Teaching: Issues and Trends*. Malang: IKIP Malang Publisher.

Kweldju, Siusana. 1985. *SMA Teachers' performance in Using English as a Medium of instruction: A Preliminary Study of S1 Graduates of IKIP Malang in Kotamadya Malang*. S2 Thesis. Malang: IKIP Malang.

Lee, Icy.1996. *Hong Kong Primary Teachers' Perspectives on ELT*. RECL Journal Volume 27 Number 2: 201-205.

Madsen, Harold S. 1983. *Teaching Techniques in English as a Second Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miles, Mattew B. and Huberman, A.M. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A source*

Book of New Methods. London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Nation, Paul. 1992. Teaching Listening and Speaking. Wellington: English Language Institute Victoria University of Wellington.

Nunan, David. 1989. *Designing Task for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, David. 1999. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. University of Hong Kong; Heinle and Heinle Publishers.

Oxford, Rebecca. 2001. Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom. (http://www.org/ericcll/digest/0105 oxford.html accessed December 7, 2003).

O'Malley, J.Michael, and Pierce Valdez L. 1996. *Authentic Assessment; Practical Approaches for Teachers*. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company

Richards, Jack C and Rodgers, Theodore S. 2001. *Approach and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sahlan, Moh. 2007. *Penilaian Berbasis Kelas; Teori dan Aplikasi dalam Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*. Jember: Penerbit Center for Society Studies

Ur, Penny .1996. *A course in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.