ENGLISH STUDENT TEACHERS' REFLECTIONS ON E-PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

Assessment in teacher education has the primary goal of developing English student teachers as self-monitoring and self-assessing professionals who are able to learn reflectively from their experiences and practices. We need an assessment tool that enhances the capacity of English student teachers for self-assessment and reflection on their levels of developing knowledge and practice. We need to consider *what* we are assessing, *how* we are doing it but also *why* (Brown & Knight, 1994). E-portfolios engage students in authentic assessment that allows them to see how and what they are learning, and how they are progressing over time. E-portfolios acknowledge the value in diverse approaches to learning and students have the opportunity to use multiple strategies for demonstrating their knowledge. In this study, the E-portfolio offers a rare opportunity to conduct an in-depth exploration of, and reflection on learning. It allowed students to practice, self-evaluate, and make adjustments or corrections before completing their final work. Several English student teachers noted that the technology gave them the opportunity to be reflective in ways they could not, prior to employing the E-portfolio.

Keyword: Assessment, E-portfolio, English Student Teachers, Reflection

Introduction

The use of electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) in teacher education programs has become popular (Clark & Eynon, 2009; Ntuli, Keengwe, & Kyei-Blankson, 2009; Granberg, 2010). Electronic portfolios are considered to be a manageable system for collecting, organizing, storing or displaying all of the writing, videos, presentations, project and artwork learners produce (Fahey, Lawrence, & Paratore, 2007; Barrett, 2007). E-portfolios can be used to foster transformation in teacher beliefs through critical reflection and ownership of their learning (Stansberry & Kymes, 2007; Ntuli et al., 2009). Stansberry and Kymes (2007) claim that "e-portfolios are strategies of reflection both in the selection of artifacts and development of the portfolio, and in the statements of reflection imbedded with the artifacts and examples of learning".

E-portfolio can be sufficiently defined as simply an online version of the more familiar printed portfolio. E-Portfolio promotes self assessment, this is a way to involve students more with their own learning processes. The students evaluate their own learning processes and their end products as comprehensive learning reflections. Thus are important in promoting the teacher candidates in reflecting the teaching experience in micro teaching course.

At present in teacher training intuitions, in this case is micro teaching course, the student teachers are trained through traditional approach of teaching and measurement of the extent to which the trainee acquires a skill in particular and general teaching competence is very vague and unscientific. Hence in order to make teacher education program effective and to bring qualitative improvement, some other technique or approach should be adopted so that the opportunity for the development of various skills among teachers may be increased. The use of E-portfolio in micro teaching course which is one of the recent innovations in teacher education may be an answer of our problem. This study tries to explore the English student teachers perceptions in reflecting their teaching experiences using e-portfolio in micro teaching course.

Specific to a teacher education setting, portfolios have a variety of purposes: to teach prospective teachers how to be reflective, to assess their readiness to graduate, as part of the process of registering beginning teachers, and as part of teacher education programme accreditation (Zeichner & Wray, 2001). Portfolios can serve to measure achievement for practicum work and to foster reflection on teaching (Smith & Tillema, 2003). As McNair and Galanouli (2002) argue, a reflective portfolio is a way of embedding theoretical principles, skills and knowledge in classroom practice, of making meaningful connections between university based learning and the classroom context, and of helping to improve performance and develop competence.

Methodology
1. Research Design
This study employs a qualitative research design. The case study was used to explore the data gathered through the interviews, questionnaires and peer reviews' documentation. By the purposive sampling to the English student teachers enrolled in micro teaching class, this study is expected to give the deep exploration of English student teachers' perceptions about E-portfolio as their showcases in reflecting their teaching competencies and surely teaching experiences.

2. Research Partcipants
The participants involved in this study were the English student teachers enrolling in microteaching class. The population of the study 76 students; 36 students in A class, 25 students in B class and 15 students in Evening class. All students were assessed using e-portfolio but not all the students were chosen as the samples of the study. There were only fifty five students selected purposively from each classes who were employed as the participants. Those fifty five students represents three different level of ability in prerequisites courses. It promotes a wider and objective points of view.

The number of English student teachers as the participants of this study is fifty five. However, not all participants were interviewed due to the research feasibility. Therefore, volunteer sampling is employed to select the English student teachers to be interviewed. Their participation are based on their willingness to be participants of this research. The English student teachers who agree to do interviews submitted their questionnaires when it was given in the beginning of microteaching class. After that, they filled the consent form that informs that they agree to participate in this study starting from their enrolling in microteaching course until the end of the semester.

3. Data Collection & Data Analysis
The open-ended reflective questionnaire as well as the interview to the chosen participants collected to describe how the English student teachers' perception toward e-portfolio assessment in micro teaching course.

Most of the data collected were analyzed and evaluated in various ways qualitatively in order to answer the research questions. These was included all open-ended responsed to the questionnaires, interview transcriptions, field notes and document analysis. Descriptive statistic were used to calculate the precentage of the frequency responses. They are conveyed through a narrative passage. In addition, figures and tables were used to represent the information about the findings such as the screenshots of e-portfolio and students; perceptions to reflect the quality of the e-portfolio and to illustrate their revlective practices.

Findings and Discussion
1. Findings
An E-portfolio can reflect the students' learning process and progress. ICT as multimedia-tool gives just an extra

possibility to collect other than written materials. Technology enables the use of a range of media – video, sound and images – as well as text to show both the learning process and final products.

In the process, the English student teachers do three primary activities which are, collecting, selecting and reflecting. Collecting: the English student teachers collect the data which are needed in teaching process such as lesson plan, teaching media, and video recorder to record the teaching learning process. In the next phase, they need to select which id thebest document that would be uploaded in the e-portfolio platform (www.e-portofolio.online) as shown in the figure 1, all the documents uploaded have been revised by the student teachers based on the feedbacks from the micro teaching lecturers. In the last phase, the English student teachers must reflect on the way they are experiencing the teaching learning process by watching the video and having feedbacks from the peers.

Figure 1. The Display of the E-portoflio

The questionnaire has been distributed to the students in getting the students' perceptions after completing E-portfolio, there are 10 questions which have similar information gathered with the first questionnaire. The first three questions shoul be answered in scale about initial informations on their ability in technological issues, the other seven questions should be anwered in essay writing to get clearer and more comprehensive description about their E-portfolio experiences in micro teaching class. The recap of the students' first three questions, can be seen in the following table of precentage:

Table 1. The Recap of the Students' First Three Questions

No	Questions	Scale	Total	Percentage
1	How would you rate your ability to work with computers	5	3	5.45%
		4	22	40.00%
		3	27	49.09%
		2	2	3.64%
		1	1	1.82%
2	How comfortable are you with the idea of using an E-portfolio	5	2	3.64%
		4	12	21.82%
		3	27	49.09%
		2	14	25.45%
		1	0	0%
3	What value do you place on the e-portfolio as it pertains to your teaching practices	5	13	23.64%
		4	16	29.09%
		3	18	32.73%
		2	8	14.54%
		1	0	0%

From the table, the data show that most of the students have had "standard" ability in operating the computer or internet. Only one student who claim herself as illeterate in computer because of her age. She is a senior English teacher in medical vocational school in Pekalongan and always asks for young teacher's help to do some computer's works. For the second question, 49.09% chose to rate themselves as in normal feeling when the idea of using E-portfolio has given to them, the third question serves how they feel about the advantage of E-portfolio toward their teaching practices through overall teaching reflections. Most of the English student teachers argue that the use of E-portofolio was rated as "useful" and some as "somewhat useful." While some might be discouraged by this, it appears to be a good start.

The important point is that none of them thinks that E-portfolio give no advantage to their teaching practices, it proves that the use of E-portfolio manifest great opportunities to be developed in the future.

After having document analysis to the questionnaires, the data (question 4) asked students for their preference for producing a portfolio, giving them a choice between an e-portfolio and a hard-copy portfolio. The result shows that from all fifty five participants, there are thirty three students agree with the application of E-portfolio anf the other twenty two participants prefer to use binder portfolio or

traditional portfolio. The percentage of students preferring the e-portfolio over the hard copy changed from 43.8% pre-survey to 60% post-survey. Students seemed to be split evenly between the hard-copy portfolio and the e-portfolio but at the end of the course, there was a slight decrease in the number of students preferring the e-portfolio.

Lecturers' comments and feedback are fundamental. Most of students feel motivated to know their weakneses during the teaching learning process through lecturers' feedbacks. The importance of offering constructive and timely feedback to ensure that students are able to integrate all received comments on their work have become crucial to ensure that learners are able to develop their own skills. At this stage, it is also important that students realize the benefits of the regular engagement into the learning process by being involved in the continuous assessments and, at the same time, they are trained to reflect on their achievements and experience. Constant engagements and a "habit" to write reflective comments are two important components which are necessary for the completion of E-portfolio.

Along with all these aforementioned positive aspects of the E-portfolio, most of students noted challenges in two areas: one is a lack of peer interaction. One noted, "my online learning experience was positive, but I wish there would have been more peer interaction". They felt isolated from peers and preferred to have more opportunities and diverse channels to communicate with lecturers and peers. Examples of their comments were, I wish there would have been more peer interaction. I enjoyed doing peer reviews, but felt it would have been helpful to have more threaded discussions and chats. During all this time in theE-portfolio, I have communicate with my lecturer and peers only through offline.

Some students commented that the reflective practice was one of the most valuable learning processes they had encountered throughout the entire course. It helped them become aware of their strengths and weaknesses, analyze and evaluate their own work, determine their professional and personal growth, and ultimately support their understanding and growth. A number of students indicated that they would use reflection in the future.

The least concern about the use of e-portfolio asserts in questions 8, most of students have the same aruguments on the troubleshooting appeared during uploading the video that need the whole night. The technical issues are very crucial since the portfolio works online, the display which standard and blog-like makes the students not so engaged in giving their best.

Overall, all students stated that their experiences was very positive, enjoyable and beneficial. They acknowledged that the program has had a huge impact on the way they approach education and learning. One student commented, "Overall I feel that this program has made me much more effective in my responsibility as a teacher and the end result is that 'my future students' receive the benefits."

From the very beginning of the E-portfolio, I have been taught ways to reflect, as well as had ample opportunities to practice reflecting on my work. I have been given the opportunity to answer questions regarding experiences, which have taught me how to reflect, as well as opportunities to reflect on my teaching experience. I look back at each event and see how it impacted my product, thoughts, and processes. Reflections have given me the opportunity to gain insight into what I have achieved and how the process of what I've learned has evolved.

"The E-portofolio has given me opportunities to learn new technologies and programs. I have used my skills in editing digital video and audio to create enthusiasm in the classroom." One student wrote, "I design and develop interactive training materials with various multimedia authoring

tools to accommodate self-learners and provide resources for learners".

All students discussed one or more specific multimedia-authoring tool that they used to develop and deliver instruction. For instance, most of students indicated that they managed the implementation and evaluation of new technologies in his classroom for the use of enhanced instruction. One student noted, "In the past the little bit of technology I used was poorly planned for and seemed to almost be a side note instead of being integrated into what I was teaching. I now feel I'm able to determine when it is appropriate to use technology and which technologies are best to use."

2. Discussion

The findings of studies show not only the reflective practice could be developed in micro teaching study but the other researches also revealed the same result that microteaching is effective in increasing planning, implementing teaching self-efficacy beliefs and reducing the teaching anxiety of pre-service teachers (Bell, 2007; Benton-Kupper, 2001; Huber & Ward, 2001; Mergler & Tangen, 2010; Peker, 2009).

As a result, the studies show that the application of e-portfolio in teaching reflection feature in microteaching course positively affects the teaching competence of English student teachers' reflective practices. With limitations such as short amounts of preparation time and an internet network that had unpredictable outages, English student teachers still managed to integrate technology into the lessons with positive outcomes. In no cases did the technology hinder or distract from classroom learning objectives. As the prospective English teachers gain more experience and confidence from integrating technology with the E-portfolio, one would assume that their level of technology integration would increase over time.

According to Dwyer, Ringstaff, & Sandholtz (1990), teachers progress through several stages of instructional and technological evolution as they become better at integrating technology. Most of the English student teachers did not use technology from the E-portfolio to integrate technology simply for the sake of using technology. While in some cases they could have been nearly as effective if they had not integrated technology, the use of technology made the lessons more powerful because students had greater ownership, were more reflective, and used real-world skills.

The potential for richer data and results also seemed to come about due to an increase in the opportunity for student reflection. For example, during the observations, it was noted on several occasions that students shot a practice take with the video and then a final take. This method allowed students to practice, self-evaluate, and make adjustments or corrections before completing their final work. An unintended result of the use of recording technology like video led to a higher level of reflection and editing on the part of students without teacher intervention. Several teachers noted that the technology gave students the opportunity to be reflective in ways they could not, prior to employing the E-portfolio.

Developing a system that meets both assessment requirements and a student-centered approach for professional development requires communication and compromise within the college and the departments. These compromises may force faculty into a more positivist or prescribed approach to learning than they are comfortable in implementing, a tension that is to be expected (Barrett, 2004). Given that most faculty members adopt innovations at individually varying rates, achieving faculty compliance takes time and development (Rogers, 1983).

Successful implementation requires ongoing communication and coordination between and among the faculty members, in this case are the micro teaching lecturers, the head of department and the head of

teaching practicum unit. The respondents for this study stated that the head of teaching practicum unit had to address the broader issues of determining which artifacts or assignments documented the standards, and developing common rubrics or assessment structures. Faculty members had to decide on common goals across courses sections in a valid and reliable manner. The high commitment and consistency in maintaining the e-portfolio also become the concern of this study, the very busy schedule in one semester makes the lecturers have limited time to check the students' e-portfolio each week. Sometimes students were quick to notice and question any inconsistent implementation and differences in requirements.

Conclusions and Suggestions

1. Conclusions

From the result of the study, there are some conclusions that can be drawn:

a. Students can take increasing responsibility for their own learning by recording and reflecting on their learning in an E-portfolio.

b. Students can carry their E-portfolio throughout their lifelong learning journey and use it to record, assess, evaluate, and reflect at any time.

c. Students can increase their ability to learn by taking ownership of and developing strategies for self-assessment, and monitoring their own development.

2. Suggestions

From the result of the study, there are some critical points that can be seen from the suggestions as follows:

a. Critical thinking and reflection should be fostered in E-portfolios.

b. In addition to upload assignments to the server, such server should provide sufficient space for learners to develop their e-portfolios systematically.

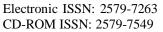c. Lecturers should regularly check students' E-portfolios as their

learning performance and progress and be aware of the issue of plagiarism.

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