

Portfolio-Based Assessment Practices of Selected High School English Language Teachers in Metro Manila

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ABSTRACT--Portfolio-based assessment is a tool used to keep track of student's progress in the classroom over time. Moreover, it does not only individualize student's learning, but also help teachers improve their instruction. This study sought to identify the portfolio assessment practices of selected high school language teachers in Metro Manila. It employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The descriptive method of research was used in the study, employing both quantitative and qualitative research designs. A total of 20 junior high school English teachers participated in the study. First, a survey was conducted to determine the profile of the respondents. Then, an interview was done to gather the necessary data regarding the teachers' use of portfolio assessment. Overall, the teachers found portfolio as an important assessment tool in monitoring student's progress and in keeping record of what they have accomplished in class. Furthermore, the teacher-respondents identified the use of portfolio as a practical assessment tool, since it provides complete and concrete learning evidence. Portfolio-based assessment has been also found useful in visualizing the strengths and weaknesses of the students in the K to 12 Classroom. However, the study revealed that portfolio assessment is often done informally and is less effective to the students in lower sections. Thus, the findings suggest that teachers must practice using formal portfolio-based assessment with distinct pattern or criteria to enhance the reliability of the **portfolio**, since teaching in the K to 12 classrooms is student-centered and outcome-based.

Keywords--assessment, portfolio-based, practices, English language teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Aligned with the implementation of K to 12 program in the Philippines, the Department of Education's Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program (DepEd Order No. 8 s. 2015) states that classroom assessment shall facilitate the development of 21st century skills among students and promote self-reflection and personal accountability among students about their own learning. In addition, a 21st century classroom describes instruction as student-centered, with the teachers giving a lot of outcome-based tasks focusing on creating lifelong learners.

Moreover, the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education curriculum in the Philippines promotes a balanced assessment program using a wide selection and variety of traditional and authentic assessment tools for valid, reliable, and realistic assessment of learning. Thus, instead of grading the students through quizzes and summative tests, one common tool that teachers use in assessing their output is the portfolio. A portfolio is mainly a collection

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of student's output which is meant to show their progress over a period of time. This comes in different forms like folders, journals, compilations, reports, or even digital or e-portfolios.

The idea of authentic assessment—evaluating children based on an in-depth examination of their work rather than their scores on standardized tests—goes back a century, to the beginnings of the progressive education movement. (Mathews, 2004) This is where portfolio assessment comes in.

Considered as an authentic form of assessment, portfolio-based assessment is a type of evaluation tool used to keep track of students learning through a series of student-developed outputs depicting students' activities, accomplishments, and achievements in different school subjects. Furthermore, portfolio-based assessment has become the preferred choice of teachers who believe students cannot be assessed solely by written exams.

Typically, genuine portfolio-based assessment requires several steps such as defining clearly identified goals, developing an evaluation procedure for keeping track of the content, and holding portfolio conferences through formal and informal meetings with the learners. Thus, in order to achieve successful portfolio assessment in the classroom, teachers need to develop clear criteria for evaluation and utilize comprehensive rubrics that clearly outline the goals of the tasks.

Since one of the common alternative assessment tools used by teachers in the K to 12 classrooms is the portfolio, this paper presents the practices of selected junior high school English teachers in using portfolio-based assessment.

II. OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to determine the portfolio-based assessment practices of selected high school English language teachers in Metro Manila. Specifically, it sought to find out the (a) profile of the respondents in terms of gender, grade level taught, and number of years in teaching; (b) the time when the teachers use portfolio assessment in class; (c) the kind of portfolio required by the teachers for the students to submit; (d) the teachers' style and criteria for assessing the portfolio; (e) the effectiveness of using portfolio as an assessment tool; and (f) difficulty encountered by the teachers in using portfolio assessment.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The 21st century classrooms demand the teachers to move from the traditional paper-and-paper types of tests to alternate and differentiated forms of assessment. One of these alternative assessment tools is the portfolio which has been primarily used in the teaching and learning process to keep track of the accomplishments and growth of the students in the classroom.

The idea of authentic assessment—evaluating children based on an in-depth examination of their work rather than their scores on standardized tests—goes back a century, to the beginnings of the progressive education movement. (Mathews, 2004)

Gillespie, (1996) defines portfolio assessment as a purposeful, multidimensional process of collecting evidence that illustrates a student's accomplishments, efforts, and progress (utilizing a variety of authentic evidence) over time.

According to Jardine, (2009) portfolio assessment gives both teachers and students a controlled space to document, review, and analyze content learning. Therefore, it means that portfolios as a collection of student work allows assessment by providing evidence of effort and accomplishments in relation to specific instructional goals.

Likewise, portfolio assessments provide an authentic way of demonstrating skills and accomplishments. They encourage a real world experience that demands organization, decision making, and metacognition. Used in a thoughtful, carefully planned way, portfolio assessment can foster a positive outlook on learning and achievement (Fersten, 2009).

In her article, McDonald (2011) mentions that the portfolio is not the easiest type of assessment to implement, but it can be a very effective tool. Portfolios show the cumulative efforts and learning of a particular student over time. They offer valuable data about student improvement and skill mastery. Along with student reflection, that data provides valuable information about how each student learns and what is important to him or her in the learning process.

Another article by Huffman (2008) discusses that portfolios are useful, effective tools to aid early childhood professionals in acknowledging and documenting each child's progress. This means that portfolios do not invite competition among students as it only focuses on the development and accomplishments of the learners.

According to Danielson & Abrutyn, (1997) the four basic steps in developing a portfolio are: collection, selection, reflection and projection. The first step in the portfolio development process is the collection of various pieces of students' works. Collection is the primary activity in creating a working portfolio. When using the assessment or evaluation portfolio, it is imperative that all writing assignments go into the working portfolio for evaluation at the end of the school term.

In his book, Klenowski (2002) elaborates that the use of the portfolio offers the opportunity for the realization of this important integration of assessment with curriculum development and is a theme addressed throughout. This is because the use of portfolios for assessment helps provide a structure and processes for documenting and reflecting on teaching and related learning practices, and making them public.

The study of Lucas, (2007) identified that portfolio assessment opened channels of communication between the teachers and the students. This alternative evaluation scheme has given the students the awareness to know their strengths and weaknesses.

In a study of Bryant, (n.d) it states that as schools move toward reforming the assessment system, researchers feel the use of portfolios is an important aspect of quality reform that can be used to better assess problem-based learning. Teachers and principals need to understand the added value and empowerment that come from using portfolio assessment for all involved in the process. Therefore, the K to 12 teachers must be equipped with the right strategies in conducting portfolio-based classroom assessment.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study made use of the descriptive method of research which employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. It is the most appropriate research to use, since the study is concerned with the portfolio-based

assessment practices of the junior high school English teachers. Calderon and Gonzales (2004) have stated that the descriptive method describes and interprets “what is.”

Participants

This study involved the participation of 20 junior high school English language teachers from selected schools in Metro Manila. The teachers were from schools, namely: E. Maceda Intergrated High School, V. Mapa High School, Mandaluyong High School, Quezon City High School, Quezon City High School, R. Magsaysay High School España, C.M. Recto High School, E. Quirino High School, and E. Abada High School. These schools were chosen based on their accessibility to the researcher.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire to identify the profile of the respondents, and the researcher-made interview questions to find out the respondents’ practices on the use of portfolio-based assessment.

Data-Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the selected English teachers of the respective schools for the conduct of the survey and interview. The respondents were asked to answer a short survey on their profile, followed by answering the interview questions on their portfolio-based assessment practices. After the data gathering, the researcher tabulated the responses using frequency for the respondent’s profile and content analysis for tabulating the respondents’ answers to the interview questions.

Statistical Treatment

The study used frequency as statistical formula in tabulating the respondents’ profile. Meanwhile, qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the participants’ responses in the interview.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Respondents’ Profile

Profile Variables	F	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	3	15.00
Female	17	85.00
Total	20	100.00
<i>Grade level taught</i>		
Grade 7	5	25
Grade 8	5	25
Grade 9	6	30
Grade 10	4	20
Total	20	100.00

<i>No. of years in teaching</i>		
1 to 5 years	7	35.00
6 to 10 years	8	40.00
More than 10 years	5	25.00
Total	20	100.00

Seventeen (17) or 85.00% of the respondents were females; six (6) or 30.00% of them taught Grade 9 students; and eight (8) or 40.00% of them has been teaching for 6 to 10 years.

Table 2: The Time When the Teachers Use Portfolio Assessment in Class

<i>Question 1. When do you use portfolio assessment in your classes?</i>	
Teacher 1	I use portfolio in assessing the learners most of the time.
Teacher 2	I use it like once a school year, since the K to 12 basic education curriculum advises the teachers to use a wide variety of assessment tools.
Teacher 3	My students submit it every grading period because it is needed in K to 12.
Teacher 4	In my class, it is used to compile group activities.
Teacher 5	We require our students to create portfolios to have their own records or data about the tasks they accomplished, especially on written tasks and quizzes.
Teacher 6	Every grading period to compile the readings
Teacher 7	I use it when students have projects like interview with pictures which serve as evidence that they completed it.
Teacher 8	I use it as my students' compilation of their written outputs.
Teacher 9	My students submit a portfolio at the end of the school year.
Teacher 10	It serves as a collection of their quizzes and exams.
Teacher 11	I require a portfolio twice a school year.
Teacher 12	I use it as a student project.

Teacher 13	I use it as their requirement for clearance.
Teacher 14	Portfolio serves as their project.
Teacher 15	I use it very quarter.
Teacher 16	Since the curriculum is changed to K to 12, I use it more often.
Teacher 17	I use it to identify the students' development in the subject.
Teacher 18	I require them to submit a portfolio once in a quarter.
Teacher 19	It is used to compile students' exams.
Teacher 20	I require my students one portfolio every grading period.

In terms of the time when the teachers use portfolio assessment, it was found out from the responses that a portfolio, most of the time, is required by high school teachers to be submitted before the end of a grading period. Furthermore, portfolio is used as an alternative assessment tool in the K to 12 Curriculum, because it allows the students to have their own records of the tasks they accomplished in a given time.

Same with the findings of the study by Baki, (2007) portfolio assessment enables students to reflect their real performance, to show their weak and strong domain and to observe student's progress during the learning process, and encourages students to take responsibilities for their own learning. Thus, portfolio assessment is given within a specific learning period.

Table 3: The Kind of Portfolio Required by the Teachers for the Students to Submit

<i>Question 2. What kind of portfolio do you require your students to submit?</i>	
Teacher 1	The portfolio is basically informal and they are required to submit that before the quarter ends.
Teacher 2	I assess it by setting concrete and complete learning evidences.
Teacher 3	Sometimes, I require them to submit formal portfolio, but most often, it is informal.
Teacher 4	I require a formal portfolio. My students are given a distinct pattern or criteria.
Teacher 5	They are compiled according to classification of tasks.

Teacher 6	I can say it's informal.
Teacher 7	Most of the time it is informal.
Teacher 8	Normally, the portfolio is informally done.
Teacher 9	I prefer formal portfolio. I am very particular with the criteria.
Teacher 10	It depends on the outputs to be compiled.
Teacher 11	Because it's just a compilation, it is not formal
Teacher 12	Sometimes formal, sometimes informal.
Teacher 13	Although it is informal, it has criteria.
Teacher 14	I require both formal and informal.
Teacher 15	For the level of my students, they submit informal portfolio.
Teacher 16	For easy checking, I require informal portfolio
Teacher 17	My students submit a simple portfolio.
Teacher 18	A formal portfolio because this will serve as their records regarding their daily activities in school.
Teacher 19	It is usually an informal one
Teacher 20	It depends on the students' activities.

On the type of portfolio required by the teachers for the students, the study revealed that the teachers basically ask their students to submit an informal portfolio or simply a mere compilation of the tasks to be submitted. However, there were still some teachers who require a formal portfolio with distinct criteria or pattern.

Mussawy, (2009) in his study stated that the instructors regularly assign students to include writing samples, reflections, drawings, reading logs, student self-evaluation, and progress notes, visuals and audio clips, among the many. These are the common examples of student outputs that illustrate their learning and development.

Table 4: The Teachers' Style and Criteria for Assessing the Portfolio

<i>Question 3. How do you assess the students' portfolio?</i>	
Teacher 1	In grading the student's portfolios, the process of making the portfolio is very important than the actual output.
Teacher 2	How the students made the portfolio matters most.
Teacher 3	It is assessed using rubric and criteria. For example, I assess whether the creativity is improving or not.
Teacher 4	In assessing the portfolio, I depend on the criteria and objective of what desired outcome you want to see in your students.
Teacher 5	I set a certain criteria in grading portfolio. Usually, creativity and content are the basis of assessing it.
Teacher 6	The most important thing about the portfolio is the content and the acquired knowledge of the students.
Teacher 7	Student portfolio is not just collected. It is also used by the teacher to monitor and remind the students about their performance.
Teacher 8	I use the following criteria in assessing my students' portfolio: Creativity, Content, Uniqueness, and Originality
Teacher 9	I prepare and use the assessment tools with the guidelines given by the school.
Teacher 10	I use a rubric which is already indicated in the material provided by the school.
Teacher 11	Sometimes, I refer to a ready-made rubric; sometimes I draft my own.
Teacher 12	I prepare the assessment tools with the guidelines given by the school.

Teacher 13	In giving portfolio tasks to students, I give the students a rubric which is already indicated in the material provided by the school.
Teacher 14	Sometimes, I use an already available rubric and at times I create my own.
Teacher 15	It always depends on the teacher on how she would assess the students based on their performance because the best tool in teaching will always be the teacher.
Teacher 16	There is a certain criteria used.
Teacher 17	Design and decoration is not a big thing when I grade the portfolio. .
Teacher 18	Before the students create the portfolio, a rubric is presented and dictated to them.
Teacher 19	It is compiled by the students from beginning up to the last activity they accomplish.
Teacher 20	I assess it by using an appropriate rubric or score sheet.

In terms of the style of assessing the students' portfolio, the responses exhibits that the teachers consider the following aspects: process of making the portfolio, creativity, content, and originality. In addition, the portfolios are graded by using a rubric and guidelines developed by the teacher or prescribed by the school.

The study of Sharp, (1997) it showed that a scoring guide (assessment sheet) for the entire portfolio. This scoring guide lists items submitted, dates submitted, dates reviewed, points possible for each assignment, and points earned. Also, for each assignment, the guide describes standards for acceptable and unacceptable work.

Table 5: The Effectiveness of Using Portfolio as an Assessment Tool

<i>Question 4. In your case, how effective is the use of portfolio an effective assessment tool?</i>	
Teacher 1	The effectiveness of the portfolio depends on the teacher.

Teacher 2	It includes evidence of specific skills and other items at one particular time and language performance and progress over time, under different conditions.
Teacher 3	Learners are involved in the process of tracking their learning and can take control of their learning.
Teacher 4	I believe teaching is a trial and error and the reason why there are different assessment tools is because the students differ from each other and you have to find what suits them best.
Teacher 5	It helps me attain my goals as a teacher, to assess and evaluate if learning takes place in my class.
Teacher 6	Teaching and without assessment is nothing.
Teacher 7	It defines effectiveness of instruction.
Teacher 8	It defines the teaching-learning process.
Teacher 9	Like a mirror, it reflects what the students have learned and the things to be improved.
Teacher 10	I consider the portfolio as an effective assessment tool because it contains the performance task of the students. Here, I was able to check whether their grammar improves.
Teacher 11	I find portfolio assessment as an effective tool as it plays an important role in identifying and assessing the students if they were really able to acquire what I've been teaching them.
Teacher 12	Portfolio is the most practical assessment tool I use in a sense that it gives importance to whatever is done and accomplished by the students.
Teacher 13	It is often used in the K to 12 curriculum, unlike in the past curriculum.
Teacher 14	It is a practical way to assess what the students have done or accomplished.

Teacher 15	It is an effective way to monitor the improvement and development of the learners as a whole.
Teacher 16	Aside from the teachers, it is also helpful for the students because they can also monitor themselves and identify their strengths and weaknesses. This will enable them to strive harder.
Teacher 17	K to 12 curriculum enables the students to exert more effort in studying than before.
Teacher 18	The usefulness of portfolio assessment is to visualize the strengths and weaknesses of the students as well as their improvements.
Teacher 19	It serves as the students' complete record of written output.
Teacher 20	It helps regulate the individual efforts of the learners. Teachers can easily review what the students have done like the outputs, etc.

On the effectiveness of using portfolio-based assessment, the teachers found the portfolio as an effective and practical assessment tool to monitor the improvement and development of the learners as a whole, as it reflects what the students have learned and the things to be improved. Likewise, by using portfolio-based assessment, the students take control of their learning, their strengths and weaknesses are identified and it gives importance to anything that the students have accomplished in class.

The case study of Gomez, (1999) revealed that portfolios can result in improved student learning. Perhaps the most compelling reason for schools to implement assessment portfolios is that they can improve student learning. By using assessment portfolios, teachers can include students in the process of setting educational goals and developing scoring criteria in the form of rubrics, checklists, and rating scales.

Table 6: developing scoring criteria in the form of rubrics, checklists, and rating scales

<i>Question 5. What difficulty do you encounter in using portfolio as an assessment tool?</i>	
Teacher 1	The student have difficulties compiling all their written works and in decorating their portfolio.
Teacher 2	Sometimes, students do not follow the instructions.
Teacher 3	The students copy paste articles for their output on reflection.
Teacher 4	Some students lose their papers.

Teacher 5	The portfolio is not neatly done completely by the students.
Teacher 6	Students have exactly the same outputs.
Teacher 7	It is difficult to conduct portfolio assessment in the lower sections.
Teacher 8	Since I am teaching lower sections, it was not effective for them. Some students lost their papers.
Teacher 9	My students in the lower section cannot comply with the requirements.
Teacher 10	My students in the lower section cannot comply with the requirements.
Teacher 11	We use one type of portfolio only. I think we need to vary it.
Teacher 12	Some students submit just for the sake of complying, especially the lower sections.
Teacher 13	We should be properly trained on how to conduct portfolio-based assessment effectively.
Teacher 14	Sometimes, it is difficult to check portfolios, especially if there are too many aspects to check.
Teacher 15	I want to try using different types of portfolios for my students.
Teacher 16	Teachers need to be properly guided on the use of portfolio as an assessment tool.
Teacher 17	Since we are now teaching in the 21 st century, there shall be seminars for teachers on the use of different alternative assessment tools, especially the portfolio.

In terms of the difficulties encountered by the teachers in using portfolio-based assessment in the classroom, the results revealed that it is difficult to conduct among the lower sections because they do not follow the instructions accordingly and they submit it incompletely. Moreover, some teachers mentioned that there is a need for them to be properly guided on how to use portfolio-based assessment in the classroom.

In a study conducted by Tangdhanakanond, (2012) although the results indicated that, the teachers had positive attitude towards the use of student portfolioassessment, still, they also had needs in all of the steps of using student portfolio assessment

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the respondents were females, teaching Grade 9 students, and with 6 to 10 years of teaching experience. In terms of the time when the teachers use portfolio in class, most of them require the students to submit it every grading period as it allows the students to record their own progress in a given time. On the type of portfolio to be submitted by the students, majority of the teachers required the students to submit an informal portfolio or a simple compilation of the tasks given to them. Most of the teachers assessed the students' portfolio by focusing on creativity, content, originality and process; and the rating is based on a guideline or criteria. The majority of the teachers found portfolio-based assessment as an effective and practical tool to monitor the development of the learners and identify their strengths and weaknesses. The teachers encountered two major difficulties in conducting portfolio-based assessment: it is difficult to conduct among lower sections and the teachers need to be properly guided on how to use it effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, it is thereby recommended for the K to 12 teachers to devise an alternative way on how to make portfolio assessment interesting for the students in the lower sections. Although informal portfolio was already found effective, it is still recommended for the teachers to exercise the use of formal portfolio assessment with a well-defined pattern and criteria in order to enhance its validity and reliability. The teachers should also explore on the several types of portfolio and how it is done in order to make it appropriate for the students' different performance tasks.

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