



Exploring In-Service TEYL Teachers' Assessment Literacy: Implication for Continuing Professional Development

Amalul Umam*, Yani Awalia Indah

English Language Education Department, Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, Indonesia

Assessment is central and holds essential role in language learning from which the result of the teaching and learning are derived. It shows that the ability of language teachers in assessing their students is crucial. This study explored the assessment literacy of in-service TEYL teachers in Bogor by employing narrative case study. The subjects of the study were 19 English teachers around Bogor. In collecting the data, CALI (Classroom Assessment Literacy Inventory) and FGD (Focus Group Discussion) were employed. The data gathered from CALI were then scored and analyzed, and FGD data were coded based on the assessment literacy standards from which conclusion were derived. The findings reveal that teachers have poor level of assessment literacy. Consequently, teachers must update themselves by conducting continuing professional development.

Keywords: assessment literacy, TEYL, CPD

INTRODUCTION

The term 'assessment literacy' was first proposed by [Stiggins \(2002\)](#). It can be translated as "teachers' understanding of assessment processes as well as their capacity to design assessment tasks, develop adequate criteria for making valid judgments on the quality of students' performances, and understand and act upon the information that is collected through assessment" [Leirhaug and MacPhail \(2015\)](#). This ability is one of the critical aspects for teachers because assessing students' performance impacts almost everything in a classroom. It is in line with [Stiggins's](#) idea that "the quality of instruction in any classroom turns on the quality of the assessments used there."

Some studies have shown that "assessing students' learning is demanding, complicated and crucial action" [Shulman \(1986\)](#). Besides, [Popham \(2006\)](#) revealed that "the inability of teachers in assessing students' performance can disable the quality of education." In addition, assessment literacy will help teachers to scaffold students in achieving a higher level of academic achievement [Coombe et al. \(2012\)](#).

In the Indonesian context, the government applies the 2013 curriculum in which teachers are challenged to use authentic assessment. It is said that the goal of the new curriculum can be achieved by giving attention to the content of the learning processes, teaching approach and assessment method. "The curriculum challenges the teachers to replace the test-based assessment with an authentic-based assessment that measures attitude, knowledge, and skills based on the learning process and learning results" [Retnawati et al. \(2016\)](#).

OPEN ACCESS

ISSN 2503 3492 (online)

*Correspondence:

Amalul Umam
amalul.umam@uika-bogor.ac.id

Received: 10th August 2019

Accepted: 28th February 2020

Published: 1st April 2020

Citation:

Umam A and Indah YA (2020)
Exploring In-Service TEYL Teachers' Assessment Literacy: Implication for Continuing Professional Development.
J. Eng. Educ. Society. 5:1.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v5i1.364>

Authentic assessment is an actual measurement of students' attainment in their learning in which high level of cognitive ability, higher-order thinking and problem solving skills are assessed in the form of tasks completion. This can be as a means of effective and efficient tool to examine the competencies of students from which educational reforms can be achieved. In other words, teachers are demanded to apply a new kind of assessment method that is required in the curriculum. It means that teachers must have a high level of assessment literacy.

In addition, teaching English for young learners requires specific teaching approaches. They must be modified in such a way in order to meet natural ways of learning foreign language. Young learners must be exposed to more positive linguistic inputs from which they will be stimulated. Authentic materials can be implemented in teaching English for young learners since it facilitates the learning process to take place as in a genuine context. One of the approaches is *Task-Based Language Teaching* Nunan (2006). In the approach, meaningful tasks and meaningful contents are used. The tasks must be attractive enough for the students and scaffold the acquisition of the intended language. The intention of the learning process is not only meaning but also the use of the language and culture. As a result, assessment is integrated in the action of learning. Unfortunately, teachers find it difficult to implement the approach in the classroom, especially for young learners.

Teachers may apply performance-based techniques for young learners in which students are required to complete authentic tasks in spoken and written form. The example of the techniques are oral reports, essay writing, group work and other problems based learning activities. This technique application challenges teachers for having assessment literacy, especially in teaching and learning under the 2013 curriculum.

In fact, there are some problems that teachers face during the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, especially in a classroom where the students are still young. Teachers stated that "the difficulty in applying the 2013 curriculum is at the time of assessment implementation" Maba (2017). The teachers do not understand the assessment, and they believe that it is too complicated to implement. For example, a study conducted by Trisanti (2014) clarified that teachers had not got the whole understanding of 2013 Curriculum. The teachers believed that authentic assessment implementation faced some problems due to rigid steps and class situation. This study focused on the beliefs of English teachers' about authentic assessment. As a result, the result of the study doesn't give clear picture of the site.

Continuing professional development is a crucial part of educational systems from which teachers' quality, organizational effectiveness and students' achievement can be improved. It is often associated with lectures, workshops and courses that teachers attend. Even though there is no doubt that such activities support teachers' development, many studies have been conducted in the exploration of continuing professional development. For example, Broad and Evans (2006); Orr et al. (2013); Timperley et al. (2008) have identified the

key characteristics of effective continuing professional development. They claimed that "the characteristics suggest an approach to continuing professional development that gives special attention to the needs of teachers, students and organizations. Moreover, the approach gives teachers choice and ownership, enables them to learn with and from each another, and provides appropriate guidance and support". In other words, continuing professional development can be a solution to keep teachers up to date from which they can fit in today's challenges. Assessment literate is one of them.

The discussion above informs us that there is a gap between reality and theory of assessment in Indonesia, especially in English classroom. Therefore, a study of assessment literacy would shed light on the problems faced by the teachers. This study focused on the exploration of the assessment literacy of TEYL teachers and its importance for their continuing professional development.

METHODS

This study was an "instrumental case study" Creswell and Creswell (2017). Case study deals with a program, event or activity in which individuals and groups are involved. This kind of study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system that focuses on a group of people, English teachers in Bogor. In this case, the object of the study is assessment literacy of the English teachers. Two data collection techniques were used. They were questionnaire and focus group discussion. The participants of the study were 19 In-service English teachers from different schools across Bogor. They have been teaching for two to five years when the study was conducted. They were chosen as the participants by using random sampling and were taken from different schools. This random sampling was done in order to get varied responses.

Two instruments were employed in the study, questionnaire on classroom assessment literacy and focus group discussion. The first instrument is adapted from a study conducted by Mertler (2003), which is called *Classroom Assessment Literacy Inventory* (CALI), which has been used in previous studies with different names, *Teacher Assessment Literacy Questionnaire* Impara et al. (1993) and *Assessment Literacy Inventory* Mertler and Campbell (2005). The questionnaire is divided into two sections, demographic and assessment literacy. In the first section, the questionnaire elicited personal information of the subjects of the study, such as name, age, gender, a period of teaching experiences, and the level in which they are teaching. The latter section, the assessment literacy, has 35 items with 4 choices for each item. These items covered 7 standards of assessment literacy. It means that each standard is represented by five items.

The questionnaire was given to the subjects of the study via an online platform, google forms, from which the subjects could access the questionnaire anytime anywhere as long as they are connected to the internet. It was done by purpose so

that the subjects would have enough time to digest and understand the questionnaire based on their pace. The researcher was always available for any clarifications of doubts that might arise from the subjects by being accessible through Whatsapp. Each item of the questionnaire has one point for every correct response. It means that the highest score for every subject is 35 and the lowest is zero. The data gathered from the questionnaire are then calculated and presented in percentages.

The questionnaire was administered for one week period. It was shared to the participants on 2nd to 9th of April 2019. By having one week period of answering the questionnaire, the participants could choose the time they felt comfortable to answer. So, they answered the questionnaire in undisturbed situation. In other words, the participants had more than enough time to digest the questionnaire from which accurate and valid data were arrived at.

The other data collection technique is focus group discussion (FGD). The purpose of focus group discussion is to get a wider understanding on the research topic that can be done around 60-90 minute period, and to set a situation in which participants are stress-free to express their views. FGD was conducted after data collection from the questionnaire was completed. The first FGD was conducted on 13th of April 2019 with 9 teachers and the second one was done on 14th of April 2019 with 10 teachers as participants. Both of the FGDs were conducted for 90 minutes period. In the FGD, the researcher led the discussion by bringing up some topics regarding assessment practices that had been prepared before the FGD. Each topic has some questions that are derived from assessment literacy standards. The questions elicited the opinions and practices of the subjects when they were in their classrooms. This FGD was conducted to get a clearer understanding of the subjects' views regarding assessment literacy and their assessment literacy when they were faced with classroom-based problems regarding assessment.

Data collected from FGD were then transcribed and coded based on the codes that were extracted from seven standards of assessment literacy. These coding results were then used to support the findings from the questionnaire. After combining the results of the two techniques of data collection, the conclusion was drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of assessment literacy

The questionnaire consists of 35 items that have seven standards. It means that each standard has 5 items. The score for one item is one point, which makes the maximum score for each standard is 5 points. The findings showed that, overall, the lowest score of assessment literacy of the subjects of the study was 6 points, while the highest score was 19 points, out of 35, as it is illustrated in [Table 1](#).

TABLE 1 | Scores of classroom literacy

NO	STANDARDS	Min	Max
1	Choosing an assessment method	0	3
2	Developing assessment method	0	4
3	Administering, assigning, and interpreting learning outcomes	0	3
4	Using assessment outcomes in decision making	0	4
5	Using assessment to determine levels of learning outcomes	0	3
6	Communicating assessment outcomes	0	2
7	Knowing unethical practices	0	3
	score minimum and maximum	6	19

In addition, [Table 1](#) shows that among 7 standards, the least achieved literacy standard was on communicating assessment outcomes, with the maximum score achieved 2 points out of five. The best-achieved standards were on developing assessment methods and using assessment outcomes in decision-making, with a maximum score of 4 points out of 5. The other four standards got 3 points out of 5.

[Table 2](#) illustrates the level of assessment literacy of the subjects of the study. The level can be classified into three, low (lower than 60%), medium (60%-79%), and high (80% and higher). Overall, the findings clearly showed that all of the subjects of the study were at a low level of assessment literacy, which means that they need some improvement.

A closer look at the level of assessment literacy revealed that among 7 standards, there were only two subjects (11%) that scored above 80% on using assessment outcomes in decision-making and one subject (5%) that scored above 80% on developing assessment method. On the other hand, communicating assessment outcomes was the lowest scored standard by having 19 subjects (100%) categorized under a low category or need improvement.

Problems in assessing students

The data gathered from FGD revealed some information regarding the problems faced by the teachers. Most of the stated that assessing students was complicated.

"Assessing students must fulfill the standard and criteria given by the government and it is complicated" (Respondent 2).

"In my opinion, it (assessing students) will be very hard if we have to assess professionally" (Respondent 6).

"...there is less preparation in grading, limited time, and insufficient facilities" (Respondent 10).

The statement above proved that the teachers were not ready for assessing their students because of some reasons, such as the criteria, preparation, and time allotment for conducting the assessment. They know that government has provided guidelines in assessing the students by giving *Teacher's Book* as a supplementary book for the teachers. It does not really help

TABLE 2 | Level of classroom assessment literacy

NO	STANDARDS	Low		Medium		High	
		Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
1	Choosing an assessment method	17	89	2	11	0	0
2	Developing assessment method	14	74	4	21	1	5
3	Administering, assigning, and interpreting learning outcomes	15	79	4	21	0	0
4	Using assessment outcomes in decision making	14	74	3	16	2	11
5	Using assessment to determine levels of learning outcomes	17	89	2	11	0	0
6	Communicating assessment outcomes	19	100	0	0	0	0
7	Knowing unethical practices	18	95	1	5	0	0
		19	100				

them because they think that the guidelines given are complicated for them. They said that the implementation of the assessment given by government book requires a lot of preparation. They also stated that the number of students in their classroom was one of the causes. They were not able to manage the students due to limited facilities from the schools and overload students.

"... in my school, there are 118 students, even the classroom is only enough for 60 students..." (Respondent 5).

One of the topics in FGD was about the solution that they had done to overcome their problems. Some of them revealed that they had joined MGMP (teachers association based on the subjects they teach) but it gave them less solution. It can be seen from the statements that they said.

"...in the group (MGMP), most of the discussion is about events, competition, meetings, etc..." (Respondent 3).

"... most of the topics are about new terminologies in the Curriculum 2013 and how to adjust our lesson plan to the curriculum" (Respondent 4).

"...we discuss on how to teach and other administrative kinds of stuff, not on how to assess our students" (Respondent 11).

When they gathered in meetings, the topic most discussed are some events that the schools face, such as scout program, celebration of independence day, celebration of national holiday, etc. Instead of discussing problems they faced in their classrooms, they discussed annual routines. Other respondent admitted that most teachers were busy with administrative stuff. For example, they were busy discussing on how to create a lesson plan that fits into the 2013 curriculum, in which character building, 21st century skills, higher order thinking

skills, and collaboration or team work must be included. The application of the lesson plan that they have created is not one of the topics discussed.

All of the subjects of the study had a poor level of assessment literacy. It means that they are not able to assess their students properly. The most problematic standard in assessment literacy was on communicating assessment outcomes. Such findings inform the teachers that they have not possessed important quality in assessing their students. So, they can perform continuing professional development (CPD) that has the meaning of "conducting any activities to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training, and support" (Lessing and De Witt 2007).

One of actions that teachers can perform in conducting continuing professional development is training. They can propose to the school principle for conducting in-house training (IHT) regarding assessment. In addition, the teachers can also ask for assistance from more able partners like senior teachers. Participating in a seminar or workshop conducted in universities is also one of the ways to elevate the assessment literacy knowledge. There are other ways to perform continuing professional development as proposed by Borg (2015). First, teachers can study by themselves by analyzing different kind of sources such as teacher research, action research and diary studies. From these activities, they will get deeper understanding of their actions in their classrooms. In addition, analyzing their lesson planning and reflection can be done to get more insight in having an effective and efficient lesson plan. There are also some other activities that can be conducted to perform continuing professional development with different focus. They are

reading groups, peer observation, learning communities, curriculum study groups, collaborative materials writing, mentoring schemes, and personal learning networks.

In turn, the actions of continuing professional development “affect the attitudes and approaches and are expected to give a contribution to the quality of the learning and teaching process” Bolam and Weindling (2006). It is in line with some authors' argument that effective CPD should firstly “be aware of and address the specific needs of teachers” Bennett (2010).

CONCLUSION

The result of the findings and discussion gave information that the assessment literacy of English teachers in Bogor is at a poor level. There must be actions to help those teachers in improving their assessment literacy. If this problem is left behind, the teaching and learning processes will not be successful since assessment is the bridge that links the curriculum and drives the instruction. It is suggested that teachers work cooperatively with their school and its stakeholders in improving their assessment literacy because it is not one show action but an ongoing process that requires time.

Based on the findings from the questionnaire and FGD, the

following suggestions are given. First, approaches for improving teachers' assessment literacy should involve not only the teachers but also stakeholders of the schools, such as the principal, parents, and other teachers. The next suggestion is that teachers' practices of assessing students should be monitored and evaluated regularly and are assisted by more able partners, senior teachers or principle. For future researchers, it is suggested that they conduct researches on assessment literacy that have focus on the efforts of teachers in developing their assessment literacy and its effectiveness. CPD is an ongoing process from which teachers will be able to scaffold their skills. So, it must be supported by the government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Bu Nuraeni, as the research supervisor. She has guided us to meet the deadlines and criticized the study during the writing processes. We feel thankful to Movi Riana Rahmawanti, for her suggestions and comments in keeping our progress on schedule. We would also like to extend my thanks to the Universitas Ibn Khaldun staff of Teacher Training faculty for their help in offering us the resources in conducting the study.

REFERENCES

- Bennett, J. (2010). The impact of targeted continuing professional development (CPD) on teachers' professional practice in science. <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/educ/research/ResearchPaperSeries/index.htm>.
- Bolam, R. and Weindling, D. (2006). *Synthesis of research and evaluation projects concerned with capacity-building through teachers' professional development* (London).
- Borg, S. (2015). Researching language teacher education in Paltridge. In *The Continuum companion to research methods in applied linguistics*, eds. B. Phakiti, and A. 541–560.
- Broad and Evans, M. (2006). A review of literature on professional development content and delivery modes for experienced teachers (University of Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education).
- Coombe, C., Troudi, S., and Hamly, M. (2012). Foreign and second language teacher assessment literacy: Issues, challenges, and recommendations. In *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment*, ed. and others. 20–29.
- Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Sage publications).
- Impara, J. C., Plake, B. S., and Fager, J. J. (1993). Teachers' assessment background and attitudes toward testing. doi: 10.1080/00405849309543584. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405849309543584>.
- Leirhaug, P. E. and MacPhail, A. (2015). 'It's the other assessment that is the key': three Norwegian physical education teachers' engagement (or not) with assessment for learning. *Sport, Education and Society* 20, 624–640. doi: 10.1080/13573322.2014.975113.
- Maba, W. (2017). Teacher's perception on the implementation of the assessment process in 2013 curriculum. *International journal of social sciences and humanities* 1, 1–9.
- Mertler, C. A. (2003). Preservice Versus Inservice Teachers' Assessment Literacy: Does Classroom Experience Make a Difference?
- Mertler, C. A. and Campbell, C. (2005). Measuring Teachers' Knowledge & Application of Classroom Assessment Concepts: Development of the "Assessment Literacy Inventory". Online Submission.
- Nunan, D. (2006). Task-based language teaching in the Asia context: Defining 'task'. *Asian EFL journal* 8.
- Orr, D., Westbrook, J., Pryor, J., Durrani, N., Sebba, and Adu-Yeboah, C. (2013). *What are the impacts and cost effectiveness of strategies to improve performance of untrained and under-trained teachers in the classroom in developing countries? A systematic review* (London).
- Popham, W. J. (2006). All about accountability/phony formative assessments: Buyer beware. *Educational Leadership* 64, 86–87.
- Retnawati, H., Hadi, S., and Nugraha, A. C. (2016). Vocational High School Teachers' Difficulties in Implementing the Assessment in Curriculum 2013 in Yogyakarta Province of Indonesia. *International Journal of Instruction* 9, 33–48. doi: 10.12973/iji.2016.914a.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching. *Educational Researcher* 15, 4–14. doi: 10.3102/0013189x015002004.
- Stiggins, R. J. (2002). Assessment Crisis: The Absence of Assessment for Learning. *Phi Delta Kappan* 83, 758–765. doi: 10.1177/003172170208301010.
- Timperley, H., Wilson, A., Barrar, and Fung, I. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development: Best evidence synthesis iteration (BES)* (Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education), 61–74.
- Trisanti, N. (2014). English teacher's perspective on authentic assessment implementation of curriculum. In *Proceedings of the 61 st TEFLIN International Conference* (Sebelas Maret University Press).

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright © 2020 Umam and Indah. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.