

The Role of Formative Assessment in Developing English Language Curriculum and Learning

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Abstract

This research examines the role of formative evaluation in improving curriculum development and the English language learning process. Formative assessment (FA) is a comprehensive evaluation method that provides feedback to teachers and students to improve teaching effectiveness. It helps students understand their limitations and gives teachers the ability to tailor lessons to students' needs. This article uses a systematic literature review approach to collect data from various studies. The results show that formative approaches are effective in increasing students' motivation, engagement and response to learning, as well as facilitating curriculum fulfillment based on students' needs. Formative assessment can be conducted using many strategies, such as questioning, group discussions, presentations, and the use of rubrics, journals, and quizzes, supported by technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords

Formative Assessment; Curriculum; English Language

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1. INTRODUCTION

Changes in learning processes and materials are common in education. New curricula may be episodic, occurring every 10 years or so and there may be almost permanent changes (Westbury et al., 2016). The continuous changes have resulted in the need for development in the curriculum development process by the government and the education department. Some of the efforts of education departments and governments mobilize many people, cause much controversy and public debate in various bodies, school publications and the media, and consume many resources such as curriculum development and revision (Westbury et al., 2016). The process of curriculum development and change requires many considerations, such as needs analysis, objectives, materials, teaching methods and syllabi that must be adapted to the development of technology and information. This curriculum development is learner-centered to increase motivation and participation in learning activities. The



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curriculum design process involves determining the characteristics of learners, what learners learn or are able to do, the content of the subject matter to be learned, and how to measure what has been achieved (Abie et al., 2023). Curriculum development also requires teachers to be able to keep up with changes made in teaching methods. Teachers can take the time to design lessons using various innovative teaching and assessment methods to better meet the needs of learners (Leong & Tan, 2014).

Assessments conducted by teachers can be created to be more interesting and make learners' abilities more developed, one of which is by means of formative assessment. Formative assessment (FA) includes a large number of tools that provide feedback to teachers or learners to make learning more effective (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Formative assessment can be a measuring tool for the ability of students to understand the material that has been given by the teacher. Formative assessment can be conducted after each chapter, so that learners can know their own level of ability. In short, formative assessment is a continuous process that helps learners manage their own learning (Guo & Yan, 2019). Some researchers describe formative assessment practices as formal and informal in nature (Cagasan et al., 2020). Formal ones include assignments and tests that will be corrected by the teacher, while informal ones occur spontaneously in class so that teachers and learners can respond to each other. In contrast to formative assessment, summative assessment (SA) is an evaluation process that will determine the value of a student's lesson. Summative assessment is widely used to screen and select learners for the next level of education or employment (Guo & Yan, 2019). Summative assessment focuses on numerical results that will indicate the level of intelligence of learners. This assessment is in the form of formal exams that are assessed in detail by teachers or authorities, such as mid-semester exams (UTS) and end-of-semester exams (UAS).

Formative assessment can support curriculum development and learning, as it serves as a monitoring and feedback tool from both teachers and learners. Students' goal orientation is not fixed and can be changed by the way feedback is given (Dweck, 2017). Feedback given directly by the teacher will make learners more motivated in learning compared to writing. This is continuous with the informal formative assessment process, where the teacher directly responds to students' questions and vice versa students can respond to the teacher's answers. Research (Golzar et al., 2022) shows that expressive feedback, self, peer, and assessment will increase learning motivation. The study conducted by (Zhan, 2020) revealed that learners' perceptions of this type of assessment increased formative promise and most students believed that it served as a motivational force for learning.

Formative assessment can increase student engagement in the learning process and make students maintain a positive response to various assessments (Evans et al., 2014). Learners are more active in class to understand the material that will be tested in each chapter. Indirectly, students become more responsive when they want to know the material they have not learned before. The development of technology also affects the formative assessment process in learning activities. Technology supports

formative assessment to improve learning attitudes, motivation, and performance in various disciplines (Bhagat & Spector, 2017). Formative assessment can be done with several technological tools such as mobile phones and laptops to do a test or quiz that can provide feedback quickly and efficiently.

2. METHODS

This article uses a systematic literature review approach. The author collects, analyzes, and concludes the results of previous studies that are relevant to the topic discussed. With this review, it is expected to produce a comprehensive conclusion regarding the research objectives. Data were obtained from journal articles published in reputable databases. Inclusion criteria in the selection of journal articles include: articles published in the last 5-10 years, articles indexed in accredited national and international journals, and studies directly related to the research topic.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Formative Assessment in Developing Curriculum

Curriculum development is divided into two branches, namely general education and special or vocational education (Abie et al., 2023). In special education, the materials and methods developed will be tailored to the needs of the department, for example in English education. In the process of learning and teaching English, the curriculum must be made as interesting as possible to increase student learning motivation. Creative curriculum design can make the learning process more interactive and fun, so that students do not feel difficult or bored in learning a second language. Appropriate curriculum presentation can also help students to more easily understand the material and face global challenges in the future. The curriculum design process involves determining the characteristics of learners, what learners are expected to learn or be able to do, the content of the subject matter to be learned, and how to measure what has been achieved (Abie et al., 2023). Thus, curriculum has an important contribution to make the English learning process more effective.

Curriculum development should be tailored to the learner's needs, what they already understand and what they need to learn. Formative assessment can be used to measure students' understanding of newly learned material (Andayani & Madani, 2023). Formative assessment plays an important role in providing feedback on the learning process for students and teachers. Teachers can identify what students need, how students are able to understand the material, and adjust learning methods according to the needs of each student. In the context of English learning, if a student has not been able to fulfill the assessment of simple present material then they cannot continue with simple perfect or past perfect. Formative assessment can encourage learners' involvement in measuring their own level of understanding and evaluating what they need in the learning process. Formative assessment has an influence in the process of achieving better learning outcomes, skill development, and critical and innovative thinking.

Formative Assessment in the English Learning Process

Formative assessment is an effective assessment for all areas of learning, including English. In the context of English learning, formative assessment can be used to improve several language skills. English language skills are divided into four skills, namely speaking, writing, reading, and listening. In practice, formative assessment can provide feedback in the learning and teaching process. When students don't understand something about English, they will get feedback from the teacher. This feedback can be in the form of evaluating the understanding of the material, correcting mistakes, or reviewing the material that has been explained. With feedback, students will feel more confident and motivated to be more active in learning English. Formative assessment can facilitate the implementation of the curriculum, where learning focuses on students and teachers become facilitators. This formative assessment will help teachers to adjust students' level of understanding and needs in the context of English learning.

There are several strategies that can be used to streamline the English formative assessment process, including questioning, discussion, and presentation (Babakan, 2021). Formative assessment through questioning can be done by giving questions to students, then students will answer according to a predetermined time. The questioned material can be done by translating the meaning of a vocabulary, explaining the content of the video that has been given by the teacher before, and comparing the different texts in the table directly. The formative assessment process with this strategy can help students improve their speaking skills in English. Students can evaluate their own abilities after getting the formative assessment results. Then the teacher can give feedback to students, give appreciation to students first and evaluate the material that needs to be improved.

The second strategy that can be used is group discussion. This group discussion can help students' ability to think more critically, analytically, collaborate, and exchange ideas. In the context of English learning, group discussion can help students to understand complex language structures. Teachers can provide materials that can train 4 skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. When there is an obstacle in doing the task, students can discuss to find out how to solve the problem. With this discussion, students can train their confidence to argue and speak in front of many people. The process of assessing group discussions is not only seen in the final results, but also during the discussion process. Aspects that need to be assessed include student participation in contribution and involvement in the discussion. Students' communication skills in expressing opinions, listening, and responding to other people's opinions. Students' collaboration skills in working together, managing conflict, and supporting each other during the discussion. During the discussion process, the teacher can be a facilitator for students. The teacher can oversee the course of the discussion, provide guidance when students have difficulty, and check students' understanding.

The third strategy is presentation which has an important role as a tool to practice speaking skills in a real-world context. This strategy can train students in developing more practical and interactive language skills. Through presentations, students can develop speaking skills, especially in the aspects of pronunciation and fluency. By daring to perform in front of the class, students can manage their nervousness and be more confident in communicating in English. Preparation of presentations by groups can foster an attitude of collaborative skills and integrate ideas together. Presentations can be done by analyzing a topic related to English material. The assessment aspects are assessed from the students' pronunciation when performing in front of the class, fluency that reflects mastery and practice, delivery of relevant information, and cooperation of each group. After the presentation, the teacher can give feedback to students on pronunciation errors or give suggestions so that students can improve fluency.

Formative Assessment Techniques and Tools in English Language Learning

The tools and materials used in the formative assessment process are very diverse, including the use of rubrics, reflection journal assessment, and assessment with quizzes. A rubric is an assessment tool used to assess students, college students or employees in a particular task or project. By using rubrics teachers can provide clear and measurable criteria for each aspect assessed, so that the assessment becomes more fair and objective. Examples of the application of formative assessment include assessing essays, presentations, or group projects. According to research conducted by (Brookes & Lin, 2010) rubrics are used as a discussion tool to evaluate assignments. According to (Brookes & Lin, 2010) rubrics are divided into four broad concepts both horizontally and vertically. The horizontal concept (ability to evaluate) refers to a person's ability to assess and analyze from various aspects such as models, equations, solutions, and claims. The vertical column (achievement level) indicates the level of achievement or mastery of the evaluation ability. The columns consist of missing, inadequate, needs improvement, and adequate. According to (Pittenger & Lounsbury, 2011) rubrics are able to produce a diverse and easy assessment process for students. Students can achieve learning objectives with feedback provided by the teacher. Formative assessment using rubrics can have a positive impact on students' ability to assess learning progress and critical thinking.

Reflection journal assessment is the process of evaluating personal notes or writings that a person makes to reflect on their experiences, learning or development. A reflection journal can be a diary, a record of an event, and a record of the learning process. Reflection journals are one way of formative and summative assessment that allows students to communicate what they read, collaborative discussions, and personal experiences (Naughton et al., 2011). In addition to texts, reflections can include checkable informational websites and blogs, interactive videos, and other media sources. Reflection journals can be sent by educators or posted online with comments and reviews, allowing students to evaluate each other.

Assessment with quizzes is a method that can measure students' abilities by using a series of short questions such as multiple choice, true-false, or short fill-in-the-blank designed to test students' knowledge quickly and efficiently. The purposes of assessment with quizzes include measuring student understanding, providing feedback to monitor learning progress, and motivating learning. One important teaching strategy that can be used is multiple-choice quizzes, exams, and formative assessments that engage students interactively in the classroom. Quiz texts that have appropriate feedback on the learning material can make multiple-choice quiz scores increase in summative assessments, which in turn will result in an increase in yearly or semesterly grades. These assessments focus more on learning outcomes than on how learners are portrayed following the educational process. However, tests and exams administered through web-based assessments will not have a negative impact on students.

Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Formative Assessment

Formative assessment has many benefits for both students and teachers, but it is possible that there are some challenges in it. Based on interviews conducted by (Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017) that teachers feel pressured, because teachers get too many topics that must be delivered on the final exam, which is why they have little time to implement formative assessment. Another obstacle that is often experienced by teachers is the lack of time, because the study load is so busy that it is difficult for teachers to organize enough time to design. Busy schedules can also limit the time to provide individualized feedback to students. Not only that, the lack of conceptual understanding causes teachers to have difficulty in designing valid and reliable assessment instruments. Difficulty in interpreting results can make it difficult for teachers to conduct an assessment on their students. Lack of communication and interaction between teachers and students can also hinder the formative assessment process. Therefore, there must be an appropriate solution so that these obstacles can be minimized and overcome.

To overcome some of the challenges experienced by teachers in the process of implementing formative assessment, several ways can be applied, including:

1. Provide training specifically for teachers to learn the concepts and techniques of formative assessment. Teachers can be taught about how to compile or design formative assessments and how to implement them in the classroom.
2. Provide sufficient time for teachers and students in the process of implementing formative assessment. Where when formative assessment is carried out on an ongoing basis, the load of material taught must be reduced or adjusted so that time remains efficient.
3. Encourage teachers to be more active in providing feedback to students. The feedback given should be specific and constructive so that learners can understand what they need to evaluate.

4. Improve good communication between teachers and students to create an interactive learning environment. Both parties must be equally active in the learning process so that the results of formative assessment can be maximized. This requires a comfortable classroom atmosphere and mutual respect for each other.

4. CONCLUSION

Formative assessment plays an important role in the learning process, especially in curriculum development and classroom implementation. In this process, formative assessment acts as a monitoring tool and provides feedback to teachers and students to improve material understanding and student engagement. The difference between formative evaluation and summative evaluation lies in the purpose and timing of implementation. Formative assessment is more flexible and continuous, allowing teachers to assess student understanding and receive immediate feedback, while summative assessment is used at the end of learning to determine final results, students will be evaluated in the form of grades.

In the context of the curriculum, formative assessment helps map students' learning needs and development, particularly in the area of English, and allows materials and strategies to be tailored to students' performance levels. Effective formative assessment strategies include questioning, group discussions and presentations that engage students more actively in their learning. Feedback provided in various forms such as rubrics, reflection journals and quizzes motivate students and increase their desire to improve their language skills. As an evaluation tool that provides feedback on an ongoing basis, formative assessment helps students understand their level of understanding of the material, increases learning motivation, and develops critical and innovative skills. In the context of English language learning, formative assessment contributes to the development of four key skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening. Strategies such as questioning, discussion and presentation are effective ways to increase student engagement and support collaborative skills, communication and confidence.

However, there are challenges in implementing formative assessment, particularly related to time constraints and teachers' understanding of how to design and implement effective assessment tools. Overcoming this requires support from the education system so that teachers can have more flexible time, understand the concept of formative assessment and be innovative in developing adaptive curriculum. Better integration of formative assessment makes the learning process more interactive and meaningful, increasing student motivation to optimally achieve learning objectives. By addressing these challenges, formative assessment can be a key component in creating an adaptive curriculum and effective learning, supporting students to achieve optimal learning outcomes and be ready to face global challenges.

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