

17-Revitalizing_formative

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REVITALIZING FORMATIVE TEST: A MODEL OF INTERACTIVE TEST ADMINISTRATION

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Second or foreign language (L2) learners are universally assessed by both formative and summative tests. The two tests are most commonly individual-oriented. The learners do the test individually. The seats are sometimes arranged in such a way so that they really work individually - the scores are expected to represent individual achievement. The argument underlying this workshop is that it is all right for summative test to play its role as summative test is, by nature, measurement at the end of an instructional program. Let us revitalize formative test by changing the test class session to look different.

The workshop is intended to provide the participants to be active 'becoming learners working in groups' and then experience the session of 'having a formative test' which is led by the following three innovative and challenging insights: (1) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into group assessment, (2) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into representative assessment, and (3) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into representative assessment with structured discussion.

['A Model of Interactive Test Administration' is added to the original abstract title to show that in the conference, a workshop is conducted. However for the proceedings, a more complete manuscript is presented.]*

INTRODUCTION

Both the so-called formative and summative tests are universally employed in assessing second or foreign language (L2) learners. The two tests are most commonly individual-oriented. The students do the test individually. The seats are sometimes arranged in such a way so that students really work individually in the test session - the scores are expected to represent their individual achievement. The main argument to be asserted here is that it is all right for summative test to play its role as summative test is, by nature, a kind of measurement at the end of an instructional program. Revitalizing formative test by changing the test class session to look different is the writer's plea.

Since constructivism and cooperative learning issues were introduced, teachers have gradually implemented learner-centered instruction. Quite a lot of teachers inspired by the respective educational approach form small groups in their class to provide chance for more learners to participate in classroom activities. Learners work in small groups to complete tasks collectively or cooperatively toward academic goals. However when it is time for formative

tests, learners work very differently from how they work on daily basis. They are encouraged to work in small groups but they are tested individually during formative test administration. The workshop conducted in the conference is intended to provide the participants to be active becoming 'learners working in groups' and then experience the session of having a formative test which is designed to fulfill the following three insights: (1) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into group assessment, (2) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into representative assessment, and (3) the change from individual (conventional) assessment without discussion into representative assessment with structured discussion.

In this paper which is the complete manuscript for the conference proceedings, the writer will, in accordance with the plea, provide some underlying theories and then present a model of revitalizing formative test.

Formative Test

When test-centered methods are the concern, the issues on formative test include,

among others, who the judges to be involved, what the test content to cover and the proportion of test items to devise (Brown, 1996). The test materials are questioned for the following issue: whether or not they cover, for example, merely one study unit or directly two units of the materials taught in class. Formative test can also be discussed with regards to what test type will be included for example whether the test will employ multiple choice type, True or False type or both types. The illustration pointed out here implies that formative test is considered as a part of assessment which is 'dissociated from instruction for purposes of evaluation' (Cizek, 1997:10). To this illustration, we are reminded by the term 'assessment of learning'. Further implication is that formative test is to a certain extent more or less the same as summative test.

With the student-centered method of assessment which is triggered by among others learner-centeredness, and the famous concept of Vygotsky's ZPD and theory of mind (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004), the traditional notion of *assessment OF learning* has been altered into the notion of *assessment FOR learning* (Shepard, 2000; Berendonk, Stalmeijer & Schuwirth, 2013). The discussion on formative test has then been changed to cover different issues for example what types of authentic or performance assessment is best to measure our students' learning. Typical questions include "Are we to combine self-assessment and peer-assessment?" and "Is portfolio a must?" It concerns with finding more valid ways to measure complex educational goal – or using Torrance & Pryor's (1998) term, to find "more educationally friendly variant 'authentic assessment'". In this paper, similar idea of process-oriented assessment is taken. However, it is a bit different as it gives less emphasis on talking about what types of student-centered formative assessment to consider. The issue is more to do with how the *processes* of formative assessment might assist learning in the classroom when the test is administered.

Group Work

Most teachers have implemented group work in their classroom instruction. Tamah and Prijambodo (2014) reported that teacher-centeredness has been abandoned by quite a lot of Indonesian teachers. Their subjects (high school teachers and students) both admitted the

high frequency use of student grouping in class (slightly above 89% respondents 'agreed' and 'very much agreed' to the fact that group work was implemented in classroom instruction). The majority of their respondents (slightly above 82%) indicated that they liked group work or cooperative learning (on a 4-point Likert scale, 46,4% respondents opted '3' or *Like*, and 35,7% '4' or *Like very much*).

The idea of group work is actually an attempt to bring about small-group learning among students thus the implementation of learner-centeredness. Tamah (2011) referring to Richard-Amato (1988) points out fossilization as one drawback of small-group learning as there is a possibility for low-achieving students to provide inadequate models one another. Another drawback is the tendency for some students to 'hitchhike' or become 'easy rider' as revealed in the following comment from a research respondent (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2014:36): "Tergantung dengan tingkat kesulitan tugas tersebut, terkadang pula ada salah seorang anggota yang tidak ikut bekerja." [Translation: Depending on the difficulty level of a task, sometimes a group member does not work]. However, despite the drawbacks, the benefits are explicitly admitted as seen in the following feedback from another respondent (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2014:37): "Dengan kerja kelompok, interaksi sosial kita menjadi luas, tidak selalu individual, bekerjasama dalam mengerjakan sesuatu, dan berpikir kritis dalam membahas suatu bahan bersama-sama. Rasa solidaritas juga bertambah." [Translation: By having group work, social interaction is enhanced, and cooperation and critical thinking in problem solving are encouraged. Solidarity is increased].

Classroom instruction atmosphere has been changed. The teacher's stage is not higher than the students' anymore. Students work in small groups during classroom instruction. Nevertheless, when it is time to have a formative test, students do the test individually. The test is individual-oriented, not yet group-oriented.

Classroom Assessment

Shepard (2000) highlights that classroom assessment comprises seven elements. First, it uses challenging tasks to elicit higher order

thinking. Second, it addresses learning processes as well as learning outcomes. Third, it presents on-going process integrated with instruction. Fourth, it is used formatively to support student learning. Fifth, it allows student expectation. Sixth, it makes students self-evaluate. Seventh, the last element, it has double functions: evaluating teaching and learning.

Introducing dynamic assessment. Poehner (2016) similarly argues that teaching and assessment should not be seen as separate activities but should instead be fully integrated. Highlighting alternatives in assessment, Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) referring to Brown and Hudson (1998) assert that alternatives in assessment have 12 characteristics. Some of them are that the assessment requires students to perform, create, produce or do something, that it allows students to be assessed on what they commonly do in daily basis, that it exposes standards and rating criteria, and that it encourages teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles.

As previously asserted, our current formative test which simply belongs to classroom assessment is still individual-oriented although group work has been implemented quite vastly in classroom instruction. The 'soul' of group work is neglected in classroom assessment (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2015:49). The cooperative class (the class where students work in group to cooperatively do the learning tasks) is missing its soul when formative test is administered in class.

Tamah and Prijambodo (2015) introduce innovative insights for classroom assessment – to be particular for formative test administration. It is proposed that classroom assessment is designed to fulfill the following three insights: (1) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into group assessment, (2) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into representative assessment, and (3) the change from individual (conventional) assessment without discussion into representative assessment with structured discussion.

The Model Introduced

Workshop Objectives

This workshop is expected to enable the participants:

1. to experience a model of a class where a formative reading test is employed

incorporating the three innovative insights introduced (See the previous sub-section),

- 2 to work out the insights underlying the assessment model so that the model can, in the long run, be adapted to their own classroom,
- 3 to appreciate the significance of the introduced model as an attempt to enhance students' learning – the insight of 'assessment for learning'.

Workshop Materials

The reading text and the comprehension questions

1
The people of the Caucasus Mountains of southern Russia have long been famous for attaining extremely old ages. Arab and Persian chronicles from centuries ago noted the existence of these longevous people. The latest Soviet census reports that 70 per cent of all people reaching 110 years or more live in the Caucasus region. An anthropologist described meeting a woman of 139 years. This does not seem old at all, however, compared to her first cousin, who reached 146 and her great grandfather, who lived to be 160. When we consider that most people in the United States expect to live only half that long and that people in some parts of the developing world will live only one third that long, we cannot help wondering what the causes of such long life are. Is it exercise, diet, physical environment, cultural environment, or what? Anthropologists have concluded that exercise and diet are not as important as a steady way of life with certain cultural expectations and roles.

2
Most people in the region of the Caucasus Mountains have a regular, rhythmic life style. There is continuity in all physical aspects of their life. First, most of the Caucasians live in mountain villages. They work as farmers, herders, or gardeners. Most of the longevous people have always held the same jobs. They learned their jobs young, and have continued in the same job until they are well past 100, some until 120 or 130. The outdoor work and the mountainous terrain provide a good deal of

exercise. Anthropologists feel that while exercise contributes to longevity, the rhythmic lifestyle is more important. There is also continuity in diet. They have eaten the same lean meat, grains, fruits, and vegetables from childhood. Traditionally, Caucasians are lean people who do not overeat. Anthropologists conclude that it is not the diet itself that is the secret for long life, although it does contribute. The real secret is the continuity in diet from birth to death. The unchanged diet and regular dietary rhythm allow the body and its digestive system to become entirely adjusted.

¹ Another important cause of longevity among the Caucasians is a stable cultural environment with certain expectations. First, the goals of the Caucasians do not overreach the possibilities of attainment. Unlike many Americans who want to be chairmen of the boards or presidents of the companies, goals which they can never attain, the goals of the Caucasians tend to be realistic and attainable within their cultural milieu. Their goals are more people-oriented. They concentrate on being hospitable and generous towards others, goals which are not only attainable, but also contribute to the overall wellbeing of the social group. Because the goals of the Caucasians are realistic and attainable, emotional tensions are reduced. This contributes to long life. Second, the normal expectation within the region is for long life. Individuals expect to live far beyond the age 100. In contrast, the cultural expectation of people in the United States is for a maximum life span of about 80 years. These cultural expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies.

¹ As a final point, longevity is also encouraged by the role of old people in the family and in the community. The Caucasians have large extended families of maybe 300 people or more. This provides a large network of people with mutual rights and obligations. The aged are respected as heads of the family. They make decisions about money, marriages, land sales, and other matters. They are also expected to be affectionate toward their grand-children. The old people are also respected in the community. They continue to live, hold office and so make decisions which will affect the future of the entire community. Because of their important place in the family and in the

community, the aged retain a feeling of individual self-worth and importance. Retaining a positive self-image reduces physical problems. It lessens mental problems as well, thus encouraging a longer life.

A. What do the following pronouns refer to?

1. "this" (par. 1): _____
2. "it" (par. 2): _____
3. "they" (par. 4): _____

B. Find words in the text that mean the following.

1. an official count of a country's people (n.) (par. 1): _____
2. statements saying what will happen in the future (n.) (par. 3): _____
3. shared in common (adj.) (par. 4): _____

C. Mark the following statements True or False.

1. The existence of people living up to very old ages has been known for over a century.
2. Caucasian people are expected to live twice as long as those in the U.S.
3. A steady way of life with certain cultural expectations and roles is less important than exercise and diet in being longevous.
4. According to the passage, Americans have unattainable goals in life.

Workshop Participants in Action

The workshop participants should be actively involved in performing some tasks. The participants are briefly supposed to be in action especially to achieve the predetermined workshop objectives. Meanwhile, the facilitator of the workshop leads the workshop following the procedure presented below.

A) **The beginning section:**

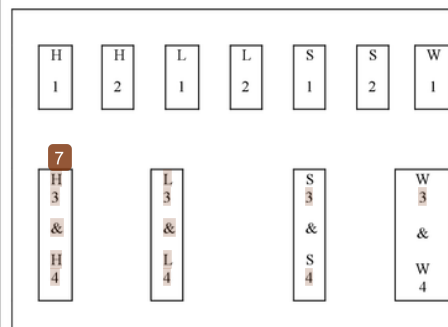
1. Greet the workshop participants and inform the overview of the workshop: (1) brief review of the underlying theory, (2) brief simulation of a reading class – some will be ‘students of high school’; some the observers, and (3) the quiz session or a formative test on reading.
2. Briefly review the followings: Formative Test, Group Work, and Classroom Assessment.
3. Form two groups of participants. Kindly ask 16 participants to act as high school learners for the simulation and the rest to become the observers watching the simulation with regard to the assessment methods employed.

B) **The simulation section:**

4. Greet the students.
5. Form four groups (Honest, Loyal, Sincere, and Wise groups), and assign roles to each member: captain, secretary, materials manager, and time keeper.
6. Distribute the materials – each group gets one set of materials (a 4-paragraph text which is prepared in four pieces of paper; see the reading text presented in *Workshop Materials*; one student gets one piece)
7. Ask each student in each group to understand the one paragraph text they receive.
8. Ask the group to scramble the paragraphs to form a text.
9. Ask the students to understand the complete text by discussing it in their group – the group members work cooperatively: helping one another to get the meaning of the text.
10. Move around to ensure the job is carried out and provide assistance when necessary (For instance, ask questions for higher order thinking practice to happen in the group).
11. Ask the students to guess what questions will appear in the upcoming quiz.
12. Stop the group work and inform the class that what follows is quiz time.

C) **The quiz section:**

13. Ensure each student in the group is numbered 1-4 (Honest group will then consist of H1, H2, H3, and H4).
14. Do the number drawing. The class draws for two quiz-takers and two non-quiz takers for each group. There will be eight students determined as quiz takers and eight as non-quiz takers.
15. Ask all students numbered 1 and 2 – if the number drawing results in numbers 1 and 2 – to sit individually at the quiz zone.
16. Ask all the remaining students to form pair and sit at the non-quiz taker zone. The picture below shall represent the description for steps 13-14 (Phase 1 of the quiz administration):



17. Distribute one problem sheet for each quiz taker.
18. Distribute one problem sheet for each pair of non-quiz takers.
19. Ask the students to do the quiz (In this Phase 1 of the quiz administration, quiz takers do the quiz individually, meanwhile non-quiz takers do it in pair – indicating that discussion is allowed for non-quiz takers).
20. After the allotted time for Phase 1, order the students to stop working on the quiz.
21. Ask the students to form new pairs (For example, H1 is paired with H3; H2 with H4. Without taking their problem sheet, H3 and H4 give assistance). The picture below shall represent the description in step 21 (Phase 2 of the quiz administration):

4							
H	H	L	L	S1	S	W	
1	2	1	3	&	3	1	
&	&	&	&	S	&	&	
H	H	L	L	2	S	W	
3	4	2	4		4	2	

22. Provide time (half of the allotted time for Phase 1) for the non-quiz takers to assist the quiz takers in their group (Within very limited time, the quiz takers can ask for certain items in the quiz. They discuss it with their helpers, the non-quiz takers).
 23. After the allotted time for Phase 2, order the students to stop working on the quiz (the non-quiz takers go back to their own zone). Implied is that the students are in the same formation as in Phase 1.
 24. Provide time (half of the allotted time for Phase 2) for the quiz takers to tidy their quiz answers (In this last phase – Phase 3, quiz takers can keep their own answers or change their answers after getting assisted).
 25. After the allotted time for Phase 3, order the students to stop working on the quiz.
 26. Collect only the quiz takers' work, check and score them (The group score is obtained from the average scores of the two quiz takers in the respective group; every group member gets the average score).
 27. Tell the students that the simulation section is over.
- D) The closing section:
28. Kindly ask one or two observers to share what has been observed in the simulation (leading to the understanding of the revitalized formative testing).
 29. Do the wrap-up.
 30. Thank the participants for joining the workshop.

Conclusion

Learning-oriented or assessment or student-centered method of assessment has triggered the writer to reconsider the conventional formative test. The idea presented is marked with genuine modification in the formative test administration

to fulfill the following three insights: (1) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into group assessment, (2) the change from individual (conventional) assessment into representative assessment, and (3) the change from individual (conventional) assessment without discussion into representative assessment with structured discussion. The writer has initially presented some underlying theories and proceeded to provide a model of revitalized formative testing. The model is, as its name suggests, exemplary so that teachers can adapt it for their own classroom context.

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