



# Implications of the Differences Between Scoring and Assessment in Learning Evaluation in the Era of the Merdeka Curriculum

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## ABSTRACT

*The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka has introduced new challenges in learning evaluation, particularly regarding teachers' misconceptions in distinguishing scoring from assessment. This issue leads to inconsistent interpretation of student achievement, biased grading practices, and ineffective formative assessment within digital platforms such as e-Rapor and ANBK. This study aims to analyze the conceptual differences between scoring and assessment and examine their implications for evaluation quality in schools. A literature review method was employed using sources published between 2015–2024 that are relevant to competency-based assessment, measurement theory, and evaluation practices in Indonesian education. Data were analyzed through concept identification, theoretical comparison, and thematic synthesis. The findings indicate that misunderstanding the relationship between numerical scores and qualitative interpretation results in inaccurate evaluation, weak feedback mechanisms, and inconsistent grading standards across schools. This study contributes theoretically by clarifying the conceptual boundary between scoring and assessment, and practically by offering recommendations to strengthen teachers' professional competence in implementing competency-based evaluation under the Kurikulum Merdeka.*

**Keywords:** *scoring, assessment, Kurikulum Merdeka, learning evaluation.*

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## ABSTRAK

Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka memunculkan tantangan baru dalam praktik evaluasi pembelajaran, terutama terkait miskonsepsi guru dalam membedakan penskoran dan penilaian. Ketidaktepatan ini berdampak pada ketidakkonsistenan interpretasi capaian, bias penilaian, dan lemahnya efektivitas asesmen formatif dalam platform seperti e-Rapor dan ANBK. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis perbedaan konseptual kedua proses tersebut serta implikasinya terhadap kualitas evaluasi di sekolah. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan kriteria sumber terbitan 2015–2024 yang relevan dengan asesmen Kurikulum Merdeka, teori pengukuran, dan implementasi evaluasi pendidikan. Analisis dilakukan melalui identifikasi konsep, komparasi teori, dan sintesis tematik. Hasil penelitian menegaskan bahwa kekeliruan memahami hubungan antara skor dan makna capaian menyebabkan interpretasi evaluasi tidak akurat, umpan balik kurang efektif, dan ketidaksinkronan standar nilai antar sekolah. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis berupa penegasan batas konseptual penskoran–penilaian, serta kontribusi praktis berupa rekomendasi peningkatan profesionalisme guru dalam menerapkan asesmen berbasis kompetensi.

**Kata Kunci:** penskoran, penilaian, Kurikulum Merdeka, evaluasi belajar.

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## INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is a critical component of the educational process as it functions to measure the achievement of learning objectives and guide instructional improvement. In the Indonesian educational context, recent reforms—particularly the *Kurikulum Merdeka*—have shifted the orientation of evaluation from score-based reporting to competency-based assessment (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). This shift requires teachers to understand not only how to measure learning outcomes, but also how to interpret them meaningfully through comprehensive assessment practices. However, several studies report that teachers still struggle to implement assessment aligned with competency indicators, especially in differentiating procedural scoring from interpretive assessment (Hidayat & Munawaroh, 2024).

One of the key issues that emerges in schools is the continued misconception that scoring and assessment refer to the same process. In practice, many teachers convert raw scores directly into final grades without conducting qualitative interpretation based on rubrics, descriptors, or standards of competence. This condition leads to distortions in students' learning profiles and reduces the reliability of evaluation (Arikunto, 2015). Such misconceptions become more problematic in competency-based learning environments, which require nuanced interpretation of performance rather than reliance on numerical scores alone.

Furthermore, the development of digital assessment systems, such as e-Rapor SMP, ANBK Computer-Based Test (CBT), and the Merdeka Belajar platform, demands teachers' ability to analyze data beyond the numerical output generated automatically. Research indicates that many teachers are still unable to connect automated scoring with qualitative judgment, resulting in limited feedback quality and inadequate follow-up actions (Sulastri & Wijaya, 2023). This suggests a widening gap between technological advancement in assessment and teachers' conceptual mastery of evaluative processes.

Despite the importance of distinguishing scoring and assessment, the existing literature tends to focus on general definitions of evaluation or measurement, without exploring the conceptual boundaries between the two or their implications for current educational reforms. This creates a research gap: there is still limited academic work that analyzes the differences between scoring and assessment in the context of modern Indonesian education, particularly under the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Addressing this gap is crucial because failure to differentiate the two concepts may weaken the implementation of competency-based assessment and the accuracy of reporting student achievement.

The urgency of this topic is further reinforced by the increasing demand for authentic assessment practices—such as project-based evaluation, performance assessment, and portfolios—which require teachers to interpret complex student outputs rather than simply assigning scores (Nitko, 2004). Without clear conceptual understanding, teachers may focus on quantifying student work instead of evaluating key competencies like reasoning, collaboration, and creativity, which are central to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This misalignment risks reducing the quality of learning outcomes and limiting students' mastery of higher-order thinking skills.

Moreover, inconsistencies in grading standards among schools highlight the need for more explicit guidance on integrating scoring and assessment. Some schools still apply traditional score thresholds, while others adopt descriptive rubrics or hybrid models. These

variations lead to inequality in educational evaluation and hinder the comparability of student achievement across regions (Rahmadani, 2024). A clearer theoretical distinction between scoring and assessment is therefore necessary to support policy coherence and improve assessment literacy among teachers.

Given these challenges, research on this topic contributes significantly to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it clarifies the conceptual boundary between scoring as a quantitative procedure and assessment as a qualitative interpretive process. Practically, it offers insights for teachers, schools, and policymakers on how to design and implement evaluation practices that align with competency-based learning. By addressing the conceptual confusion that persists in the field, this study supports more valid, reliable, and meaningful assessment practices in Indonesian schools.

Based on the problems identified, the purpose of this study is to analyze the conceptual differences between scoring and assessment and examine their implications for the effectiveness of learning evaluation under the Kurikulum Merdeka. Through this objective, the study seeks to strengthen teachers' assessment literacy and support the improvement of educational evaluation systems in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This study employs a literature review method with a descriptive-qualitative approach to analyze the conceptual differences between scoring and assessment, as well as their implications for learning evaluation in the Merdeka Curriculum era. Data were obtained from 25–30 secondary sources, including academic books, scientific journals, articles, and official government documents that are relevant and published between 2015 and 2024. Data collection was conducted systematically through document study, screening of literature relevant to the research focus, recording citations and summaries, and organizing information according to themes and sub-themes. Analysis was carried out descriptively and qualitatively with the following steps: identifying the main concepts from each source, grouping information into relevant themes and sub-themes, comparing findings across sources, and synthesizing results to develop a comprehensive conceptual understanding. All procedures were documented in detail to ensure the study can be replicated. Data validity was maintained through literature triangulation and verification of findings against recognized theories and assessment standards, enabling the study to provide both practical and theoretical contributions within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A literature analysis shows that scoring and assessment have fundamental conceptual differences (Sudijono, 2015; Arikunto, 2015). Scoring is quantitative, presenting numeric results of students' answers or performance, while assessment is interpretative, linking scores to competency indicators to meaningfully evaluate learning outcomes. In practice under the Merdeka Curriculum, many teachers still treat the two processes as the same. For example, several secondary schools in Central Java reported that teachers directly converted test scores into final grades without analyzing competency rubrics (Sulastri & Wijaya, 2023). This mistake results in inaccurate interpretation of learning outcomes and less effective feedback.

Several factors contribute to teachers' misconceptions based on literature synthesis and field findings:

1. Low assessment literacy: Teachers do not fully understand the purpose of competency-based assessment.

2. Limited professional training: Teacher development programs do not sufficiently emphasize qualitative score interpretation.

3. Digital system pressures: Platforms such as e-Rapor and ANBK generate automatic scores, but teachers often struggle to interpret the data into information useful for improving learning.

4. Variable assessment standards across schools: Differences in score thresholds, descriptive rubrics, and hybrid models cause inconsistent evaluations.

The author's analysis indicates that these factors are interrelated; lack of literacy and training is exacerbated by reliance on digital systems that emphasize numbers rather than competency interpretation.

This situation affects evaluation effectiveness. First, feedback provided to students tends to be general and nonspecific, making it difficult for students to improve. Second, inconsistent standards across schools create inequity in assessment, limiting the comparability of student achievement nationally. As a case study, some schools use descriptive rubrics to assess student projects, while others rely solely on numerical scores. This demonstrates that teachers' conceptual differences directly influence assessment quality and the validity of learning outcome reports.

Moreover, in the Merdeka Curriculum, digital assessments are increasingly common. Systems such as e-Rapor and ANBK facilitate automatic scoring, but without adequate assessment literacy, numerical scores are not translated into actionable information for learning improvement. The author emphasizes that teachers' assessment literacy is critical for connecting digital scores with competency interpretation, feedback, and subsequent instructional decisions.

Based on the findings, the author stresses that strengthening teacher professionalism is key to addressing misconceptions between scoring and assessment and improving evaluation quality. Strategic recommendations are as follows:

1. Strengthening teacher assessment literacy
  - Teachers need to understand that scoring is quantitative and only one component of assessment, whereas assessment is interpretative and evaluates students' overall competency.
  - Training should emphasize the use of rubrics, competency indicators, and interpretation of assessment results so that teachers can provide constructive feedback.
  - This literacy is not just theoretical; teachers must link numeric scores with students' critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration skills in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.
2. Standardization of rubrics and competency indicators
  - To reduce inconsistency between schools, clear, understandable, and consistent rubrics and competency indicators should be established.
  - With standardized rubrics, scoring can be interpreted uniformly, and students' final grades become more valid and reliable.
  - Standardization also allows teachers to compare student achievement across schools and regions.
3. Integration of assessment literacy with digital technology

- Digital platforms like e-Rapor and ANBK provide automatic scores, but scores alone are insufficient. Teachers must interpret these data for learning improvement.
  - This strategy includes using digital analysis features to monitor student progress, assess specific competencies, and plan appropriate interventions.
4. Continuous professional mentoring
- One-time training is insufficient; teachers require ongoing mentoring to ensure competency-based assessment implementation aligns with standards.
  - Mentoring can include workshops, coaching, or teacher community discussions, so that assessment practices become more refined and consistent.

The relevance of these recommendations to the study findings is clear: they emerge directly from evidence that teacher misconceptions affect evaluation effectiveness, feedback quality, and standardization across schools. By implementing these strategies, teachers can conduct accurate, interpretative, and competency-based assessments, achieving the Merdeka Curriculum's goals of more personalized, meaningful, and competency-centered learning.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that scoring and assessment are distinct yet interconnected stages in learning evaluation. Scoring is quantitative, providing raw scores as an initial measure of student performance, while assessment is interpretative, translating scores into meaningful insights about competency achievement and overall learning quality. Misconceptions among teachers regarding these processes reduce the accuracy of outcome interpretation, feedback quality, and consistency of standards, particularly under the Merdeka Curriculum's competency-based framework.

Findings highlight that improving teachers' assessment literacy, standardizing rubrics and competency indicators, and integrating score interpretation with digital platforms are essential for effective evaluation. These strategies enhance validity, reliability, and the ability to provide constructive feedback that supports holistic student development.

This study contributes to both theory and practice by clarifying the conceptual distinction between scoring and assessment and emphasizing teacher professionalism in competency-based evaluation. Future research should empirically examine the impact of assessment literacy training and standardized rubrics on evaluation quality across educational levels.

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