EVALUATING ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF PARIS (ISP)

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Abstract: International Baccalaureate (IB) is a foundation that is headquartered in Geneva whose focus is to foster critical thinking and building problem-solving skills. Its programmes encourages diversity, international mindedness, curiosity and a healthy appetite for learning and excellence. This foundation develops the assessment policies and practices in International School of Paris (ISP). This paper attempts to evaluate the assessment policies implemented in the school. There are four sections mentioned in the ISP assessment policy i.e. assessment principles, assessment purpose, assessment practices and grading practices. The primary focus of this paper is the practice of three ISP assessment sources: ongoing formative teacher assessments, summative assessment tasks and the student as learner. The evaluation of each sources is reviewed and discussed.

Keywords : Assessment Policy, Assessment Practice, ISP

Abstrak: International Baccalaureate (IB) adalah sebuah lembaga yang berkantor pusat di Jenewa yang fokus untuk mengembangkan pemikiran kritis dan membangun keterampilan pemecahan masalah. Program-programnya mendorong keragaman, pemikiran internasional, rasa ingin tahu dan keinginan untuk belajar dan menjadi unggul. Lembaga ini mengembangkan kebijakan dan praktik penilaian di International School of Paris (ISP). Tulisan ini mencoba mengevaluasi kebijakan penilaian yang diterapkan di sekolah tersebut. Ada empat bagian yang disebutkan dalam kebijakan penilaian di ISP yaitu prinsip penilaian, tujuan penilaian, praktik penilaian, dan praktik penentuan nilai. Fokus utama dari artikel ini adalah praktik dari tiga sumber penilaian ISP: penilaian formatif, tugas penilaian sumatif dan siswa sebagai pembelajar. Evaluasi masing-masing sumber ditinjau dan didiskusikan.

Kata kunci : Kebijakan Penilaian, Praktik Penilaian, ISP

The main purpose of assessment is the feedback. All types of assessment performed in class are supposed to produce feedback for both teachers and students. As stated by Hattie (2003), teachers and students need to interpret the feedback to answer the three feedback questions: Where am I going or what is aimed to be understood, How am I going or what is understood, and Where to next or further actions. The feedback for teacher will help them to determine their next actions appropriately. The

feedback for students will help them to understand and to be aware of their capability and incapability so that they can improve.

To gain the certain feedback, certain assessment is needed. Therefore, it is necessary for teacher to have good assessment literacy so that they can practice correct assessment for certain situation depends on the objective need to be achieved. Stiggins (1997) states that assessment literacy is the key, and a variety of benefit will be increased to all school members including teacher, student, staff and school as long as they, excluding students, know and understand assessment principles, know how to translate those principles into valuable information about students and involve students in the assessment process.

That is what assessment policy for. Each educational institution has formed their own policy regarding assessment process in their institution. The policy will help teachers and institution to achieve their objectives. For teacher, the assessment policies facilitate them to know which area they need to focus or which point they need consider in assessing their students. To do the assessment, they must have knowledge about assessment. For example, in ISP assessment policy, the teachers need to think about their students having different style of learning. Besides, in assessment practices, the teachers need to gather evidence and information about their students by having conversation with other adults who have knowledge.

However, since each institution will have different points in their assessment policy, an evaluation about an assessment policy need to be undertaken to see whether the policy match the literatures. In this paper, an assessment policy of International School of Paris (ISP) is chosen. An evaluation is conducted to see whether the policy is supported by the literatures or it should be changed or might be improved. In addition, there is a discussion about putting the policy in a broader context to provide a more understanding of the policy. Explanation about certain part of the policy is discussed to give an insight about its importance in assessment.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Assessment Policy in ISP

According to ISP website (www.isparis.edu), the International School of Paris is established in 1964 and is the only school within the city of Paris that use English as the language of communication and the only school in France that offer all three International Baccalaureate program: Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme and IB Diploma Programme. International Baccalaureate (IB) is a non-profit educational foundation based in Geneva, Switzerland. It has authorized some 1300 schools in 110 countries to teach those three programmes. Educational services such as curriculum and assessment development, teacher-training and information seminars, electronic networking and others are provided to the IB schools (IBO, 2002).

As written in ISP assessment policy (ISP, 2010), it consists of four main sections, which are principles of assessment, why do we assess (purpose of assessment), how do we assess (assessment practices) and how do we grade. The section on principles is divided into topics about

students, curriculum and instruction, and the wider world. Each section or topic consists of several specific points.

For example, 'how do we assess' as the focus section of this paper, has seven points. ISP assesses their students by gathering evidence and information from the following sources:

1. Ongoing formative teacher assessments
2. Summative assessment tasks
3. Previous summative records
4. Parent's consultations
5. Conversation with other adults who have knowledge
6. The student as a learner
7. By analysing the above using professional knowledge and expertise

This paper mainly discuss the only three points of the section, which are ongoing formative teacher assessment, summative assessment tasks and the students as a learner. The main messages of the three points is interpreted, explained in more detail and evaluated. To evaluate the assessment policies and practices, the discussion touches upon three areas of assessment:

1. The role of formative and summative assessment
2. The role and contribution of student to assessment (including how students need to be taken into account in assessment)
3. Different purposes of assessment

Assessment Practices Policies in ISP

Every educational institution might have different practices in assessing their students. In ISP, International Baccalaureate assessment policy is used. There are seven sources of assessment practices, which utilized by teachers in ISP. Any

evidence and information related to students' assessment are taken from the sources. Those seven sources are discussed briefly.

First, teachers in ISP use information gained from ongoing formative teacher assessment to assess their students. According to Strijbo and Sluijmans (2010), formative assessment focus on several aspects in assessing students, which are cognitive, social, affective and meta-cognitive aspects of learning. Second, summative assessment tasks are used in assessing students in ISP. Cognitive aspect of learning is the main focus in summative assessment (Strijbos & Sluijsmans, 2010). Third, previous summative records function as additional information for teacher to make an assessment for their students. The previous record function as evidence of students' development stages so that teacher would know what their students have or have not achieved in the previous study. Fourth, parent's consultations will mainly provide information about their opinion of how best assessing their children. Teachers and school will have a discussion with parents talking about which aspect the parents want their children to be assessed and how. Fifth, teachers collect information for students' assessment by having conversation with other adults who have knowledge. For example, teachers who have disabled students in their class can consult with the experts such as psychologist to solve certain assessment problems or issues related to inclusive assessment. Sixth, the student as a learner indicates that students as independent learner who are able to assess themselves and their peers. Seventh, teachers will make a conclusion of any information they got by analysing them using professional knowledge and expertise. It means that

to make a comprehensive and reliable assessment analysis, teachers should have knowledge background in assessment. They should know the purposes or assessment, types of assessment and anything related to assessment, and more importantly, they should know how to use all the information appropriately and know how to apply certain assessment in certain situation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article used literature review approach whose purpose is to describe knowledge, ideas and findings from academic-oriented literature and to formulate a descriptive analysis of certain topic. The techniques of collecting data is by gathering and reviewing several resources from books, articles and journal papers published nationally and internationally. The data is analyzed descriptively by describing the main issue to give an explanation and understanding to the readers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Evaluating Three Assessment Practices in ISP

Further interpretation and explanation of the ISP assessment sources are compiled from literatures to give an understanding of its importance and to help school to decide appropriate actions regarding their assessment practices. However, only three of seven sources are evaluated.

Ongoing Formative Teacher Assessments

Formative assessment is also known as assessment for learning. According to Harlen (2006), formative assessment aims to promote learning by collecting evidence about students,

which related to their learning goals to plan next steps in their learning. It is about doing an assessment for learning purpose since it is used to make decisions that affect teaching and learning in the short-term future. The feedback gained from formative assessment can helps to ensure that the next steps or actions by teachers are not too difficult or too easy for students.

It is important for teachers as the assessor to implement several types of assessment including formative assessment. Each assessment has its own characteristic, and formative assessment is usually an ongoing process, which is performed throughout the teaching and learning process. Some techniques used in formative assessment to get information are informal observation, quizzes, homework, pupil questions and worksheet, and the information is used to improve and change a process while it is still going on (Airasian, 2005). Black and William (1998) maintain that formative assessment will aid learning if students are given opportunity to express their growing understanding. Teachers need to design instruction and formative assessment tasks by which students can develop and display their knowledge through discussion, observation and tasks. As a results, any feedback come from the formative assessment really reflect the real condition the students face in class. For example, there is clear information that certain students still have lack understanding of certain material so that teacher will be able to do something to help these students.

Therefore, literatures suggest that formative assessment plays an important role in teaching and learning. It helps teachers to diagnose students'

difficulties in class and help them improve themselves before summative assessment is performed. ISP assessment policy has done a great job by including ongoing formative teacher assessment in their assessment practices. Therefore, any change in this point is not necessary. All the school has to do is to ensure that the policy is clear enough to teachers and applied properly in class. In addition, the school have to consider the importance of assessment literacy owned by every teacher by giving training or workshop regularly.

Summative Assessment Tasks

The other name for summative assessment is assessment of learning since its purposes is to record and report what students have learned. It provides summary of students' achievement at a particular point to give information for parents, other teachers, employers, further education institutions and the students themselves (Harlen, 2006). Summative assessment is usually represented by numbers or figures that determine the students' achievement level.

To do summative assessment, the assessment techniques such as formal tests, projects, term papers and final exam are used, and the purpose is to evaluate the outcomes of instruction by judging, placing and promoting students (Airasian, 2005). Some teachers have different view about judging their students' ability based on summative tasks, some reckon that giving summative tasks help them to know better about their students' achievement, whereas others feel that to give a lot of summative tasks makes their students upset, and the learning process is not enjoyable. However, Airasian (2005) points out that despite all different opinions the teachers have, they must use summative assessment

since it has important consequences for students. For example, one type of summative assessment, which is high-stakes assessment, must be completed by students for their graduation. The students, their parents and the public take this high-stakes assessment seriously, and the teacher need to prepare their students to be ready in doing the assessment.

Hence, the use of summative assessment has been around education world longer than formative assessment. Literatures support that in spite of many other types of assessment that focus on the process of learning, such as performance or authentic assessment and formative assessment, the position of summative assessment that focus on the outcome of learning is still significant. Therefore, it is a right decision for ISP assessment policy to include summative assessment tasks in their assessment practices. Many stakeholders such as school, parents, employer and others prefer to see students achievement in a shape of figures or number rather than words.

The Student as Learner

In general, learning is the process of collecting and interpreting any information by a learner. The role of students as learners has determined their position as the one who take responsibility of their own learning. The role of teacher is as facilitator and assessor that help guiding the students throughout learning process. In additions, the role of peers is also considered important especially in assessment process. Therefore, many literatures consider the concept of students' contribution and role to assessment. The idea of self-assessment and peer-assessment is emerged.

Students as learners need to know and be able

to assess their capability and incapability in certain skills. Previously, classroom assessment is only executed by teachers, but now, students are considered important to assess themselves and their peers. Airasian (2005) mentions that it is necessary for teachers to train students to self-assess by letting them ask effective self-assessment questions in order to be able to identify high quality task, evaluate their own task, become aware of their own learning strategies and set goals to improve them. Munns and Woodward (2006) point out that there are strong theoretical and practical relationships between student engagement and student self-assessment. They mentioned about Fair Go Project, action research into students engagement among low SES primary school students in Sydney. The results of the project show that when students are given opportunity to have voices in decision making process of learning and assessment, it helps in engaging student into learning because they feel as part of it.

Black and William (1998) argue that formative assessment and self-assessment are inevitably linked together. They state that to get a productive formative assessment, teacher have to ensure that their students have a clear picture of their target learning so that they will be able to assess themselves. Their own assessment can later be discussed with their teachers and peers.

The other important aspect for students as learners is peer-assessment. Topping (1998) defines peer assessment as a situation in which students judge their peers' learning product or outcome in terms of its amount, level, value, worth, quality or success. The judgement can be represented quantitatively through scores or grades and/or qualitatively by using written or oral feedback. Kollar and Fischer (2010) state that there are four activities in peer assessment. It usually begins with a task performance. Students are given tasks to complete or to perform. Then, the second activity is feedback provision. A student assesses his or her peer's task performance. The third activity is feedback reception, in where a student listens or read his or her peer's comments or assessment on the initial task performance. There is a possibility for students to discuss about the feedback. The last activity is revision. The performance task is revised based on student's feedback. There is an opportunity to revise task collaboratively or individually.

Thus, self-assessment and peer-assessment have their own position in assessment. Literatures support that it is essential for teacher to participate students in assessment process. ISP assessment policy also mention that student self-assessment and peer-assessment are valued and encouraged in their assessment practices. So, the decision ISP made to consider students' role as learners in gathering evidence and information to assess students is correct. There is no need to change this policy. All ISP need to do is to guarantee that this policy is applied in class, and the students are really given opportunity to involve in decision-making.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Conclusion

International School of Paris (ISP) applies assessment policy that is prepared by International Baccalaureate (IB). IB is considered as international educational institution that has much experience in

educational sector. It is believed that their assessment policy has gone through many revision and modification and has been consulted with many experts in certain area of educational assessment. So that, through this paper and supported by literatures, it can be concluded that the ISP assessment policy, especially the assessment practices, has included sufficient points of assessments and is able to produce comprehensive information about students' achievement. It is assured that if teachers can apply this policy appropriately, any achieved feedback might be able to help teachers and students to improve.

Suggestion

Thus, the main concern of assessment is to provide feedback for teachers and students and how they can interpret and use the feedback to improve their teaching practices and learning practices, respectively. Any feedback gained from any assessment can be used as formative or summative feedback. It depends on the context when assessing students. It is important to take into consideration that the reliability of certain assessment is related to teachers' assessment literacy and students' self-assessment and peer-assessment.

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