STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING PORTFOLIO IN TEACHING WRITING

Ida Yulianawati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Mursid Saleh, Djoko Sutopo
Universitas Negeri Semarang
Indonesia
idayulianawati90@gmail.com, yanmujiyanto@mail.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

This study aimed at investigating students' perception on the use of Reflective Learning Portfolio (RLP) in teaching writing. This study, which followed the case study design, was conducted in a class of 31 students at a university in Indramayu, Indonesia. During one semester, the reflective learning portfolio (RLP) was used as the treatment to teach writing. Questionnaire and interview were given to students to express their perception to the use of reflective learning portfolio in their classroom. The result of the study shows that most students believed reflective learning portfolio give positive impact on their writing. The reflective learning portfolio involves learners in a process of continues reflection on their work and collaboration with their peers and lecturer which has focus on selective evidence of learning that makes students become involved in self-evaluation and begin to monitor their own progress over time.

Keywords: Reflective Learning Portfolio, Students' Perception, Writing

Introduction

Writing an essay is not always a smooth process for language learners. Some research found that writing difficult for the students and even for teachers (Hyland, 2002; Emilia, 2005), therefore they did not know how to turn their ideas into their intelligible text. This is consistent with Halliday (1992:62) who says that written language is more complex than spoken languiage. In order to write successfully, students need to understand what they expect to write, why it is written in a particular way and the form that the final text should take. Writing activities in the classroom should be designed specifically to build students' writing habit that motivate students, build their confidence, and make them conformable with writing (Harmer, 2007).

As explicit literacy skills are modeled through dialogue, the engagement of students must also be considered (Orem, 2001). To engage all students teachers may need to make changes to their instructional methods and even the layout of their classroom. Engaging students in an interactive writing format will require teachers to teach in an authentic manner which is responsive to the needs of all students (Jordan, 2009). According to Ruddell and Unrau (2004), several interacting components influence the writer's ability to make meaning from written text. Prior beliefs and knowledge affect the writer's construction of meaning. This includes both affective and cognitive conditions. Affective conditions include motivation to write, attitude toward writing and content, writer's stance and sociocultural values and beliefs. The use of reflective learning is a common strategy in higher education (Ryan & Ryan (2015). Reflective Learning Portfolio is a part of reflective learning that has roots in "Constructivism" which has great focus on the context and learning process. Constructivists believe that learning always involves both analyzing and transforming new information (O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010 cited in Hemmati & Soltanpour,

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING PORTFOLIO IN TEACHING WRITING
Ida Yulianawati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Mursid Saleh, Djoko Sutopo

64

2012). An approach to individualized assessment includes reflection and self-assessment which could stand alone as a learning activity or be embedded within the context of portfolio assessment (Lam, 2018). The learning portfolio is a flexible tool that involves learners in a process of continuous reflection and collaboration which has focus on selective evidence of learning. It provides an opportunity for both improvement and assessment of students' learning (Zubizarreta, 2008).

Several studies have been examined the efficacy of Reflective Learning Portfolio in writing classroom. Poulseon, Poulson and Mayer cited in Niekerk (1998) define a portfolio as a purposeful collection of student work that exhibit students' efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judge merit, and evidence of student self-reflection. The learning portfolio is a flexible tool that involves learners in a process of continues reflection and collaboration which has focus on selective evidence of learning that makes students become involved in self-evaluation and begin to monitor their own progress over time (Sabooni and Salehi 2015; Hemmati & Soltanpour, 2012; Zubirazetta, 2009). Portfolio demonstrate students work beyond the mere grade, it allows reflection, and can serve as effective spaces for personal reflection and integration of learning across the students' experience, in and outside the class (Corley & Zubizarreta, 2012).

Those benefits are in line with Reyes-Chua at all (2020) who investigate the use of reflective portfolio for pre-service teacher and found that the impact of reflective portfolio is effective in to improve students' writing and encourage the students to use reflective journal in their daily life. The same results are also found by Hemmati & Soltanpour (2012) and Khodadady (2012) found that developing learning portfolios promote reflective thinking and also improve their writing ability.

Although the use of Reflective Learning Portfolio is widely spread, research on the effect of Reflective Learning Portfolio viewed from students' perception in Indonesia has rarely been conducted. The purpose of this study is to investigate the students' perception on the use of reflective learning portfolio in writing class at a university in Indramayu.

Methodology

Relevant to the purpose of the study mentioned above in the previous section, this study involves the collection or analysis of qualitative data in a single study (Dornyei, 2007) and employs strategies of case study. Students' perspectives on their experience on the use of Reflective Learning Portfolio in writing classroom were explored. This study was conducted with 31 students during their school experience in English Department at a university in Indramayu, west java. There were 25 female, and 6 male students. The reflective learning portfolio was conducted for 8 weeks.

In this study, the data were analysed using thematic analysis. There are six phases of analysis; "familiarising with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report. Familiarising with the data could be done through transcribing them (for verbal data), reading and rereading the written data, and noting down initial ideas. The analysis process in this study involved data sets of questionnaires and interview (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

The main topics directing the discussion were: (1) Students' writing skills development; (2) the advantages of RLP; (3) Students' motivation in the reflective learning portfolio activities; (4) Emerging problems throughout the implementation of RLP; and (5) the roles of lecturer in writing class.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the data from questionnaires and interview showed students' views and thoughts about the use of reflective learning portfolio in teaching writing in their class. The table below shows detailed information about the contents of portfolio.

Table 1. Students' perception on the use of Reflective Learning Portfolio in Writing class

	N	F
Positive	25	80,6
Both positive and negative	30	96,8
Negative	2	6,4
Useful	31	100

Most of students had positive opinion about the use of reflective learning portfolio in their class. Some students think that the use of portfolio had both positive and negative effect toward their writing ability. There were 2 students who think that portfolio cannot help them to improve their writing. Nevertheless, all students agree that reflective learning portfolio is useful to build students teacher interaction inside and outside the classroom.

- *I was happy to get written feedback from myfriends and lecturer in my essay (Student 5)*
- *Reflective learning portfolio makes me feel free to write because my lecturer is not only concern with grammatical mistakes in my writing but also talked to me about the content (student 12)*
- *It's like exchanging the essay with your friends (student 18)*
- *I like the lecturer more (student 24)*
- *I'm not afraid to write anymore because the lecturer always give me feedback (student 31)*
- *I don't know. I just cannot write as good as my friends… (student 3)*

The interviews with students were conducted after they finished their writing class using reflective learning portfolio.

There are five topics asked to the students. They are: (1) Students' writing skills development; (2) the advantages of reflective learning portfolio; (3) Students' motivation in the reflective learning portfolio activities; (4) Emerging problems throughout the implementation of reflective learning portfolio; and (5) the roles of lecturer in writing class.

1. Students' writing skills development
Findings from the interview suggest that most students think that the implementation of RLP improve their writing ability.

RLP makes me study more about the mistakes I made. Especially with grammar and vocabulary (S30)
'I learn more about writing argumentative text from the feedback given by my friends and lecturer (S5)'
One student said that RLP is difficult (S9) because it is something new for him. Students also revealed that their writing were improved in terms of grammar and vocabulary.
'Hmmmm I think my vocabulary is improved because we are forced to write four paragraphs (S31)'
The result of the study resonates studies by Sabooni and Salehi (2015) and Khodadady (2012) who found that Portfolio not only make learners autonomous in writing but also improve their writing ability.

2. The advantages of reflective learning portfolio
Based on the interview result with students RLP can overcome writing difficulty as stated in the response below.
RLP gives us knowledge about peer feedback. It makes me happy because sometimes I am nervous (S6)
RLP help me to improve my writing ability because we have a group discussion and the lecturer gave us written feedback (S23)
I think I can overcome my grammar problem now (S3)

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING PORTFOLIO IN TEACHING WRITING
Ida Yulianawati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Mursid Saleh, Djoko Sutopo

66

I can collaborate with my friends and my lecturer (S15)

The finding is in line with Reyes-Chua at all (2020) and Corley & Zubizarreta (2012) who found that the reflective portfolio gave many advantages to the studends. Portfolios demonstrate students work beyond the mere grade because students can review their learning over the course of a semester and can serve as effective spaces for personal reflection and integration of learning across the students' experience, in and outside the class.

(3) Students' motivation in the reflective learning portfolio activities

Based on the interview result with students, RLP can increase students' motivation to write more as stated in the response below.

I think I like to exchange my essay with my friends and lecturer (S9)
I am not feel afraid of making mistakes (S23)
I like to read and reread my essay (S2)
Writing is not something boring anymore (S29)
I like to share the idea in a gropu discussion, and the lecturer is really helpful (S4)

The same result is also found by Khodadady (2012) who said that Portfolio and self-assessment not only make learners autonomous in writing but also improve their writing ability.

(4) Emerging problems throughout the implementation of RLP

Based on the interview result, students' difficulties in the implementation of RLP in writing often caused by the lack of familiarity with RLP and low level of proficiency in English language, as stated in the response below.

I have problem with grammar (30/31) and vocabulary (31/31)
RLP is something new. I don't know if my writing is good or not (S28)
I have difficulty in writing an essay if the topic is not familiar (S7)
Hmmmm I am nervous when my friends discussed about my writing (S9)
I am afraid of making mistakes (S28)
Sometimes, I don't know how to give feedback to my friends' essay. I need more help from my lecturer (S2)
I have limited vocabulary (S26)

Based on the analysis above, there are four problems of the implementation of RLP in writing class, namely lack of writing experience and practice; limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge; low level of proficiency in English language, and lack of familiarity with subject matter.
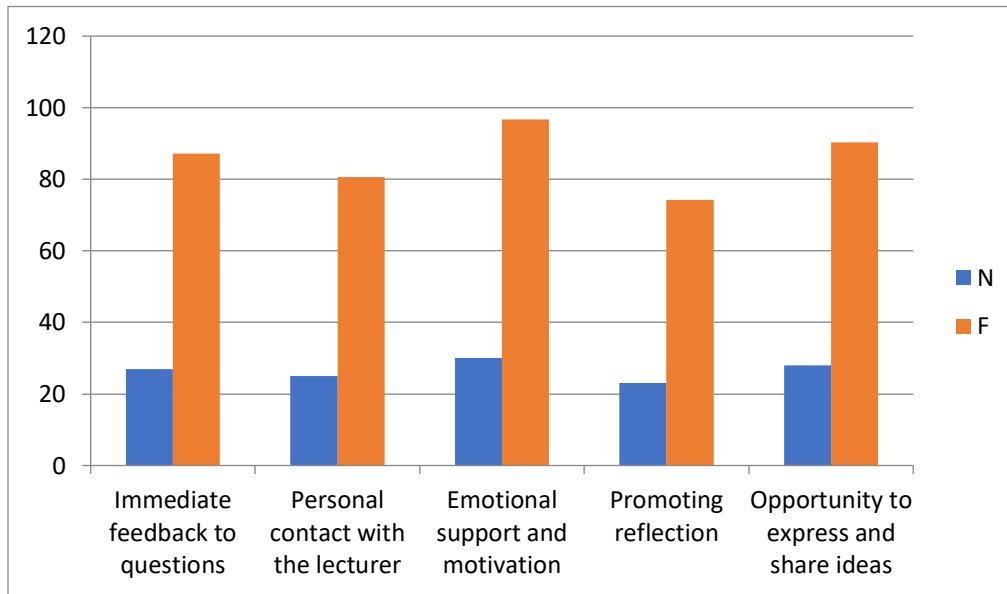
(5) the roles of lecturer in writing class.

In terms of the role of the lecturer in writing classroom. Most students say that the lecturer was really helpfull and willing to give oral and written feedback. Furthermore, the students says that they have better communication with their lecturer.

Table 2. The roles of Lecturer in writing class

The roles of lecturer	N	F
Immediate feedback to questions	27	87,1
Personal contact with the lecturer	25	80,6
Emotional support and motivation	30	96,8
Promoting reflection	23	74,2
Opportunity to express and share ideas	28	90,3

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING PORTFOLIO IN TEACHING WRITING
Ida Yulianawati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Mursid Saleh, Djoko Sutopo

67

Graphic 1. The roles of Lecturer in writing class

As graphic 1 illustrates, one of advantages of the use of RLP in teaching writing is the roles of lecturer who give oral and written feedback to the students. Students felt that RLP was useful because the lecturer gave guided them with the questions and helped them with their writing. Reflective learning portfolio gave them extra time outside the class to discuss about the writing. Because they have personal contact with the lecturer, students feel motivated in expressing their ideas into a text.

- *I think RLP makes me more aware about my writing because the lecturer will give feedback at my writing and it makes me think twice before I give the revison (student 10)*
- *My lecturer motivates me to write more although my writing is not good (student 11)*
- *I like to share ideas with my friends and my lecturer (student 24*

The finding is in line with Hemmati & Soltanpour (2012) who found that developing learning portfolios support the positive effects of reflection with support of a mentor or collaborator that have affected the learners' improvement.

Conclusion

The present study was an attempt to explore studends' perception regarding the implementation of reflective learning portfolio in writing class. The process of reflective learning portfolio served as a process of self-reflection. In this respect, there are mixed results but most students believed that reflective learning portfolio give positive impact on their writing. The students also viewed dialogue journal motivate them to write because they have personal contact with the lecturer and it gived them opportunity to share the ideas. One of the limitations of the study was that the n umber of participant was very small. Thus this study is not generalizable since it was unique to this context only.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING PORTFOLIO IN TEACHING WRITING
Ida Yulianawati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Mursid Saleh, Djoko Sutopo

68

References

[1] K. Hyland. Teaching and Reseaching Writing. Graphicraft Limited:Hongkong . 2002.

[2] E. Emilia. A Critical Genre-Based Approach to Teaching Academic Writing in a Tertiary EFL Context in Indonesia. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The University of Melbourne. Melbourne. 2005.

[3] M.A.K. Halliday. An Introduction to Functional Grammar (2nd Edition). London: Edward Arnold. 2004.

[4] J. Harmer. The Practice of English Language Teaching Fourth Edition. United Kingdom: Longman. 2007.

[5] R. Orem. Improving practice through Reflective writing. Journal writing in adult esl: New directions for adult and continuing education, 90: 69–78, summer 2001.

[6] J.J. Jordan. Beyond Sharing the Pen: Dialogue in the Context of Interactive Writing. A Doctoral Dissertation. University of Tennessee, Knoxville. 2009.

[7] R.B. Ruddell, & Unrau, N.J. Reading as a meaning-construction process: The reader, the text, and the teacher. In R.B. Ruddell & N.J. Unrau (Eds.), Theoretical processes and models of reading (1462-1521). Newark, DE:International Reading Association.2004.

[8] Ryan & Ryan. Teaching Reflective Learning in Higher Education. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-09271-3_2. 2015.

[9] F. Hemmati a F. Soltanpour. A Comparison of the Effects of Reflective Learning Portfolios and Dialogue Journal Writing on Iranian EFL Learners' Accuracy in Writing Performance. English Language Teaching, v5 n11 p16-28 2012. ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916-4750. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1080094. 2002.

[10] R. Lam. Promoting Self-Reflection in Writing: A showcase Portfolio Approach. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-63444-9_16. 2018

[11] J. Zubizarreta, The learning portfolio: A powerful idea for significant learning. The IDEA Center (Paper No. 44). Retrieved from http://dcccd.edu/Employees/Departments/EA/CoreResources/Documents/CompLit/. 2008

[12] M.H. Van Niekerk. Putting a portfolio together: some guidelines.Progressio, Volume 20 (2), pp. 81-101. 1998.

[13] M. Sabooni. & N. Salehi. The Impact of Reflective Learning Portfolio on the Development of Writing Accuracy. Journal of Social Issues & Humanities, Volume 3, Issue 1, January 2015 ISSN 2345-2633 https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&scioq=Sabooni+and+Salehi+%282015%29+&q. 2015.

[14]. J. Zubizarreta. The learning portfolio: Reflective practice for improving student learning (2nded.). San Francisco. 2009.

[15] C. R. Corley a J. Zubizaretta. The Power and Utility of Reflective Learning Portfolios in Honors. Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council, v13 n1 p63-76 Spr-Sum 2012. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1082249

[16] Reyes-Chua et al. Reflective Portfolio for Pre-Service Teachers in Phillipines. Journal of Critical Review Vol7, Issue 11, 2020.

[17] E. Khodaddody & H. Hodabakhshzade. The Effect of Portfolio and Self Assessment on Writing Ability and Autonomy. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 518-524, May 2012 Academy Publisher Manufactured in Finland. doi:10.4304/jltr.3.3.518-524. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=Khodadady+%282012%29&btnG=

[18] Z. Dornye. Teaching and Researching Motivation. Harlow: Pearson Eduation Limited. 2001.

[19] Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke. Using thematic analysis in psychology, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3:2, 77. 2006. 101, DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF REFLECTIVE LEARNING PORTFOLIO IN TEACHING WRITING
Ida Yulianawati, Januarius Mujiyanto, Mursid Saleh, Djoko Sutopo

70