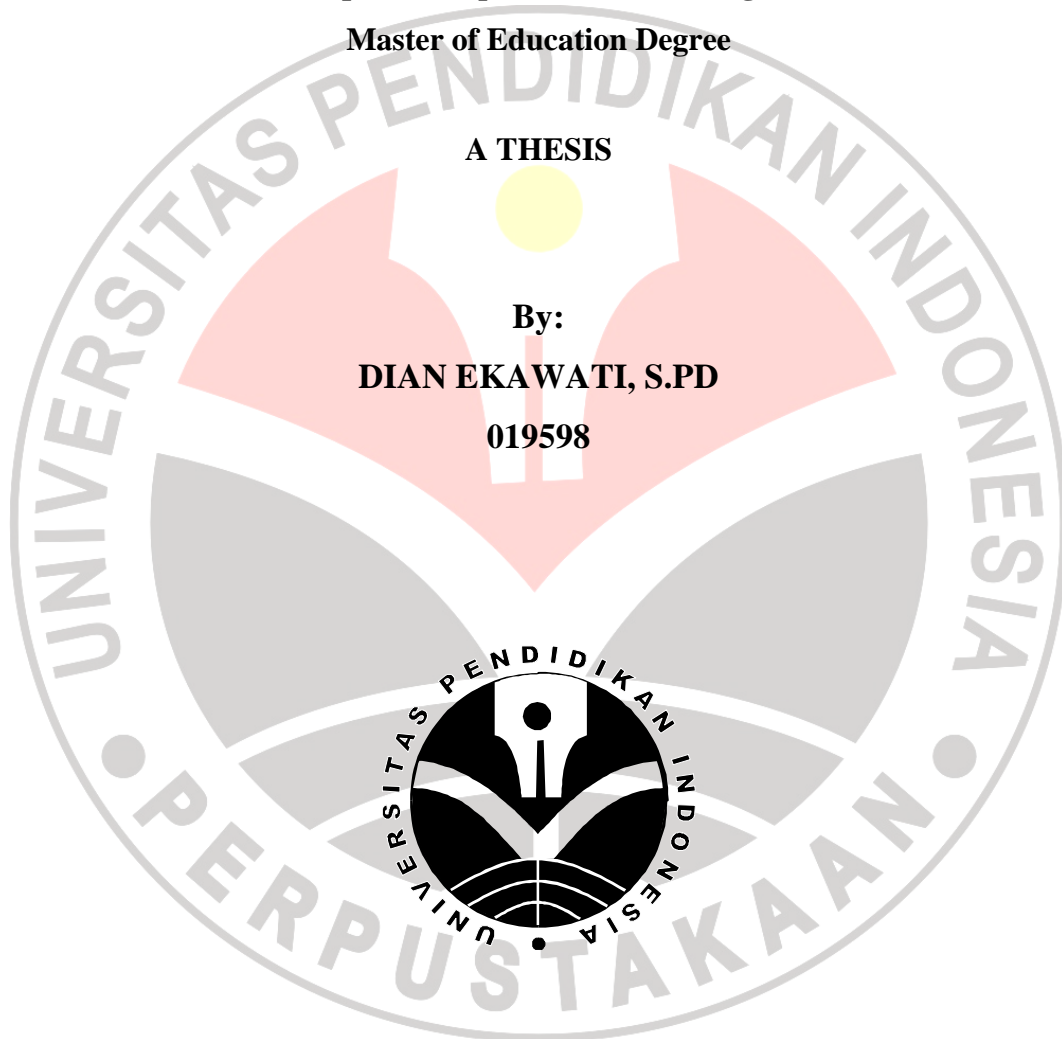


**EMPOWERING STUDENTS THROUGH THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT  
(A Case Study of the Second-Grade Students of SMUN 8 Bandung)**

**Submitted to fulfil a partial requirement for taking the examination of  
Master of Education Degree**

**A THESIS**

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

It is undeniable that pedagogical program, in some contexts, cannot be separated from assessment since it helps both teachers and students sharpen their eyes towards ongoing process. Learning will take place if both teaching and assessment exist. Therefore, assessment plays an important part in teaching and learning process and may heavily influence the way pupil are taught and the kinds of activities they do (Brewster, *et.al.*, 2003). It is also highly helpful in collecting information about students (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). Specifically, assessment itself is an integral part of language education reflecting both effective and ineffective language teaching (Oller, 1979 in Prapphal, 2001). For reason, assessment is extremely important to be developed because it has strong washback effect on practice in the classroom and plays a pivotal role in students' future.

Over years, in most schools, the assessment system used to determine the progress toward degrees and capabilities was done in the form of paper-pencil tests in terms of scores, grades, and the completion of course. Including Indonesia, the general system of this assessment used in classroom practice is multiple-choice which is objective and standardized. This kind of system is regarded practical, efficient to administer and easy to score (McNamara, 1996; Weir, 1990). However, the disadvantage of this test is that students have little

input into this system. They are not empowered. McNamara (1996:14) adds that the students cannot exercise their productive skills since they only choose the best option of given items. In addition, multiple-choice tests are not authentic because they do not represent students activities typically perform in classrooms (Pierce & O'Malley, 1992). No wonder if Fajar (2002) believes that the weakness of the assessment system in Indonesia, in general, is lack of students' empowerment of being dynamic and critical.

Recently, because of the insufficiency of multiple standardized test and scoring/grading system, there is growing interest among educators to find an alternative method of assessment fitting to the need of how to monitor actual progress of student's performance and how to empower them through series of tasks by observing the students in ongoing process (e.g. their behaviour in the classroom) and collecting the students' work (e.g. students' journals) and portfolios known as alternative assessment (Hancock, 2004).

Alternative assessment, according to Hancock (1994), is an ongoing process involving students and teacher in making judgments about the students' progress in classroom using non-conventional strategies. There are various kinds of alternative assessment; however, the paper will only focus on portfolio as it greatly helps educators to monitor and determine the progress of the students.

Another concern is that portfolios are typically seen as source of teacher and students empowerment because control over assessment linked most closely to instruction (Graves, 1983 in Pierce & O'Malley, 1992; Musthafa, 1996; Tierney, Carter & Desai, 1991). It is also said empowered for both teacher and

students since it makes intuitive sense to involve students in decisions about which pieces of their work to assess, and to assure that feedback from teacher is provided (Hancock, 1994). Thus, portfolio offers interactive activity between them.

Regarding to the important impacts of portfolios on students' learning, this study is trying to discover (1) the implementation of portfolio assessment in classroom and (2) how the implementation of portfolio assessment empowers students socially, cognitively, and psychologically in their learning process.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

To focus more on the investigation, based on the background, the research will lie on the research questions stated as follows.

- 1) How is portfolio assessment carried out in classroom setting?
- 2) How can portfolios empower the students socially, cognitively, and psychologically in their learning process?

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Research**

The research seeks to accomplish the following objectives that are related to research questions:

- 1) to investigate how portfolio assessment is carried out in classroom setting.
- 2) to explore how portfolios can empower the students socially, cognitively, and psychologically in their learning process.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

The research, hopefully, is expected to give the information for other educators who would like to implement portfolio assessment and to see the students' empowerment through the assessment. Comparing and contrasting to seek strengths and weaknesses of the implementation may also be found in this research which is very useful for schools to conduct the assessment.

This research is also dedicated to invite other researchers who are interested in portfolios to find or conduct further investigation on the issue in this field of study. Finally, it may offer new insight in assessment as an effort to have effective English teaching and learning process.

#### **1.5 Clarification of the Terms**

The following terms are provided in order to understand the case presented in this paper.

##### **1.5.1 Empowerment**

The term of empowerment refers to the development of knowledge, skills and abilities in the learners to enable them to control and develop their own learning (Harvey, 2004). Referring to this definition, the meaning of empowerment in this research is more focusing on the growth of process of the students in gaining control over their learning and decision that affected them. The students' empowerment here is divided into three that interconnectedly affects their learning along with their social, cognitive, and psychological development.

### **1.5.2 Assessment**

Testing and assessment are different in some contexts. Tests are seen as the results of students' progress (Hancock, 1994). He further calls testing as 'achievement learning' resulted from the students' learning. In contrast to testing, assessment is viewed as the process which interactively occurs done by teachers and students in monitoring the performance of students.

### **1.6 Thesis Organization**

The organization of the thesis will be in five chapters. Chapter one contains the background of the study, the rationale for the research, followed by research questions, purpose, general approach, and its significance to the research. In addition, the chapter also presents some clarifications of the terms and thesis organization.

Chapter two highlights the detailed theories and frameworks of portfolio assessment including some views of the experts, the history, the implementation or the process of portfolios which are conducted in classroom setting, its evaluation, the role of portfolio in the current curriculum, and the connection between portfolio assessment and students' empowerment. This chapter also reveals how to establish an effective portfolio assessment, issues and some related research findings.

Chapter three emphasizes on the methodology of the research elaborating data collection, research design, the procedure of the research, research sites, the

role of the researcher, the phases of gathering data collection, and some instruments used in the research.

Chapter four deals with the discussion of data analysis which is obtained from the field, exploration of questionnaires, interviews, and observation used in the investigation, and some findings which come up in the process of investigation.

The last chapter, that is chapter five, conveys the overview of the findings consisting some conclusions, suggestions, and recommendations for the improvement of portfolio assessment.

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