

Using Portfolio as an Assessment Task

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Abstract:

This article will analyze using portfolios as an assessment strategy. It is organized as follows. Initially, portfolio assessment is depicted and the most essential attributes of this method are discussed. Next, the merits and demerits of portfolio assessment are explored. The evaluation principles are discussed followed by the significance of feedback in using a portfolio as an assessment task.

Keywords: portfolio, entry, assessment, reflective, feedback.

Introduction

Before the discussion, it is important to depict the word ‘portfolio’. “Portfolio is a collection of written texts written for different purposes over some time” [Weigle, 2002, p198]. Portfolio can be substituted to evaluate students’ progress which can describe each student do [Farid, 2018:53-62]. A portfolio task consists of several written entries to collect in our portfolio during the given adequate time to demonstrate progress and accomplishments gained from a module or a lesson. Tasks can be in different genres which are an observation of teaching practice and a reflection.

Weigle (2002) give some characteristics that make a portfolio assessment stand out from other assessment methods which will be explained below: [Weigle, 2002]

1. It allows the writer to demonstrate a variety of writing abilities across genres, audiences, and goals.
2. A portfolio has context richness insofar as it accurately depicts the learning environment and highlights the writer's accomplishments within it.
3. Delayed evaluation is a crucial aspect of the majority of portfolio programs, offering students the chance and incentive to edit their written work before receiving a final rating. This characteristic plays an important role to demonstrate better version of what students produced creating a chance of working on it by doing revision continuously.

4. Selecting the pieces to be included in a portfolio is often done by the student with some direction from the instructor. A selecting opportunity gives a chance students to show their work as many times as they wish and select the best one that matches to the criteria.
5. When creating a portfolio, students must reflect on their work in order to decide how to arrange it. They are also frequently required to write a reflective essay about their progress as writers and how the portfolio pieces reflect that progression. These tasks have a high potential to positively exert their writing, organizational and research skills.

It can be concluded that this portfolio has crucial elements that can fairly assess the students' work and develop some essential skills of students while completing the entries of portfolio.

The main principles of these aforementioned characteristics are collection, selection and reflection. Weigle explains the significance of these attributes in a substantial manner: "...selection of specific contents and their arrangement, made through deliberate reflection, are what turn a collection of writing samples into portfolio" [Weigle, 2002, p 200]. Organising selected contents by reflecting on gained expertise and collecting into a portfolio make this assessment demonstrate students' real achievement. In our case, a portfolio possesses these most crucial elements as I illuminated with examples above.

By allowing students to evaluate their own learning and development, portfolios enable them to become reflective and self-directed practitioners and contribute to their personal and professional progress.

Merits of portfolio assessment

There are several advantageous sides of portfolio using in assessment. It can foster self-assessment in students. Birgin (2007) argues that by allowing students to evaluate their own learning and development, portfolios enable them to become reflective and self-directed practitioners and contribute to their personal and professional progress [cited from Birgin and Baki, 2007: 75-90]. A portfolio task can lead students to assess their own product effectively, work on it and approach well and eventually they will become self-directed and reflective on what they have done personally and professionally.

The noteworthy feature that I would like to underline in portfolio assessment is developing good writing skill which is entirely necessary competence for the entire academic years at university. Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) state that a portfolio assessment gives a possibility of "teaching a person to fish". Because writing instructors still want their students to generate high-quality writing that good writer utilize [Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000, p36]. The portfolio task is entirely written work which requires to concentrate on producing an outstanding writing production. It can hone students' writing skills to produce a well-written work for their further studies and advance the writing styles as experts.

It is deduced that the advantages of portfolio are immense that makes the learning and teaching process efficient in the long run by creating chances of enhancing core skills that are essential in their lives.

Demerits of portfolio assessment

Although a portfolio assessment is one of the effective form of assessment, there are some indisputable drawbacks that causes difficulties in the process. The fact that portfolio assessments take a lot of time and effort from both teachers and students is possibly the one drawback of portfolio assessments that is mentioned the most frequently [Weigle ,2002]. Indeed, completing portfolio is time-consuming for both a teacher and a student. The process demands a lot of time and energy. Despite of the fact that Weigle states single negative side of portfolio assessment, I came

across another weakness of implementing portfolio in Daud's work. Mathew (2004) argues that the single official reason to refuse using portfolios is due to the fact that they are too subjective (cited in Daud, 2017: 106-114). For instance, while grading writing assignments, various teachers may give different scores. One might give 50, whereas another might provide 60. In order to reach inter and intra reliability and tackle this issue, an assessor needs to be well-qualified and consistent what he or she assessed.

Methodology

The methodology for this study will involve a detailed examination of portfolio assessment as a tool in educational contexts, based on existing literature and practical applications. The research will adopt a qualitative approach, using a combination of literature review and reflective analysis to explore the effectiveness of portfolio tasks in developing essential student skills such as writing, self-reflection, and self-assessment. Primary sources, including articles from Weigle (2002), Birgin (2007), Hamp-Lyons & Condon (2000), and Daud (2017), will be critically analyzed to extract key elements that make portfolio assessment an effective strategy for educational assessment. The study will also consider the experiences of teachers and students in handling portfolios, emphasizing the feedback mechanisms that enhance learning outcomes. The analysis will incorporate reflective practice as an essential element of portfolio use, allowing students to engage deeply with their progress and areas for improvement. Moreover, the challenges associated with portfolio assessment, such as the time-consuming nature of the process and potential subjectivity in grading, will be explored to offer a balanced perspective. The findings will be contextualized within the framework of higher education, considering how portfolios can be used to foster long-term skill development. Overall, this methodology will focus on gathering insights from theoretical and practical perspectives, using reflective analysis to highlight the strengths and limitations of portfolio assessment in education. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how portfolios function as both an assessment tool and a catalyst for student development.

Result and Discussion

Brown (2005) depicts feedback as a heart of the learning process and although it is time-consuming, it should be an indispensable part of the process to help students to understand where they are, whether to keep doing or change their work, what to work on it and how to develop further [Brown, 2005]. I really agree with this idea since feedback controls and guides appropriately the learning and teaching system like a heart. If it doesn't occur in the process, it is likely to lead failure at the end. They guide students to assess the way toward the destination and every dialogue with the teacher urges them to move forward better and explaining where they are and directing to the ultimate goal.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the multifaceted value of portfolio assessment as an effective tool for fostering essential skills such as self-reflection, self-assessment, and advanced writing capabilities among students. The findings indicate that portfolios not only allow for a comprehensive evaluation of a student's progress but also encourage deeper engagement with the learning process through reflective practice. However, the research also highlights challenges, particularly the time-intensive nature of portfolio management and the subjectivity in grading, which may affect the reliability of assessments. These insights imply that while portfolios are beneficial for long-term skill development, their implementation requires careful planning and consistency in evaluation standards. Future research should explore methods to streamline portfolio assessment, focusing on ways to enhance inter-rater reliability and reduce the time burden on educators. Moreover, further studies could investigate the impact of portfolio use across diverse educational settings and disciplines to establish broader applicability and refine best practices.

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