



Exploring Vocational High School EFL Teacher's Understanding of Student-Centered Learning Assessment

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Abstract. Since the *Kurikulum Merdeka* was implemented to respond to the learning loss students experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, student-centered learning assessment (SCLA) has become a significant part of current Indonesian senior high school educational initiatives. However, previous research found that teachers need more understanding of the concept of SCLA. Thus, this study explores vocational high school EFL teacher's understanding of SCLA in implementing problem-based learning in the *Kurikulum Merdeka* aligned with the theory from Jonassen (2000). This qualitative case study employed an interview as the main instrument to discover an understanding from one teacher. Based on the data analysis through thematic analysis, the findings revealed that the teacher had a fair understanding of the student-centered learning assessment's concepts, advantages, and obstacles. Nevertheless, the teacher still needed to learn more about SCLA. Although not all of the research findings were relevant to the previous study and the theory, the teacher reasonably implemented the student-centered learning assessment while improving the future teaching- learning process, particularly the assessment system. Moreover, there is an expectation for the school, principals, and other stakeholders to pay attention to providing teachers with training regarding student-centered learning assessment. In addition, teachers are expected to be willing to stay up-to-date with the change of curriculum, including the shift in the assessment form, teachers' role, and learning to understand the current curriculum and the learning methods.

Keywords: student-centered learning assessment; EFL teacher's understanding; *Kurikulum Merdeka*

Introduction

Student-centered learning assessment (SCLA) constitutes a significant component of current Indonesian senior high school educational initiatives, primarily since the *Kurikulum Merdeka* was implemented as a response to overcome the learning loss faced by students during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, little research has been conducted on English teachers' understanding of SCLA in Indonesia, especially in vocational high schools that aim to produce students with real-life skills after graduating.

The curriculum changes lead to a different learning process, including the assessment, which is also considered the core component of teaching and learning. The result of students' assessment during their learning process will subsequently present a meaningful influence on the learning quality and teaching instruction (Pastore & Andrade, 2019).

Furthermore, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is related to objective-based education, which emphasizes the student-centered approach through problem-based learning. However, the change in the national curriculum also significantly affects the assessment in the learning process (Wahyuni & Sugihartini, 2021). The current issue regarding assessment refers to the dilemma faced by teachers regarding the assessment policy in problem-based learning. The teachers lack confidence in conducting assessments due to their limited knowledge and skills

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about the current curriculum and the learning method (Luthfiyyah, R., Basyari, Wariin, & Dwiniasih, 2020).

In addition, teachers in Indonesia possess a moderate level of assessment literacy (Pujiawati, 2019; Fitriyah, Masitoh, & Widiati, 2022). Moreover, since each school has a specific policy for assessment, it might force the teacher to adapt to the system even though it is unfitting to the student's competency and situation. In addition, the curriculum change in Indonesia affects the teachers' performance during the teaching- learning process. A study (Yuhastina et al., 2020) found that teachers did not recognize that they were utilizing a pedagogical paradigm (education for children) with high school students who had reached maturity. When they shifted to the Kurikulum Merdeka, they were unaware that they should employ the andragogy paradigm (education for adults). This finding is in line with the research (Wahyuni et al., 2020) that discovered the existence of a gap between vocational high school teachers' competencies and the ideal ones. Additionally, although the Kurikulum Merdeka relies upon student-centred learning and relates to problem-based learning (Purba, 2022), it cannot be neglected that teachers possess little understanding about how to assess students in problem-based learning class with the current curriculum. (Qolbiyah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, much research in the Indonesian context mentions the positive influence of problem-based learning (Putri, 2022; Hidayati & Wagiran, 2020; Novalinda, 2020). However, more research is needed to discover the quality of problem-based learning implementation, particularly on how teachers comprehend the student- centred learning assessment form.

Some previous relevant research regarding teachers' understanding of student-centred learning assessment indicated some evidence to support this present study. Research findings assert that the lack of a standard definition for student-centred learning assessment in literature resulted in a complication in understanding teachers' definitions of student-centred learning assessment (Islam et al., 2021). Another research also reveals that each teacher has different ways of defining the term student-centred learning assessment (Komatsu et al., 2021).

Based on some research results conducted and elaborated by the other researcher, the student-centred learning assessment becomes one of the supporting aspects of successful problem-based learning implementation. However, not all teachers understand student-centred learning assessment. Therefore, based on the elaborated issues, this study explores vocational high school teachers' understanding of student-centred learning assessment in the Kurikulum Merdeka following the theoretical foundation of Jonassen (2000) and previous related research.

Based on the pre-observation result of the teacher, it is shown that the teacher was unsure of the student-centered learning assessment term. Therefore, through the qualitative case study, this present research focuses on answering the question: How is a vocational high school teacher's understanding of student-centered learning assessment aligned with the theory in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

Based on the background of the study and the formulation of the problem, the objectives of this study are divided into two parts, namely general objectives and specific objectives, which are described as follows: General objectives: to explore vocational high school EFL teacher's understanding of student-centered learning assessment in implementing problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Specific objectives: to investigate the suitability of vocational high school teachers' understanding of student-centered learning with the theory of problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

In addition, the following are the explanations of key terms that will be used in this research to avoid misunderstanding: Vocational high school: Education that enables students to gain the knowledge, skills, and competencies that are particular to a specialty occupation. Student-centered learning assessment: The assessment requires the active participation of students in establishing goals for their learning and development, reviewing their progress toward those goals, and determining how to fill in any gaps. Problem-based learning: A teaching method in which challenging real-world situations facilitate students' learning of concepts and principles

rather than the direct presentation of facts and concepts. Kurikulum Merdeka: Curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning. It focuses on student-centered learning by giving the freedom for students to choose their own learning.

Theoretical Framework

Student- centered learning assessment (SCLA) in the problem-based learning

SCLA requires students to create learning objectives and identify resources and activities to accomplish them (Jonassen, 2000). This technique begins with a central question that creates a need for certain information and activities, and students learn by responding to that question (Jonassen, 2000). Learner-centered teaching balances grading and learning through evaluation and involves pupils more in learning and assessment (Weimer, 2002a, b).

Like any excellent assessment, SCLA sets demanding developmental learning goals. It gives students, instructors, districts, and states feedback on deepening learning. It is valid, reliable, and practical in the current setting (McMillan, 2019). SCLA has many defining traits such as individualized, focused on learning and progress, motivating, able to engage students in regulating their learning, and informative and valuable to various audiences (Abdigapbarova & Zhiyenbayeva, 2022).

SCLA involves differentiating learning aims, assignments, and activities, offering targeted feedback on students' learning (alone or in groups), and changing teaching and learning processes as needed. SCLA emphasizes 3 growth and learning. It measures and reports student learning, but it does more than that. Student-centred assessment fosters learning and growth by giving students, teachers, and others feedback on what they need to advance toward the learning aim. Student-centred assessment mirrors modern notions of formative assessment in that it is a learning moment, not merely grading, ranking, or sorting (Dong et al., 2019).

SCLA involves students setting learning and growth goals, monitoring progress, and addressing gaps. Self- regulated learning is an essential skill for 21st-century education and professional success. Self-assessment, peer evaluation, and portfolios can help students acquire content and develop self-regulation skills (Dong et al., 2019).

Understanding of student- centered learning assessment (SCLA)

Only some studies have examined English instructors' SCLA knowledge and practice. Din and Wheatley (2007) reviewed 28 SCLA research; none were TESOL-related. This review's key finding is that SCLA has been independently defined. Pederson and Liu (2003) revealed that teachers have different definitions of SCLA. In Oman, only Emenyeonu (2012) studied student-centered learning assessment. This study examined the obstacles to SCLA implementation in applied science colleges. The study found that teachers' and students' negative perceptions of SCLA limit its use. Emenyeonu (2012) said that before implementing SCLA in Oman, teachers' beliefs and behaviours must be investigated. The present study responds to this need to increase SCLA understanding in problem-based learning.

In student-centred learning, students may choose not only what to study but also how and why that topic can be interesting (Rahman et al., 2021). In addition, students' worldviews are significant, relevant, and suitable. SCLA's tenets as active rather than passive learning, student responsibility and accountability, learner autonomy, and mutual respect and interdependence between teacher and learner (Vadivel, et al. (2021)

Students' involvement in assessment practices

Several schools and universities use summative written exams. Marks and grades generated through such assessments are used to regulate students (Harrison et al., 2014). Formative assessments that emphasize feedback promote a student-centred approach. Students receive formative assessments during the course or semester to help them develop. Formative evaluation includes feedback on essays, portfolios, presentations, and tasks (Dixson & Worrell, 2016).

Students should be active in selecting and constructing assessment assignments,

discussing criteria, and self- or peer-assessing (Abdigapbarova & Zhiyenbayeva, 2022). Self-assessment allows learners to evaluate their performance during and after learning (Andrade & Brown, 2016). Self-assessment helps students take responsibility for their learning.

Student-centered in the Kurikulum Merdeka

Based on the Permendikbud No. 3 Tahun 2020 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi, part four about the standard of learning process in from the article 11 paragraph 1, the characteristics of the learning process in Kurikulum Merdeka as referred to in Article 10 paragraph (2) consists of interactive, holistic, integrative, scientific, contextual, thematic, effective, collaborative, and student-centered.

The Kurikulum Merdeka is a policy of the Minister of Education and Culture. Its goal is to get students to learn different knowledge that will help them get jobs (Qolbiyah, et al., 2022) Then the Kurikulum Merdeka policy is implemented, it shifts the focus from a rigid, content-based curriculum to a flexible, learning-outcomes-based curriculum. This helps prepare students to be independent adults. The Kurikulum Merdeka policy, collaboration and cooperation with partners or other parties are related to the scientific field of the study program and participation in supporting the desired learning outcomes. So, learning innovation must also teach students how to solve problems, think critically, work together, communicate, and care about others. This can be done through methods like problem-based learning and project-based team learning (Agung & Kumala, 2022).

Learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka provides challenges and opportunities for the development of creativity, capacity, personality, and needs of students, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge through reality and dynamics fields such as ability requirements, real problems, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets, and achievements (Agung & Kumala, 2022).

Material and Method

The main purpose of this research is to vocational high school EFL teacher's understanding of student-centered learning assessment in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Based on the research objectives, this research uses a case study approach with a qualitative method to answer the problem formulation in this study. The case raised aligns with this research because this case does not aim to generalize a population but rather to gain a more specific and in- depth understanding of a case (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The present research used the data obtained from the interview as the primary data, followed by the triangulation. Therefore, the data obtained from the interview will be associated with and analyzed based on the theory and findings of previous research. Because this research uses the case study method, the researcher only acts as an observer or observer, and the researcher will not carry out or provide any intervention to the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This role is done to make it easier for researchers to create interpretations of vocational high school EFL teacher's understanding of student-centered learning assessment in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

This present study collected the data through a semi-structured interview, considered a more naturalistic data collection technique, so this data collection tool might help expand the scope of understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Alshenqeeti, 2014). In this case, researchers used a sole primary instrument that was reliable and had been tested for validity by Orabah (2022) and Patria (2015), in which the questions were considered sufficient to be used for answering the research problems. The semi-structured interview was used to obtain data about vocational high school EFL teacher's understanding of student-centered learning assessment in the Kurikulum Merdeka. The interview session was conducted once on December 5, 2022, around 55 minutes. The medium for conducting the interview was face-to-face since the participants and researcher were in the same areas. The interview questions generally cover the following points: Teachers' understanding of student-centered learning assessment in general. The example of student-centered learning assessment used in problem-based learning by the teacher. Teachers' experience of using student-centred learning assessment in problem-based learning. The mentioned points above developed into

three themes, three indicators and 12 specific questions. The researcher recorded the interview and wrote down some main points so that the data obtained is easier to analyze in the further steps.

Interviews will be used as the validation tools regarding teacher's understanding, perceptions, opinions, knowledge, and behavior toward the student-centered learning assessment. In analyzing the interview data, the researcher used one of the inductive qualitative analyses, thematic analysis. The thematic analysis required the researcher to make sense of students' perceptions or opinions and highlight it before the researcher found their connection to the other research instrument. The interview data analysis begins with transcribing to make the analysis easier. In addition, the researcher will also code or categorize several themes that will frequently occur in the interview. Then, the researcher reviewed those themes, followed by defining and giving their name for them to prevent confusion.

Results and Discussion

Results

This research aims to reveal vocational high school teacher's understanding of students-centered learning assessment in implementing problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. This present study revealed some findings through interviews. Below is a description of the results obtained. Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka as Indonesia's current curriculum leads teachers to construct a learning environment, including the assessment which focuses on students. Specifically, the Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes student-centered learning through the project- or problem-based learning methods. Therefore, teachers should evaluate students' competency through student-centered learning assessment.

This present research revealed that the teacher already implemented the student-centered learning assessment even though she did not initially realize and understand the student-centered learning assessment term. This finding was shown when the teacher claimed that the assignments she proposed for students were unrelated to the student-centered learning assessment since she only focused on writing and speaking tasks. She asked for clarification regarding the student-centered learning assessment term. "I am not going there yet (student-centered learning assessment) because the assessment is still from written assignments or assessments from their speaking. What does a student-centered learning assessment form?" (Source: Interview).

The teacher might not recognize student-centered learning assessment implementation in her class since it was her first-time teaching in the Kurikulum Merdeka. Besides, while doing the teaching practicum in 2021, Indonesia still used the former curriculum, Kurikulum 13. Thus, there was a curriculum change currently, and as a result, she still needed to learn and understand the difference between both curricula.

Furthermore, despite the unawareness of the teacher in implementing student-centered learning assessment, she already assessed students following the theory of student-centered learning assessment. The teacher explained that the student-centered learning assessment she assigned to her students in the class was in the form of writing (exposition text) and speaking (expressing opinion). "As an assessment, they wrote the exposition text. I gave them indicators for making the text, what should be included, and how many sentences they had to make in the exposition text. I am curious to know whether it is already a student-centered learning assessment. For this semester, my goal is that they can write well, so the orientation of the assignments I give is writing. Moreover, there is no practical exam on speaking yet, only for daily scores." (Source: Interview) This finding indicates that the teacher implemented various student-centered learning assessments by assessing more than one language skill in English in her class: students' writing and speaking skills.

Besides, the teacher had the knowledge related to the assessment rubric she applied in her class. In assessing students' writing, the teacher used the assessment writing rubric, a holistic assessment based on the book she learned while she was in undergraduate study and

teaching practicum. In addition, she claimed that she set a lower standard in assessing students' writing since, in the Kurikulum Merdeka, there is no passing grade needed by students to fulfill. Instead, the teacher and teacher community are the stakeholders in setting the passing grade. She added that she could not be an idealist in implementing student-centered learning. Thus, she should consult with the senior teacher regarding the passing grade. She recognized that setting a higher passing grade would make it difficult for students to complete. "However, I lowered the assessment standard because the Kurikulum Merdeka does not have a KKM. So, there is an agreement between the teacher community; for example, the passing grade for the eleventh grade is 78. In student-centered situations, I cannot be idealistic because a score of 80 is different from the student's ability, so I have to consult with senior teachers first." (Source: Interview). This finding signifies that the teacher properly assessed student-centred learning assessment through their writing since the teacher had a rubric as the guidance to evaluate students' work.

Moreover, the teacher believed it would be too ideal for reaching the learning objectives in the Kurikulum Merdeka, especially when she needed to be more familiar with the current curriculum. In addition, the teacher recognized that based on the student's competency in English, a student-centered learning assessment could not ensure students' success in fulfilling the learning objectives. "Based on the student's condition, it would be too idealistic to achieve the output of the independent curriculum. There are many considerations from students; it is also rather difficult to assess to achieve learning objectives. Moreover, because I am not yet familiar with the independent curriculum, it turns out that the implementation of the independent curriculum in a real situation is different." (Source: Interview). This finding indicates that the student-centred learning assessment implementation in the class might not be the sole component to the student's success in reaching the learning objectives.

Moreover, the teacher believed that it is important to understand the student-centred learning assessment in implementing problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. She argued that student-centred learning assessment might encourage students' active participation, understanding, and self-confidence in the learning process. "It is necessary to understand student-centered learning assessment, even though there are too many theories so it gets confusing. But actually, it's necessary because the student-centered learning assessment invites students to be more active, besides that they understand the learning material and also build their self-confidence" (Source: Interview). Based on this finding, the teacher realized that student-centred learning assessment plays an important role in learning and is beneficial for students for several reasons.

The findings revealed that student-centered learning assessment encourages students' active participation in the class. The teacher claimed that students tended to be more active in group assignments rather than individually. While in the group, students were talkative even though they used fluent English. However, in an individual task, students needed clarification and discussed it with their friends. Therefore, the teacher preferred to assign students to work in a group. "The active role of students appears during group assignments, so they talk a lot and are active even though students are not fully able to use English fluently (South Jakarta English) If the task is, individually, they are confused, in the end, they will discuss it again with friends." (Source: Interview).

Based on the findings, it can be inferred that student-centred learning assessment might be effective in terms of group rather than individual since there was a difference in students' responses. As a result, the teacher preferred to instruct the students to work in a group, although the assessment was still individual.

The present study also denoted that the student-centred learning assessment led students to establish their learning independently. In general, the teacher allowed students to create their learning freely but with a particular limitation determined by herself. "In the exposition chapter, I gave students five specific topics (smoking, bullying, school, social media, and playing games), and they were free to choose any topic as long as it did not come out of the five topics. I am afraid they will get confused because they still need clarification even if they try these five topics." (Source: Interview).

The finding inferred that the teacher understood the student-centred learning assessment emphasized students' active participation in learning rather than the teachers. Therefore, giving students five themes in writing exposition texts might encourage students to be creative. In addition, student-centred learning assessment also stimulates students to be creative and responsible for their learning. The teacher asserted that she gave punishment for every late submission and every indication of plagiarism by giving a minus score. Therefore, the students tended to submit the assignment on time and create original works. "Student-centred learning assessment demands students to be responsible with their work. I threatened them that I would reduce their score if they submitted assignments late. I found students who plagiarized, I told them to make a new exposition and think about what punishment they deserved for learning the language; then the students decided to make sentences in English" (Source: Interview).

The finding indicated that student-centered learning assessment affects students' behavior in which they become aware of the responsibility in their learning by submitting on time. In addition, the students were aware of creating original work by avoiding plagiarism.

Additionally, student-centered learning assessment stimulated students to think and analyze. The teacher argued that writing exposition text triggered students to think and analyze based on one of the five topics they had chosen. Students needed to think about creating coherence and cohesion exposition text. Besides, students also needed to analyze and revise their work or their peers' work. "Student-centered learning assessment encourages students to think and analyze. Especially in the exposition chapter. The students were asked to make exposition texts according to the five topics provided, then they were given revisions and evaluated by their friends." (Source: Interview) This finding indicated that the teacher stimulated students' thinking and analyzing skills through student-centered learning assessment. A better assessment score can be achieved by creating excellent exposition text under the text's coherence and cohesion, followed by analyzing and evaluating the other students' work.

On the other hand, although the student-centered learning assessment has many positive impacts, it does not encourage students to solve authentic problems. This fact was revealed since the teacher did not involve a department-related problem in their learning. "Student-centered learning assessment did not encourage students to solve the exact problem; since students did not discuss the problem more profoundly in writing exposition text about social media. They only understood the problem and why the problem became a concern." (Source: Interview). This finding might become an obstacle to student-centered learning assessment implementation. The teacher had difficulty providing authentic problems related to the student's department.

In general, this present study revealed that in student-centered learning assessment, the teacher did not compare each student to one another. The teacher agreed that she observed her students and looked at their progress instead of their final result. In addition, the teacher avoided comparing students with their peers, and she preferred to compare one student's progress from the beginning until the end. "I see their progress every day. For example, student A, usually when doing mediocre assignments, why does it suddenly turn out to be good? Uh, it turns out he is cheating. So, compare it to the ability of student A who used to be with the current one—not comparing the ability of student A with other students." (Source: Interview) This finding inferred that the teacher knew student-centered learning assessment implementation in problem-based learning. It is not necessary to compare students with others in student-centered learning assessment. Instead, the teacher needs to compare each student's individual progress to observe whether the student has improved in their previous learning. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the teacher understands the concept, benefits and obstacles of student-centered learning assessment in problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka.

Discussion

In general, most of the findings were in line with the theoretical foundation by Jonassen (2000) and other related research on student-centered learning assessment in problem-based learning. The research findings showed that the teacher understood the concept, advantages, and obstacles of student-centered learning assessment.

Teacher's Understanding of SCLA Concept

Servant-Miklos et al. (2019) and Jonnasen and Hung (2015) believe that the teaching-learning process in problem-based learning should be emphasized to students. The teacher should reduce the lecturers' sessions and focus on encouraging students as the center of learning. Since the learning process relies on students' active participation, the teacher should consider using student-centered learning assessment to evaluate her students' performance in learning English. This present study agreed with the previous related study since the teacher used student-centered learning assessment in problem-based learning.

However, not all teachers understand how to evaluate students through student-centered learning assessment. The previous research by Emenyeonu (2012) revealed that teachers have different definitions of student-centered learning assessment. In addition, it is considered necessary to explore teachers' beliefs and behavior regarding student-centered learning assessment. On the other hand, based on the research findings, it can be drawn that the teacher already implemented student-centered learning assessment to evaluate her students' although the teacher asked for clarification regarding the terms of student-centered assessment. She felt unfamiliar with the term, especially since it was her first-time teaching with the Kurikulum Merdeka, which relies on a student-centered approach.

Abdigapbarova and Zhiyenbayeva (2022) argued that student-centered learning assessment has many defining traits, such as individualized, focused learning and progress and being able to engage students in regulating their learning. This present study was in line with the previous study. In problem-based learning, the teacher used student-centered learning assessment through writing exposition text and evaluating students' speaking skills by instructing them to provide opinions on discussed issues. By assessing students through writing exposition text, students can focus on creating the text individually, while the teacher can also assess students' competence individually without comparing them to other students. Additionally, learning in the Kurikulum 8 Merdeka provides challenges and opportunities for the development of creativity, capacity, personality, and needs of students, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge through reality and dynamics fields such as ability requirements, real problems, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets, and achievements. Besides, research by Weimer (2002a, b) discovered that in student-centered, the teacher should balance the grading and learning through evaluation and involves pupils more in learning and assessment.

Furthermore, the teacher in this research showed her understanding of student-centered learning assessment in which she assessed each student differently. Thus, the teacher did not compare students' English competence to the others, but she compared students' progress. In addition, student-centered learning assessment seems more logical and reasonable. Different students possess different competence in learning English; thus, student-centered learning assessment allows the teacher to assess students' competency in detail without comparing them to other students. Student-centered learning assessment respects students with low, medium, and high English proficiency. This finding was in line with the study by Dong et al. (2019), who argues that student-centered learning assessment focuses on growth and learning and mirrors modern notions of formative assessment in that it is a learning moment, not merely grading, ranking, or sorting (Dong et al., 2019). Thus, when the teachers evaluate students through a student-centered learning assessment, it does not push students to achieve great scores compared with their peers but encourages them to focus on understanding their learning.

Overall, the teacher in this present study understood the concept of student-centered learning assessment and how to implement it in problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. The teacher used SCLA to assess students' writing and speaking skills through

exposition text and opinion chapters. The teacher looked at students' competence individually instead of comparing it with other students.

Teacher's Understanding of SCLA Advantages

This study's finding denoted that teacher understood the advantages of student-centered learning assessment. The teacher also agreed that teachers must understand the concept of student-centered learning assessment, specifically for those who implement problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka since SCLA benefits teachers and students. Additionally, the concept in the Kurikulum Merdeka relies on simplifying teachers' teaching activities as the learning method is focused on students.

The teacher claimed that student-centered learning assessment promotes students to engage actively during the learning process. The teacher revealed that students were more engaged in the group rather than individual assignments. However, still, the teacher assessed students' competence individually even though students were discussing in a group. This finding was in line with the previous research from Dong et al. (2019), who discovered that differentiating learning objectives, tasks, and activities, providing focused feedback on students' understanding (alone or in groups), and altering teaching and learning procedures as necessary are all part of SCLA. Thus, it does not matter whether the assignment is done individually or in a group. However, in the student-centered learning assessment, the teacher must evaluate students' understanding individually to provide a reliable and valid assessment of the students.

In addition, student-centered learning assessment helps students to understand the material since SCLA aims to investigate students' comprehension individually. Student-centered learning assessments also encourage students to be confident about their work without comparing it to others, especially when students can learn independently with the teacher as the guide to revise or correct their work. This finding was in line with the concept in the Kurikulum Merdeka and problem-based learning in which the learning activities should emphasize the students' active participation. Learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka offers students opportunities and challenges to develop their creativity, capacity, personalities, and needs as well as independence in seeking and finding knowledge through reality and dynamics fields including ability requirements, real-world issues, social interaction, teamwork, self-management, performance demands, targets, and accomplishments (Agung & Kumala, 2022).

Moreover, the teacher assessed students' creativity by asking students about daily problems that are considered related to the student's life. This finding is supported by Jonassen's (2000) theory which indicates that students-centered learning assessment initiates by proposing central questions to students. It is expected that the problem raised by the teacher will generate a need for a certain set of information and activities, and the students learn by responding to that question. This study's findings also showed that the teacher used student-centered learning assessment to promote students' creativity and responsibility. During the learning, students were required to provide original thoughts on their work by avoiding plagiarism. This finding was supported by the research of Vadivel et al. (2021), who believe that student-centered learning assessment relies on active rather than passive learning; thus, students are expected to be responsible and accountable.

However, it may be better for the teacher to learn more about student-centered learning assessment. The teacher should establish other kinds of student-centered learning assessments. In this study, during the teaching-learning process, the teacher only used writing exposition text and expressing the opinion as the student-centered learning assessment since she believed those two learning chapters could benefit students' future needs. The assessment proposed by the teacher in this present study was in line with the research by Dixson and Worrel 9 (2016), who claims that formative assessment aims to promote a student-centered approach and it includes essays (writing exposition) and presentation (giving opinion in this current study). Nevertheless, still, the teacher might use other types of formative assessment. Therefore, the teacher may be better if she also teaches

and assesses students' problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and empathy.

Teacher's Understanding of SCLA Obstacles

The findings in this present study indicated the similarity with a study by Dixson and Worrel (2016), who stated that in student-centered learning assessment, the evaluation includes feedback on essays, portfolios, presentations, and tasks. However, the teacher found barriers to implementing student-centered learning assessment. Considering most of the students with low and medium proficiency in English, the teacher decided to limit the discussed topic in the exposition text to avoid misunderstanding among students. This finding is quite contradicted by the research of Rahman et al. (2021), who believe that in student-centered learning assessment, students may decide not just what to study but also why and how a particular topic is intriguing. Based on the finding and the previous research, the teacher may reconsider allowing students to choose a suitable topic for writing exposition text since when students write on the topic they are interested in, it may encourage students' motivation in learning.

On the other hand, this study found that the teacher should have included students in deciding on learning assessments. Instead, the teacher determines the learning assessment by the agreement among the English teacher community. This finding is irrelevant to a study (Abdigapbarova & Zhiyenbayeva, 2022) which argues that students are expected to take an active role in selecting and constructing assessment assignments, discussing criteria, and either self- or peer-evaluating their performance. In this study, the teacher revealed that she did not ask students to do self-assessments or peer-evaluating since the students could not do so. The students needed to gain knowledge in revising their peers even though they still needed feedback on their work from the teacher. In contrast, research by Andrade and Brown (2016) discovered that through self-assessment, learners could evaluate their performance both during and after the learning process. Students can better accept responsibility for their education when they engage in self-evaluation. When the teacher in this present study does not provide students to do self-assessment, it may disallow the opportunity for the students to understand what they have learned and did not understand during the learning. Thus, self-assessment or peer evaluation is necessary so students can learn to evaluate the learning process, as stated by Dong et al. (2019), who believe that self-regulated learning through student-centered learning assessment is crucial for 21st-century education and professional success. Students can learn material and gain self-control skills by using self-assessment, peer evaluation, and portfolios.

Moreover, Agung and Kumala (2022) stated that the Kurikulum Merdeka curriculum offers opportunities and challenges for students to develop their creativity, capacity, personalities, needs, and independence in seeking and acquiring knowledge through reality and dynamic fields, including real problems. However, the present research findings showed contradictory facts that even though the teacher understood the concept and advantages of student-centered learning assessment, it took much work to ensure students' success in achieving the learning objectives through SCLA. The teacher felt it was challenging to include real-world problems related to students majoring in.

To sum up, the teacher experienced barriers in implementing student-centered learning assessment since she felt it was too ideal to be applied in the current situation, with most students having low to medium English proficiency.

Conclusion

This present study aims to discover the vocational high school teacher's understanding of student-centered learning assessment in implementing problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka and investigate the suitability of vocational high school teachers' understanding with the theory of student-centered learning assessment in problem-based learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka. The present research partially met the research objective through the triangulation of some shreds of evidence through interview data with the previous

related study and relevant theory from Jonassen (2000) and previous related research. In Indonesia, problem-based learning has become a new way of teaching concerning the Kurikulum Merdeka; it may take some teachers time to grow accustomed to it, explicitly when implementing student-centred learning assessments to evaluate students' performance in English. Overall, the teacher had a fair understanding of the concept, advantages, and obstacles of student-centred learning assessment. Nevertheless, the teacher still needed to learn more about student-centred learning assessment. This study shows that even though, in the beginning, the teacher needed clarification about the term student-centred learning assessment, she had already implemented it in the class despite the difficulties faced by the teacher in assessing students. In conclusion, although not all of the research findings were relevant to the previous study and the theory, the teacher reasonably implemented the student-centred learning assessment while still needs to be improved in the future teaching-learning process.

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