



## The Enactment of Portfolio Assessment in Teaching Writing

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### **Abstract**

The application of curriculum 2013 in Indonesia becomes controversy in Indonesia. For senior high school students, the 2013 curriculum gives them opportunity to learn another subjects from the other major such as science students can learn about economics. This is also happened to English subject. There are two types of English subject; compulsory English and supplementary English. Both of them have different syllabus and assessment. The important of assessment is to show how the students' understanding and the teacher's perspective to the curriculum. In this research, the researcher observes SMA Negeri 2 Semarang and it is specify to X grade science. This research focus on portfolio assessment especially in writing. It is chosen because writing can reflect the grammar understanding which is very important to do the compulsory test such as final term test and Nasional Examination. Besides, the assessment can reflect the teacher's method effectiveness. The writer collected the data by using observation, interview, and documentation. The data was collected in March 2018 with the English teacher of grade X. The interview involved the English teacher, the principal, and the vice principal of curriculum. The documents are syllabus, lesson plans, and the students' assessment. The research shows that the implementation of 2013 curriculum by the English teacher can be seen from the assesment of the students. The students' skill as targeting in 2013 curriculum is achieved. This happened since the student center method applied in the class. So, the students are more active rather than the teacher. The barriers are finding the right method and the right instrument of authentic assessment. They both are important to support the success of Core and Basic Competence realization in the learning.

**Keywords:** Assessment; Curriculum; Portfolio; Student

### **Introduction**

Education is a strategic way to improve the quality of a nation. Therefore, the progress of a nation can be measured from the progress of education. To achieve a predetermined educational goal, it is necessary to have a curriculum to implement the education. The curriculum currently used in educational standards is curriculum 2013. Curriculum 2013 is an improvement from 2006 Curriculum or school-based curriculum (SBC). Curriculum 2013 emphasizes on improving the hard skill and soft skill including aspects of attitudes, skills and knowledge. One emphasis in the curriculum 2013 is related to assessment.

Assessment is an important component in the organization of education. Efforts to improve the quality of education can be pursued through improving the quality of learning and quality assessment. Berry (2008) said that the conception of assessment is one that focuses on describing student learning, identifying where each student is in his or her personal learning progression, diagnosing any difficulties students may be having in their learning, and providing direction to the teacher and the student in the steps to be taken to enhance learning. In curriculum 2013, the assessment used is an authentic assessment. According to Jon Mueller (2005), authentic assessment is a form of assessment that students are required to display tasks in real situations that demonstrate the application of skills and knowledge essential to be meaningful. Therefore, authentic assessment is more often expressed as a performance-based assessment.

Writing is the most difficult skill for second or foreign language learners to master. The difficulties are not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into a readable text. The difficulty becomes more noticeable if their language proficiency is weak. Teaching writing for students who learn English is one of the important things that has to be done well because it will influence the students' ability in developing their writing ability. It is commonly believed that an appropriate teaching technique will have a contribution to the success of students' writing ability. Furthermore, it will be true that teaching writing will be influenced by the teaching technique which is used by the teacher.

To know the students' performance, the teacher needs to implement the assessment. Based on curriculum 2013, the teacher can apply portfolio assessment. The portfolio assessment is the suitable one to assess students' ability in writing. It consists of any form of assessment in which the students construct a response orally or in writing. The student can make writing sample. Students are asked to generate writing samples to meet a number of different purposes.

Language learners already know that there are two skills that are included in productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing. McDonald & McDonald (2002: 47) differentiates that writing is originating and creating a unique verbal construct that is graphically recorded; while speaking is creating and originating a verbal construct that is not graphically recorded. The other differences between speaking and writing are also proposed by Brown (Weigle., 2002: 15). Brown provides the characteristics that differentiate written language from spoken language in terms of the permanency, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, formality and vocabulary. However, in this paper the writer only presents some of them. There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for language learners to master.

Teachers should know and understand the appropriate approach that can be used in teaching writing so that the learners are easily able to produce a good writing. At the beginning of a lesson, the teacher should make sure that the students know about the purpose of the activity in the lesson. He or she should give a clear explanation about what they will learn, so the students will get an advantage in the teaching and learning process. Harmer (2004: 31) argues that writing should encourage students to focus on accurate language use and, because they think as they write, it may well provoke language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts into their minds.

The essence of teaching writing is guiding and facilitating students to work. This is supported by Brown (2007: 8) who proposes that "teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, and setting the conditions for learning". It implies that teaching cannot be separated from learning. When teachers teach writing to the students, they do not only teach how to develop ideas in writing, but they also need a serious attention of how to write.

A teacher has some responsibilities to the success of the students' writing. The first responsibility is to provide opportunities for writing and encouragement for students who attempt to writing. The second responsibility is to promote students' success in writing. The teacher does this by carefully

monitoring students' writing to assess strengths and weaknesses, teaching specific skills and strategies in response to students' needs, and giving careful feedback that will correct students' mistakes in writing. In the end, the teacher needs to assess and he must choose one of type of authentic assessment which recommends in curriculum 2013.

### ***Literature Review***

Portfolio assessment by Wiggins (1998: 1) aims to test students' skills in displaying knowledge and skills in realistic situations and contexts. Students are asked work in groups; apply skills and concepts to complete task or problem complex. Portfolio may include writing, revising, or presenting reports to classes, executing science experiments and analysing results. To measure student activity in the performance used observation sheet can be a check list or rating scale. In addition, the portfolio assessment applies to check the students' performance in active skill such as writing and speaking. Portfolio assessments build over time with varied activities to reflect growth, maturity, and depth, leading to mastery of strategies and processes for solving problems in specific areas with the assumption that these skills will transfer to solving other problems.

Portfolios have not only been used in developing fine arts to illustrate students' work but have also been expanded to accommodate informational needs and assessment requirements of schools in assessing the ability of students to achieve teaching-learning goals. A portfolio used for educational assessment must offer more than a showcase for work produced by the students; it should be the product of a complete assessment procedure that has been systematically planned, implemented, and evaluated. A portfolio should be a collection of a student's work, experiences, exhibitions, and self-ratings. While portfolio assessment is the procedure used to plan, collect, and analyze the multiple sources of data maintained in the portfolio. A portfolio based on a systematic assessment procedure can provide accurate information about students' capability in many domains of learning. Actually, portfolios have been used for many years in many areas such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, teacher training, and language learning to document individual progress and accomplishment. As for the assessment of language skills, the use of portfolios is a growing trend and has been of significant interest to teachers for the past few decades (Douglas., 2007).

Moreover, according to Epstein (2005: 2), portfolios can be divided into two categories:

- *Process- Oriented Portfolios*: which tell the story of a students' growth over time.
- *Product- Oriented Portfolios*, which are a collection of a student's best work.

In conclusion, both types of portfolios are used in all grade levels. However, a process-oriented portfolio is of more common at elementary levels as individual growth is of more concern than determining specific levels of performance. A product-oriented portfolio, on the other hand, is more common at advanced levels as older students generally have higher thinking skills necessary to select their best work wisely as well as to engage in deep self-reflection processes (Epstein., 2005).

Teachers need to use an appropriate tool which helps them in assessing students' writing performance. Rubric is an important tool to be prepared by the teachers in order to give an objective score. Urquhart & McIver (2005: 31) argue that rubrics are very effective assessment tools because they describe specific levels of performance. Besides, rubrics also explain the students' performance clearly. Research also supports using rubrics because they clearly communicate expectations for both teaching and learning. There are four main types of rubrics, i.e. holistic rubrics, analytic rubrics, primary trait

rubrics, and multi-trait rubrics. However, in this study the researcher only presents two of them, i.e. holistic rubrics and analytic rubrics.

It assigns a level of performance by assessing performance across multiple criteria as a whole. The emphasis in holistic rubrics is on what a student does well. Weigle (2002: 112) argue that holistic scoring has an advantage to focus on the students' attention on the strengths of their writing, not on their deficiencies. However, holistic scoring also has several disadvantages. It is less useful for classroom purposes because it provides little information to students about their performance because holistic scoring assesses students' performance of several criteria as a whole or in a single score. Weigle (2002: 114) says that "a single score does not provide useful diagnostic information about a person's writing ability." Another disadvantage of holistic rubrics is in the way of interpreting the scores. It is because in holistic scoring, raters do not use the same criteria to arrive at the same score.

On the other hand, analytic scales are divided into separate categories representing different aspects or dimensions of performance. For example, dimensions for writing performance might include content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Each dimension is scored separately, and then dimension scores are added to determine an overall score. Weigle (2002: 114) states that "in analytic scoring, scripts are rated on several aspects of writing or criteria rather than given a single score depending on the purpose of the assessment."

### ***Methodology***

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang which was located at Jalan Sendangguwo Baru No.1 Semarang. It is one of the senior high schools in Semarang which implements the authentic assessment practice in English language teaching including portfolio assessment in writing. In this context, the researcher explored in depth the implementation of portfolio assessment in writing teaching, the teacher's perception, and the students' respond. The research topic was studied in the detailed description and analysis, and in very contextual condition that was at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang. Moreover, the researcher tried to investigate the teacher's implementation and his problems related to the implementation of the portfolio assessment at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang in 2017/ 2018 academic year.

The research data in this study consists of some sources information portfolio assessment practice in writing teaching in tenth grade of SMA Negeri 2 Semarang in the academic year 2016/ 2017. In getting the information, the researcher took event, informant and documents as the sources of data. In collecting the data, the writer used interview, classroom observation and documentation. In order to get the accuracy of the data, the researcher used triangulation to check the validity of the data. The data that are collected was analyze by using descriptive qualitative method. The data analysis uses the Miles & Hubberman models consisting three steps, as cited in Sutopo (2002: 104) which are data reduction, data display and drawing conclusion and verification.

### ***Results and Discussion***

In this study, the way of the English teachers implements of authentic assessment refers to the activities of assessing students' English skill competence by using portfolio, portfolio and project assessment, the teacher's perception and the students' perception. The findings comprise analytical description about the implementation of portfolio assessment in writing teaching and also problem faced in the implementation of portfolio assessment. Each points of the finding are described as follows:

## **Research Finding**

The data of this finding are gathered from the interviews and the available documents of the school. The data collect from SMAN 2 Semarang. From the school, the researcher took a complementary English teacher, Mr. Mat Ibnu, M.Pd, who teaches science class. Based on the findings, syllabus, teacher and student books and scoring instruments as the main documents in designing, administering, scoring and managing the authentic assessments.

Based on the observation, it is seen that the teacher still took important parts in the class. Here, it was seen that Mr. Ibnu was more active rather than the students. The class was also very quiet because the communication is one-way communication means the students did not response any action or even questions that were given by the teacher. The observation also shows that the students felt that writing was so difficult because the grammar is a must in writing and they got problem in making chaining toward each paragraph to create the great story. In portfolio assessment, the students also got difficulties in spontaneous speaking and writing. Based on the observation, mostly the students needed long time to make a text and they thought the suitable vocabularies to explain such as in retelling the story.

This finding showed that teacher was in a situation when he had to make some adjustment. Therefore, the teacher's implementation from planning to the assessing process indicated a strong part of curriculum 2013, the teacher chose to change the policy based on their classroom reality (Ahmad., 2014). Furthermore, it can be seen from the documentation and observation that teacher prepared two kinds of scoring instruments, scoring rubric and scoring form. Scoring rubrics were used to score students' task while the scoring instruments were used to compile the score for the report card. Rubrics are descriptive tools that help create clear learning expectations for students which describe the characteristics of student work at varying levels of achievement (Vagle., 2014). Rubrics can be holistic or analytic. A holistic scoring rubric required assessor to make a judgment about the overall quality of each student's response while an analytical scoring rubric requires assessor to evaluate specific dimensions, traits or elements of a student's response.

Based on the documents, teachers applied holistic scoring rubric to score the performance, the portfolio and the project assessments. The rubrics measured 4 criteria as the aspects of scoring. Although the rubric uses an even number of levels of performance which can avoid the middle being the catchall, there were no descriptors which indicated in what level were the students' achievement. An ideal rubric score should able to describe clearly observable attributes of a product or a performance; so that, the students exactly know what good or bad performance on a task look like as well as more clearly recognize areas that need improvement.

As mentioned by Airasian (2000), before implementing an assessment, a teacher must decide whether the performance or product will be scored holistically or analytically. In this time, the application of holistic rubrics was less appropriate since the rubrics have function as classroom assessment. Moreover, Mueller (2005) emphasized unlike analytical rubric which can provides much more detail about the students' strength and weaknesses, holistic rubric does not communicate information about what to do to improve. In other words, teacher is strongly suggested to consider about what type of rubric that appropriately meets the instructional activities.

## **Interview Result**

The teacher is an important thing in the curriculum 2013. The teacher and the students have their own perceptions about the authentic assessments. Here, Mr. Ibnu as the teacher becomes the first interviewee, student A as the second interviewee, student N as the third interviewee and student F as the

fourth interviewee. Some of the students were taken randomly to know the difficulties of the authentic assessment. Mr. Ibnu was interviewed to find out the implementation and the barrier of the curriculum 2013.

The interview did with Mr. Ibnu. The researcher gave the teacher 15 questions. From the result, the researcher concluded that the teacher faced some difficulties in assessment activity. The problem came from the teacher and the students. From the teacher, he has difficulties in implementing the students' center method as the curriculum 2013 goal. The teacher's perception is so many assessment; so, the students would be more understand. From the research finding at SMAN 2 Semarang, the researcher got the data transcription about some problems from this research. The data descriptions as follows:

- a) From the research finding the researcher found that the teacher used document of curriculum 2013: syllabus, lesson plan, rubric scoring.
- b) From the syllabus and lesson plan, the teacher teaches the students about narrative text.
- c) The teacher used the traditional technique, it is teacher center.
- d) For the assessment activity, the teacher applies portfolio assessment besides the performance assessment and project assessment.
- e) For the performance, the teacher applies in the class of any form of assessment in which the students construct a response in writing. Reading assessment and writing assessment are implemented in the class.
- f) For the scoring rubric, the teacher made it. In teaching learning process, the teacher applies the rubric scoring. He also just assesses the students in a habit. So, in using rubric scoring the teacher follow the rule of curriculum.
- g) Based on interview with Student A, he said that the assessments are so many and it creates burden for the students because he thought that the teacher only focus on how the students able to apply the English basic skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) rather than the material. Student F also had the similar opinion with students A. Student F added that in the end, the students' comprehensive in the material is more important rather than the assessment because she thought that the final test is in the form of multiple choice. So, she concludes that the assessment had less correlation with the final test. The different opinion was given by student N. She said that the assessment makes the students understand how to apply English in the various skills. The students not only able understand the theory but also apply the English language as the one of skill that must be comprehended to face the global competition. However, some confusion still came up for her such as she still did not understand how to make the text fast but coherence.

### ***Implementation of Portfolio Assessment in Writing Teaching***

SMAN 2 Semarang is one of the high school in Semarang which has been implemented the new curriculum for around two years. Based on the result of observation, interview and documentation, the school had all the necessary documents and all the teachers have gotten the curriculum 2013 training program from the government. Moreover, the English teacher of the tenth-grade students of the school has implement the curriculum by put more some revision such as the use of authentic assessment including performance assessment.

Practically, the English teacher seemed not totally use the English teacher book as the only guidance and source of the teaching and assessment process. Moreover, the teacher of developing the learning activities, the worksheets, and the assessments were mostly not only taken from the book. As the result, the class ran relatively vary and more creative. The teacher, of course, should design the authentic assessments. He conducted several steps proposed by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) that to design a well-functioning portfolio assessment, teacher should 1) build a team; 2) determine the purpose; 3) specify objectives; 4) conduct professional development; 5) collect examples; 6) develop a new assessment; 7) try out and review the assessment.

Furthermore, the finding also showed that teacher's perception based on the interview, Mr. Ibnu said so many assessments gives to the students, they will be more master in English. As the result, he had applied portfolio assessment, portfolio assessment, student self-assessment, reading assessment, writing assessment and integrated language assessment in assessing student's English skills competence. He administered oral test to assess students speaking skill as the performance assessment and narrative written test as the portfolio assessment. Specifically, for the portfolio task, teacher asked students to create a narrative text about the text. So, all the students should make the text clearly and coherently. All students were assigned to do the same task with the decided topic. Actually, this assignment task was quite effective. Damiani (2010) once said that a portfolio is not simply a scrapbook or collection of all of students' works. The works put into portfolio are carefully and deliberately selected so the collection as a whole accomplishes its purpose. Here, teacher should give students the opportunity to choose and decide what tasks they are going to submit. This is important to stimulate students to recognize their strength and weaknesses.

The process of implementing authentic assessments in English instruction based on curriculum 2013 in SMAN 2 Semarang still did not run effectively. The English teacher seemed to experience some constrains in applying portfolio, performance and project assessment in assessing students' skill competence as guided in Model Penilaian Hasil Belajar Peserta Didik SMA. Portfolio assessment was much dealing with complicated binder management. Based on the research, the students in SMAN 2 Semarang faced lack vocabulary. According to Celce and Murcia (2001: 285) vocabulary learning is a central to language acquisition whether the language is first, second, or foreign. Based on that explanation, teaching vocabulary is an activity where the teacher gives the students' knowledge about vocabulary and how to use it in daily life. So, it is very important to teach vocabulary in teaching learning process.

Furthermore, the English teacher of SMAN 2 Semarang also has problem with the class size. According to Kerr (2011), high student numbers limited the assessment methods available to them and the amount of assessment that could be conducted. They included excessive marking loads, managing valid assessment, providing sufficient and prompt feedback, monitoring academic dishonesty, maintaining quality and consistency of marking, and challenges in efficiently assessing higher order thinking skills. In addition, the students also feel that portfolio assessment gives them burden such as making an interested text with only given generic structure and language features. In fact, not all students are interested in English; so, the teaching process and the assessment must be hand in hand to support the goal of curriculum 2013. Since, writing is one of productive skill, the teacher must apply the suitable method in case to make the students able to write and they can do the portfolio test easily and effectively.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of portfolio assessment is less effective in the class. The fact that the students get difficulties in the class especially the lack of vocabulary must be fixed by the teacher. The teacher should not only focus on how the students' performance in writing able to make them understand in

productive skill but also the process to make the clear and coherence text must be emphasize in the class. The other problem is binder management. Besides, the effectiveness also comes form the class size. The teacher cannot focus to maintain the students and it is not effective to monitor the students' ability in writing.

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