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# EFL EDUCATION JOURNAL

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# THE USE OF PROCESS AND PRODUCT ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING EFL WRITING APPLYING GENRE-BASED APPROACH

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**Abstract:** The adoption of genre-based approach or text-based instruction in the teaching of English in Indonesia affects EFL teachers' strategies in designing instruction and assessment procedures. In the implementation of genre-based approach, EFL teachers need to be familiar with the cyclical model of learning that consists of text modelling, joint negotiation of a text, and independent construction of a text. As genre-based approach emphasizes on the process and product of writing, the design of assessment should cover the observation of students' writing process and the measurement of students' writing product. For the purpose of sharing ideas on the use of process and product assessment in teaching EFL writing, this paper will discuss the background information about genre-based approach, the notion of process assessment and its kinds, the notion of product assessment, the writing aspects to be assessed, and closed with the discussion of analytic or holistic scoring methods.

**Keywords:** process assessment, product assessment, EFL writing

At the present time, genre-based approach has become an influential approach in English language teaching. EFL curriculum of the secondary schools in Indonesia, for example, has adopted genre-based approach or text-based instruction in the teaching of English. "Text-based instruction sees communicative competence as involving the mastery of different types of text" (Richards, 2010:40). This is a model for developing complete lesson units around text types, and has ultimate aims of helping learners to gain literacy through mastery of text types. Thus in text-based instruction, students are expected to understand different types of texts through listening and reading activities and to produce different types of texts through speaking and writing activities. A number of text types studied in the teaching of English using genre-based approach are narrative, recount, information reports, instruction, explanation and expository texts. Narrative texts aim to tell a story, usually to entertain; recount texts (personal and factual) aim to tell what happened; information reports aim to provide factual information; instructions aim to tell the listener or reader what to do; explanations aim to explain how or why something happens, and expository texts aim to present or argue viewpoints.

In the implementation of genre-based approach, a set of instructional procedures have been introduced. Feez and Joyce (1998 in Richrads, 2010) propose five phases in implementing text-based approach in class: (1) building the context, (2) modelling and deconstructing the text,(3) joint construction of the text, (4) independent construction of the text, and (5) linking to related text. Other writers such as Derewianka, (1990 and Butt et al., 2001 in Fauziati, 2013) propose

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four phases essential for developing control of a genre, namely: context exploration, text exploration based on model texts, joint construction of a text, and individual application. More specifically, in the teaching of writing, three stages are introduced: modelling, joint negotiation of text, and independent construction of text (NSW Department of School Education, 1993). Each of these stages comprises a number of activities. When modelling a genre for the first time, teachers are recommended to concentrate mainly on the context and the schematic structure with minimal attention being given to the language features. Modelling the genre thoroughly may be time consuming at first, but it is fundamental to the development of the students' understanding of the genre. Following this, some joint construction activities may be useful to reinforce generic purpose and structure. Before students attempt independent construction, they may wish to construct a text in pairs or groups.

In the context of teaching writing, the presence of genre-based approach could complete the shortcomings of two previous approaches in teaching writing, namely product-based and process-based approach. Similar to product-based approach, genre-based approach targets language learners to be able to produce a good text, that is well-organized and grammatically correct. In an attempt to produce a good text, genre-based approach also pays attention to the process of writing as indicated by the provision of guided activities in phase of text modeling, joint construction of text, up to free writing activities in the final stage of independent construction of text. In short, genre-based approach could balance the writing process and product.

The successful implementation of genre-based approach must certainly be supported by EFL teachers who understand deeply about the notion of genre-based approach. They are required to have capability in designing instruction and assessment strategies suitable to the features of this approach. Teaching and assessing are closely related. If genre-based approach could balance the process and product of writing, it is required the design assessment should also capture the students' process of writing and the students' product of writing. To share ideas on how to design assessment procedures in text-based instruction, this short article will discuss the use of process and the product assessment in the teaching of EFL writing applying genre-based approach.

## PROCESS ASSESSMENT

The assessment of the process of learning English is given in each meeting (Ariatmi and Fatmawati, 2013). In the process, EFL teachers could assess three domains of competencies covering knowledge, psychomotor, and affective. Assessment can be focused on the variables of students' participation, motivation, honesty, responsibility, self-confidence, creativity, and progress in learning the four language skills through the related assignments or exercises. The data on these aspects can be collected by procedure of observation using structured or unstructured instruments in the forms of checklist, rating scale, anecdotal records, or field notes. Teachers could also collect the data from authentic proofs of the learning process, such as students' note books, students' worksheets and homework. The assessment in the process of learning contributes to the final score.

In relation to the process assessment in the teaching of writing, EFL teachers could focus on examining what students do as they write, the strategies they use, and the decisions they make as

writers (Tompkins, 1992). Three measures of process assessment that will be explained the following discussion are writing process checklist, assessment conferences, and self-assessment by students. Information from these three measures together with the product assessment measures will provide a more complete assessment picture. Both students and teachers can use these measures to keep track of completed work, to reflect on students' growth as writers, and for grading.

## Writing Process Checklist

A writing process checklist contains activities in each stage of the writing process, (i.e. prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). Tompkins (1992) gives an example of checklist that is used to monitor students' writing process. In this checklist, EFL teachers could observe students as they write and participate in writing process activities, and place checkmarks and add comments as necessary for each observed activity. Students can also use this checklist for self-assessment to help them become aware of the activities involved in the writing process. The writing process checklist can be adapted for various types of writing. For example, if students are writing biographies, items can be added in the prewriting stage about developing a lifeline and clustering ideas for each chapter of each topic. Apart from that, a writing process checklist can be used in conjunction with product assessment. Teachers can base a percentage of students' grades on how well they used the writing process and the remaining percentage on the quality of the writing. Table 1 is an example of a writing process checklist.

### Table 1. A Writing Process Checklist

| Name: ........................... <br> Title : ........................... | Date:............................ |
|---|---|
| **Prewriting** <br> 1. Student considers purpose, audience, and form for writing <br> 2. Student gathers and organizes ideas before writing | ................................ <br> ................................ |
| **Drafting** <br> 3. Student writes one or more rough drafts <br> 4. Student labels paper as a draft and double-spaces text <br> 5. Student places a greater emphasis on content rather than on mechanics | ................................ <br> ................................ <br> ................................ |
| **Revising** <br> 6. Student meets in a writing group to share his/her writing <br> 7. Student makes changes to reflect suggestions made by classmates and teachers | ................................ <br> ................................ |
| **Editing** <br> 8. Student proofreads writing to identify and correct errors <br> 9. Student meets with teacher to identify and correct errors | ................................ <br> ................................ |
| *Publishing* <br> 10. Student makes a final copy <br> 11. Student shares writing with an appropriate audience | ................................ <br> ................................ |

(Tompkins, 1992)

## Assessment Conferences

In assessment conferences, EFL teachers meet their students in conference. Together, they discuss the students' problems, strategies, and opinions about the piece of writing they develop.

In conferences, the discussion may be focused on topic selection, writing forms, prewriting activities, word choice, writing group activities, types of revisions, consistency in editing, degree of effort and involvement in the assignment, or any other topic. In conferences with students, Tompkins (1994) provide examples of questions EFL teachers may ask in the following.

(1) What was easy (or difficult) about writing this paper ?
(2) What did you do well on this writing assignment?
(3) What did you do to gather and organize ideas before writing?
(4) What kinds of help did you get from your writing group?
(5) What kinds of revisions did you make?
(6) How do you proofread your papers?
(7) What mechanical errors are easy (or difficult) to locate ?
(8)  Read your favorite part to me. Why do you like it ?(Tompkins, 1994).

Through the use of these questions, teachers help students probe theirunderstanding of the writing process and their competencies. Conferences are usually brief about ten minutes, and at the end the teacher and student develop a set of goals for the next writing assignment.

## Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a natural part of writing. The ability to reflect on one's own writing promotes organizational skills, self-reliance, independence, and creativity. In self-assessment, students assess their writing throughout the writing process. They assess their rough draft as well as their finished compositions. Before sharing with classmates in a writing group, for example, students examine their rough drafts and make some preliminary assessment. The self-assessment  may deal with the quality of writing, i.e. whether or not the writing communicates effectively and how adequately the writing incorporates the requirements for the composition as stipulated by the teacher. Table 2 taken from Tompkins (1994) is an example of checklist used by students to assess the process of writing autobiography.

**Table 2. Autobiography Checklist**

| Writer: ........................................................................................ | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prewriting | ............... ............... ............... ............... | Created a lifeline<br>Brainstormed eight chapter topics<br>Choose four topics for chapters<br>Clustered each topic for a chapter |
| Drafting | ............... ............... | Wrote a draft of each chapter<br>Wrote on every other line and marked papers as a rough draft |
| Revising | ............... ............... | Participated in a writing group<br>Made at least three changes in the draft |
| Editing | ............... ............... | Completed an editing checklist with a partner<br>Had a conference with the teacher |
| Publishing | ............... ............... ............... | Added a title page and a table of contents<br>Recopied the autobiography<br>Added an illustration for each chapter<br>Shared the autobiography with two other people |

(Tompkins, 1994)

## PRODUCT ASSESSMENT

In the assessment of the outcome of learning English, EFL teachers have to know whether or not students have already acquired competence through the process of learning English (Ariatmi and Fatmawati, 2013). Product in this context refers to the finished compositions written by EFL students that are elicited from writing assignments/tasks (homework, portfolio, writing projects) given by EFL teachers. These assignments are given in reference to the learning objectives designed in the lesson plan of the EFL teachers. In addition, the finished composition can also be elicited from writing tests (daily test, mid semester test, semester test) given by EFL teachers. Hughes (1989) assumes that the best way to test people's writing ability is to get them to write. Therefore, the combinations of writing tasks and writing tests are expected to reveal the students' true writing ability.

### Aspects to Be Assessed in Writing

To measure the students' quality of writing, EFL teachers need to determine the performance indicators to be evaluated. From language assessment experts, EFL teachers can have ideas of what must be evaluated in students' compositions. Hughes (1996), for example, proposes five aspects to be evaluated in writing, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency (style and ease of communication), form (organization). In almost similar way, Heaton (1990) also proposes five aspects to be assessed, i.e. fluency, grammar, vocabulary, content, and spelling. One of the minor difference in both is the absence of 'content' in Hughes', and the absence of 'organization' in Heaton's. In a more complete information, Madsen (1983) proposes a number of factors that can be evaluated in students' compositions, i.e. mechanics (including spelling and punctuation), vocabulary, grammar, appropriate content, diction (or word selection), rhetorical matters of various kinds (organization, cohesion, unity; appropriateness to audience, topic and occasion; as well as sophisticated concerns such as logic and style.

Concerning the different aspects of writing to be evaluated, EFL teachers need to decide what aspects that will be utilized to score students' compositions. They may adopt the available criteria determined in the literature or make adaptation. Whether adoption or adaptation chosen, EFL teachers need to think about the following aspects: (1) the complexity of the writing tasks done by their students, (2) students' levels of education and language development, as well as (3) the practicality of scoring.

Because scoring students' composition is frequently not so reliable (different from the objective test of writing), it is recommended that EFL teachers use scoring rubric, treat papers anonymously, scan and categorize the papers into (high, high medium, low medium, and low) before marking, and invite two or more scorers (Ariatmi and Fatmawati, 2013). To minimize the subjectivity in scoring students' compositions, the following will discuss holistic and analytic scoring methods that are commonly used by EFL teachers.

### Holistic Scoring Method

Holistic scoring or impressionistic scoring involves the assignment of a single score to a piece of writing on the basis of an overall impression of it (Hughes, 1996). It is used to judge overall writing performance without emphasis on any particular writing skill. In holistic scoring, EFL teachers read students' writing for a general or whole impression and according to this general impression they group compositions from strongest to weakest (Tompkins, 1994). Summative test of writing is usually scored holistically. It is not an appropriate measure to use when teachers

want to assess how well students have used a particular writing form or applied specific writing skills in a composition.

However, in stipulating the general or whole impression of student's composition EFL teachers are required to use a rubric, in this case holistic scoring rubric. Rubrics are scoring guides that describes criteria for performance and differentiate among different levels of performance within those criteria. For example, the holistic scoring guide (Table 3) categorizes student's quality of composition from 1 (the weakest) up to 6 (the strongest). To stipulate students' scores appropriately, EFL teachers should have been familiar with the descriptors in each category prior to scoring students' compositions. In addition, inter-rater scoring read by at least by two readers is also recommended in scoring student's composition. Then, numerical scores from two readers are either averaged or added together for a cumulative score.

**Table 3: Holistic Scoring Rubric for Writing Assessment**

| Score | Descriptions |
|---|---|
| 6 | Conveys meaning clearly and effectively; Presents multi-paragraph organization, with clear introductions, development of ideas, and conclusion; Show evidence of smooth transitions;Uses varied, vivid, precise vocabulary consistently; Writes with few grammatical/mechanical errors. |
| 5 | Conveys meaning clearly; Presents multi-paragraph organization logically, though some parts may not be fully developed; Shows some evidence of effective transitions; Uses varied and vivid vocabulary appropriate for audience and purpose; Writes with some grammatical/mechanical errors without affecting meaning |
| 4 | Expresses ideas coherently most of the time; Develops a logical paragraph; Writes with a variety of sentence structures with a limited use of transitions; Chooses vocabulary that is (often) adequate to purpose; Writes with grammatical/mechanical errors that seldom diminish communication; |
| 3 | Attempts to express ideas coherently; Begins to write a paragraph by organizing ideas; Writes primarily simple sentences; Uses high frequency vocabulary; Writes with grammatical/mechanical errors that sometimes diminish communication. |
| 2 | Begins to convey meaning; Writes simple sentences/phrases; Uses limited or repetitious vocabulary; Spells inventively; Uses little or no mechanics, which often diminishes meaning. |
| 1 | Draws pictures to convey meaning; Uses single words, phrases; Copies from a model. |

(O'Malley and Pierce, 1996)

**Analytic Scoring Method**

Analytic scoring method is a method of scoring which requires a separate score for each of a number of aspects of a task (Hughes, 1996). The separate components are sometimes given weights to reflect their importance in instruction (O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). This traditional form of assessment is most appropriate when EFL teachers want to compare students' writing to a standard score of excellence (Tompkins, 1994).

A number of advantages of using analytic scoring method are: (1) disposing the problem of uneven development of sub-skills in individuals; (2) scorers are compelled to give score on each aspect they usually ignore; (3) a number of scorers make the scoring more reliable (Hughes, 1996). Perkin (in O'Malley and Pierce, 1996) add two advantages of analytic scoring method, namely (1) the provision feedback on specific aspects of writing and (2) the diagnostic information for planning instruction. In contrast, there are two disadvantages of using analytic

scoring, i.e. the longer time spent for scoring and concentration on the different aspects may divert attention from the overall effect of the piece of writing.

In analytic scoring method as shown in Table 4, writing performance is divided into two main categories: general merit and mechanics. The specific traits for general merit are ideas, organization, wording, and flavor. The specific traits related to mechanics are usage and sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization, spelling andhandwriting and neatness. The most significant drawback of this technique is that equivalent weight is given to the two categories, although writing educators recommend that greater emphasis be given to content than mechanics.

Table 4. Analytic Scoring Rubric for Writing

| Domain Score* | Composing | Style | Sentence formation | Usage | Mechanics |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Focuses on central ideas with an organized and elaborated text | Purposefully chosen vocabulary, sentence variety, information, and voice to affect reader | Standard word order, no enjambment (run-on sentences), completeness (no sentence fragments), standard modifiers and coordinators, and effective transitions. | Standard inflections (e.g. plurals, possessives, -ed, ing with verbs, and ly with adverbs), subject-verb agreement, standard word meaning) | Effective use of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and formatting (paragraphs noted by indenting) |
| 3 | Central idea, but not as evenly elaborated and some digressions | Vocabulary less precise and information chosen less purposeful | Mostly standard word order, some enjambment or sentence fragments | Mostly standard inflections, agreement, and word meaning | Mostly effective use of mechanics; errors do not detract from meaning |
| 2 | Not a focused idea or more than one idea, sketchy elaboration, and many digressions | Vocabulary basic and not purposefully selected; tone flat or inconsistent | Some non-standard word order, enjambment, and word omissions (e.g. verbs). | Some errors with inflections, agreement, and word meaning | Some errors with spelling and punctuation that detract from meaning |
| 1 | No clear idea, little or no elaboration, many digressions | Not controlled, tone flat, sentence halted or choppy | Frequent non-standard word order, enjambment, and word omissions | Shifts from one tense to another; errors in conventions (them/those, good/well, double negatives, etc. | Misspells even simple words; little formatting evident |

\* 4 = consistent control
3 = reasonable control
2 = Inconsistent control
1 = Little or no control(O'Malley and Pierce. 1996)

## Conclusion and Suggestions

The current curriculum of English in Indonesian secondary schools has adopted genre-based approach or text-based instruction as the approach in the teaching of English. The adoption of genre-based approach will influence EFL teachers in designing instruction and assessment strategies. In teaching writing adopting genre-based approach, EFL teachers need to follow the cyclical model of learning consisting of text modelling, joint negotiation of a text, and independent construction of a text. As the emphasis of genre-based approach is on the process and product of writing, the design of assessment should cover the observation of students' writing process and the measurement of students' writing product. Writing process checklist, conferences, and self-assessment are several examples of process assessment methods. In assessing students' writing performance, EFL teachers may use data collected from writing assignments and/or writing tests. Then, students' composition can be scored using analytic or holistic scoring procedure depending upon the scoring purposes.

In line with the adoption of genre-based approach, it is suggested that EFL teachers pay serious attention to the procedures of teaching. It is recommended that EFL teachers concentrate mainly on the context and the schematic structure when modelling a genre for the first time. Modelling the genre thoroughly may be time consuming at first, but it is fundamental to the development of the students' understanding of the genre. In addition, correction feedback on students' product of writing based on the problems of content, organization, language accuracy, vocabulary, and mechanics of writing is required to be given continuously.

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