

THE USE OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT IN PROCESS-BASED ACADEMIC ESSAY WRITING INSTRUCTION

Peptia Asrining Tyas

Faculty of Culture Studies, University of BrawijayaJl. Veteran Malang

E-mail: peptia_tyas@yahoo.com; peptia@ub.ac.id

teacher to teach. As Richards and Renandya (2002:306) says that it is

ABSTRACT

Although the concept of process-based approach in writing instruction in the teaching of EFL becomes popular in the recent years, many English teachers still used conventional method in teaching writing that only concern about the final product with perfect grammar and vocabulary. Thus, many educators suggested the use of a process based approach in teaching writing which is consists of various activities, namely pre-writing, drafting, responding, revising, editing, assessing, post-writing, and reflection. Those activities can give students opportunities to improve their writing composition, perhaps motivate them to be a better writer, and of course train them to have critical thinking in order to make optimal interaction of teacher-student and among students.

Keywords: writing process-based approach, portfolio assessment, and process-product assessments.

Introduction

Some experts say that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. It needs higher level skills of planning and organizing. Since the difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas but also translating those ideas into readable text, it needs higher level skills of planning and organizing. However, writing is not only difficult for students to master but sometimes it is also difficult for

fact that both learning and teaching a language promote anxiety. And even when writing is involved. Sometimes many teachers themselves do not feel confident and comfortable with writing in English although they are native language. Moreover, there are so many conflicting theories exist today. Thus, they also point out:

Planning a course is like walking a minefield. It involves so many choices about where to go next, what is the best step to take, and what is the best route to the goal. Taking a wrong step in this context might not be as dire as stepping on a mine, but it can undermine our confidence and denote our students' resistance.

Two Perspectives in Teaching Writing

According to Widodo (2008), there are two perspectives of teaching writing. The first is cognitive perspective. In this perspective, writing should be thought as a process of forming concept and ideas for certain purpose, audience, and language use. Thus, the process of writing involves some activities that are done recursively. They are pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. The second is humanistic perspective. In humanistic, writing is used as a means of exploring and discovering meaning.

From the two perspectives, it can be seen that EFL teachers should not only emphasize on the students' writing product

which only focuses on the students' grammatical and lexical accuracy, but also emphasize on the writing process that encourages students to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process of writing so that teacher-student and student-student can interact optimally. Thus, it allows students to focus on their ideas and then encourages the students to work on accuracy in the revision stage.

Process Based-Writing Instruction

In this process-based writing instruction, teacher and students play important roles. Teacher serves as resource and facilitator, monitor and motivator, and also as the feedback provider and evaluator. As resource and facilitator, teacher selects useful task for students in order to give input that is learnable and comprehensible. Ann Raimes (as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:310) says that it is helpful to do an analysis on the first day in order to know what the students need to learn and what they need to use writing for. In addition, Hill and Ruptic (1994, as cited in O'Malley & pierce, 1996:153) says that surveys or rating scales can be used as a means to assess the students' interest and awareness of writing (See Appendix 1 for The Survey of Writing Interest And Awareness Sheet). Thus, by using The Survey of Writing Interest and Awareness Sheet, hopefully the teacher knows what kind of materials that suitable with the students and even can keep in touch with the students' experiences during the writing process.

As a monitor and motivator, teacher is expected to monitor the students' activities and motivate them to finish and complete the writing task in every stage. The last is of course, before the teacher evaluates students' work, he or she needs to give them feedback in the form of positive responds on the students' content. A correction symbol is one sample that can be used as a means to give feedback on the

students' work. Dewi (as cited in Cahyono, B.Y., 2010:197-198) says that the use of correction symbols encourages the students to think about what the mistake is, so that they can correct it by themselves. The symbols can be written above or next to the place where the problem occurs. Besides, the students must know the symbols first and it must be used consistently. Then, teacher can assess their work as a result of the feedback given. For Students, they play as competent planners, writers, feedback provider of their peers' work in a peer review activity, and editors for their own composition (Widodo, 2008).

Process-Based Academic Essay Writing In an EFL College Class.

There are seven stages in process-based academic essay writing in an EFL college class.

- 1) **Pre-writing;** this stage is suitable in stimulating students' ideas or thoughts to get started in their writing and helping the students to organize and develop their ideas into completed essays (Widodo, 2008). There are two steps in pre-writing activity. First is generating ideas and the second is organizing ideas. Based on Boardman & Frydenberg (2002: 12), generating ideas is an activity that can be used to think about a certain topic and generate as many ideas as possible. There are many ways to generating ideas, such as brainstorming, free writing, clustering, and wh-questions. While organizing ideas concerns with the method used to help students to organize ideas. It can be done by outlining or making tree diagram.
- 2) **Drafting;** it focuses on the fluency of writing or promotes the fluency of ideas. In this stage, the teacher should disregard the grammatical accuracy.
- 3) **Peer-Review;** this activity is used in encouraging students to participate

actively in the class, involving them in an authentic communicative context, and developing students' critical reading skill.

- 4) **Revising and Editing;** the aim of these stages are to produce well-written essays. Thus, in the revising activity, the students review their own work based on the feedback given in the previous stage. They have to look at not only on the language errors but also the content and the organization of ideas. While in editing, students are expected to check the minor mistakes in relation with grammar, spelling, punctuation, dictions, and contraction.
- 5) **Assessing;** the purpose of assessing is to examine how well each students or each group has completed the work. The suitable scoring or grading for process-based essays writing instruction is by using analytical scoring system because it allows students to look at their weaknesses on the particular aspects.
- 6) **Post-writing;** it deals with the activities that are used to appreciate students' work in relation with the completed essays. It may cover publishing online or displaying the finished essays on notice boards, sharing with one another, or reading aloud.
- 7) **Reflection;** the purpose of reflection here is to encourage students to reflect on what they have learned during the writing process. Hopefully, they can promote their awareness of writing practice.

Portfolio Assessment

O'Malley and Pierze (1996:14), states that portfolio assessment is a purposeful collection of students' work that is intended to show progress over time. Portfolio assessment may include samples of student's work which are usually selected by the student or by the student

and teacher to represent learning based on the instructional objectives. In addition, Sweet (1993) also says that Portfolio Assessment focuses on reflection of specific learning goals that contain systematic collection of students' work, which includes writing process checklist, self assessment sheet, drafts of writing with teacher's feedback, and the final product. The students' portfolio will be evaluated on specific criteria by both students and English teacher.

The Essential Elements of Portfolios

According to O'Malley and Pierze (1996:35), the essential elements of portfolio are:

- a. **Sample of Student Work**
Portfolio consists of samples of students' work that show growth over time. The sample can consist of audio or video tapes and writing samples. The contents may depend on students or teacher preferences, the purposes of the portfolio, or the instructional goals.
- b. **Students Self Assessment**
Self assessment is an important part of portfolio. A portfolio gives a unique opportunity for students to learn, to monitor their own progress, and to take responsibility for meeting goals set jointly with the teacher.
- c. **Clearly Stated Criteria**
Students need to know how their work will be evaluated and by what standards their work will be judged. The teacher should involve students in setting standard and clarifying them. Teacher needs to make time for students to discuss criteria and engage in goal setting. Criteria can be identified for selecting the work samples that go in portfolio as well as for judging the quality of each sample.

Portfolio Assessment in Writing

Portfolio Assessment not only provides learners with an opportunity to demonstrate their authentic language use but also gave them a chance to reflect on their learning and their performance on specific tasks. With multiple artifacts including the drafts of essays documented, Portfolio Assessment serves as a lens through which the students witnessed how their learning evolved. At the same time, they also learned to judge the quality of their work, identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it was clear that Portfolio Assessment involved students directly in the assessment process, which helped students understand what it meant to learn a language autonomously. Furthermore, the learners not merely viewed their past performance or competence but also set goals for improving their writing skills. In sum, the learners became more conscious about self-reflection and autonomy through self-assessment practice while creating Portfolio Assessment. In other words, they were encouraged to become the self-assessors of their developing capabilities beyond formal education (Hung, 2009:140).

Connecting to Process-Based Writing Instruction Proposed by Widodo

It is suggested then to combine the process-based writing instruction proposed by Widodo and the Portfolio Assessment. Process-based writing instruction work best in helping students become confident and independent student writers and even maximizing students' class participation. While Portfolio Assessment offers teachers a number of ways to evaluate students' learning, including learning process and learning outcomes (Gottlieb1995, as cited in Wang & Liao, 2008: 135).

In line with the explanation above, based on Barrett's definition as cited in Wang &

Liao (2008: 135), a portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' works exhibiting these students' effort, progress, and achievement in one or more areas. Whereas according to Widodo, in this process-based academic essay writing instruction, the analytic scoring system may be more rewarding for students to allow them to look at what aspects they lack in detail. For this reason, a teacher needs to design a marking scheme for students essay assessment. Thus, the Portfolio Assessment and process-based writing instruction serve not only as a guide for students in making choices, in demonstrating how they can reason, create, and reflect upon discussion issues, but also it offers teachers a useful device to assess students' achievement, effort, and improvement. Accordingly, teacher can incorporate the implementation of Portfolio Assessment and process-based writing instruction in the classroom.

Portfolio Assessment in Process-Based Writing Instruction

In portfolio assessment, teacher must monitor the process and the final product of writing. Through the process, the students will share their work with their friends and their teacher in order to get feedback. It will be important for the students to know their strengths and weaknesses.

Process Assessment

The focus on the use of process assessment is to decide the strategies chosen by the teacher. There are three process assessments used:

a. Writing Process Checklist

Based on O'Malley and Pierze (1996:120) , a process checklist might be used to assess whether students have engaged in various processes such as those required for working in small groups or in making a report. Students can use a writing process

checklist to indicate that they have completed all tasks or steps before submitting assigned work. Therefore, checklist is used to structure direct

assessment of students' performance. Table 1 is an example of a writing process checklist.

Table 1. Writing Process Checklist

Student		Date				
Mark:	4=usually	3=sometimes	2=rarely	1=never		
Writing process		Quarter:	1	2	3	4
I. Prewriting strategies						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formulates topics before writing ▪ Considers approach to topic ▪ Discusses topic for writing ▪ Outlines or makes schematic organizer 						
II. Writing strategies						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitors writing (rereads, reviews, backtracks) ▪ Uses adaptive techniques (e.g. skips words, makes substitutions) 						
III. Post writing strategies						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Edits (word-level changes) ▪ Revises (sentence-level changes) ▪ Rewrites (composition-level changes) ▪ Get feedback from others 						
IV. Application and interests						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Write for pleasure ▪ Uses writing to communicate (letters, notes, etc.) ▪ Actively seeks guidance in writing activities ▪ Writes in subject other than language arts ▪ Participates in discussions about writing ▪ Shares writing with others ▪ Edits writing of others 						
Comments						

(Taken from O'Malley and Pierze 1996:149)

b. **Self Assessment of Writing Strategies**
 Self assessment is the reflection of the students' work. Students can increase their control as a writer by using self assessment. Self assessment encourages students to think about their purpose in writing and to reflect on what and how much they are learning (O'Malley and Pierze, 1996:151). Indeed, Barry and Lenking

(2000:350) says that self assessment helps students assess strengths and weaknesses and make the students more conscious of better performance. It means that in self assessment, students not only control their own writing but also monitor their progress as a writer. Table 2 is an example of self assessment sheet.

Table 2. Self Assessment Sheet

Name	Date	
Check one box for each statement		
Before writing:	Yes	No
▪ I talk to a friend or partner about the topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I made a list of ideas on the topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I made an outline or semantic map	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
During writing		
▪ I skipped words I didn't know and went back to them later.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I substituted a word from my own language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I used drawing or pictures in my writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After writing		
▪ I checked to see if the writing met my purpose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I reread to see if it made sense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I added information to take out information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ I edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other strategies I used:		

(Taken from O'Malley and Pierze 1996:155)

c. Writing Conference

In writing conference, students will share their writing with peers, who comment on the piece and ask questions or offer comment on encouragement. According to O'Malley and Pierze (1996:150), teacher might ask students these questions:

- How did you choose the topic?
- Did you write about something you did or something you read?
- Before you wrote, did you talk about the topic with someone?
- Before you wrote, did you make a plan or write an outline?
- When you have writing problem or get stuck what do you do?
- Did you write a draft?
- Did you edit what you wrote and then rewrite it?
- What do you look for when you edit?

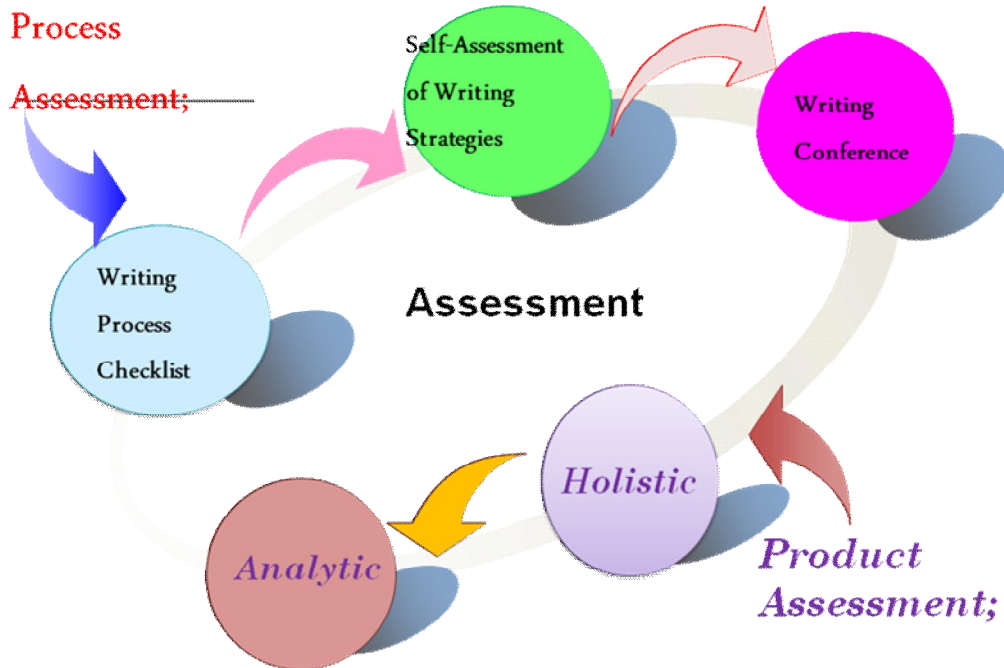
- What was hard in writing? What was easy?
- What do you want to do better in writing?

Product Assessment

Product assessment focuses on scoring the students' product. Ferris & Hedgcock (2005, as cited in Widodo, 2008) say that the teacher has two options for scoring or grading systems either analytical on the basis of the specific aspects of writing ability or holistic based upon the global interpretation of the effectiveness of the compositions. According to Widodo, in this process-based academic essay writing instruction, the analytic scoring system may be more rewarding for students to allow them to look at what aspects they lack in detail. For this reason, a teacher needs to design a marking scheme for students essay assessment.

The scheme of the use of Portfolio Assessment in Process-Based

Writing Instruction is shown in the following figure.



Steps in Conducting Portfolio Assessment in Writing

According to O’Malley and Pierze (1996:40), there are 6 stages in implementing Portfolio Assessment. First, establishing the purpose of Portfolio Assessment. Second, specifying the contents. Third, introducing the ideas of Portfolio Assessment. Fourth, setting the assessment criteria. Fifth, establishing the mastery standard. The last is organizing portfolio conference.

In addition, the application of Portfolio Assessment in process-based writing instruction can be used as a means to enhance students’ skills in organization and development, as well as interpersonal communication. Being independent learners, students can take responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, portfolio assessment helps students build up their self-confidence and facilitate their engagement both in the process and product of learning.

Conclusion

By combining Portfolio Assessment & process-based Writing Instruction, the activities and assessment will focus on both the process and product. The used of Portfolio Assessment can arouse students’ learning motivation and facilitate students’ learning process. In

REFERENCES

- Barry, K. and Lenking, 2000. *Beginning Teaching and Beyond 3rd*. Australia: Sosial Science Press.
- Boardman, C. A., & Frydenberg, J. 2002. *Writing to Communicate: Paragraph and Essays* (2nd Ed). New York: Pearson Education.
- Brown, H.D. 2007. *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (3rd Ed.). New York: Pearson education.
- Cahyono, B. Y. 2010. *The Teaching of English Language Skills and English Language Components*. Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- Hung, S.T. 2009. *Promoting Self-Assessment Strategies: An Electronic Portfolio Approach*. Asian EFL Journal, 11(2): 129-146.
- O'Malley, J.M., & Pierce, L.V. 1996. *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners: Practical Approaches for Teacher*. United States of America: Addition-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.
- Richards, J.C., & Renandya, W.A. 2002. *Methodology in language teaching: An Anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sweet, D. 1993. *Students Portfolios: Classroom Uses*.
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/classuse.html>.
 Retrieved November 14, 2008 [on line].
- Wang, Y., & Liao, H.C. 2008. *The Application of Learning Portfolio Assessment for Students in The Technological and Vocational Education System*. Asian EFL Journal, 10(2): 132-154.
- Widodo, H.P. 2008. *Process-Based Academic Essay Writing Instruction in an EFL context*. Bahasa dan Seni, thn 36, No.1.