

## Diagnostic Assessment in Implementing Curriculum Merdeka on Senior High School

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### Abstract

*This research aims to examine the implementation of diagnostic assessment in the independent curriculum at SMA N 1 Sitiung. This research utilizes a Descriptive method with a Qualitative approach. The participants in this study are two English language teachers in the E phase at SMAN 1 Sitiung. Data were collected from these two English language teachers through audio-recorded interviews. The researcher employed nine research questions using indicators from the diagnostic assessment implementation stage to understand how assessment is conducted by English language teachers. Based on the research findings, it was discovered that diagnostic assessment plays a crucial role for teachers in identifying students' weaknesses and challenges. In terms of implementation, it aligns with the procedures for applying diagnostic assessment to students in English language learning. However, based on data collected through teaching modules, diagnostic assessment results for students, and interview transcripts, it was found that teachers are effectively applying diagnostic assessment in accordance with the existing procedures to identify weaknesses and measure students' abilities.*

**keywords:** Merdeka Curriculum, Diagnostic Assessment

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana penerapan penilaian diagnostic dalam kurikulum merdeka di SMA N 1 Sitiung Jenis penelitian ini menggunakan metode Descriptive melalui pendekatan Qualitative. Partisipan penelitian ini ada 2 guru bahasa inggris fase E di SMAN 1 Sitiung. Data dikumpulkan dari 2 guru bahas inggris melalui proses wawancara dengan perekam suara. Peneliti menggunakan 9 pertanyaan penelitian dengan menggunakan indikator dari tahap penerapan penilaian diagnostic untuk melihat bagaimana penilaian di lakukan oleh guru bahasa inggris. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ditemukan bahwa penilaian diagnostic berperan penting bagi guru dalam mengetahui kelemahan serta kendala yang di hadapi siswa, dari aspek pelaksanaan sudah sesuai dengan prosedur penerapan penilaian diagnostic terhadap siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa inggris namun berdasarkan pengumpulan data melalui modul ajar, Hasil penilaian diagnostik terhadap siswa dan transkrip wawancara ditemukan bahwa guru sudah mampu menerapkan penilaian diagnostic sesuai dengan prosedur yang ada untuk mengetahui kelemahan serta mengukur kemampuan siswa.

**Kata kunci:** Merdeka Curriculum, Penilaian Diagnostik

## INTRODUCTION

In an era of constant change, the enhancement of the education system is a pressing necessity. In this context, the curriculum plays an immensely pivotal role in shaping successful education. A robust curriculum can mold students with resilient personalities, capable of functioning in an ever-evolving world. It is noteworthy that the curriculum is dynamic and can be adjusted to meet the evolving needs and developments of students throughout their learning journey.

With the rapid advancements in technology, students now have greater access to various types of learning media. This has driven changes in the curriculum to align with the needs of students in the digital age. The transition from the previous curriculum to the

Merdeka Curriculum was prompted not only by the ineffectiveness of traditional learning methods but also by the loss of learning time during the pandemic. Additionally, factors such as limited internet access and devices have contributed to reduced student motivation. The Merdeka Curriculum has been designed to ensure that it remains in sync with technological advancements and caters to the diverse needs of students. In this effort, Indonesia has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, which provides freedom and autonomy to schools, teachers, and students.

The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational framework that emphasizes core subjects, character development, and student competencies with the goal of nurturing children's interests and talents. Within the

Merdeka Curriculum, students' learning achievements are also evaluated through various methods, including academic assessments and non-academic evaluations. There are three main types of assessments within the Merdeka Curriculum: formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments. This research focuses on diagnostic assessment, which is conducted at the outset of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum to identify students' weaknesses and challenges. This proactive approach facilitates customized learning according to each student's learning needs.

Diagnostic assessment is a specific component within the Merdeka Curriculum aimed at identifying and understanding students' characteristics, competencies, strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. This facilitates the design of learning experiences that align with diverse competencies and student conditions, as outlined in Ministerial Regulation No. 719/P/2020. Diagnostic assessment is divided into two categories: cognitive and non-cognitive assessments. Cognitive diagnostic assessment aims to demonstrate students' strengths and weaknesses concerning their knowledge structure and processing skills.

Given the significance of this diagnostic approach within the Merdeka Curriculum, this research aims to investigate how teachers apply cognitive diagnostic assessment in evaluating students' weaknesses and challenges in the learning process. By gaining a deeper understanding of the implementation of cognitive diagnostic assessment, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educators and schools in designing more effective educational programs that cater to the diverse needs of students in the era of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## METHOD

The research methodology employed in this study is a qualitative approach, chosen due to the primary aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and experiences of English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Sitiung in the context of using

diagnostic assessments in their teaching practices. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore the factors influencing assessment implementation and to comprehend the teachers' viewpoints. The research population consists of English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Sitiung who have implemented diagnostic assessments in their teaching processes to enhance learning effectiveness. Purposive sampling was used to select two English teachers who have significant experience in implementing diagnostic assessments, representing variations in practices and perspectives related to diagnostic assessment use in the learning process.

The research instruments employed in this study are semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with prepared questions relevant to diagnostic assessment, allowing the teachers to explain their practices, the challenges they encounter, and whether they adhere to established procedures. Document analysis involves collecting lesson plans, assessment samples, and class notes that reflect the use of diagnostic assessment by teachers. Interview data will be transcribed and analyzed using content analysis, while document analysis data will support the findings from the interviews.

By combining interviews and document analysis, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of diagnostic assessments in English teaching at SMA Negeri 1 Sitiung.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we present the key findings of our research, which focused on the implementation of diagnostic assessment in the "Merdeka Curriculum" for English language learning. Our study aimed to gain insights into how teachers effectively employ diagnostic assessment to enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes within this curriculum.

One of the notable findings is that teachers display a high degree of thoughtfulness in selecting appropriate test

questions. Their choices are carefully aligned with the intended learning objectives and desired outcomes, which resonates with the principles of educational assessment, particularly the notion of alignment as advocated by Biggs (1996). By using the right types of test questions, teachers not only assess students' understanding but also cater to various dimensions of comprehension. Furthermore, teachers employ a strategic approach in designing assessment questions. These questions are crafted to encourage students to engage deeply with the subject matter, reflecting the principles of formative assessment outlined by Black and Wiliam (1998). The diversity of question types allows teachers to identify areas of confusion and address misconceptions effectively. Additionally, teachers emphasize the measurement of deep understanding by designing questions that go beyond the scope of factual knowledge. This approach aligns with the principles of higher-order thinking assessments and is reminiscent of Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), which categorizes higher-order cognitive skills as crucial components of comprehensive learning. Moreover, our findings highlight the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment. Teachers prioritize the establishment of an atmosphere characterized by comfort and enthusiasm, echoing the social constructivist theories, especially Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). This environment encourages students to feel secure and motivated during assessment activities.

Furthermore, teachers provide guidance and support during assessment sessions. They explain the types of questions and offer relevant examples, emphasizing the assessment as a valuable learning opportunity, consistent with the concept of assessment for learning, as emphasized by Black and Wiliam (1998). Our research also reveals the adaptive strategies teachers employ when students encounter profound difficulties. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory (Vygotsky, 1978), as teachers provide scaffolded support tailored to

students' levels of understanding. Additionally, teachers offer post-assessment support based on analyzed results. This aligns with differentiated instruction principles advocated by Tomlinson (2001). Teachers adapt their teaching methods and provide additional assistance to address specific challenges identified through assessment outcomes.

Moreover, teachers provide feedback that highlights strengths and suggests practical improvements, aligning with feedback theories, particularly Hattie and Timperley's (2007) notion of informative feedback. Finally, teachers actively engage students in improvement planning based on assessment results. This collaborative approach empowers students to take an active role in their learning journey, aligning with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1991).

In conclusion, the findings from this study underscore the pedagogically sound approaches employed by teachers in implementing diagnostic assessment within the Merdeka curriculum. These approaches are aligned with established educational theories and contribute to the creation of a dynamic and supportive learning environment that fosters student growth and development.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of diagnostic assessment plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum in high schools. Through the stages of preparation, implementation, and follow-up, teachers are empowered to identify students' needs and potentials more deeply, facilitate improved interactions between teachers and students, and provide valuable guidance for further development. The application of diagnostic assessment aids educators in measuring students' understanding in a more holistic and profound manner. The preparatory phase assists teachers in designing assessment questions and tasks aligned with curriculum content and learning objectives. The utilization of diagnostic assessment allows teachers to better

comprehend students' comprehension levels of subject matter. Subsequently, the follow-up stage enables teachers to design instructional strategies more tailored to the identified students' needs.

### SUGGESTION

To enhance the successful implementation of diagnostic assessment in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, several recommendations can be considered. Firstly, providing comprehensive training and professional development opportunities for teachers on the principles and techniques of diagnostic assessment will empower them to effectively utilize this approach. Secondly, fostering a collaborative environment among educators to share best practices and experiences related to diagnostic assessment can significantly contribute to its successful integration. Additionally, creating a repository of diverse diagnostic assessment tools and resources that align with different subjects and learning levels would further support teachers in designing appropriate assessment tasks. Lastly, continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process, coupled with regular feedback from both teachers and students, can lead to refinements and improvements in the utilization of diagnostic assessment techniques.

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