

Writing portfolio as an alternative assessment tool: perceptions of the insiders

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A QUICK QUESTION

How do you assess your students' performance?

Numbers that tell stories

20-25

2.3 %

112

18-19

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

- **Heaton (1990):** “A test can favor certain students, but not others. It may fail a student who deserves to pass, or pass a student who really should fail.” (7-8)
- **Swatz (1999):** “a single test score or measure is not always an accurate depiction of a student's learning outcome.”

MY STORY



Research Questions

1. What are FELTE 2nd-year students' perceptions of portfolio assessment?
2. What are FELTE teachers' perceptions of portfolio assessment?

Major Contents

1. Portfolios
2. Benefits & Drawbacks of Portfolio Assessment
3. Portfolios at FELTE, ULIS
4. Data collection
5. Findings & implications
6. Recommendations

Portfolios

A student portfolio is a systematic collection of student work and related material that depicts a student's activities, accomplishments, and achievements in one or more school subjects.

(Venn, 2000, P.530-531)

Portfolio is a collection of a learner's work assembled for the purpose of determining how much has been learned.

(Hancock, 1994)

Portfolios

Portfolios are **purposeful** collections of any aspects of students' work that tell the story of **their achievements, skills, efforts, abilities, and contributions** to a particular class.

(Brown & Hudson, 1998)

Portfolio types

- Product/ showcase portfolios
- Progress/ working portfolios



Portfolio Components

- Samples
- Processed samples
- Revisions of student work
- Reflections
- Portfolio projects

(Crockett, 1998)

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Benefits & Drawbacks of PA



Authenticity

Positive washback



Reliability

Practicality

Benefits

Authenticity

Burner (2014, as cited in Phung, 2016, p.4):

- (a) Creates opportunities for authentic and sophisticated language use.
- (b) Responds to the multifaceted nature of language/ multi-domain learning.
- (c) Generates anxiety-free effects from time constrained tests and exams
- (d) Increases students' motivation and time-on-task
- (e) Promotes interaction in and out classroom
- (f) Facilitates communication and sharing of texts online, enhancing ecological validity.

Benefits

Positive Washback

- Informing teachers
- Promoting motivation
- Encouraging self-reflection


(Phung, 2016)

Benefits & Drawbacks of PA



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Portfolios at FELTE, ULIS

- Objectives:** the assignment creates chance for students to
- practice critical reading in an academic way.
 - use ideas learned in reading texts to support, develop and/or deepen their viewpoints in writing essays.
 - practice paraphrasing, citing in writing academic essays.
 - sharpen their self-study skills through this assignment.

Portfolios at FELTE, ULIS

W1-4

- Learn about essay writing
- Search for academic texts

W5

- Bring to class 2 academic texts
- Consult with teacher

W6

- Submit 2 texts, diaries, and glossaries
- Get comments from teacher

Portfolios at FELTE, ULIS

W7

- Bring outline to class – get comments
- Write 1st entry

W8

- Get peer comments (in class)

W9

- Revise

Portfolios at FELTE, ULIS

W10

- Submit 1st entry
- Search for academic texts for entry 2

W11

- Bring to class 2 reading texts
- Consult with teacher
- Get comments on entry 1

W12

- Submit texts, diaries, and glossaries
- Submit outline – get comments

Portfolios at FELTE, ULIS

W13

- Write draft 1 of entry 2
- Get peer comments (at home)

W14

- Submit the whole package

W15

- Get feedback from teacher

Rubrics

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Need work	
	9-10	7-8	5-6	3-4	1-2
Interaction (with the text)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows thorough understanding of the main ideas and significant details of the text - Recognizes all general academic words that are central to understanding the text - Identifies all points that are relevant to the essay title; classifies those points into relevant categories - Shows the need for and clear orientation of further search (if any) - All of the ideas and vocabulary items are highlighted/ noted systematically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows proper understanding of the main ideas and significant details of the text - Recognizes most of general academic words that are central to understanding the text - Identifies most of the points that are relevant to the essay title; classifies those points into relevant categories - Shows the need for further search; may show the orientation of the search but it may not be sufficient - Most of the ideas and vocabulary items are highlighted/ noted systematically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows adequate understanding of the main ideas and significant details of the text; some significant details may be ignored - Recognizes some general academic words that are central to understanding the text - Identifies some of the points that are relevant to the essay title; classifies those points into relevant categories - Shows the need for further search, but may not show the orientation of the search - Most of the ideas and vocabulary items are highlighted/ noted systematically; few inconsistencies may persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows certain but somewhat unclear understanding of the text - Recognizes some general academic words, but some of them may not be central to understanding the text - Identifies few points that are relevant to the essay title; may misclassify those points into categories - May not show the need for further search - Some of the ideas and vocabulary items are highlighted/ noted; the highlights/ notes may be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows little understanding of the text - Recognizes few general academic words, and they may not be central to understanding the text - Identifies very few points that are relevant to the essay title; misclassifies those points into categories - Does not show the need for further search - Some of the ideas and vocabulary items are highlighted/ noted; most of the highlights/ notes are hard to review

Rubrics

	Linguistic competence		Socio-linguistic competence	Pragmatic competence	Strategic competence
	Lexical Resources	Grammatical Range and Accuracy			
9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; no minor errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the appropriate tone throughout the writing according to the level of formality required by a particular writing type • Uses a wide range of linguistic markers suitable for particular level of formality/politeness; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention (including the use of grammar referencing/substitutions) • Skillfully manages paragraphing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully addresses all parts of the task • The main ideas are stated clearly and skillfully supported with strong grounds and warrants which are properly and consistently cited • Uses paraphrasing skillfully • Demonstrate great improvement throughout the two essays; improve the writing as commented and when necessary while maintain control over mechanics, vocabulary and higher order/global features (organisation, ideas, ideas expressions, etc.)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings • Skillfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a wide range of structures • The majority of sentences are error-free • Makes only very occasional errors or inappropriateness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows the awareness of the level of formality required by a particular writing type; there may be occasional inconsistencies in tone, but certain formality can be maintained • Uses a wide range of linguistic markers suitable for particular level of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequences information and ideas logically • Manages all aspects of cohesion well (including grammar referencing/substitutions) • Uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sufficiently addresses all parts of the task • The main ideas are stated clearly and generally supported with relevant details which are properly and consistently cited, • Uses paraphrasing sufficiently and appropriately • Shows adequate improvements, but some errors

Peer Checklist

Name of Writer:

Name of Partner:

Checking effectiveness	Writer	Partner	Evidence
Introductory paragraph			
1. Do the building sentences provide adequate background knowledge on the topic?			
2. Is the motive for the essay clear?			
3. Does the thesis have a clear position?			
Body paragraphs			
5. Does each paragraph have a topic sentence which explains the thesis of the paragraph?			
6. Does each topic sentence directly support the thesis?			
7. Do the supporting sentences in each body paragraph directly and adequately support the topic sentence?			
8. Are counter-arguments presented and rebutted?			
9. Are the arguments logical?			
Concluding paragraph			
10. Are the readers reminded of the thesis and main arguments?			
11. Is there an effective final thought?			

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Data Collection

- **Approach:** Qualitative
- **Participants:** students from 3 classes (66 portfolios, 9 interviews), 3 teachers
- **Instruments:** portfolio analysis, interviews (teachers and students)

Student Interviews

1. Can you describe your process of developing your 4B writing portfolios?
2. Did you enjoy making the portfolios?
3. What did you understand to be the objectives of the portfolio process?
4. What did you learn while developing your portfolios?
5. How much time did you spend on each entry? (follow up: what do you think about that?)
6. If it were your choice, would you want your final grade to be based on a portfolio or a traditional test?
7. Do you think your grade for the portfolio accurately reflects your competence?
8. Would you like to make any other comments?

(Adapted from Wahab, 2002)

Teacher Interviews

1. How long have you been using portfolios to assess your students' performance?
2. How do you instruct your students to develop their portfolios?
3. How do you grade your students portfolios? (Possible follow up: Do you use the rubrics? Are they difficult to use?)
4. Do you think portfolios are great assessment tools? Why (not)?
5. Do you encounter any difficulties when using portfolio assessment?
6. Would you like to make any recommendations?

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Findings & Implications

STUDENTS

- Majority had positive perceptions.
Reasons: less stress, more chance to communicate with teacher, more opportunities to learn, better sense of achievement.
- Many complained portfolios are time-consuming to create.
Reasons: availability of academic texts, familiarity with essay format
- Mixed ideas about peer feedback.
- Most students think their grades reflect their competence.
Reasons: received comments from teachers
- Students are generally informed of the objectives
- Some students think portfolios are boring.

TEACHERS

- All teachers perceived portfolio assessment as a good way to develop students' skills (note taking, time management, some writing competences) but were reserved about some other abilities (critical thinking, lexical choices).
Reason: too few entries
- All teachers believed they knew more about their students thanks to PA.
- All teachers think portfolios are time-consuming.
- 2 teachers strictly based on the rubrics to mark their students' portfolios. The other looked at students' progress and marked holistically.
- All teachers found it hard to make decisions about students' performance.

Implications

- Clear objectives & guidelines
- Design & familiarity
- Time vs. number of entries
- Complementary activities
- Teachers: peer review
- User-friendly rubrics and checklists

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Recommendations for Future Studies

- Do the differences in teachers' perceptions and students' perceptions matter? How?
- Can portfolio assessment be repeated over courses?
- Does design really affect the effectiveness of portfolio assessment?

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Thank you for your attention!

The bottom of the slide features a decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, wavy lines in shades of light blue, teal, and light red, creating a sense of movement and depth.