

Analysis of English Teachers' Assessment Strategies within Differentiated Learning Context at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan

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Abstract

This study is intended to identify assessment strategies that are conducted by English teachers within differentiated learning contexts at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan. This study used a qualitative method with descriptive research design. The data were obtained through observation and interview with three English teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan. The finding of study showed that English teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan have conducted variety of assessment strategies such as Elicitation, Reviewing, Games, Question and Answer, Group discussion, Peer discussion, Exercise, Feedback, Presentation, Peer tutoring, Summarizing, Task, Test and Portfolio. Those assessment strategies were used to measure students' learning process and provide feedback. In addition, it was found that teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan conducted differentiated assessment only on assessment as learning and assessment for learning that have a function as formative assessment. Those assessment strategies with differentiation were dominant, conducted in the form of differentiation of process, where the teachers accommodated the students' preferences to understand the material.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an important factor in the learning process that is used as a determiner for learning quality and success. An effective assessment activity should be able to provide the students with critical thinking in learning context because they are required to evaluate their own learning process (Macmath, et al 2009; Lora & Rosidin, 2020). It is an essential element in a learning process that the teacher provides an evaluation of their methods of teaching regarding the learners' progress, therefore the teacher could receive the required information as the guidance to improve the methods that they used while learning in the classroom (Alahmadi et al., 2019).

In the Emancipated curriculum, conducting an effective assessment process must consider the approaches of assessment. According to Padmadewi and Artini (2019) stated that the approaches of assessment divided into Assessment of Learning (AoL), Assessment for Learning (AfL), and Assessment as Learning (AaL). All of these assessments have their own function in assessing and evaluating the learning process of the teacher and student (Padmanabha, 2021). Emancipated curriculum also promote differentiated instruction in order to assess the students. Differentiation is an attempt to address the variation of learners in the classroom through multiple approaches that modify instruction and curriculum to match the individual needs of students (Renzulli, 1977; Tomlinson, 2000; Reis and Renzulli, 2018). According Tomlinson (1999, 2001) stated that there are four elements that can be differentiated to make instruction, which are content, process, product and learning

environment, which all of these elements are interconnected and can be adjusted based on students' readiness, interest, and learning profile. In a similar way, differentiated assessment is a practice of teachers to adjust their assessment in the classroom according to the individual wants and needs of their diverse students (Jung & Guskey, 2010; Norman & Kaur, 2020).

In order to implement the differentiation, teacher could conduct multiple of assessment strategies in assessing process. Assessment strategies have important purposes and functions in teaching and learning process which one of it to support learning by assessing students' knowledge and development, helping them understand their learning progress and providing feedback, thereby promoting the improvement of learning outcomes as well as used for certification, progress and transfer that help to confirm students' learning outcomes and abilities which promote students' academic and career development (Archer, 2017; Zou et al, 2024). In addition, differentiated assessment strategies also could be carry out by the teacher in assessing students, which helpful in providing students abilities a learning progress based on their own levels of learning, way of understanding the material, and the outcomes. However, if the teacher demonstrates different assessment strategies, teacher should take it into account students' variability to accommodate different students learning styles in order to enhance overall learning.

Numerous studies have discussed about the teachers' assessment strategies that is used to assess their students in the learning process, especially in language assessment. One of the studies found that an assessment process refers to implementing multiple methods or range of strategies to make decisions regarding instruction and gathering information about students' performance and behavior, diagnoses students' problems, monitors their progress and gives feedback for improvement (Sugiono, 2021). In other hand, Sabir, Wang, and Zou (2024) revealed that differentiation strategies such as flexible grouping and culturally relevant content significantly improved student engagement and participation. another study by Ojong (2023) discovered that differentiated instruction significantly influences learners' motivation and engagement in second language acquisition. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence on its efficacy, indicating a need for more research in this area. Furthermore, Hidayat, Ruhiat, Anriani, and Suryadi (2024) revealed that positive correlations were found between differentiated learning and adversity intelligence, as well as between learning outcomes and peer tutoring. However, some studies revealed that there were challenges faced by the teacher whether in planning the authentic assessment strategy or conducting the assessment strategy.

According to the findings of those studies that have been conducted about the use of assessment strategy and also the challenge of conducting those assessments in differentiation context in the classroom. There still lack of study that exploring and describing the variety differentiated assessment strategies that teacher conducted as what have been promoted in Emancipated curriculum. Thus, it is the urgency to conduct a study in how English teachers' conducted differentiation on assessment strategies in the long-term of the purpose of assessment such as diagnostic, formative, and summative and in the approach on assessment as learning, for learning, and of learning is needed in Emancipated curriculum. Therefore, it will give clear picture and develop a deep framework in how are assessment strategies conducted by the English teachers in the learning process.

2. METHODS

In order to collect the data, Qualitative was considered to be used in this study, especially descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is a method that aims to address the societies and practical issues that involve the naturalistic and interpretive approach in order to differentiate the subject matters (Taherdoost, H. 2022). Descriptive qualitative was

chosen because this study aims to study the nature of phenomena in the area, including the quality, different manifestations, and the context in which they appear or the perspective from which they can perceive the phenomenon (Philipsen, H., et al, 2007; Busetto, L., et al, 2020). The object of this study was the assessment strategies that were conducted by the English teachers in differentiated learning context at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan in the classroom based on Emancipated curriculum. The data were obtained through observation and interview in the classroom with the three English teachers. Content analysis is appropriate method that used to analyze the data in this research, where helped the research to summarize the teachers' differentiated assessment strategies used, and categorize which approach and purpose of assessment strategies for, and the frequency of they conduct the differentiated assessment strategies in assessing students. The analysis also supported by the statement that obtained from the interview with the teachers. Therefore, the qualitative content analysis used in this research to analyze the collected data through classifying the data based on the content.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research on assessing strategies conducted by English teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan is based on the three assessment approaches which are assessment as learning, assessment for learning, and assessment of learning. Then, the purpose of assessment which is diagnostic, formative, and summative as well as differentiated instruction as stated and promoted in the Emancipated curriculum, which consisted of three stages; pre-activities, main-activity, and post-activity. Table 1 below provides the assessment strategies conducted by the teachers that are classified as follow;

Table 1. Assessment Strategies Conducted by English Teachers

No	Learning Phase	Assessment Strategies	Implemented by			DL	No DL	DA	No DA
			T1	T2	T3				
1	Pre-Activity	Elicitation		✓	✓		✓		✓
		Reviewing	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
		Games		✓			✓		✓
2	Main Activity	Question and Answer	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
		Group discussion	✓	✓			✓		✓
		Peer discussion			✓	✓			✓
		Exercise	✓	✓			✓		✓
		Feedback	✓		✓		✓		✓
		Presentation	✓				✓		✓
		Peer tutoring	✓			✓		✓	
3	Post Activity	Summary	✓		✓		✓		✓
		Task	✓	✓		✓		✓	

		Test	✓	✓			✓		✓
		Portfolio	✓				✓		✓

Note:

DL : Differentiated Learning

No DL: No Differentiated Learning

DA : Differentiated Assessment

No DA: No Differentiated Assessment

Based on Table 1 above, it can be concluded that the teachers used 14 assessment strategies such as elicitation, reviewing, game, question and answer, discussion, peer discussion, exercise, feedback, writing, presentation, summarizing, task, test and portfolio. According to the observation, the assessment strategies that were used by the teachers were quite similar to each other in different classes. But, each teacher was implementing the assessment strategies differently. In addition, it also found that there are three assessment strategies that have been conducted within differentiated learning context, which are *peer-discussion, peer-tutoring, and task*. But one assessment strategy was not carried out differentiated assessment which appeared in *peer-discussion*.

The assessment strategy that was conducted within differentiated learning was *peer-discussion*. Where this strategy was conducted by teacher 3, which the differentiation in the form of process where teacher 3 give instruction for the students to discuss about the material that had been explained and discussed earlier with their peer. Then, the teacher was providing an opportunity for those students who want to present their dialog as the result of peer discussion with their partner orally in front of the classroom or just collected the result in the form of written text. However, even though the teacher provide differentiation in the process of the how students present their work. At the end the teacher assessed students work based on the written text that students have did, with the same criteria.

T3 (Teacher 3)

“...I use peer discussion so that students can discuss in two ways of learning, not alone. Even though they learn independently, they still discuss with each other with their partner, because it really helps students in the development of their cognitive by exchanging ideas to solve problems. I also give them a choice in how they will present their discussion, so students will feel more comfortable in sharing their idea...”

The second assessment strategies that conducted within differentiated learning and carried out differentiated assessment is *peer-tutoring*. The differentiated assessment carried out in peer-tutoring assessment strategy that was implemented by teacher 1 in the form of providing different way of assessment where, the students that was instructed to help and tutor the others student were assessed based on their activity when tutoring their friends and the task that they have been finished. Then, the other student's assessment was collected through the result of their work with their tutor. Based on the different way of assessing the students in this assessment strategy, it can be concluded that teacher provided differentiated assessment to assess some students that were asked to tutor others students and the rest students, who were being tutored. Furthermore, this differentiation was used to provide different process of students' learning through more flexible and comfortable for the students.

T1 (Teacher 1)

“.....Sometimes, not all the students finished their assignment at home, because some reasons. If I just punish them because of that it would be the best solution, So I prefer to ask their other friends how have more high ability to teach and help them. I think it would be more effective to make students learn. And of course, I always assess the tutor students based on their activities when peer tutoring, so they would get a grade differently than others during peer tutoring...”

In addition, task also carried out differentiated assessment which conducted by teacher 1 within differentiated learning as well. The differentiated assessment was done when teacher 1 provided a different level of task for some students that already understand the material. Those students were asked to do more challenging task about related material, so they could apply the knowledge more and make think deeper about the material on the book. And for the other students who were still confused about the material were given a task that simpler by the teacher directly, so the student could understand the material and reach the learning goals. Teacher 1 assessed the task differently based on the level of task that students have made. In addition, this differentiated assessment in task also done in the process of students' learning, where teacher considering students level understanding and ability in learning the material.

T1 (Teacher 1)

“...I treat some of these students differently when giving task; if they are able to understand the previous material, then I give them more challenging activity in the book and trying to continue the material. And for the students who do not understand, I still provide explanations and activities until they understand the material and for the assessment, I assessed their task based on what they have made and I instructed before, which different for some students since I asked some students to do continuing task on the book....”

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there are only 3 out of 14 assessment strategies appeared with differentiation in learning which means that only 21,5% of assessment strategies were conducted within differentiated learning context by the teachers and only 2 out of 14 assessment strategies, which only 14% carried out differentiated assessment within differentiated learning that have been done by the teachers. It means that differentiated assessment not always carried out by differentiated learning in the practice.

Discussion

This study discovered, the English teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan have considered the three approaches and purpose of assessment in assessing students with varieties assessment strategies in teaching and learning in order to assess the students, that assessment should meet three approaches of assessment in conducting an appropriated assessment for students in teaching and learning process Padmadewi and Artini (2019). It also in line with the implementation of multiple assessment strategies is beneficial to help the teacher triangulated the evidence for a complete picture of student comprehension and understanding, rather than a single assessment Sugiono (2021).

In all of those variety assessment strategies that have been conducted, there are three assessment strategies that have implemented in differentiated learning context includes peer-tutoring, peer-discussion and task. In the practice, those assessment strategies were used by the teachers to reach their diverse in learning the material through some choices such as individual learning, group learning or peer learning. Then students could present their idea through presentation, writing, making video, and etc, which conducted as a process to ensure of what and how a student learns, then how a student demonstrates what he or she has learned is a match for that student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning (Tomlinson, 2004).

However, in practice it also found that only peer-tutoring and task carried out differentiated assessment to assess students' diverse within differentiated learning context, which is not in line with what have been expected by the theory of differentiation. Where, both instruction and assessment with differentiation provided students the opportunity to provide input regarding what and how they learn, and choice, and the opportunity to opt for activities or assessment they find interesting, stimulating or students learning preferences (Brown and Wentworth, 2021).

It found that differentiated assessment not always carry out by differentiated learning, even though both differentiated assessment and differentiated learning have a strong connection. However, the practice of differentiated learning must be followed by differentiated assessment in order to ensure that learning needs of every student in a classroom is met and fair for the students (Noman & Kaur, 2020).

In addition, the process of providing differentiated assessment for students in peer-tutoring assessment strategy, the teacher has not clear indicators to assess the students who were asked to tutor their other friends, which made the assessment less reliable and valid in assessing student for both in regular and differentiated learning context. In contrast, the visible indicators in assessment are required in order to develop a good grading practice and reliable, which must be considered by the teacher (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Thus, it means that there are some challenges that appeared in how differentiated assessment must be conducted in the classroom and effectively accommodated students' diverse.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the finding and discussion on teachers' assessment strategies within differentiated learning context at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan. It can be concluded that English teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Sawan have conducted a variety assessment strategy in teaching and learning process include assessment strategies that were conducted with differentiation I the form of process of learning that appeared in peer-discussion, peer-tutoring, and task. However, there still assessment strategies that were conducted without any differentiation, thus teachers' creativity in providing differentiation is needed here. Teachers could make small group of students with same ability in learning, so teacher provide each group with different level of task, source, criteria, or content, based on students' abilities to accommodate the diverse of students.

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