ACADEMIC WRITING CLASS’ PERCEPTIONS OF PORTFOLIOS ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: Using portfolio as a academic writing assessment has been applied in the last semester. For the following action this paper investigates the students opinions as their perceptions and reflections of the portfolios assessment that has been applied in academic writing I. The data have been obtained from semi-structured interviews with 10 students English Department who took Academic Writing I. The qualitative research design was administered to analyze the data by identifying and classifying the contents of student’s opinion and reflections toward portfolio assessment that has been implemented in Academic Writing I. The investigation found that most of students encouraged the implementation of portfolios assessment, the students cited that the portfolio gives a positive reward to the students’ writing. They felt portfolio assessment can build the objective assessment. Thus, it is recommend to keep using portfolios to assess the students’ composition. And also the improvement of portfolio is needed that is e-portfolios in academic writing assessment.

Key Words: Portfolio Assessment, academic writing

There are such of ways to make an effective learning and one of them is applying an appropriate assessment. The term assessment, with its origins in the Latin phrase “to sit beside,” suggests the possibilities inherent in formative, cooperative methods for training and mentoring writing instructors (Dayton, 2015: 7). In this term, the teachers or the lectures must be able to create a fair assessment to measure the students’ ability in language skill. Brown (2004:15-30) cited principles of language assessment covers practically, reliability, validity, authenticity and backwash. In other words, the result of assessment must appropriate, meaningful and useful based on the goal of the assessment. Moreover, the test is as a natural as possible, and the topics must be meaningful for the learners. For the last notes, the assessment should imply that students have ready access to the teacher/ lecturer to discuss the feedback and evaluation he/ she has given. Hibbard and Wagner (2013) stated that the assessment list is a tool that helps students learn to pay attention to the quality.

of their own work. The teacher creates the assessment list for the purpose of coaching the student to pay attention to what is in need of attention.

In writing skill, there is an interactive process between the writer and the reader. The imposed demand of writing on the text is much more than that of the spoken interaction, since there is no immediate feedback as a guide in written interaction (Olstain in Tahriri et al, 2014). Based on the definition, effective writing needs a fair correction and feedback to make a better composition. Most of the students still got difficulty to produce an effective writing. They felt so confuse to start writing, to make grammatically correct sentences. And the lecturer tried to cope this problems by implementing portfolio to assess the students’ writing.

According to Horby (2006), portfolio is a collection of photographs, drawing, etc. Richard and Schmit (2002) defines portfolio as a purposeful collection of artifacts that gives some information about someone’s effort, progress and achievement. Portfolio has several characteristics as follows:

1. The learner can decide what to put in the portfolio;
2. After receiving feedback and comments from the teacher or peers, learners can revise materials in the portfolio;
3. Since the learners assess and reflect on the work in the portfolio, they can be aware of their progress and personal development;
4. There is evidence of mastery of knowledge;
5. Artifacts can take many forms such as written work, audio recording, video recording, etc (Tahriri et al, 2014).

Those characters are proper to be implemented in the writing class because most of the students need to revise many composition in order they are able to check their writing progress and development. Concerning with the types of portfolio, O’Malley and pierce in Tahriri et al (2014) exposed three categories such as:

1. Showcase portfolios which are typically used to present a students’ best work to parents and school administrators
2. Collections portfolios which literally mean all of student’s work that present how students deal with day to day class assignment or working folders which may include rough draft, sketches, works-in-progress, and final product.
3. Assessment portfolio which are specifically presented as reflections of specific learning goals that contain systematic collections of students’ work, students self assessment, and teacher assessment.

Here, the researcher has conducted assessment portfolio as the tool to know the students’ progress in academic writing class. By documenting their
writing, students can have a collections of their sample work in order to see their improvement over time. They are working with the lectures, other friends who respond to their writing by making some corrections, evaluation and rework. The researcher chose portfolio assessment because there are many studies proved portfolio is effective to be implemented. Tahriri et al (2014) studied that portfolio assessment is effective on learning idioms in writing. They indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of idioms and portfolio was found to be able to improve students’ knowledge of idioms. Since portfolio has already used by the lecturer in academic writing, the researcher needs to know the students’ perceptions toward the using of portfolio in the class. This study needs to know the students’ opinion and reflections about the application of portfolios assessment.

METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative research design. Qualitative research is used to describe what is seen locally and sometimes to come up with or generate new hypotheses and theories. Qualitative research is used when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it. It is commonly used to understand people’s experiences and to express their perspectives (Johnson& Chistensen,2012: 33). Concerning with the goal of this study, the researcher aimed to find the students’ opinion and reflections when portfolio assessment has been implemented in last semester. To obtain the data, the researcher has Carried out semi-structured interview with 10 students who involved in academic writing I.

In academic writing I subject, the students learnt to compose an article. In the first few meetings, the students searched some theories about composing an article. Then the students began to write their articles. Every step, self-editing, peer editing and instructor editing has been done to improve the quality of the draft. In the end of semester the students submitted their works and it called “portfolio book” on which the assessment of the course was based.

After the students collected their works, the researcher conducted semi-structured interview by giving a couple of questions and if it is necessary the researcher gave clarification to the subject in order getting a proper answer. This data has been collected between November-December 2015.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

_The students’ opinion to the implementation of Portfolio assessment_
In this part, the researcher described the data concerning with the students opinion after they have been given a portfolio assessment.

(a) Absolutely I agree about this assessment (portfolio assessment). I can know my progress in writing. In every composition I find my mistake and also some revision. So, I like this assessment.

(b) I think this writing system, portfolio assessment, is a fair assessment. I got direct revision in my composition. When I found those revision I got motivation to make a better essay or composition.

(c) Portfolio is a great assessment. I agree if this assessment still implemented in academic writing. It is fair because the final score based on the students' process that covered in portfolio book.

(d) I though portfolio assessment is a good way to motivate and encourage the students' development in their writing. I can put and develop my idea continuity.

(e) I'm quite sure that this assessment can dig my writing potential. I can write everything that I like and then I show it to my lecturer and I got direct revision.

(f) By portfolio I have many experiences that came from revision. So, from this experience I can produce much more better.

(g) I can not believe that my writing is good. When I checked my writing, I felt so surprise because I can reread my composition in portfolio book. I know my progress, my mistake and my revision.

(h) I agree if portfolio always applied in writing class, because I can do my writing or essay in different places, not only in the class but outside the class. The most important is I have to fulfill my portfolio.

(i) I felt that portfolios assessment force me to read a lot of book to enrich my vocabulary. I also must be discipline because there is a deadline when I have to submit the essay.

(j) Using portfolio makes me learn more about structure. The direct revision makes me understand more about the using of structure.

From the students’ opinion above, it can be stated that most of the students agree and felt the positive impact of portfolio assessment. It can be elaborated that this assessment give motivation to the students because they know their writing progress from first essay into the last composition.

The Students’ reflection after getting portfolio assessment.

When the researcher obtained the data, not only the opinion has been gotten but also the students’ reflections. Reflections here means the students gave some ideas to make the implementation of portfolio assessment can be maintained.

(a) Portfolio assessment has a good impact toward the students’ writing development but I felt that it’s consuming time. In a big class, the lecturer
can not manage the time because every students got a direct corrections while others were waiting without doing anything.

(b) Sometime, I lost my paper and I have to rewrite the composition. Maybe, it will be effective if the portfolio can be applied by using email. So, I would not lost my paper.

(c) I like portfolio assessment but sometime I felt so busy because I must submit my essay weekly. So, I felt stress if I can not make a better essay.

(d) I guess portfolio makes me bored, but it is ok.

(e) I am lazy to read a lot of book, so my words can not be developed. It makes me get many revision in composition.

Discussion

The findings showed that most of the students can take the useful of portfolio assessment. In accordance with what Harmer (2007:340) states, the students in the research consider the portfolio a fairer assessment that gives them more time to read, to prepare, to write, to correct and to revise their composition. Portfolio assessment can encourage the students to make a better essay, because there are many preparation, revision and feedback. In academic writing, the students must create a better sentences and better composition. They have to be creative to choose and use a various words as their work. They have to read many books as their sources and experience to get various vocabulary. And also the students must be able to compose right sentences and structure. From the finding, the students inform that the implementation of portfolio can support the students to do those procedures in academic writing.

The findings also showed the reflections that came from the students perceptions. Some of them felt so boring because they have to write, make revision, correction and write again. In other answer, the students inform that portfolio can waste the time because the lecturer make a direct revision toward every students. So they need some innovation in implementing portfolio assessment.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawan. First, Academic writing is so supported by portfolio assessment to assess the students’ composition. Next, the students are so great to the implementation of portfolio because they can know their progress. Moreover, the students can enrich their vocabulary and their understanding of stucture.
They can be a more better writer. In another side, the students sometime felt boring, and lazy to read and write a lot of sources to make better essay.

The following suggestions are recommended to the lecturer, the students, and the following researchers. The lecturer must be able to create a nice atmosphere in academic writing when they give some revision or feedback. And the students can do other activity while the lecturer give some feedback to other students. They also must be pay attention to the goal of academic writing that is how to write a scientific composition inorder they are ready to do their final task, thesis writing. And for the last part, the suggestion is proposed to the following researcher. It can be seen from the finding that some students inform if the portfolio assessment is implemented through email. This innovation can be called e-portfolio.

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