



**TECHNIUM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL**

**Vol. 20, 2021**

**A new decade  
for social changes**

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)

ISSN 2668-7798



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## **Peer Assessment in Writing Expository Essays: A Research on Tenth Graders of Vocational School**

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**Abstract.** The present work was devoted to: (a) exploring peer assessment instruments (i.e., assessment sheets) utilized by teachers in teaching expository essay writing for tenth graders of vocational schools; (b) discussing the implementation and (c) the impact of peer assessment of the peer assessment activities. In this study, the data were from information in the peer assessment implementation. Methods of data collection involved observation, interview, and documentation. The results showed that: (a) The peer assessment instruments were in compliance with the competence standards in student assessment. (b) The implementation of expository writing teaching and learning was to find out students' progress and outcomes; it also aimed to improve learning processes. (c) Peer assessment activities help schools enhance their learning quality and teachers in comprehending the peer assessment processes. On top of that, the assessment provides students with practical experience in assessing their peers' works, thus boosting students' concentration in learning. Peer assessment also measures the affective domains of students (by which it eases teachers to select appropriate teaching-learning strategies). In conclusion, the assessment on students' social attitude fall under a good category based on the students' average score.

**Keywords.** assessment, instrument, students, constructing an essay, expository

### **1. Introduction**

Evaluation refers to a means of rating the performance of an individual. Some authorities argue that evaluation is an assessment process aimed at deciding on something; the assessment relied on a set of measurements based on specific determined goals (Arifin (2016:16; Sukmadinata et al. 2008:11; Doni et al., 2017:7). Evaluation is also described as a systematic and continuous process to determine the quality of a specific object under particular considerations and criteria (Arifin, 2015:8). From the above notions, evaluation is simply defined as a systematic and continuous assessment performed by teachers. This process helps teachers' decision-making prior to specifying what steps they should take in teaching-learning activities.

Assessment is described as a process of retrieving information in students' learning progress and achievement at schools. Student learning outcome assessment takes into account the aspect of affective, cognitive, and skill. The assessment should comply with the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 66 of 2013 concerning Educational

Assessment Standards. According to the standard, the assessment measures the students' affective skills through observation, self-assessment, peer assessment, and learning journal.

Assessment of students' concept mastery or knowledge can be done through written or oral tests and assignments. Practicum, project assignments, and portfolio assessment can be used to assess students' skills. The present work focuses on tenth-grade students' learning outcome evaluation in writing expository essays. As stated in Law Number 19 of 2005, assessment is a means to collect and process information regarding students' performance to measure their learning achievement. One of the assessment types is peer assessment.

Sani (2014:201), Baylon (2014:41), and Borg and Gall (1983:11) claim that peer assessment enables students to get feedback and critique from each other. The students are required to be objective in providing critique and feedback to their peers. Peer assessment is also important to the improvement of students' accuracy in assessing a specific object. Such a skill is significant to the students' observation skills, their future asset.

Assessment components of student affective domains encompass honesty, responsibility, discipline, caring attitude, politeness, eco-friendly, cooperation, responsiveness, and proactiveness. These are the elements of solutions to social problems (Jordaan, 2011:43). Peer assessment is employed to measure student learning outcomes in constructing expository essays; this includes assessing contents, structures, and the language aspects of the texts (Kartowagiran, 2016:22). This activity enables the students to reflect on their progress and make improvements based on the assessment results.

Peer assessment activity, as mentioned previously, should be authentic. This idea complies with the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 66 of 2013 concerning Authentic Assessment. In this context, authentic assessment refers to a comprehensive assessment that is performed to evaluate inputs, processes, and learning outputs. Such an assessment consists of three components: a) affective domain assessment (assessing students' affective skills through observation, self-assessment, peer assessment, and journal writing); b) cognitive assessment (assessing students' knowledge through written or oral tests and assignments), and; c) skill assessment (assessing students' performance by demonstrating specific tasks, i.e., practicum, projects, and portfolio assignments). The present work narrows its focus to the peer assessment.

The assessment was performed to examine the learning activities in the tenth grade of a selected vocational high school. Peer assessment allows the students to reflect on their performance and improve their learning (Lesilolo et al. 2015:35; Prihatini, et al., 2013:37). Therefore, the activity should be authentic. Although peer assessment is not new to vocational high schools, many students are still perplexed by some issues. Some students are unable to make an objective evaluation for their peers, resulting in ineffective and poor assessment. This issue blames students' hesitation and inability to make a deliberate evaluation (since the students do not crosscheck their peers' tasks). The present study is intended to promote students' understanding of quality peer assessment in learning to write expository texts.

## **2. Research Method**

This qualitative descriptive research was aimed at exploring peer assessment activities in tenth-grade students of SMKN 2 state vocational high school in Gorontalo, the academic year of 2018/2019. Sukmadinata (2008:60) and Kiong et al. (2013:14) define qualitative research as a type of research that seeks to examine a phenomenon, social activity, faith, and perception of an individual or group of people.

All data were from peer assessment results. These data were generated from observation, interview, and documentation. According to Sugiyono (2016:204) and Sugiyanto

(2015:85), observation is a means of retrieving data or information regarding research objects; the observation can be performed directly or indirectly. Observation is a systematic, logical, objective, and rational process of observing an actual situation or simulated situation to attain a specific goal.

Regarding the interview, Sugiyono (2016:194) argues that this data collection method is generally performed in preliminary studies to determine the research problem. This method is also applied to gain in-depth information of respondents in small numbers. Vladis also (2015:17) agrees that interview is central to collecting comprehensive data of the respondents. In the present study, all data were analyzed qualitatively (Surya et al., 2016:15; Syamsi, 2012:293).

### 3. Results

This section discusses all results that correspond to the research problems. It presents a discussion of (a) peer assessment instruments utilized by teachers in teaching expository essay writing for tenth graders of vocational schools, (b) the implementation, and (c) the impact of peer assessment of the peer assessment activities.

#### Peer assessment Instruments for Teaching Writing Expository Essays

In this research, the instrument for peer assessment was adapted from the available lesson plan used by the school teachers. The instrument was aimed at determining students' objectivity in assessing their friends' work. There are two categories of responses in the instrument: positive and negative, as seen in the following table.

**Table 1. Peer Assessment Instrument**

Number	Statement	Yes	No	Total Score	Score	Code of Score
1	Willing to accept opinion from others.	100				
2	Giving solutions to problems.	100				
3	Imposing oneself to others.		100			
4	Getting insulted when receiving criticism.	100				
5	Demonstrating perseverance in composing expository essay.		50	850	85.00	SB
6	Not doing the assignments.		50			
7	Demonstrating responsibility.	100				
8	Completing all assignments.	100				
9	Cheating.		50			
10	Completing a task on time.	100				

Source: Lesson Plan

Description:

- Assessment score Yes = 100, No = 50 for each positive statement. Yes = 50, No = 100 for the negative statement

- b. Maximum score = total of responses x total criteria = 10 x 100 = 1000  
c. Affective score = (total score/maximum score x 100) = (850 : 1000) x 100 = 85.00

Score Description

75.01 – 100.00 = Very good (SB)

50.01 – 75.00 = Good (B)

25.01 – 50.00 = Pass (C)

0.00 – 25.00 = Poor (K)

The assessment instrument is based on the indicator of affective aspect achievement developed by the teachers. Further, the instrument complies with the basic and core competence. This is to ensure the accuracy of the data and information. The students should fill the sheet based on the response or statement that fits to the person they assess. The first statement examines students' affective domains in responding to opinions from other students during the class.

In the second statement, the students are expected to identify the problem-solving skills of other students in the class. The assessment is also intended to determine whether or not the students force their opinion on others; this aspect is a part of students' social competence during the learning activity. Another assessment component is purposed to identify students' behavior, especially in responding to criticism.

Students' perseverance and responsibility in learning were among the assessment components. The assessment is also intended to determine whether or not the students cheated in writing expository essays. The eighth item of the assessment aims to examine students' honesty in the class.

In the assessment sheet, the negative statements are intended to examine students' honesty (affective components) in completing the tasks from the teacher. Similarly, the positive statements, such as punctuality in submitting tasks, were also incorporated as a part of the affective assessment. Finally, all students calculated the final score before handing out the report to their peers.

Scores for negative and positive statements are different. For positive statements, each "yes" response is worth 100, while a "no" response scores 50. On the other hand, "yes" and "no" response in the negative statement is worth 50 and 100, respectively. The maximum score is the total response scores multiply by the total criteria score. The formula for affective domain score is the total score divided by the maximum score and multiplied by 100. Instructions in the assessment table help students perform the assessment. Drawing upon the above discussion, peer assessment can be regarded as an assessment method for measuring students' affective aspects.

### **1. Peer assessment Process in Writing Expository Essay for Tenth-grade Vocational High School Students**

The way the teacher assesses his or her students is significant to the teaching-learning success. In this study, peer assessments were performed at the end of the learning activities. The steps of peer assessment are discussed below.

#### **a. Informing peer assessment criteria**

The teacher informed all details in the assessment sheet to make sure that all students understand the procedure of peer assessment. The teacher can provide the details for peer assessment in writing or orally. Giving clear instructions is crucial to boosting students'

motivation, hence enhancing their competences. Teachers also offered an example of completed assessment sheets to the students.

**b. Distributing assessment sheets**

Before distributing the assessment sheets, the teacher observed the social relationship among students to ensure that the assessment result is objective. Students received the sheets after completing the assignment, i.e., writing an expository essay as instructed in the worksheet. The teacher explained the assessment steps to help students complete the sheet.

**c. Exchanging work**

The teacher instructed the students to exchange their work. All students passed their work to their friend sitting next to them as the teacher counted from one to five. Students stopped passing their writing on the count of five. Those who sat on the last row, who received more than one writing, would distribute the other work to their friends sitting on the front row.

**d. Monitoring**

During the peer assessment process, the teacher walked around the class and provided assistance to students who needed helps. This step is essential to identify students' difficulty in comprehending the instruction. Besides identifying students' problems, the teacher monitored some students who had yet to understand some of the steps in peer assessment.

**e. Finalization**

Assessment follow-up was performed after explaining all details about peer assessment; in this step, the teacher concluded all classroom activities. The teacher asked the students to reflect on everything they have learned. Moreover, the teacher provided feedback on the results of peer assessment to motivate the students to perform better and improve their competences.

## **2. The Impact of Peer assessment**

The peer assessment evaluation was performed based on the peer assessment results, observation, and interview with students. It is revealed that peer assessment is impactful on writing expository essays. This is seen in a rise in the students' achievement and motivation. On top of that, the students are able to understand the core concept of the lesson and the affective elements of learning activities.

Peer assessment also encourages students to act objectively. All processes of peer assessment comply with the details seen in the teacher's lesson plan. The outcome of peer assessment is categorized into two: very good and good.

**a. Enhancing learning quality at schools**

School principals are demanded to better the learning quality and personnel (including administration staff) to attain educational goals. The implementation of peer assessment is vital to instilling students' learning motivation, especially in learning to compose expository essays.

This outcome will, in turn, maximize the quality of learning at schools. Learning activities depend on the principals' decision in raising school quality and students' achievement towards positive changes. Simply put, school principals should be able to organize and facilitate any means towards the attainment of schools' objectives through innovation and appropriate utilization of resources.

**b. Help teachers with assessment processes**

Central to the learning activities is teachers' comprehension. Teachers are required to understand every learning activity, including evaluation and assessment of the students' performance. By that, mastering multiple methods of assessment is an obligation. This aspect is crucial to identify students' learning progress. Among the assessment methods that can be used in measuring students' achievement is peer assessment.

**c. Providing empirical experiences in peer assessment**

Paying attention to several aspects of classroom learning is mandatory for all school members involved in the activity, especially students. This notion is fundamental to peer assessment since teachers usually assign their students to measure students' learning outcomes. Impacts of such an activity are categorized into two: positive and negative; these are discussed in the following sections.

The positive impact of peer assessment is encouraging students to be objective in criticizing and giving feedback to their peers. Peer assessment plays a major role in the improvement of students' accuracy in assessing a specific object. Such a skill is significant to the students' observation skills, their future asset. Peer assessment also develops students' self-responsibility in providing objective assessment results to their friends.

Despite its advantages, peer assessment has some drawbacks in terms of the objectivity of the assessment results. Some students are reluctant to give accurate assessment results to their friends. To worsen, there are some students who skip crosschecking their friends' work. They are concerned that doing so will affect their friendship.

**d. Enhancing students' concentration**

Concentrating on learning is essential for students to help them meet the learning objectives. Good concentration skills are the prerequisite to successful learning. Students with a lack of focus and concentration have a hard time paying attention to everything their teacher has instructed, therefore hindering them from completing assignments or projects.

**4. Discussion**

Peer assessment is an assignment method where the students grade their peers' work. This method is employed to assess students' affective competence during learning. Kunandar (2013:140), Akinbobola et al. (2009:16), and Gomleksisz (2011:445) opine that peer assessment gives the students an opportunity to exchange feedback with each other as a mean of competence improvement. According to Lesilolo et al. (2013:13), Liu (2016:44), and Sani (2014:216), peer assessment can help the teacher performs comprehensive grading.

Teachers are responsible for examining students' strengths and weaknesses in learning. Further, teachers must have a clear vision in reflecting on what they need to improve in the learning process. In the present work, the reflection is based on the results of peer assessment.

Instruments used by teachers in peer assessment encompass several components. All components of assessment in the present work adopted the model by Thiagarajan and Semmel (1974:17) and Vibe and Wahlgren (2017:51).

Peer assessment is noteworthy to the learning evaluation (Wahyuni, 2013:71; Wicaksono et al., 2016:47; Wijayanti, 2014:104). Although some students were yet to understand the procedures of the peer assessment activity, the teacher had managed to cope with the situation by providing an example of a completed assessment sheet.

Peer assessment contributes to bettering learning quality at schools (Supriyadi, 2015:83; Wicaksono et al., 2016:46). Learning activities are determined by the principals' decision to improve school quality. Despite this, it is worth noting that the school principal is not the only element that should pay attention to several aspects of classroom learning; this task is the responsibility of all involved authorities at the school.

**5. Conclusion**

This research concludes that: Instruments used by teachers in peer assessment encompass several components. These components examine students' social competences, problem-

solving skills, affective elements (such as the ability to respect other people's opinions and critics and not imposing oneself on other students), perseverance, discipline, punctuality, and honesty in writing expository essays.

Peer assessment was performed by the end of the learning activities. The teacher further evaluated the students' affective achievement. During the peer assessment activity, the students are expected to meet the standard of the activity, i.e., assessing their friends objectively.

It is revealed that peer assessment is significant to their ability to write expository essays. This is seen in a rise in the students' achievement and motivation. On top of that, the students can understand the core concept of the lesson and the cognitive and affective elements of the learning activities. The teacher plays a significant role in examining students' learning outcomes. Since peer assessment is only intended to evaluate students' mid-test, the teacher is unable to identify the students' progress comprehensively. On the other hand, peer assessment is effective in examining students' affective domain during the class.

The outcome of peer assessment will, in turn, maximize the quality of learning at schools. Nevertheless, the roles of the school principal also determine the improvement of learning activities. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that taking into consideration several aspects of classroom learning is mandatory for all components involved in the activity, especially students.

In conclusion, the implementation of peer assessment in tenth-grade students of SMKN 2 state vocational high school in Gorontalo, the academic year of 2018/2019, is effective to help teachers identify students' progress in composing expository essays. Peer assessment also enables the teacher to select learning strategies that fit students' needs.

## 6. Acknowledgment

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Salam, M.Pd and Dr. Muslimin, M.Pd for their invaluable inputs and correction to this research.

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