

The Formative Assessment Practice in Vocational High Schools: Case Study

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ABSTRACT

In Merdeka Curriculum, the application of formative assessment improves teaching and learning quality. This study aims to explore (1) the implementation of formative assessments techniques' practices in vocational high schools, (2) challenges of the implementation of formative assessments in vocational high schools. This research is qualitative case study research that applies semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document studies. Data from this study were collected from a Center of Excellent (CoE) vocational high school in Gunungkidul area involving four English teachers and one school principal. The study found that schools applied various formative assessment techniques based on learning objectives. Teachers also found some challenges in implementation of formative assessments such as limited learning facilities, limited time allocation, and teachers' willingness

INTRODUCTION

Students in vocational high schools benefit greatly from the quality of teaching and learning. It is a long process in honing both soft skills and hard skills of vocational high school students. After graduating, vocational graduates are expected to be the qualified workers in the workplaces of many industrial sectors. The primary goal of Vocational High School (SMK) is to produce competent, hardworking, and work-ready human resources. Science and technology competencies are essential for students to acquire in order to become superior, expert, and skilled resources in today's industrialized world. (Cindy et al., 2022)

To answer the need for qualified vocational school graduates and in line with global developments, the government launched the Center of Excellence Vocational High School program. Center of Excellence Vocational High School (CoE VHS) allows vocational school graduates to acknowledge their religion, character, nationality, independence, and good character in their schools, families, and communities. The CoE VHS program is supposed to act as a driving force for vocational high school, ensuring that the quality of learning outcomes meets industry standards. (Susatya et al., 2023) The CoE VHS preparing industrial workers, should be the focus of improvement efforts at this point in time. (Fanani et al., 2023). It aims to collaborate with other schools to enhance student learning results and promote vocational education. (Indra et al., 2022)

Vocational high school must improve the quality of teaching carried out by prioritizing the principles of student needs and current developments. Brown (2004) mentioned that assessment is a continuous process that encompasses a vast range of activities. A teacher subconsciously assesses a student's performance whenever they answer a question, make a comment, or try out a new structure or word. Whether jotted down phrases or formal essays, written work is a performance that ultimately must be evaluated by the student, the teacher, or possibly others. Nunan (2005) stated that assessment is a procedure for collecting the learners' data. An assessment is also a subset of evaluation which subsumes testing.

There are many purposes of giving assessments, such as measuring tool of student's achievement, evaluating mastery of learning objectives, reflecting way to students' performance, offering valuable feedback to students and teachers, providing evidence of student learning, revealing the students' gaps in understanding or skills, informing the development and refinement of curriculum materials, motivating and engaging students to learn better. Tosuncuoglu (2018) claimed that the purpose of assessments is to guide instruction on a daily basis, diagnose student strengths and weaknesses related to classroom instruction, and provide specific feedback to students for continual improvement. Furthermore, assessment allows teachers to quickly adapt their teaching practices based on immediate feedback.

According to Kemdikbud (2022) designed as part of a learning reform initiative, the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on developing student character and skills alongside important material. Unfortunately, teachers were largely

unaware of their learners' progress and difficulties with learning and were unable to adapt their own work to meet the learners' needs (Rahman et al., 2021). There is a paucity of research specifically addressing the challenges faced by vocational high school teachers. Without a clear understanding of these challenges, policymakers and educational leaders may not provide the necessary support and resources for vocational teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessments in the Merdeka Curriculum

A curriculum has a crucial part in Indonesian education system. It serves as the foundation for educational programs. Based on Lestari (2023), the curriculum offers an essential part in achieving educational success and fostering students' full potential. The Indonesian curriculum has been updated to reflect current grows, technology, and global market needs. Curriculum analysis aims to identify weaknesses in the prior curriculum. This curriculum analysis has scope, which allows it to perform optimally. (Lestari, 2023)

The Merdeka Curriculum is the newest curriculum being implemented by the Indonesian government at all levels of education in Indonesia. This curriculum incorporates a variety of intracurricular learning experiences, with the goal of students optimally deepening concepts and strengthening competencies. This curriculum also gives teachers and schools the opportunity to design effective learning based on student needs and the learning environment. According to Astari et al. (2023), the Merdeka Curriculum is designed to be adaptable and prioritize vital themes, character development, and student abilities. In Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, teachers recognize two kinds of learning assessments, they are formative assessments and summative assessments.

Schellekens et al. (2021) mentioned that formative and summative assessments have become widely used terms since 1990. The notions are generally assigned two distinct purposes: 1) assessments with a formative function provide support and improvement to students' learning, while 2) assessments with a summative function serve accountability, ranking, or certification of competence by assessing students' performance. Brown (2004) confirmed that formative assessments aim to support students in continuing their growth process by assessing them while they are developing their competencies and skills. Moreover, summative assessments are usually given at the conclusion of a course or unit of teaching with the goal of measuring or summarizing the material that a student has learned.

Joughin (2009) stated that since summative evaluation is used in all phases of the course, it has become the standard for assessment practices and is frequently used as a benchmark for other assessment activities. Summative assessments do not collect feedback, it grades on how much learning has taken place, how much the students know the lesson. Typically, summative assessment is conducted at the end of learning segments such as quizzes, periodic review tests, midterm exams, final test, final performance, term papers, and end-year exam. The test items in summative assessment are also varied; multiple choice questions, response items, technology-enhanced items, as well

as performance tasks. Summative assessments also have clear advantages in teaching learning process.

Formative assessment is sometimes defined as assessment for learning (*afl*) since its activity of assessment is used as feedback in assessing teachers or students. According to (Black & Wiliam, 1998) formative assessment is defined as all activities carried out by teachers and/or by their students which provide information to be used as feedback to adjust the teaching and learning activities. According to Wiggins (1998), formative assessment's main goal is to enhance rather than only audit students' performance. Thus, formative assessment provides feedback to teacher and students to help them improving the teaching and learning process. Additionally, it explains the learning objective, the students' current standing in relation to it, and what may be done to enhance performance in the future to both students and those assisting the teacher and students. (Black & Wiliam, 2010)

Formative Assessments Classroom Techniques (FACTs)

Formative Assessments Classroom Techniques (FACTs) are strategies to assess students learning in real-time about how well their material acquiring and to adjust teachers' teaching approach as needed. FACTs are short formative assessment activities designed to provide teachers with feedback about the lesson, as well as students with brief summaries and feedback about their learning. (Babinčáková et al., 2020). This is a class activity that takes place in the classroom and does not have grades. It is meant to give teachers feedback regarding what students have absorbed and what they have not comprehended in the studied material. This helps the teacher control the educational situation before the course is completed, and it allows students to reflect upon what they have learned. (Jawad et al., 2021). Cullinane (2011) stated that the best FACTs and collections of FACTs are not universal, so consideration is necessary when choosing what FACTs to use in the classroom. It takes trial and error to find what fits each group best, and every teacher knows that class dynamics vary from group to group. There are numerous ways and strategies for doing formative evaluations. (Bell & Cowie, 2002; Hall & Burke, 2004) such as observation, questioning, discussion, exit/admit slips, student learning journals, self-and-peer assessment, assignments, think-pair-share, and peer teaching and peer learning.

Challenges in Formative Assessments

Although formative evaluation appears to be flexible in its use, there are numerous obstacles to overcome. Many teachers have this difficulty. A lack of coherence between assessments and evaluations at the policy, school, and classroom levels, as well as concerns that formative assessment is too resource- and time-intensive to be useful, are some of the main obstacles to the wider use of formative assessment. Teachers frequently teach to highly visible summative tests and examinations, which are meant to hold schools accountable for student achievement (OECD, 2005). Other researchers in other jurisdictions have documented several factors that influence teachers' integration of formative assessment into teaching-learning. It is important to note that even though the research was not conducted in Indonesia, many similarities exist with what happens in Indonesian schools.

It was also found that teachers in South Africa experienced difficulties implementing formative assessment in Israel's (2005) study. Insufficient professional development and high workloads contributed to these difficulties. Zalia (2007) found that most Tanzanian teachers lack formative assessment skills and knowledge, supporting her findings. Teachers stated in Polizzi, Jaggernauth, Ray, Callahan, and Rushton's (2015) study that a lack of assessment instruction compromises inquiry-based learning in formative assessment. Based on Asare & Afriyie (2023), Classroom assessment researchers find that instructors' perceptions of the challenges associated with integrating formative assessment into their instruction are influenced by a few key demographic factors. As a result, findings from various research samples and geographic areas may be comparable or dissimilar.

Formative assessments are usually carried out during the learning process of a chapter/unit. This formative assessment attempts to monitor and improve the learning process, evaluate the attainment of learning objectives, and collect information on student growth for use as feedback to teachers and students. In this study, the researcher attempts to identify the practice of implementing formative assessment in vocational school education so that teachers can gain a new perspective on the implementation of formative assessment, particularly at the vocational school level, so that the learning and assessment process can be carried out optimally and graduates a workforce that is qualified and in line with the needs of the global era.

Based on this description, a conceptual framework is formed as below.

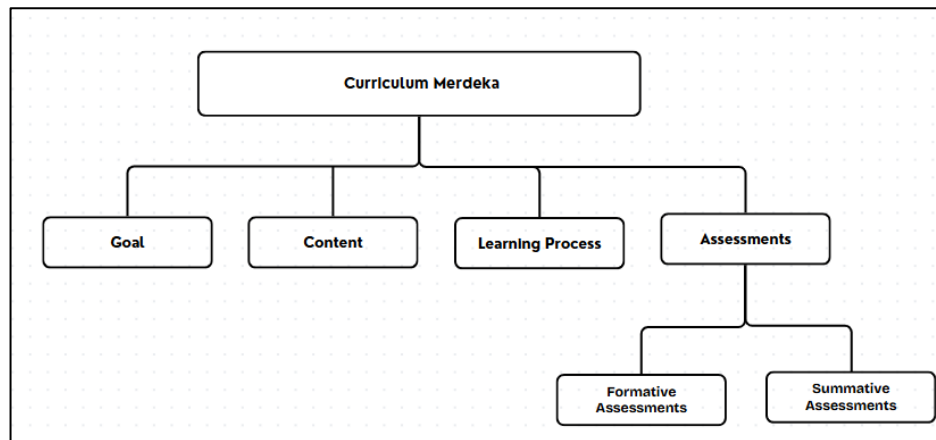


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this study are to find out the techniques of formative assessments implemented in vocational high schools and to reveal the teachers' challenges in implementing formative assessments in the vocational high schools. To achieve these objectives, the researchers used a qualitative approach using case study research design.

The research participants were taken at SMK Negeri 1 Ponjong for the 2023/2024 academic year. There were four English teachers and one school principal. It was sufficient to gather data on formative assessment practices in

the classrooms used in the study. The researcher collected sufficient data by examining the actual process of formative assessment carried out throughout the learning and teaching process that occurs in the classroom. The interaction between teachers and students were also clearly observed.

According to the description above, the case study was the proper research design to be undertaken in examining the practice of formative assessment in SMK Negeri 1 Ponjong. This school employs an independent curriculum and formative assessments to prepare students for the global era by emphasizing the importance of optimal resource development through education based on Yogyakarta culture, industrial culture, and the literacy movement. Therefore, the researcher was interested to organize a case study focusing the practice of formative assessments in detail.

In order to achieve sufficient and strong research findings, the researcher used some research instruments such as observation, semi-structured interviews, and documents. The researchers used two categories in observations during this study which were participant observation and non-participant observation. The research also used semi-structured interview because it provided enough flexibility to approach individual respondents differently while addressing the same areas of data collection. In addition, the researchers did documentary analysis in the form school's curriculum document, teachers' administration documents, official reports, and students' journals.

RESEARCH RESULT

The Implementation of Formative Assessments Techniques

Based on the data the researcher found in the field, the teachers have practiced many formative assessment techniques which have been adjusted to the competency goals. The frequency of conducting formative assessments also varies. The more teachers and students need feedback on learning progress, the more often formative assessments are carried out. Teachers and students engage in formative assessment as a means of improving the quality of learning that takes place during and at the beginning of the learning process. Various formative assessment techniques are employed by teachers according to the content and learning objectives. The principal said:

"At SMK Negeri 1 Ponjong, various techniques are implemented. Generally, the formative assessment techniques used depend on the teacher and the expected learning outcomes." (Interview, Principal)

In line with the principal, Teacher 1 also explained how they implemented the formative assessment is based on what teachers want to achieve from the teaching and learning activity. Teacher 1 stated:

"I usually use multiple forms of assessment for formative assessment. Thus, it varies from meeting to meeting, depending on the basic competencies to be taught during the English lesson." (Interview, Teacher 1)

In addition to formative assessments, teachers have been conducting them for a long time currently, but sometimes they are misunderstood due to the changing terminology. The formative assessment techniques implemented by English teachers at schools were:

a. Discussion

Teacher 2 mentioned that discussion is an effective technique in his learning teaching activity because he feels more connected to his students. A comfortable environment exists between students and their teachers, and there are no too big gaps between them. Teacher 2 said:

"Personally, I often use discussion techniques with my students because they are straight to the point. Without complicated preparation, process and results, I can immediately see how students interact, which ones are active and which ones are less active. They can also be more open about disclosing information or asking about something." (Interview, Teacher 2)

Teacher 3 feels the same way about discussion techniques as teacher 2.

"Through discussions, I feel closer to the students. They like discussion techniques where they can express their opinions and freely ask questions to the teacher. I also immediately knew where my teaching shortcomings lay." (Interview, Teacher 3)

The freedom to explore new things, learn new things, and exchange opinions is one of the benefits of discussions for students. The role of the teacher is to observe students and provide them with the direct feedback they need. It is also possible for teachers to clarify misunderstands or misconceptions regarding the material being studied. As a formative assessment technique, discussions have become more diverse in vocational high schools. There are some that are done only classically, through WhatsApp groups, and others that are done through e-learning which have been developed by the school.

b. Think Pair Share

Think Pair Share technique in formative assessments is a collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to solve problems or answer questions regarding an assigned reading. It is also a common technique in vocational high schools. Teacher 3 said:

"Think Pair Share is also effective for learning English in my class. I usually provide an opening topic or question. Then I tell the students to search through any source. It can be from the internet or books. Then I will ask them to discuss with a tablemate and at the end they will show the results of their discussion in front of the class." (Interview, Teacher 3)

Teacher 4 mentioned:

"TPS (Think Pair Share) techniques also help teachers to teach. Students are free to find sources of information, discuss, and then present them later. Teachers only need to wrap up their ideas and concepts results. I also always prioritize feedback from other students and then I add or conclude." (Interview, Teacher 4)

The teacher's role in this formative assessment technique is to be a facilitator to guide the process and ensure smooth transitions between steps, an observer who can assess student understanding during pair and share stages, and an encourager who prompts students to engage with the material deeply. Furthermore, students learn how to be independent, creative, innovative, and have the ability to filter reliable information through this technique in addition to deepening their

knowledge of the material on a topic. The technique also teaches students how to speak in public and how to be a good analyst to their peers' knowledge.

c. Observation

By observing students throughout the learning process, teachers can gain a better understanding of how their learning is progressing. Then teachers can add other activities to make the classroom more enjoyable and conducive. Observations will be recorded in an observation assessment sheet for teachers and used to evaluate teaching and learning activities so that the quality of teaching can be improved. As what teacher 3 said:

“Observation was one of my formative assessment techniques. Observation allows me to see the character of students during my learning process. It appears that some are active, some are just listening, and others are doing something else. Moreover, I can also assess my students' abilities. Some students seem to understand the material, while others are unable to do so. So, that's my input to make them both understand how to do it.”
(Interview, Teacher 3)

Teachers are able to determine each student's individual needs, strengths, and obstacles through observation. This makes it possible to create customized lesson plans that address the needs of each unique student, resulting in learning that is more successful and efficient.

Code	Aspect	Availability		Notes
		Yes	No	
T2M2	Teachers provide students with sufficient opportunities and time during the formative assessment process in the classroom.	√		The teacher was not rigid in the learning process. Although the allocation of learning time was limited, he provided loose time for students to engage in formative assessments in class. In this learning process, he went around to see the progress of students' work as well as observing the progress of student learning in the classroom.

Figure 2. Observation Results Related to the Implementation of Observation Techniques in Formative Assessments

The observation in the classroom showed that after the teacher gave students some tasks, he moved around the classroom, observed the students' learning progress, and asked few questions about the topic. Through this technique, he was able to learn more about his students' real conditions. The students appeared engaged and responsive to the teacher's questions. Some students asked clarifying questions, showing a genuine interest in deepening their knowledge. Overall, the interaction fostered a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

d. Questioning

Questioning is another technique of formative assessment in the classroom. This technique involves asking students to reflect on their learning and provide feedback. This helps to identify areas of difficulty,

confusion, or misunderstanding and provides opportunities for the teacher to provide targeted support. This included asking open-ended questions, probing questions, and reflective questions to stimulate critical thinking and discussion.

Open-ended questions aim to generate detailed and broad responses of a question. It encourages exploration of ideas and multiple perspectives. The examples of open-ended questions can be *“What do you think of the moral value of the story?”*, *“How do you think about the main characters’ decisions?”*. Probing questions aim to elicit more detailed information, to seek clarification, evidence, and elaboration. It encourages the students to think critically. The example questions such as *“what evidence supports your answer?”*, *“Can you explain why do you mention that?”*, and *“Can you provide an example of what you mean?”*

Reflective Questions aim to encourage self-assessment and to help students make connections between their learning and their experiences. The example questions of reflective questions such as *“What strategies did you use to solve this problem?”*. *“What did you find the most challenging about this assignment?”* and *“How has your understanding of the topic changed after this lesson?”*. The use of these types of questions in a vocational high school can be strategically used to assess students' understanding, promote deeper thinking, and help them improve.

From the data collected from the field, teachers often combine questions to find out more deeply about students' understanding. The classroom observation also shows the activity guiding students to come up with new ideas orally during the formative assessment implementation process.

Code	Aspect	Availability		Notes
		Yes	No	
T1T1	Teachers guide students to come up with new ideas both orally and in writing during the formative assessment implementation process.	√		The teacher explored students' ability to find new ideas by asking questions that stimulate their critical thinking. The questions are packaged simply but interrelated.

Figure 3. Observation Results Related to the Implementation of Questioning Techniques in Formative Assessments

Based on the document analysis, Teachers 1 prepared some questions in their teaching journals to check the students' understanding of the material through dialogues displayed in front of them. There was plenty of time for students to observe and analyze the dialogue's content. Then Teacher 1 asks questions such as: *What is the dialogue about? Where is the dialogue take place? How many people are there in the dialogue? What is the offering to person B?*

The image shows a handwritten document titled "AGENDA BELAJAR MENGAJAR" (Teaching Learning Agenda). It includes a header with the teacher's name (NAMA GURU: Endang Pujihermanto), NIP (29021320082010), and NIS (1074). Below this is a table with columns for "NO", "TANGGAL", "MATERI", "TEORI / BERKAITAN", "ASISTENSI", and "EST". The table contains several rows of lesson plans, such as "1) 18/07/2023" with material "Pembuatan dan penggunaan alat" and "2) 19/07/2023" with material "KCB". To the left of the table, there are handwritten notes in Indonesian, including "Perencanaan" and a list of questions: "1) what is the Analogue about?", "2) what is the Analogue table plate?", "3) How many person are there in the Analogue?", "4) what is the suggestion for B person?", and "5) what is the offering to B person?".

Figure 4. Document Analysis Related to the Implementation of Questioning Techniques in Formative Assessments

e. Self-and-Peer Assessments

In higher education, student-centered assessment processes increasingly include self-and peer-assessment. In peer and self-assessment, students evaluate each other and themselves, which can enable students to take greater responsibility for their learning, for example, by requiring them to engage with assessment criteria and reflect on their own performance and the performance of their peers. As part of classroom learning, peer and self-assessment can enhance student learning. Teacher 3 said:

"Direct assessment from the teacher is the main part of a formative assessment, but assessments carried out by oneself and peers are also very helpful to fill in gaps that the teacher may not be able to see." (Interview, Teacher 3)

Self-and-peer assessments can be formed to a variety of activities such as reflection journals, checklists and rubrics, self-reflection questions, portfolio reviews, project presentations, and workshop sessions. The role of the teacher in this formative assessment technique is defining objectives clearly about self-and-peer assessments so the students can understand the importance of the result in their learning, providing criteria and rubrics to guide students in evaluating their own work, teaching how to effectively assess their work, facilitating reflection, and providing support and feedback regularly to check the feedback given by students to ensure its constructiveness.

Code	Aspect	Availability		Notes
		Yes	No	
T3A2	Teachers facilitates the interaction between students as well as between students and teachers, the environment and other learning resources.	√		In...order...to analyze the components of descriptive text, the teacher provided a checklist. The students were instructed to check the checklist to see if all the components of their descriptive texts were included. A few minutes later, the teacher asked the tablemates to review his/her friend's work.

Figure 5. Observation Results Related to the Implementation of Self-and-Peer-Assessments Techniques in Formative Assessments

According to the data above, it was shown that Teacher 3 implemented the self-and-peer assessment as one of formative technique assessments. The teacher also provides the rubric and checklist to guide them in accessing their work. While the students do the instruction, the teacher moves around the classroom to check directly and gives some feedback to what they do. This activity really maintains good interaction between students and teachers.

f. Peer Teaching and Peer Learning

Peer teaching and peer learning are effective strategies in formative assessment, which is the process of gathering and using information about students' learning to improve teaching and student performance. Peer teaching allows students to gain a better understanding of the material through sharing their own knowledge and experience. Peer learning also allows students to learn from each other and build relationships with their peers. Both strategies can be incorporated into the classroom to foster student learning. This also helps to create a more collaborative learning environment and encourages students to be more engaged and motivated. Additionally, peer teaching can help to reduce teacher workload as students take on the responsibility of teaching each other.

Some specific examples of implementing peer teaching in the classroom include assigning students to teach a concept or skill to their classmates, creating small groups for collaborative problem-solving activities, and organizing peer feedback sessions where students provide constructive criticism and suggestions to their peers' work. These activities not only enhance students' understanding and retention of the subject matter, but also develop their communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills. Teacher 3 mentioned:

"I created groups based on intelligent students. First, I divided those who were intelligent into being the group leaders. And then I gave them material to learn which I also delivered directly using the LCD. I provided them with materials and instructions. Some of them discuss outside of the classroom, while others do so inside. Through the group's work, I would definitely come to them in the middle of the discussion. I gave them enough time to discuss and work together. I could see the students who were active and not in the group and I also observed the leader of the group I appointed. I would find out whether he could lead his friends to study the same material, which is only opening questions." (Interview, Teacher 3)

As can be seen from the transcript above, Teacher 3 uses peer teaching and peer learning techniques to create more equitable and dynamic learning environments where teachers are not the only knowledge and teaching centers. As a result, students will be more open to discussing questions or difficulties with fellow classmates. This is also one way to build students' soft skills in communication, teamwork, and critical thinking. Using this technique also motivates students to engage actively in the learning process and further develop their abilities and knowledge.

Teachers' Challenges in Formative Assessments

Although this vocational high school has many professional teachers, it does not mean the teachers do not face the challenges in implementing formative assessments at school. Therefore, during field research, this study tried to analyze several challenges which perhaps were faced by the English teachers related to the implementation of formative assessments. After analyzing the data, the researchers found that teachers faced three main challenges.

a. Limited Learning Facilities

Schools have limited facilities for implementing various formative assessments. Learning facilities play an important role in supporting the lesson. Well-equipped learning facilities provide the necessary tools and environment for effective teaching and learning. They help to engage students more actively and can accommodate different teaching methods and learning styles. Without adequate facilities, teachers may struggle to deliver high-quality education and students may miss out on valuable learning opportunities.

Inadequate facilities can lead to a lack of motivation and engagement among students, ultimately affecting their academic performance. When students do not have access to the necessary resources, it becomes difficult for them to grasp complex concepts and stay interested in the material. Additionally, the absence of proper learning tools can hinder the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The internet network of SMK Negeri 1 Ponjong is perceived as inadequate as a learning support facility. The school already has its own internet network that can be accessed, but the network is often slow or unavailable. Due to the school's location behind a hill, the internet network is often disrupted and not smooth. This has caused many students to struggle in their studies, as they cannot access the necessary online resources for research and assignments. The school needs to upgrade its network infrastructure to ensure that the students have access to a reliable internet connection for learning. Teacher 1 said:

"The challenge for me is signal. Sometimes, Sometimes the signals inside and outside the classroom are different. I experienced it this morning. My teaching time was only about 20 minutes, then the signals were fluctuating. It was difficult to access. The students were hectic because they could not list the attendance. They did not concentrate well if they cannot list the attendance. (Interview, Teacher 1)

According to the transcript, Teacher 1 is a teacher who often uses technology in learning. Teacher 1 always carries out e-learning-oriented learning so that when there is a signal interference, it is very burdensome and disruptive in the learning process, including the implementation of formative assessments. Moreover, students also become unfocused on learning.

b. Limited Time Allocation

The second challenge is the limited time to conduct formative assessments so that teachers only focus on completing the target material. This lack of time can lead to rushed formative assessments, which may not be accurate and provide teachers with limited feedback. Additionally, teachers may not be able to provide meaningful feedback to their students in a timely manner. To manage time better for formative assessments, teachers can integrate quick, informal assessments like exit tickets or online quizzes that provide immediate feedback.

They can also leverage peer assessments, allowing students to review each other's work and provide constructive comments. Lastly, incorporating technology tools that automate grading and feedback can save valuable time and ensure timely communication with students. Teacher 2 mentioned:

"The biggest obstacle is time for me. It is because there are many additional tasks for teachers. It is complicated. When teachers only focus on teaching, I believe it can. Vocational high school teachers have other additional tasks so it takes up time. It sometimes reduces teaching quality. There is really limited time. There are also activities which are important, so teachers leave the students in the classroom." (Interview, Teacher 2)

Teacher 4 also gave the same statement:

"The obstacles are limited time, high additional workload of teachers and also lack of quality feedback given. Sometimes, the feedback provided is not always consistent and constructive." (Interview, Teacher 4)

Teacher 2 and Teacher 4 had mentioned that limited time is the burden they found along the implementation of formative assessment. In addition, the existence of additional tasks worsens the situation. As a result of inadequate human resources in schools, one teacher can be assigned other additional tasks, making it harder for him or her to focus on their main task, which is to teach students. As a result, the quality of learning is poor. In this case, teacher 2 also serves as the vice principal for student division in this case. Furthermore, teacher 4 is as the vice principal for curriculum.

c. Teachers' Willingness

Different from the previous two challenges, this third challenge comes from the teacher himself. Teachers' willingness to implement formative assessments is increasingly eroded due to limited time and teacher workload. It is the reason why teachers do not implement formative assessments. In addition, there are some teachers who only want to complete the material so conducting the formative assessment is not a big deal. Therefore, it is important to create an environment that encourages teachers to implement formative assessments. This can be done by providing resources, training, and support. Additionally, providing feedback on student performance can help motivate teachers to continue implementing formative assessments. Teacher 2 said:

"The challenges are time and willingness. Then the current condition of students. Because sometimes I also do formative activities but other

teachers don't. I believe that if all teachers adopt this strategy, learning will improve in quality. The reason behind this is that multiple disciplines contribute to the learning environment rather than just one. When we do the same thing, students will also form the same mindset." (Interview, Teacher 2)

From the transcript, Teacher 2 explained that teachers' willingness is one of the challenges faced. As teachers already have a lot to do, the implementation of formative assessments is seen as adding to their workload. Some teachers do not hold formative assessments in their classes, which can lead to jealousy and negatively impact the classes they teach. It is because every teacher influences the learning situation in the classroom.

One potential solution to address teachers' workload concerns is to provide professional development focused on integrating formative assessments efficiently. Additionally, schools could offer administrative support or hire teaching assistants to help manage the increased workload. Another approach could be to incorporate technology that automates some aspects of formative assessments, making the process less time-consuming for teachers.

DISCUSSION

Merdeka Curriculum has an assessment that has a significant impact on improving the quality of learning, namely formative assessment. Wilkinson (2024) stated that formative assessments are ongoing assessments designed to monitor student progress. Designed for low-stakes assignments that engage students in low-to no-stress settings, they are designed to be implemented as low-stakes assignments. This formative assessment has a larger portion than summative assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, this study investigated the implementation of formative assessments in vocational high school, such as the techniques and steps and the teachers' challenges in implementing formative assessments.

Based on Bell & Cowie (2002); Hall & Burke (2004) there are many techniques of formative assessments, such as observation, questioning, discussion, exit/admit slips, student learning journals, self-and-peer assessment, concept mapping, assignments, think pair share, and peer teaching and peer learning. From the techniques of formative assessments mentioned, it was found six techniques during the research, observation, think pair share, questioning, discussion, self and peer assessments, and peer teaching and peer learning. The techniques are implemented before the teaching processes and also the main teaching process.

The implementation of formative assessments also challenging for the teachers. The challenges appeared from external and internal factors. Ghaicha & Oufela (2021) mentioned that formative assessment practices are hindered by a number of issues, such as teachers' commitments outside of the classroom, students' incapacity to comprehend the assessment criteria, a lack of preparation time for organizing activities that incorporate formative assessment practice, and insufficient training on formative assessment. In this case, schools

must act quickly to assist teachers in removing barriers so that this formative evaluation may be completed and provide the best possible results as part of an effort to raise the quality of teaching in classrooms.

Based on the previous research, teachers faced some challenges such as the limited learning facilities provided, limited time allocation to conduct formative assessments, teachers' commitment, and many more. The school need to reduce the obstacles experienced by teachers by conducting some professional development workshops to understand the Merdeka Curriculum, especially the implementation of formative assessment, and improving school facilities to support learning. Indeed, the practice of formative assessments in vocational high school has not been perfect yet but the way teachers and the school tried to conduct this assessment should be appreciated.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Formative assessments play an important role in providing feedback to improve teaching and learning activities in vocational high schools. The principal and teachers realized that formative assessments practice provides constructive feedback which can be an evaluation to improve the learning process. The practice of formative assessments in vocational high schools was vary. It was adjusted to the learning objectives that will be carried out by teacher. It brings many advantages for teachers, students, and the institutions to contribute an effective educational environment. English teachers should constantly learn to hone their skills for the implementation of more interesting and varied formative assessments. Teachers also found some challenges in implementing formative assessments. Schools should also support teachers' efforts to create effective assessments and have a constructive impact on students, teachers, and schools.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

While the study delivers valuable findings about the practice of formative assessments in vocational high school, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations. The limitation of this research is related to the participants of this study. There are only four English teachers and one principal participated in this study. The findings may not fully represent the formative assessment practice in vocational high schools in Gunungkidul. Therefore, this study was conducted using interview, classroom observation, and study documents to make the data stronger. The researcher would like to suggest regarding the development of research focusses on formative assessment. The first, the needs of adding more participants and more vocational high schools to create more complex and comprehensive data. The second, it is important to ensure that the data are collected using a valid and reliable survey tool to improve the accuracy and reliability.

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