

## **AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT FOR READING COMPREHENSION**

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### **ABSTRAK**

*Assessment* adalah penilaian siswa terhadap kemampuan mereka dalam bidang tertentu yang bertujuan untuk menganalisis sejauh mana siswa mampu menguasai bidang tertentu yang diujikan. Sedangkan, *authentic* adalah jelas, *real*, atau realia. Kemudian, *Reading Comprehension* merupakan proses penyampaian informasi sipenulis kepada halayak umum termasuk siswa yang biasa disebut sipembaca. Maka dari itu, siswa perlu memahami terlebih dahulu aspek-aspek yang penulis tuangkan dalam teks yang dibaca, contohnya: bagaimana siswa memahami topik, kalimat utama, kalimat pendukung, dan kesimpulan. Oleh karena itu, *authentic assesment* dalam memahami bacaan merupakan penilaian kemampuan siswa terhadap hasil membaca siswa yang bertujuan untuk melihat kondisi hasil akhir tergantung pada guru menilai kemampuan membaca siswa nya melalui tes-tes yang real atau realia, jelas dan nyata.

Key Words: *Authentic Assesment and Reading Comprehension.*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English; it is happened in Indonesia. TEFL can occur in the student's own country, either within the state school system, or privately, e.g., in an after-hours language school or with a tutor. TEFL can also take place in an English-speaking immigrant country, for people who have moved (either temporarily for school or work, or permanently). TEFL teachers may be native or non-native speakers of English.

In order to know the students' reasult in teaching and learning process in the classroom, the teachers need to assess the students' learning. Assessment is doing to know what they have got by their learning process. To assess the students/ ability, the teachers must use appropriate kinds of assessment, because if it is done

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by the inappropriate tools or instrument, it will not get what the teachers need from the students' learning process. Thus, it is needed the instrument; it should be based on authentic assessment.

Authentic assessment is done to know whether the students have gained the teaching and learning result, and experience. The assessment should based on the students' need and the students' knowledge. In order to get the correct information, the students should give the accurate instrument and assessment for it.

Related to this, the writer would like to explain about reading comprehension assessment based on authentic assessment. The assessments that is explained below are to assess the students' reading comprehension for formative assessment of the University students.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **1. Assessment**

Assessment is a huge topic that encompasses everything from statewide accountability tests to district benchmark or interim tests to everyday classroom tests. In order to grapple with what seems to be an overuse of testing, educators should frame their views of testing as assessment and that assessment is information. The more information we have about students, the clearer the picture we have about achievement or where gaps may occur.

Assessment<sup>2</sup> is the evaluation in order to know the students' learning result. *Assessment* as applied in education describes the measurement of what an *individual* knows and can do. More over, assessment is "the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development<sup>3</sup>"

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<sup>2</sup>Banta, Trudy W and Palomba, Chaterine, E., *Assessment Essential: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education*, (New York: John Willey & Sons, Inc, 20015), p. 215.

<sup>3</sup>Banta, Trudy W and Palomba, Chaterine, E., *Log. Cit.*

There are two kinds of assessments; they are formative assessment and summative assessment. Formative Assessment is the assessment that is done to evaluate students' progress in learning; while Summative Assessment will be done to evaluate students' performance at the end of the lessons.

Based on Garrison and Ehringhaus<sup>4</sup> stated that formative assessment is “part of the instructional process”. When incorporated into classroom practice, it provides the information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening. In this sense, formative assessment informs both teachers and students about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made. These adjustments help to ensure students achieve targeted standards-based learning goals within a set time frame. Further, Formative assessment (FA), in particular, is integrated in everyday classroom routines<sup>5</sup> Its purpose is to promote and assess learning.

Summative assessment<sup>6</sup> are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know. Summative assessment at the district and classroom level is an accountability measure that is generally used as part of the grading process. The list is long, but here are some examples of summative assessments:

- 1) State assessments
- 2) District benchmark or interim assessment
- 3) End-of-unit or chapter tests
- 4) End-of-term or semester exams
- 5) Scores that are used for accountability of schools (AYP) and students (report card grades).

Further, there are also three kinds of assessment in classroom assessment based on the learning oriented assessment according to James E

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<sup>4</sup>Catherine Garrison and Michael Ehringhaus, Formative and Summative Assessments in the Classroom, accessed from <http://www.nmsa.org/>, Association for Middle Level Education retrieved on June 2014.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Purpura<sup>7</sup>; they are *alternative assessment*, *authentic assessment* and *performance assessment*. *Alternative assessment* “Emphasizes an alternative to and rejection of selected-response, timed and one-shot approaches to assessment, whether they occur in large-scale or classroom assessment contexts”. Further, Alternative assessment encourages assessments in which students are asked to perform, create, produce or do meaningful tasks that both tap into higher-level thinking (e.g., problem-solving) and have real-world implications (Herman et al., 1992) from James Purpura<sup>8</sup>. Alternative assessments are scored by humans, not machines.

Similar to alternative assessment, *authentic assessment* stresses “measurement practices which engage students’ knowledge and skills in ways similar to those one can observe while performing some real-life or ‘authentic’ task<sup>9</sup>. It also encourages tasks that require students to perform some complex, extended production activity, and emphasizes the need for assessment to be strictly aligned with classroom goals, curricula and instruction. Selfassessment is considered a key component of this approach.

Further, based on Purpura<sup>10</sup> *Performance assessment* refers to “the evaluation of outcomes relevant to a domain of interest (e.g., grammatical ability), which are derived from the observation of students performing complex tasks that invoke real-world applications”. Performance assessment encourages self-assessment by making explicit the performance criteria in a scoring rubric. In this way, students can then use the criteria to evaluate their performance and contribute proactively to their own learning.

Besides, it is also classroom assessment. Classroom assessment is the assessment that is used to observe and to know the students’ learning process, the collection of frequent feedback on students’ learning, and the design of modest classroom experiments, classroom teachers can learn much about how

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<sup>7</sup>Purpura, James E, *Assessing Grammar Ability*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 215.

<sup>8</sup>Purpura, James E, *Log. Cit.*

<sup>9</sup>Purpura, James E, *Log. Cit.*

<sup>10</sup>Purpura, James E, *Log. Cit.*

students learn and, more specifically, how students respond to particular teaching approaches<sup>11</sup>. Classroom Assessment helps individual college teachers obtain useful feedback on what, how much, and how well their students are learning. Faculty can then use this information to refocus their teaching to help students make their learning more efficient and more effective.

Furthermore, there are some purposes of doing assessment<sup>12</sup>. They are to understand how educational programs are working to determine whether they are contributing to students' growth and development, to know what experience the students got after learning, to know whether the curriculum makes sense for the students, whether the students can integrate their learning with their life and ability or not.

Thus, in assessing reading, it must be based on the curriculum and the students' need. Then, it is to assess the students' learning in the classroom.

#### **a. Authentic Assessment**

As stated above that authentic assessment is an assessment to assess students about their mastery; to perform their mastery about the subjects of learning. Authentic Assessment is "An assignment given to students designed to assess their ability to apply standard-driven knowledge and skills to real-world challenges<sup>13</sup>". Further, authentic assessment<sup>14</sup> stated as the assessment tasks that resemble reading and writing in the real world and in school. Based on Mueller<sup>15</sup> authentic assessment is "a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform realworld tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills". Its aim is to assess many different kinds of literacy abilities in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which those abilities are used.

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<sup>11</sup>Angelo, Thomas A and Cross, K. Patricia, *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, second edition*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Banta and Palemba. *Op.Cit.*

<sup>13</sup>(<http://jfmuller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/tasks.htm>)

<sup>14</sup>Hiebert, Valencia & Afflerbach, 1994; Wiggins, 1993 from What Is Authentic Assessment.htm).

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 22.

Authentic assessment based on Baron in Nitko<sup>16</sup>, there are four features to craft authentic assessment:

1. **Emphasize Application:** Assess whether a student can *use* his knowledge in addition to assessing what the student *knows*.
2. **Focus on Direct Assessment:** Assess the stated learning target directly as contrasted with indirect assessment.
3. **Use Realistic Problems:** Frame the task in a highly realistic way so that the students can recognize them as a part of everyday life.
4. **Encourage open-ended thinking:** Frame the tasks to encourage more than correct answer, more than one way expressing the answer, groups of students working together, and taking a relatively long time to complete (e.g. several days, weeks, months).

Then, there are some principles on doing authentic assessment, they are 1) the process of evaluation is doing in learning process; 2) it is related to the real life; 3) use such kinds of measurements, methods, and criterias, based on the characteristics and learning experiences; 4) holistics assessment with three aspects of learning (cognitive, affective, and psychomotorics).

So, it can be concluded that authentic assessment is the assessment that assess students' ability on something of their performance; its aimed to see the real situations of the students for their learning process not just only based on their last evaluation.

There are some kinds of authentic assessments as stated in the table below:

**Table 1: Types of Authentic Assessments**

Assessment	Description	Advantages
Oral Interviews	Teacher asks student questions about personal background, activities, reading, and interest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Informal and relaxed context</li> <li>❖ Conducted over successive days each student</li> <li>❖ Record observation on interview guide</li> </ul>
Story or Text Retelling	Student retells main ideas or selected details of text experienced through listening or reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Student produces oral report</li> <li>❖ Can be scored on content or language components</li> <li>❖ Scored with rubric or rating scale</li> <li>❖ Can determine reading comprehension, reading</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup>Nitko, Anthony J., *Educational Assessment of Students*. (USA: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001), p. 244.

Assessment	Description	Advantages
		strategies and language development
Writing Samples	Student generates narrative, expository, persuasive or reference paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Student produces written document.</li> <li>❖ Can be scored on content or language components.</li> <li>❖ Scored with rubric or rating scale</li> <li>❖ Can determine writing process</li> </ul>
Project/ Exhibitions	Student completes project on content area, working individually or in pairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Student makes formal presentation, written report or both</li> <li>❖ Can observe oral and written products and thinking skills</li> <li>❖ Scored with rubric or rating scale</li> </ul>
Experiment/ Demonstration	Student completes experiments or demonstrates use of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Student makes oral presentation, written report or both</li> <li>❖ Can observe oral and written products and thinking skills</li> <li>❖ Scored with rubric or rating scale</li> </ul>
Constructed-Response Items	Student responses in writing to open-ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Students produces written report or both</li> <li>❖ Usually scored on substantive information and thinking skills</li> <li>❖ Scored with rubric or ratings scale</li> </ul>
Teacher Observation	Teacher observes student's attention, response to instructional materials, or interaction with other students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Setting is classroom environment</li> <li>❖ Takes little time</li> <li>❖ Record observations with anecdotic notes or rating scales</li> </ul>
Portfolios	Focused on the collection of student's work to show progress over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Integrates information from a number sources</li> <li>❖ Gives overall picture of student's performance and learning</li> <li>❖ Strong student's involvement and commitment</li> <li>❖ Calls for student's self-assessment.</li> </ul>

Thus, the authentic assessment are portfolio, essay tests, writing journals, demonstrate, observations, and others; they can be used on every kinds of English skills.

## **2. Reading Comprehension**

Talking about reading, it is a process of recognition symbols. It is the process of cognition, interpretation and perception of a written or printed material. In reading, an individual construct meaning through a transaction with written text; it involves the readers' acting on interpreting the text and the readers' experiences, language background, and their cultural framework influence interpretation. Irwin says that reading is a transactional between the reader and the text in a specific context that results in the creation of a new text in the mind of the reader with the goal of reading is not inferring the intended message of the author but rather creating a message that is useful to the reader<sup>17</sup>. The readers read the texts and do the new interpretation based on their knowledge; they try to make new text but not far from the original text based on their interpretation and their understanding.

Furthermore, Young in Nadrah in Harida<sup>18</sup> states that comprehension focuses on reading instruction, such as: (1) understanding words and building vocabulary, (2) understanding sentences, sentence structure, and syntax, and (3) understanding paragraph, which include finding the main idea and topic sentences, finding detail, and drawing conclusion and interpretation what you read. Further, in comprehension at least needs three skills which should be possessed as a reader; knowledge of words forms and their meanings, the ability to understand the sentence in a paragraph, the ability to see the main thought of the writer and get the general ideas of a piece of reading material.

Based on explanations above, it can be concluded that reading comprehension is mental process in which the readers try to understand the meaning in the text by interpreting what have been read in order to find the

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<sup>17</sup>Irwin, *Teaching Reading*, p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Eka Sustris Harida, "Reading Strategies Used by Muhammadiyah University Studnets", *Unpublished Theses*, (Padang State University: Padang), p. 28.



idea given by the writers. In reading comprehension, the readers should pay attention for some aspects such as how they understand the words and the information from the text, understanding main ideas and details, and be able to make conclusion. All of the aspects will be the indicators of this research on reading comprehension. The result of reading comprehension depends on kinds of texts, background knowledge of the readers, goal of reading, and tools which are used to values interpretation of reading.

Next, there are some level of understanding that should be tested in reading comprehension; it can be literal comprehension and applied comprehension. Literal comprehension is related to the symbols that have been stated in the etxt they read. The readers try to understand the symbols from the texts; they are sentences that connected one each other. They try to understand what they have been read by looking up to the symbols, senetneces, or in paragraph. Then, applied comprehension related to the ability of the students to apply what they have been read. It can be stated that the readers after reading the text can improve their skills, their ability to socialize with others, the characters, and others.

**a. Assessing Reading Comprehension**

Assessing reading comprehension should be done by valid instrument and with the appropriate band of score. Below is the band score of the reading comperhesion:

**Table 2: Reading Performance Band Score Criteria**

Band Score	Score Criteria
10 – 20	Very limited reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is unable to read effectively</li> <li>- Takes some meanings from pictures, titles, randoms words, etc.</li> <li>- May understand the main idea at times but issess almost all the supporting details</li> </ul>
30	Limited Reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reads with limited accuracy and fluency</li> <li>- Reads with some undertsanding of main ideas but is unable to identify specific, relevant details</li> <li>- Is often unable to identify the meaning of unfamiliar</li> </ul>

Band Score	Score Criteria
	terms from context
40	Marginal competence reader: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is unable to understand main ideas</li> <li>- Is restricted by limited vocabulary and a lack of familiarity with textual conventions</li> <li>- Reads most slowly than most academic readers</li> </ul>
50	Competent but limited reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read with understanding of main ideas and is able to identify some relevant details</li> <li>- Reads more slowly and with greater effort than most academic readers</li> <li>- May misinterpret information at times</li> </ul>
60	Competent reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understands main ideas and is able to identify most relevant details</li> <li>- Reads more slowly and with greater effort than some academic readers</li> <li>- Is unable to interpret information with some flexibility</li> </ul>
70	Adept reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reads academic texts with ease provided time is available</li> <li>- Demonstrates comprehension of academic texts with approaches that of experienced academic readers</li> <li>- Interprets information with flexibility</li> </ul>
80 – 90	Expert reader <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reads academic texts with ease</li> <li>- Demonstrates comprehension of academic texts which is equal to that of experienced academic readers</li> <li>- Understands both main ideas and supporting details with ease</li> </ul>

### b. Developing Reading Comprehension Assessment

Reading comprehension assessment must be done authentically, below is the test of reading comprehension, it can be used for final semester assessment. The assessment of reading comprehension will get the maximum score 100.

The assessment can be as below:

***Instruction:***

*Read the following advertisement, then answer the questions following:*

**HOTEL BOROBUUDUR JAKARTA**

Ideally located in the hearth of Jakarta the live star with diamond Hotel Borobudur

Hotel Borobudur Jakarta is the preferred choice for business and leisure travellers as well as meetings, conventions and weddings

Our excellent five restaurants offers Chinese, Japanese, International, Italian & Indonesian cuisine

Elegantly set in 23 asres of beautiful gardens, “Klub Borobudur” features an extensive range of recreation facilities, an Olympic size swimming pool, 700 metres jogging track with synthetic surface, acomplete Gym with a wide range of Cardio – Vascular equipment, 8 Tennis and 3 squash Courts

The Spa offers foot reflexology, facials and aromatheraphy massages

**HOTEL BOROBUUDUR  
JAKARTA  
EXCEPTIONALLY YOURS**

Jalan Lapangan Banteng Selatan, PO Box 1329,  
Jakarta 10710 – Indonesia  
Tel: (62-21) 380 555, Fax; (62-21) 380 9595,  
E-mail: welcome@hotelborobudur.com  
Managed by Discovery Hotels & Resorts

*Answer these Questions based on the advertisement above!*

1. Where is Hotel Borobudur located?
2. What excellent restaurants are found in that hotel?
3. What does “Klub Borobudur” feature?
4. What information can you get from the first part?
5. Why did the writer present this advertisement?

***Read the text below loudly, then answer the questions no. 6 – 7!***

I had a wonderful summer this year. I went to visit my aunt and my cousins in San Diego. My aunt is a Ballet instructor. I took Ballet lessons from her. I went to see the famous San Diego Zoo with my cousins. We went to the beach almost every day. We stayed up late watching TV and playing card games. I wished my summer would never end!

6. What is the topic sentence from the passage above!
7. What does the text tell about?
8. What is antonym from the word “famous”?

9. I had a wonderful summer this year. Change this sentence becomes conditional if!

*Read the text below! (Questions number 8 – 11)!*

*Making Handicraft*

Making handicraft is a common past time an occupation in Indonesia, especially among village folk. There is a wide range of materials which can be used for this purpose. They include wood, sea-shells, leather, bamboo and rattan.

Horn-carving is a popular handicraft in Pucang, Secang subdistrict, in Magelang, Central Java. It is said that almost the whole population here are skilled in this art. In fact, about thirty five families in this place actually make their living by carving things from the horns of buffaloes or cows.

Mr. Mangundiharjo is one of the horn-carvers of Pucang. He has been engaged in this trade for more than thirty years. It was his father who had given him his early training. Now, Mr. Mangundiharjo owns a workshop where he has eight people working under him. He and his staff normally produce one thousand carvings per day.

*Questions for number:*

10. What does it means by handicraft?
11. Who are skilled in horn-carving?
12. The word “village folk” in the first paragraph synonymous with...
13. Combine theses two sentences become one!
  - Making handicraft is a common past time an occupation in Indonesia, especially among village folk.
  - There is a wide range of materials which can be used for this purpose.

*Read this text loudly!*

Text:

A farmer came across a bird with a broken wing. He picked it up, took it home and looked after it lovingly, even though his wife complained bitterly about his wasting too much time on the creature.

After some time, the wing mende end, because the bird didnt want the farmer to have kept o arguing with his wife all the time, it decided to go back to its nest.

When the farmer discovered that the bir was gone, he was so upset that he went out to look for it. Eventually, he found it again, and was greeted happily by the whole of the bird. As a sign of their thanks for his care and attention, the birds gave him a little box, and told him not to open it until he got home.

To his surprise, the farmer found the box full of precious stones. When his wife saw them, she decided that she deserved a reward, and she went to see the birds. The birds gave her a little casket; but this one was full of

devils. The devils jumped on her as soon as she opened the casket and chased her away.

Left alone, the farmer went to live near his friend, the bird. There he built a hut of perfumed wood; and the birds decorated it with flowers of every kind.

*Answer the questions based on the text:*

14. The farmer's new hut was...
15. What is the main information discussed in the third paragraph?
16. Make the correct passive voice from this sentences!

### **C. CONCLUSION**

In doing assessment, the teachers must assess the students based on their needed and also base on what they have been learnt. So, the assessment that is given to students should measure what to be measured. Due to this reason, beside the teachers must use authentic assessment, they should be able to make the assessment that will be made in valid and realibility condition.

In order to assess students' ability in reading comprehension and writing ability, the writer gives the students various kinds of test that assess students as what they have learned in the university. The test that have been made is based on the school standar curriculum. It is still related to the curriculum based competence in which the students asked to performs their competence based on the topic or materials that has been stated in the curriculum.

The tests that have been developed in this writing is hopefully can fulfill the students' need in teaching and learning in university students and also for the needs of the teachers to know what the students have learned for some materials. It is in the formative assessment, to assess the students' performance in their studying not for the end of learning process.

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