

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, problem identification, purpose of the study, research question, scope of the study, significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Issues of assessment have been widely discussed in higher education. Many key writers who are interested in assessment have expressed concerns about assessment practices in tertiary education. Boud (2009) voices concerns that assessment in higher education is implemented in a traditional way; revolving around examinations, assignments and other kinds of tests. Cultural practices of assessment are rooted in the academic disciplines, and the classroom tradition of teachers 'marking students' work' is predominant in higher education. This assessment mode has been overlaid with external examinations, the purpose of which is to judge students' performance (Boud, 2009). Boud and Falchikov (2006) assert "higher education has traditionally focused on preparing students for acquisition of knowledge rather than participation in learning" (p. 406). In addition, Boud (2000) warns that some current assessment practices in tertiary education are unlikely to help prepare students for lifelong learning.

Transparency of assessment practices is another challenge. As Rust, Price, and O'Donovan (2003) mention, there is growing acceptance of the need within higher education for greater transparency in assessment processes, and moves have been made to construct methods of assessment which are clearer to all participants. For example, the transfer of knowledge of the assessment process and criteria to students is still questionable. Another concern about the practice of assessment identifies an over-emphasis on grading assessment in higher education. Knight (2002) claims that summative assessment in higher education is in 'disarray'. In his view, current assessment practices have negative effects on students' learning due to an overemphasis on grades and learning outcomes, and it thus does not necessarily take learning processes into account.

Feedback, as part of assessment practice, may also hinder learning if it is not given on time. Carless (2006) expresses concerns about feedback occurring too late for students to use it to further their learning. Hounsell (cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2006, p.401) identifies "growing concern that the provision of feedback on assignments may be in decline". Similarly, Baty (cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2006) also voices concerns that a lack of constructive feedback along with late feedback does not allow students to benefit from it. It seems that constant feedback contributes to the promotion of a learning environment where students can take lessons from previous tasks and improve for later.

Discussion of assessment issues also emerges in the Asian educational context. Assessment in higher education in Malaysia is seen to take the traditional

assessment approach. The practice of dominant summative assessment with norm-referenced assessment is common in many courses in Malaysian universities (see Fook & Sidhu 2011). Teachers in Hong Kong also still widely practise an examination-oriented system (Ka-man, 2004). In Hong Kong, this system is called assessment for selection, which is a major element within an assessment framework (see Ka-man, 2004). Similarly, in the wider Chinese educational context, the education system has instilled a testing culture into teachers, students, and parents (Gao & Watkins, 2001; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). Examinations and tests are common modes of assessment used to select and reward talent in Hong Kong as well as in mainland China (Cheung, 2008; Ye, 2007). Research indicated that high-stake examinations are evident in Hong Kong universities (see Brown & Wang, 2011). It seems that the practices of assessment in Asian higher education contexts are still questionable.

In recent years, assessment has become a big issue in higher education because assessment is an essential component in teaching learning process. However, the importance of assessment has increased even further. Assessment is used in order to diagnose students' needs to guide teachers in teaching, and also to enable teachers, students, and others (parents and administrator) determine whether they have achieve their goals (Wiggins, 2005, p. 13). It means that assessment is not only essential for students but also for all students because it can give the information about the students' learning achieve (Ramsden P. , 2003) ment based on the learning objectives and activities. It also gives information for teachers and students in order to determine

next strategies that they should use in next teaching learning process. Moreover, the information that is provided by the assessment can motivate the students to do better in their learning process.

Assessment in higher education has many purposes. According to the Canadian and Australian academics, they agree that there are three purpose of education that are to teach students to analyze ideas and issues critically, to develop students' intellectual/thinking skills, and also to teach students to comprehend principles or generalization (cited in (Ramsden P. , 2003).

1.2 Problem Identification

In this study, student perception in higher education has a problem with supporting their learning for successful achievement of the assessment tasks course. The writer has the researcher in EAD course: The Case of ELE-SP UNJ can employ of students in assessment tasks. The proportion of students in the group perceived that assessment tasks and assessment types can support their learning for successful achievement in the course has reasons do they use to support this claim of study.

1.3 Research Question

This study is guided by the following question:

1. What is student's perception of the assessment tasks employed in EAD course in supporting their learning for successful achievement in the course?

Sub-Research Question:

- a. What assessment tasks are employed in EAD course?
- b. What assessment types are employed in EAD course?
- c. What is proportion of students in the group perceive that assessment tasks employed in EAD course support their learning for successful achievement in the course? What reasons do they use to support this claim?
- d. What is proportion of students in the group perceive that assessment tasks employed in EAD course do not support their learning for successful achievement in the course? What reasons do they use to support this claim?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to obtain information/data on students' perception of the assessment tasks employed in EAD course in supporting their learning for successful achievement in the course. Since assessment is important in the teaching learning process, study the students' perception of assessment is important, because it may be useful to evaluate the assessment itself in order to help teachers decide the assessment strategies.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this study, the writer focuses on students' perception of the assessment tasks in EAD course: The Case ELE-SP UNJ. Especially, the writer focused on the students' perception in assessment tasks, assessment types employed in EAD course and proportion of supporting their learning for successful achievement in the course.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lays in providing better insight into factors that can support students' achievement in the learning process from the exploration of students' perception about assessment tasks. Moreover, the result of this study is expected to evaluate the assessment task and assessment types that are used in EAD course, and to give suggestion for more effective assessment should be implemented in EAD course. In addition, it also can be used as the source information for the students, lecturers, and the readers about the assessment tasks.

