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**The Importance of Learning Assessment System:
·A study on the effectiveness of the system onto Brunei's Primary School·**

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' responsibilities are not limited to teaching but also to make sure the students are able to understand and absorb the necessary knowledge needed for their future. One of the strategies for the teachers to not lose track of different types of students is by giving continuous assessment throughout their studies. The assessment may be in the form of formative or summative but ultimately, these assessments can be used to identify students' progress and achievement against benchmarks and learning objectives. Additionally, this includes identifying the specific areas where students are struggling and therefore allowing the teacher to provide intervention and use proper strategies to address it. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the Learning Assessment System onto Primary School students and how it could help teachers in rectifying mistakes and misconceptions made by the students. Using mixed-method analysis, this study assesses major summative assessments of the subject English Language and questionnaires answered by the students. This study suggests that Learning Assessment System could aid in improving students' performance score after their initial assessment was being analysed and provided with proper interventions in between of the next major assessment.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background study

Learning assessment refers to a strategy which is used to confirm students' knowledge on a certain topic or subject and to show whether they can meet the curriculum objectives. On the other hand, a system means a set of procedures which is done in an organised scheme. Therefore, from these definitions a learning assessment system is a set of procedures which are conducted in a systematic timeline to assess the students' level and abilities for them to meet the curriculum standard.

There are three types of assessments which are diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. The first step is to undergo a diagnostic assessment where to assess the students' current level of knowledge including their skills and capabilities, example on pre-tests and discussion of a topic. The second step is to conduct formative assessment which occurred during the classroom sessions in which to assess the students' progress as well as the effectiveness of a teacher's lesson. Although this assessment is mostly ungraded, it acts as to identify the areas that may need further improvement. The last step is the summative assessment where it takes place after the completion of the study or topic, such as examinations, term papers or projects.

1.2 Problem statement

The teacher's first appointment to the primary school was in the second half of the school year and apart from the handover and discussion with the previous instructor, the teacher was not acquainted on the strengths and weaknesses with each student. For new teachers it would be a daunting task especially when they first take the lead to teach their lessons. Even though they knew the topic and the content of the lesson, the teacher would not be able to predict or make assumptions on how far the students understood the topic. This could create a large knowledge gap for the students and the belief that it would be a difficult topic to comprehend. Shabani, Khatib and Ebadi (2010) referred to Vygotsky's definition on Zone of Proximal Development as the distance between current development and the possible development that could be achieved under the assistance of an elder or by cooperating with more competent peers. If the task was too difficult for the students it caused the lessons to not be engaging, meaningful lessons nor fit for students' abilities. Additionally, lessons that do not cater to the students' need or on the same level as their ability could cause the lack of interest and engagement during the lesson.

Notably, His Majesty's the Sultan in his *titah* (royal speech) was concerned on the educational inequalities and learning loss due to the 15 weeks closure of school and institutions during the pandemic (Prime Ministry's Office, 2022). As a possible consequence, the weaknesses and misconceptions would not be addressed and the students continued to repeat them in the future and even in bigger examinations. This study is to investigate two main factors: 1) the effect of assessments on the students' learning performance and understanding, as well as 2) the effect on the teacher's understanding of students' needs in their studies.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study specifically investigates the effectiveness of assessment conducted in the classroom setting which are during diagnostic, formative or summative assessments (Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, 2012). To comprehend students' abilities, the teacher needs to conduct several assessments on the students in terms of comprehension ability, grammatical ability and writing ability. After the teacher analyses the marks, this will enable the teacher to understand and create a proper lesson plan that focuses on the weaknesses and misconceptions while keeping the lesson engaging and meaningful for the students. Therefore, this will not only help to improve the students' learning environment but also improve teachers' understanding of the students' capabilities to create an effective lesson according to the topic.

Additionally due to the pandemic that had occurred in the last few years, this caused learning loss among the students when the school session was closed for 15 weeks. From His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei's *titah* (royal speech) quoted that "Without intervention, the learning loss will bring about long-term negative impact on student productivity and well-being." (Mohamad, L, 2022). After school reopened, schools faced varieties of challenges where there are possible learning deficits caused by online classes being conducted and students, especially primary school students found it had to keep up with their studies compared to in physical class with the teacher in which when the lesson needed dialogue teaching on the more difficult topics (Ministry of Education, 2022). Therefore, to recover from the learning loss and reduce the learning gaps, the teacher needs to monitor and evaluate the students' comprehension and understanding. By collecting and analysing various data, the teacher will be able to ascertain the students' misconceptions, growth and improve the teachers' lessons. Henceforth, one of the methods to collect data is by assessments.

1.4 Research objective

The study will be focusing on the following objectives to inspect the importance of learning assessment system for the students and teachers:

- To investigate the effectiveness of assessments in class based on the students' performance in their pre-test and post-test.
- To ability to identify the students' weaknesses and misconceptions to the questions given by the teacher.
- To investigate the effectiveness of teacher's interventions derived from the result of the assessments.

1.5 Research question

The following research questions are prepared to accomplish the objectives of the study stated above:

- 1) What is the student's test score performance result between Pre-Assessment Examination and Mid-Year Examination?
- 2) What are the weaknesses that the teacher and students managed to identify?
- 3) How did the teacher make sure the intervention is successful while using formative assessments in the lesson?

1.6 Significance of the study

Learning assessment shows that it would help the students to have self-reflection on their own work and would give the opportunity for them to discover their own mistakes and misconceptions especially during the formative assessment. This will avoid the students from repeating the same mistakes over a period and carrying it to their major examination. A study by Chang (2019) found that a student discovered that reflection helped them understand and think about the topic in a deeper level where they analysed the theories as well as revisited it after their assignment was completed. In addition to this, the teachers would also have their own self-reflection session and discuss their lessons if there were other methods to improve with how they conduct a class or explanation. Gün (2010) noted that when the teachers are given the opportunity to discuss their strategies on their teaching, they can identify the problems and find out better methods to effectively deliver lessons. As a result, by repeating it as a system where assessment, reflection, planning, and intervention occurred as a routine in classroom session, both teachers and students can ensure that the topic is on the right track

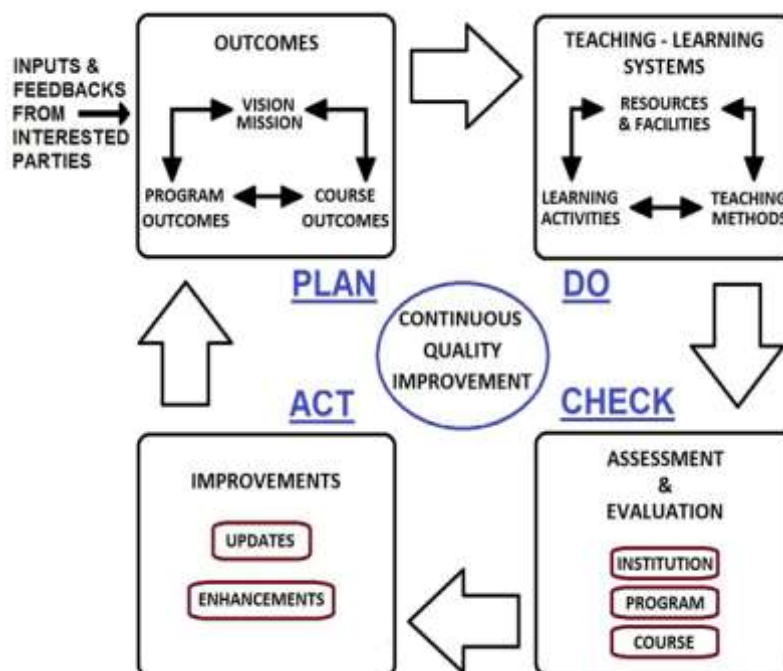
and accurate as well as the students managed to answer them correctly in a summative assessment.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The framework is following a method called 'Outcome-Based Education' propounded by William G. Spady where it is to focus on the result and accomplishments when they graduate at the end of their studies (Rao, 2020). Even though this method is mostly used in higher education for mature students, the system can also be used in primary education especially when the teacher wants to see the progress and improvement of the students for an upcoming examination. In this case the teacher wanted to increase the students' capabilities to achieve grades in '*Penilaian Sekolah Rendah*' (PSR) or 'Primary Education Assessment'. The teacher had already briefed the students on the expectations for them to be able to answer the questions during the examination and as a result obtained flying colours grades. Therefore, this system is used to identify students' weaknesses and to revolve the lessons to the topic and adjust the lessons to address those weaknesses. This can be used particularly in English subjects as the PSR English papers are divided into 5 sections: writing skill, comprehension skill, knowledge transfer skill, conversation skill and grammar skill. The main objective is for the students to be able to answer the questions in PSR examination and having a certain critical-skill to answer the open questions. This will also be beneficial when they transition to secondary education where the questions will be more inclined to critical thinking such as to give their own ideas or assumptions on the meaning of the passage. It will no longer be 'what is the definition of this word' but 'what is the hidden meaning to this phrase'. This undoubtedly helped the students in reaching the Higher Order Thinking skills of the Bloom's Taxonomy which are 'analyse', 'evaluate' and 'create'.

Diagram 1

Outcome-based Education flowchart system (MOU Technical Institute for Women (Cebu) Inc., n.d.)



METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Context

This research's data was taken from Year 5 and Year 6 students of the Year 2024. There have been 2 major assessments since the beginning of the year. The school has had the same English language teacher for both levels since 2023 therefore the teacher was able to recognise the students' capabilities and weaknesses. Their Pre-Assessment Examination and Mid-Year Examination results will be the main data for this study. The two sets of data from both examinations will be analysed to compose the finding into a conclusion. Along with that, the students' questionnaire result will also be used to reflect on the students' own awareness and capabilities as well as on the teacher's lessons.

3.2 Sample

There are a total of 54 students whose data would be used for this study where the students consist of Year 5 and Year 6 ages ranging from 10 to 12 years olds. The study took place at PGGMB School, Sg Akar, Brunei Darussalam with students identified into three groups (emerging, developing and secured) by their English Teacher. The students are aware of their groupings and are seated together accordingly.

Table 1

Year 5 SB		Year 5 SP		Year 6 TL		Year 6 TM	
HA	2	HA	2	HA	4	HA	6
MA	9	MA	8	MA	6	MA	3
LA	4	LA	5	LA	3	LA	3
Total	14	Total	15	Total	13	Total	12

Number of participants and students' level of abilities within each group

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research question 1

What is the student's test score performance result between Pre-Assessment and Mid-Year Examination?

Table 2, and 3 are the test score result and the progress between Pre-Assessment Examination and Mid-Year Examination for Year 5 and Year 6 students. The students are colour-coded into red (secured), yellow (developing) and green (emerging).

Table 2

Broadsheet for Year 6 TL and Year 6 TM comparing two major assessments

YEAR 6 TL												
Name Code		Date	05-Mar				05-Jul				PROGRESS (PRE-EXAMINATION VS MID YEAR)	
		Day	TUE				WED					
		Title	Pre-examination Assessment				Mid term exam					
		INDEX	P1	P2	/ 100	Grade	P1	P2	/ 100	Grade	Mark difference	+ or -
TL01			40.0	44.0	84.0	B	39	41.5	80.5	B	-3.5	Decrease
TL02			25.0	19.5	44.5	D	27	24.5	51.5	D	7	Increase
TL03			29.0	26.0	55.0	D	29	15	44	D	-11	Decrease
TL04			37.0	46.0	83.0	B	37	45.5	82.5	B	-0.5	Decrease
TL05			29.0	33.0	62.0	D	28	29.5	57.5	D	-4.5	Decrease
TL06			32.0	38.5	70.5	C	28	37	65	C	-5.5	Decrease
TL07			36.0	30.0	66.0	C	30	32	62	D	-4	Decrease
TL08			35.0	37.0	72.0	C	29	35	64	D	-8	Decrease
TL09			35.0	33.0	68.0	C	37	40	77	B	9	Increase
TL10			34.0	22.5	56.5	D	30	27.5	57.5	D	1	Increase
TL11			35.0	28.5	63.5	D	36	33.5	69.5	C	6	Increase
TL12			39.0	38.0	77.0	B	39	40.5	79.5	B	2.5	Increase
TL13			44.0	47.0	91.0	A	43	44.5	87.5	A	-3.5	Decrease
Average			34.6	34.1	68.7		33.2	34.3	67.5			
Pre-Assessment Overall Grades	A	1	B	3	C	4	D	4	D	1	Increase %	38.5
Mid-Term Examination Overall Grades	A	1	B	4	C	2	D	5	D	1	Decrease %	61.5
YEAR 6 TM												
Name Code		Date	05-Mar				05-Jul				PROGRESS (PRE-EXAMINATION VS MID YEAR)	
		Day	TUE				WED					
		Title	Pre-examination Assessment				Mid term exam					
		INDEX	P1	P2	/ 100	Grade	P1	P2	/ 100	Grade	Mark difference	+ or -
TM01			31.0	33.5	64.5	C	26	32	58	D	-6.5	Decrease
TM02			31.0	23.0	54.0	D	25	32.5	57.5	D	3.5	Increase
TM03			26.0	34.0	60.0	D	30	24.5	54.5	D	-5.5	Decrease
TM04			39.0	40.0	79.0	B	38	46	84	B	5	Increase
TM05			30.0	39.5	69.5	C	30	37	67	C	-2.5	Decrease
TM06			39.0	40.5	79.5	B	31	40.5	71.5	C	-8	Decrease
TM07			39.0	35.5	74.5	B	35	39	74	C	-0.5	Decrease
TM08			38.0	32.5	70.5	C	34	30.5	64.5	C	-6	Decrease
TM09			32.0	27.0	59.0	D	32	24.5	56.5	D	-2.5	Decrease
TM10			33.0	38.0	71.0	C	37	29.5	66.5	C	-4.5	Decrease
TM11			36.0	38.5	74.5	B	38	37.5	67.5	C	-7	Decrease
TM12			33.0	41.5	74.5	B	33	40	73	C	-1.5	Decrease
Average			33.9	35.3	69.2		31.8	34.5	66.2			
Pre-Assessment Overall Grades	A	0	B	5	C	4	D	3	D	0	Increase %	16.7
Mid-Term Examination Overall Grades	A	0	B	1	C	7	D	4	D	0	Decrease %	83.3

Table 3

Broadsheet for Year 5 SB and Year 5 SP comparing two major assessments

YEAR 5 SB												
Name Code		Date	05-Mar			05-Jul				PROGRESS (PRE-EXAMINATION VS MID YEAR)		
			Day	MON			WED					
				Title	Pre-examination Assessment		Mid term exam					
					INDEX	P1	/ 100	Grade	P1	P2	/ 100	Grade
SB01				68	68	C	31	39.5	70.5	C	2.5	Increase
SB02				46	46	U	27	32	59	D	13	Increase
SB03				73	73	C	26	41	67	C	-6	Decrease
SB04				41	41	U	23	20	43	U	2	Increase
SB05				11	11	U	1	0	1	U	-10	Decrease
SB06				64.5	64.5	C	22	34.5	56.5	D	-8	Decrease
SB07				56.5	56.5	D	25	35.5	60.5	D	4	Increase
SB08				61.5	61.5	D	27	40	67	C	5.5	Increase
SB09				55	55	D	33	23	56	D	1	Increase
SB10				19.5	19.5	U	16	9	25	U	5.5	Increase
SB11				43.5	43.5	U	9	17.5	26.5	U	-17	Decrease
SB12				70.5	70.5	C	30	34	64	D	-6.5	Decrease
SB13				59.5	59.5	D	30	35.5	65.5	C	6	Increase
SB14				66	66	C	27	33.5	60.5	D	-5.5	Decrease
Average				51.5	51.5		23.4	28.2	51.6			
Pre-Assessment Overall Grades	A	0	B	0	C	5	D	4	U	6	Increase %	57.1
Mid-Year Examination Overall Grades	A	0	B	0	C	4	D	6	U	4	Decrease %	42.9

YEAR 5 SP												
Name Codes		Date	05-Mar			05-Jul				PROGRESS (PRE-EXAMINATION VS MID YEAR)		
			Day	TUE			WED					
				Title	Pre-examination Assessment		Mid term exam					
					INDEX	Assessment	/ 100	Grade	P1	P2	/ 100	Grade
SP01				61	61	D	23	32.5	55.5	D	-5.5	Decrease
SP02				42	42	U	30	33	63	D	21	Increase
SP03				53	53	D	26	37.5	63.5	D	10.5	Increase
SP04				1	1	U	0	2	2	U	1	Increase
SP05				50	50	D	18	19	37	U	-13	Decrease
SP06				40	40	U	18	26	44	U	4	Increase
SP07				58.5	58.5	D	31	38	69	C	10.5	Increase
SP08				36	36	U	13	30.5	43.5	U	7.5	Increase
SP09				24	24	U	19	20.5	39.5	U	15.5	Increase
SP10				67.5	67.5	C	16	33	49	U	-18.5	Decrease
SP11				54	54	D	34	36	70	C	16	Increase
SP12				44.5	44.5	U	29	35.5	64.5	C	20	Increase
SP14				41	41	U	25	22.5	47.5	U	6.5	Increase
SP15				82	82	B	40	45	85	A	3	Increase
SP16				57.5	57.5	D	32	21	53	D	-4.5	Decrease
Average				46.75	46.8		23.0	28.8	52.4			
Pre-Assessment Overall Grades	A	0	B	1	C	1	D	5	U	7	Increase %	73.3
Mid-Year Examination Overall Grades	A	1	B	0	C	3	D	3	U	7	Decrease %	26.7

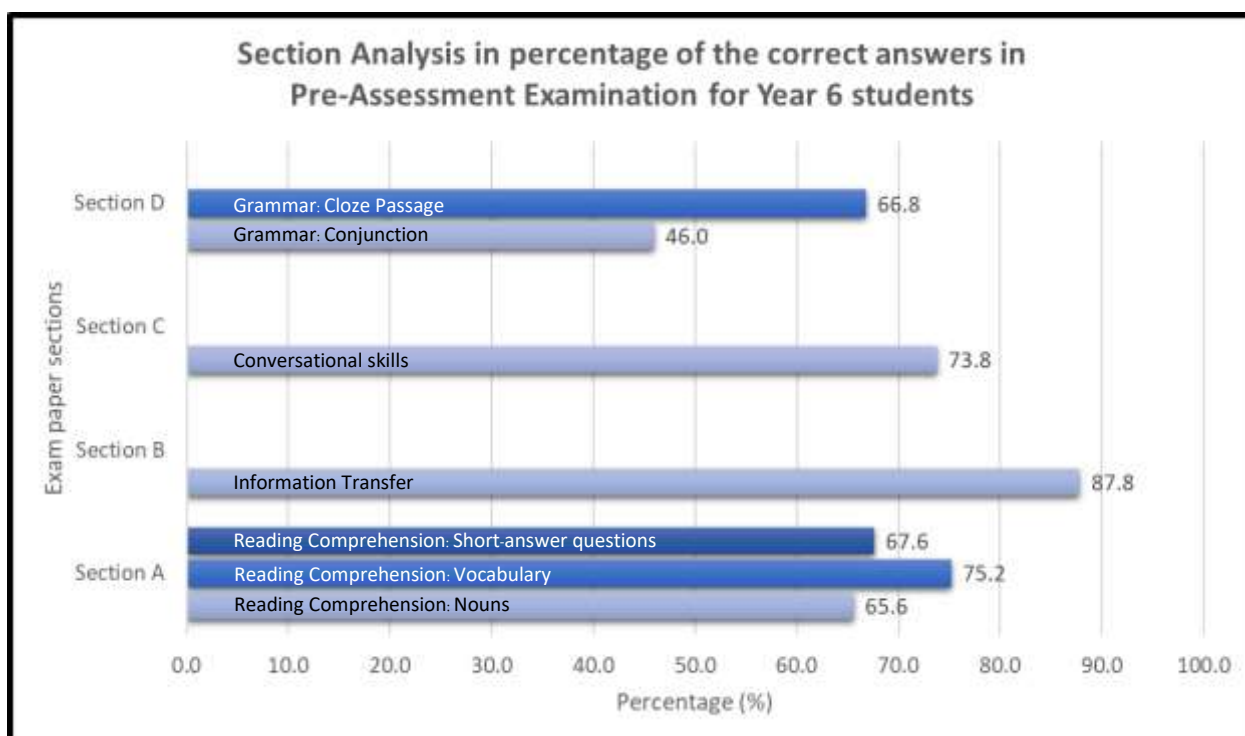
4.2 Research question 2

What are the weaknesses that the teacher and students managed to identify?

Table 4, 5, 6 and 7 are the Section Analysis for Pre-Examination Assessment and Mid-Year Examination where they are used to identify the students' weaknesses in answering the paper. The sections were divided into 4 sections which are Reading Comprehension skill, Information Transfer skill, Conversational Dialogue skill and Grammatical skill.

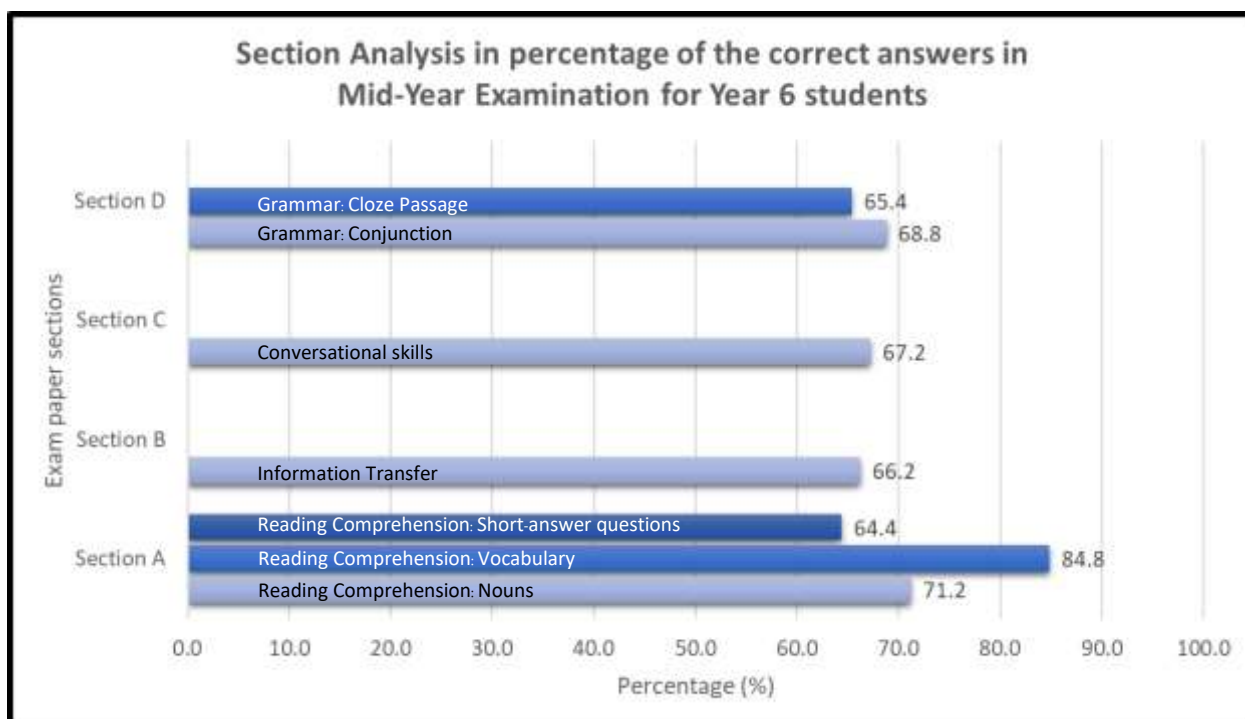
Graph 4

Question analysis for Year 6 students for Pre-Assessment Examination



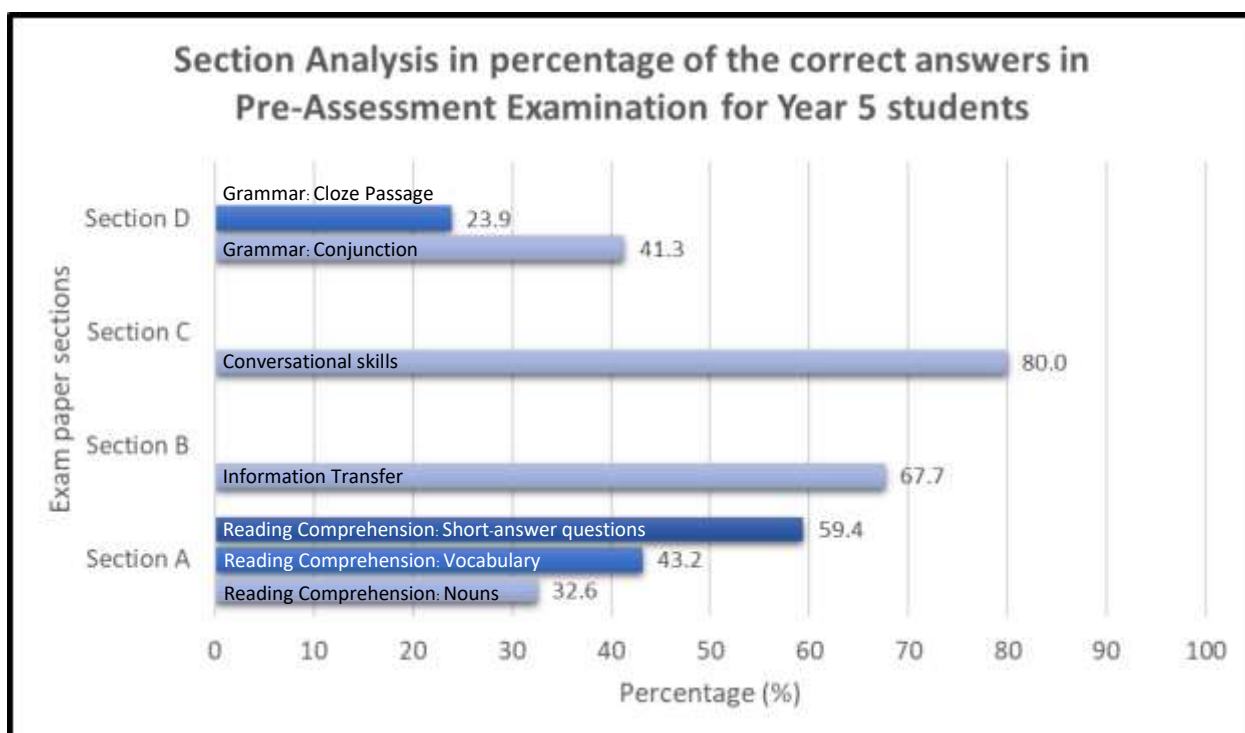
Graph 5

Question analysis for Year 6 students for Mid-Year Examination



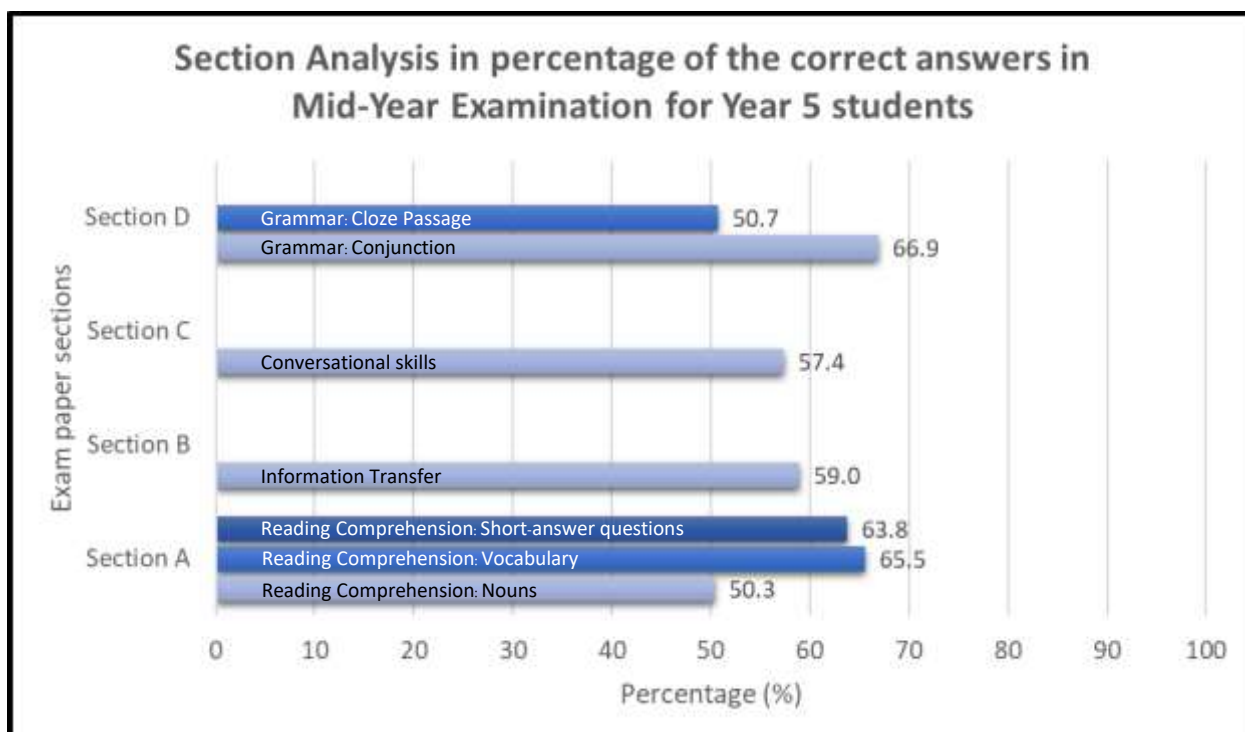
Graph 6

Question analysis for Year 5 students for Pre-Assessment Examination



Graph 7

Question analysis for Year 5 students for Mid-Year Examination



4.3 Research question 3

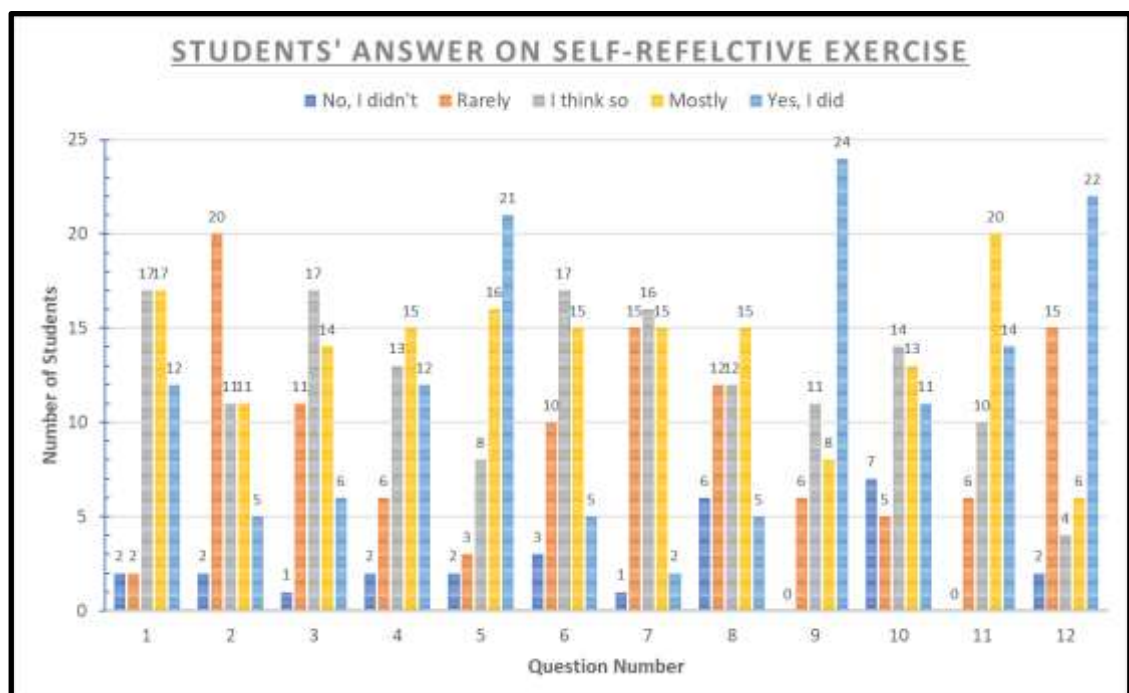
How did the teacher make sure the intervention is successful while using formative assessments in the lesson?

After the intervention, each student was given a Self-Reflection Exercise sheet to explain what they think of the lessons so far. This questionnaire served as a reflection for both the students and the teacher. 50 students participated in the questionnaire while the other 4 students were absent on the day of the exercise.

Diagram 8

Self-Reflective Exercise questions and answers from 50 students

No.	Questions	No, I didn't at all	I rarely did it	I think so	I mostly did it	Yes, I always did it
1	I understand the written instructions and followed it properly.	2	2	17	17	12
2	I checked my answers more than 2 times before submitting them to the teacher.	2	20	11	11	5
3	I wrote down the proper punctuations for my answers.	1	11	17	14	6
4	I wrote down the proper capitalisation in my answers.	2	6	13	15	12
5	I wrote my answers in full sentences.	2	3	8	16	21
6	I wrote my answer in proper tenses according to the instructions.	3	10	17	15	5
7	I wrote my answers with correct grammar.	1	15	16	15	2
8	I spoke English in my English language classes fluently without using Malay words.	6	12	12	15	5
9	When the teacher spoke in English, I understand and able to follow her instructions.	0	6	11	8	24
10	I can read and able to explain the story to the teacher and classmates in English.	7	5	14	13	11
11	I can complete my work within the given time.	0	6	10	20	14
12	I ask questions when I do not understand them	2	15	4	6	22



4.4 Discussion

This study investigates the importance and effectiveness of the learning assessment system on both students in their learning and teacher in their teaching. For the first research question, there is a decrease in Year 6 Mid-Year Examination score results where their class average score dropped from 68.7% to 67.5% for Year 6 TL while for Year 6 TM had a decrease from 69.2% to 66.2%. It can also be seen on Table 2 where there are only 7 out of 25 Year 6 students who have improved since their first assessment. This could be due to the increased difficulty on the questions during the Mid-Year Examination where the questions also consist of Mathematics and general knowledge.

In comparison to Year 5 students, there are two different results despite having the same lessons with the teacher. Year 5 SP has a decrease in class average score (53.9% to 51.6%) in comparison to Year 5 SB has an increased class average score (45.8% to 53.8%). In addition, as seen from Table 3, there are 12 out of 15 students from Year 5 SP showing significant improvement from their first examination while there are only 8 out of 14 students from Year 5 SB who had significant improvement. This shows that the intervention was not properly executed or the questions were too difficult for the students' level.

On the second research question, the teacher focused more towards the Conjunction part of Section D during the intervention period due to low average score. As seen in Graph 4 and 5, Year 6 students have a higher percentage of correct answers (68.8%) in the Mid-Year Examination compared to the Pre-Assessment Examination (46.0%). The same could be said to Section A's Noun and Vocabulary parts where they increased from 75.2% to 84.8% and 65.6% to 71.2% respectively.

For Year 5 students, there is a significant increase of correct answers for Section A and Section D in Mid-Year Examination in comparison to Pre-Assessment Examination as shown in Graph 6 and 7. The teacher had been helping on teaching the skills to answer comprehension questions correctly, correcting the grammatical errors as well as defining the usage of the words in a sentence. This shows that focusing and changing the strategies during the intervention period aid the students to use the skills taught and correct the misconception in class for examination.

On the third research question, the result on Diagram 8 shows the students' opinion on the English lessons with their teacher. 21 out of 50 students said that they always manage to answer in full sentences in their exercises. Out of 50 students, 24 students claimed that they

understood and could follow the teacher's lesson when she spoke English for the entirety of the lesson. These factors supported that most of the students could answer the questions and exercises correctly to obtain the highest mark possible for the examination. Additionally, 22 out of 50 students would usually ask the teachers questions to understand the lesson. As they practised and made it a habit to answer the questions as accurately as they could, there will be less mistakes and avoiding errors therefore helps in increasing their examination score.

On the other hand, 20 students claimed that they rarely checked their answers before submitting their work or papers to the teacher and only 17 students believed that they wrote down the correct punctuations in their answers. Whereas, only 16 out of 50 students believe that their answers have the correct grammar and tenses while following the instructions. Through these answers, the students are also aware that these are also one of the reasons why their scores during examinations. The grammatical mistakes that the students made could cause their scores to decrease and furthermore they did not rectify their mistakes before submission.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

As a conclusion, using a learning assessment system can not only be used to gauge the students' level of capabilities and rectify their mistakes but also to reflect on the teacher's strategies used in their lesson. By making both the teachers and students aware of their weaknesses and mistakes on a particular topic or skills would lead them to make an effort to improve the way the students are studying and which skills need to be polished. After distinguishing the mistakes comes the intervention done by the teacher where the lessons could be adjusted to the proper difficulty appropriate to the student's level as well as providing differentiation tasks to different groups of student level. Apart from these, the teachers would be able to identify the frequent misconceptions being done and correct them. This will prevent the misconceptions from recurring throughout their studies and during the examinations.

Table 2 and 3 show students coded with green colour which are the emerging students. 7 low-ability students showed improvement on their scores during the Mid-Year Examination after undergoing intervention with the teacher. This demonstrates that when the teacher manages to identify their weaknesses and misconceptions, it can quickly be amended and explained to prevent further mistakes. On the other hand, 17 middle-ability students also manage to improve their scores in the Mid-Year Examination where 12 of the students come from Year 5. These students had only started learning under the English teacher's guidance for approximately 6 months and gradually are adapting to the PSR curriculum standard which proves that the learning assessment system is beneficial to the teacher's strategies and lessons in class including identifying the student's needs.

In spite of that, on average 72.4% of Year 6 students were not able to improve their score in the Mid-Year Examination due to the increased difficulty of the papers. Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006) discovered that students need continuous scaffolding from the teacher could mean that the challenge could be too difficult for the students' ability. This concluded that the students were not yet prepared to receive a higher level of difficulty and the future papers needed to be adjusted to properly suit the students according to the PSR curriculum standard.

According to Table 5 and 6, after the teacher conducted an intervention after analysing the student's weaknesses according to the sections in Pre-Assessment Examination, Year 5 students managed to score higher in two sections which are Section A and Section D. After 3

months of intervention on the method to answer Reading Comprehension questions by modelling and practising, the increase showed that students could improve their skills and examination score. This proves that for the students to form well-developed abstract thoughts, the teacher should be guiding them by filling up the gaps to stimulate their critical thinking skills development (Vygotsky and Cole, 1978).

5.2 Implication

Implementing a learning assessment system into Primary Education will help not only identify the students' weaknesses but also to reflect on the teacher's teaching strategies as well as creating better differentiated tasks and exercises to better suit the students. Teachers should be more attentive and innovative towards their teaching methods by exploring new strategies that would be better suited and benefiting the student's level of abilities and experiences (Hayashi, 2019). Using different arrays of teaching strategies into primary school lessons will also aid in developing students' HOT skills, self-management, retention and to be proactive learners during the lessons. This is in alignment with Brunei's Ministry of Education's plan to improve students' results and enhance individualised and personalised education. Moreover, it is also within Brunei Vision 2035 which is to produce educated and highly-skilled people and particularly, it lined up and followed His Majesty's *titah* (royal speech) to teach 21st Century competency even to Primary School students.

5.3 Recommendation

The system has to be implemented early in the beginning of the year to identify the students' weaknesses and misconceptions. Early detection can allow the teacher to prepare ahead on different types of strategies that they could use to better suit the students, especially the low ability students. Additionally, it would be more helpful when the teachers from the previous year have a similar progress report on the students and therefore the new assigned teacher will be able to prepare their lesson plans centering on the needs of the students.

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