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# IMPLEMENTING PROJECT ASSESSMENT TO EVALUATE STUDENTS' TEACHING PERFORMANCE IN TEFL CLASS

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## Abstract

The authentic assessment is now widely applied in todays' education. It is more effective to evaluate the students' performances which are relevant to the learning activities. Project assessment is one of the authentic assessments that are able to give a freedom to students in exploring their ability through accomplishing the project assigned by the lecturer. In this article, I attempt to reveal the benefits of applying project assessment in evaluating the students' understanding of theories and strategies in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). This research was done to fourth semester students of English Department, Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya who took TEFL class. The data collections were obtained from open ended questionnaire and students' videos which they demonstrated their knowledge on how to teach English. Through this implementation, I found the benefits of project assessment in evaluating students' teaching performance. First, students were more exposing their understanding about teaching skill that could not be revealed much through the application of traditional assessment. Second, demonstrating and performing what they have learned about teaching technics were much more meaningful rather than finishing a set of questions on pieces of paper. Third, doing a project was able to strengthen a good relationship among students. Last but not least, this project was also useful for self-assessment. The students were able to do self-evaluation on their own performances by watching back at their videos.

Keywords: Implementing, Project Assessment, Students' Teaching Performance, TEFL

## Introduction

Along with the rapid progress in the world of education, the assessment system also changes. Long time ago when teacher –centered approach is fully applied, traditional assessment is considered to be effective way in evaluating the cognitive aspect. It is applied in the end of process of teaching and learning. Preparing set questions to be solved by students become the best way to justify the students' comprehension on certain unit of instructions. Traditional assessment seems easy to be applied since the test administrators only prepare set questions

and let students finish those. The lecturers or teachers are able to determine how many students pass the test and comprehend the materials. However, traditional assessment meets several weaknesses. Traditional assessment is indirect and inauthentic. This single occasion test only measure what students know at certain time (Bailey in Dikli, 2003:15). Therefore, how students can obtain the benefit of learning experiences. Moreover, in traditional assessment, lecturers or teachers do not provide any feedback meanwhile the score obtained can not tell the progress of learning (Bailey in Dikli, 2003:15). Franklin (2002) adds that in the implementation of traditional assessment, students do not participate in discussion, do the project and teachers are not able to observe and monitor the students in acquiring the knowledge. Smaldino et all in Dikli (2003:15) asserts that the focus of traditional assessment is on students' ability in memorizing and recalling which both are lower level in cognitive skill. The authentic assessment exists to cover the weaknesses of traditional assessment. Authentic assessment is defined as the multiple forms of assessment that are relevant to the classroom activities (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996:2). Newman, Brandt & Wiggins in Frey (2012:2) assert that when assessment measures products or performances that own valuable meaning and accommodate the capability that students need to have, thus the assessment is authentic.

There are a number types of authentic assessment applied in classroom and project assessment is one of them. In this assessment, the students are required to complete the tasks step by step, begin from planning, organizing and data presenting. Through this form of assessment, the students are obliged to accomplish the project procedurally.

Teacher and lecturers in different education institutions have various points of interest in the implementation of authentic assessment in teaching and learning. Determining the appropriate types is important to create proper evaluation which relevant to the courses and beneficial for both teachers and students. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is a compulsory course in English Department, Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya, this course is taken by fourth semester students. The aim of this course is preparing students of English department the basic theories on how to teach English. TEFL is taught once in a week with 3 credits.

This article attempts to reveal the benefits of project assessment in TEFL. In this project, students were assigned to prepare lesson plan, demonstrate their lesson plan into teaching performance and make the video. This assessment was applied to evaluate the students' teaching performance in TEFL.

## Literature Review

### Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment started being applied since not all subjects can be evaluated by using traditional assessment. The authentic assessment deals with the multiple forms of assessment which are relevant to the activities in classroom (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996:2). There are some types of authentic assessment. They are oral interviews, story or text retelling, writing samples, project and exhibitions, experiments or demonstrations, constructed – response items, teacher observations and portfolio.

**Figure 1 Types of authentic assessment**

Types of Authentic Assessment

- Oral interviews
- Story or Text Retelling
- Writing samples
- Projects/Exhibitions
- Experiments/Demonstrations
- Constructed – Response Items
- Teacher Observations
- Portfolios
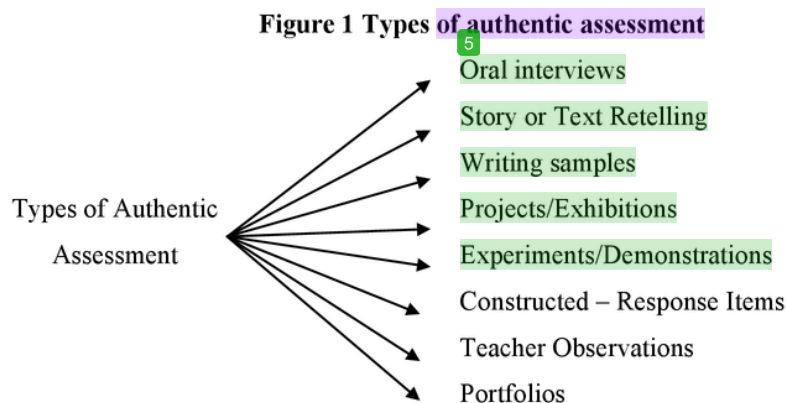
The numerous types of authentic assessments above have different features which their implementation is adjusted according to the characteristics of particular subjects taught in Education Institutions. O'Malley and Pierce (1996:12) explain the descriptions of each type. Oral interviews deals with the conversation activity which teachers ask students several questions related to personal background, daily activities and etc. Story or Text Retelling relates the students' activity in retelling the main idea or details of text practiced through reading or listening. Writing sample encompasses the activity of producing written documents such as writing narrative, expositions and etc. Project or Exhibitions focus on the activity which students complete project in particular area and can be done both individually and

groups. Experiments or demonstrations concentrate on how students can complete the experiment, observe oral and written products and explore their thinking skills. Constructed-Response items challenge students to produce written report and give response in writing to open – ended questions. Teacher Observations relate to the activity which teacher monitor students learning progress by observing their attention, response to instructional materials and how they interact with other students. Last is Portfolio which defines as a cumulative or collection of student work to show the progress of learning.

## Project assessment

Project assessment is one of authentic assessment which students are assigned to accomplish a project on certain topic and display their work. O'Malley and Pierce ( 1996:13) assert that In this assessment, the students are allowed to conduct their project both individually and in small group. Through completing this project, the students are taught to communicate step by step procedures or project description. The role of teacher or lecturer in this assessment is evaluating and assessing the students' performance by providing assessment rubrics which address compulsory aspects that needs to be assessed.

## Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Teaching English as a Foreign Language is a compulsory subject for English Department's students which its purpose is to prepare them to recognize, comprehend and apply the theories, strategies and techniques in English teaching. According to the aim of the course, it is crystal clear that the candidates of English teachers are required to determine how the theories, strategies and techniques are implemented in the teaching and learning activity. Harmer (2007:23) states that Teaching is not an easy job but it should be appreciated when the learners show a good progress in the learning activity. In order to pursue a successful teaching, the candidates have to pay attention on the level of the learners and their needs. Therefore, teaching style can be adjusted based on what the learners have to study.

## Research Questions

In this study, I attempt to find the answers on the following reseach questions
1.  How is the implementation of project assessment in evaluating students' teaching performance?
2.  What are the benefits of implementing project assessment for lecturers and students?

## Research Method

### Research Design

This case study presented a closer look at how project assessment was applied to assess students' performance in TEFL Class. In this assessment the students completed a step by step procedure in accomplishing the project. It began from preparing the lesson plan, executing the plan into real teaching activity and recording the teaching performance. Interview of 40 college students who took TEFL class was also conducted to find out their feeling and the benefits after they experienced the accomplishment of the project.

### Research Procedure

For final test of TEFL, Students were assigned to make project which the steps were as follows:

1. The 40 Students were assigned to prepare the lesson plan individually which contain of compulsory elements.
2. Students were obliged to consult their lesson plan twice, to get advices and suggestions from the lecturer.
3. Sooner the lecturer approved their plans, students began to demonstrate their lesson plan, perform as if real teachers in classroom setting and they had to record their performances.
4. For recording the performances, students were divided in to group of four, where each member helped each other in the process of video making.
5. Students submitted their videos on the day of final test and filled the questionnaires.
6. Lecturer evaluated their video based on the assessment rubric which has been prepared.

**Table 1 Assessment rubric for evaluating students' performances.**

| Name | Lesson Plan | | The appropriateness between Lesson plan and performance (20) | The clarity of Teaching Performance | | | The ability of using English in teaching (15) | Total Score (100) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Format (10) | Clarity (15) | | Opening (10) | Main (20) | Closing (10) | | |

*) The assessment rubric is modified based on assessment criteria for assessing teaching simulation which is taken from *Pedoman Simulasi PPL Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya*.

## Result and Discussion

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is a compulsory subject which contains of 3 credits. This subject requires students to comprehend the theories, methods and strategies used in teaching English. It took sixteen meetings for students to get involved in this class.

**Table 3 Lesson Plan of TEFL**

| BASIC COMPETENCE | MEETING | UNIT | MATERIAL | ACTIVITIES | REFERENCES | TIME ALLOCATION (MINUTES) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. | | INTRODUCTION The Basic of Teaching | | | 2x'50 |
| Recognizing the basic concept of language teaching. | 2. | 1 | Approaches to the teaching of English. | Presenting and Explaining | | |
| Recognizing, Discriminate and Explaining the approaches of language teaching. | 3. | 2 | Students Centered Classroom | | | |
| | 4. | 3 | Communicative Language Teaching Today | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| | 5. | 4 | Teaching Methods/techniques | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| Recognizing and Explaining the teaching methods and how to prepare a lesson plan. | 6. | 5 | Planning a lesson | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| | 7. | 6 | How to teach listening | | | |
| | 8 | | MID TERM TEST | | | |
| Explaining and identifying the concept of teaching | 9. | 7 | How to teach speaking | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| | 10. | 8 | How to teach reading | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| language skills. | | | | | | |
| | 11. | 9 | How to teach writing | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| Explaining and identifying the concept of teaching language areas. | 12. | 10 | How to teach grammar and error correction | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| | 13. | 11 | How to teach vocabulary and pronunciation | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| Constructing lesson plan | 14. | 12 | Creating Lesson Plan | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| | 15. | 13 | Creating Lesson Plan | Presenting and Sharing | | |
| | 16. | | FINAL TEST | | | |

The mid-term and the final test were held on eighth and sixteenth meeting. In mid-term test, the lecturer prepared the test which students were assigned to finish a set of questions on piece of papers. Meanwhile for final test, they were required to accomplish a project. In this project, students prepared the lesson plan, demonstrated the plan into performance where they act as if real teachers recorded their performances and made into video. There were some reasons why the lecturer set different form of assessment. First, The lecturer needed to

determine the right form of assessment that was suitable for evaluating students' comprehension in TEFL class. Second, the lecturer wanted to prove that implementation of project assessment were able to encourage students to explore their ability and discover valuable meaning of what they have studied in classroom activities.

Regarding to the nature of authentic assessments which do not judge the students' right or wrong answers, this form of assessment gave autonomy to the lecturers in evaluating how far the students were able to demonstrate their understanding on certain subject. For the evaluation, the assessment rubric has been set. The rubric includes the aspects which needed to be considered in the process of evaluation.

**Observation and Assessment Process**

In this activity, the lecturer assessed the students' project by observing the compulsory components which have been set already in assessment rubric. The following are the components: First is the ability in preparing the lesson plan which covers format and clarity. Second is the appropriateness between the lesson plan and the teaching performance. Third is the clarity of Teaching Performance from opening, main and closing. And fourth is the ability of using English in teaching.

The result of evaluation based on the rubric showed the strengths and weaknesses of the students based on their performance, such as the students were still confused in determining the indicators, some learning steps in lesson plan didn't match with the real teaching. Meanwhile the strengths are as follow: some students felt free in exploring their creativity such as the use of fun teaching method and attractive teaching media. The other finding showed that this project could strengthen the relationship among friends. They were allowed to cooperate with their friends particularly in preparing the video recording. They helped each other to make the video.

**Questionnaire**

In obtaining students' opinion related to the project they have accomplished, five open ended questions were prepared. The answers were varied and the following are the sample of the answers done by the students:

1. **Before you took TEFL class, how far do you understand about the procedures of English teaching?**

Various answers were collected from this question such as the students initially thought that teaching English was difficult. They claimed that they did not get idea how to teach. Some said that the teacher just explained the material, gave examples and assigned students to do the exercises. Other answers showed that in the procedure of English teaching, the teacher was just coming to the class and delivering the material. Some students didn't realize how important the role of lesson plan to maintain the flow of teaching activities.

2. **After you have accomplished this subject and passed a series of assessment, which one is the most appropriate form?**

    (Traditional: finishing a set of questions on pieces of papers or Authentic: demonstrating the understanding through performing)

    The students were assigned to finish 5 questions in the midterm test and they felt that the project they have finished in final test was much more meaningful. Most students said that through this project, the applied what they've learnt into teaching practice.

3. **How far do you understand the procedures of English Teaching after preparing the lesson plan and performing as if a teacher in classroom setting?**

    The students said that lesson plan was very important and useful to help them in conducting the teaching activities. Many of them add that being a teacher was not easy but by preparing the lesson plan in advance, the process of teaching could be less difficult. The other students said that lesson plan would help teachers a lot in delivering materials in the class.

4. **Give your opinion about working in group in the process of video making!**

    The students answered that by working in group, they could finish the assignment easier. They took turn to help one another in preparing the video. Some students felt that this activity could strengthen the relationship among friends.

5. **Are there any benefits that you obtain after completing this project?**

    The answers were various; some students said that after finishing the project, they realized that completing step by step procedures in the process of teaching helped them a lot in

understanding the concept of teaching. The other students conveyed that this kind of assessment was so meaningful.

## Conclusion and Suggestion

According to the result of discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of project assessment which is a part of the authentic assessment gave positive benefits to both students and lecturer. In this assessment, the students obtained more opportunity to explore their creativity in applying the knowledge which has been learnt through performance activity. It drove them to realize how important planning a lesson before teaching activity began. This project also could strengthen the relationship among friends; they helped each other to make the video. For the lecturer, this assessment was able to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of students. The result of evaluation showed that the students felt free in exploring their creativity such as the use of fun teaching method and attractive teaching media. The other finding showed that in planning the lesson some students were still confused in determining the learning indicators. Some learning steps that they have written in Lesson Plan did not match Apart from the strengths and the weaknesses found, this project was so much useful for introducing the role of planning a lesson. It gave them prior knowledge for taking the upcoming courses in the next semester. Instructional Design deals with how to prepare the syllabus and lesson plan, Curriculum Material and Development relates with how to develop teaching material and Language Testing relates with how to prepare learning evaluation and assessment.

According to the result of discussion it is suggested to apply the types of authentic assessment which are appropriate with the characteristics of the subject. It is important to let students obtain useful learning experiences.

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