The Effect of Reflective Portfolio Learning on Students'
Motivation in Learning English

Law Lok Kan, Lai Shan Hui ,
(Delia Memorial School (Glee Path), HongKong, China)

Abstract: English is a frequently used foreign language in Hong Kong. A teacher-directed learning environment is commonly observed in English lessons of Hong Kong. Teachers design and assign the learning tasks for students to absorb texts passively, which may hamper the development of students' self-directed learning skills because of the lack of opportunity to reflect of their learning progress and outcomes.

Portfolio learning has been advocated by teachers to extend students' learning by encouraging them to construct, document and evaluate their own performance and decide for further action to improve performance. It is commonly used as a learning tool for teaching, learning and assessment of writing in English as a secondary language setting.

Theoretically, portfolio learning in classroom level makes students experience the responsibility for their learnings, which can stimulate their affective motivation.

Mslq Questionnaire (Pintrich, 1991) was a 31-item questionnaire used for assessing students' motivation in learning in term of their expectancy, value and affection of learning on likert scale in the research. Surprisingly, compared to portfolio learning, students in non-portfolio learning have a significant higher motivation in intrinsic goal orientation, task value and self efficiency. Further investigation is required to understand how to let students get benefits from portfolio learning.

Key words: portfolio, reflective learning, motivation

1. Literature Review

1.1 What Reflective Portfolio Learning Is

Reflective portfolio learning is a defined as a documentary of the students' artefacts created over time to display their efforts, growth and achievements (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). The rationale of reflective portfolio learning is to encourage independent learning and self-monitoring at different stages of learning process. The purpose of the reflective learning portfolio is to allow students to reflectively explore and document their own learning process and evaluate the achievements of courses, desired outcomes and skills over a period of time (Barrett, 2007).

Reflective portfolio learning has been advocated by teachers to extend students' learning by encouraging

---

Law Lok Kan, Master of Education (Educational Psychology), The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Delia Memorial School (Glee Path), Hong Kong; research areas/interests: educational psychology and teaching pedagogy. E-mail: lklaw@deliagroup.edu.hk, llkkevin@hotmail.com.

them to construct, document and evaluate their own performance and decide for further action to improve performance. It is commonly used as a learning tool for teaching, learning and assessment of writing in English as a Secondary Language setting (Lam, 2014).

Compared to the portfolios which focus on students' learning outcomes (showcase portfolio), reflective portfolio learning which focus on students' learning progress can train students to become more reflective and self-directed learners. The development of reflective portfolio concerning students' learning progress can let students describe their own professional improvement over time. The reflective portfolio should contain the previous work, the reflection on the strength and weakness of their work, and the plans to improve their work in the future.

Reflection is a very crucial component of reflective portfolio learning which focuses on students' learning progress. It is believed that reflection, which is defined as critical and careful consideration of the learning outcome, can promote the learning effectiveness because it can help students to develop knowledge and skills through examination of present achievements and preparation of future plan. Students' prior knowledge can be refreshed by the new knowledge. They can make new meaning on existing information and use new strategies of action to study. (Dewey, 1997; Moon, 2013) Reflective portfolio learning is a very useful tool to stimulate students' reflection through examination of efforts and achievements in one or more areas. Teacher, peer and parents can provide feedback to students based on their artifacts and reflection. A high quality feedback allows students to identify their strength and weakness, especially provides constructive individualized advice on the feasibility and effectiveness on their future plan on learning. (Black & Wiliam, 1998) Students can freely adjust their learning based on the given feedback.

There are three levels of reflective thinking of tasks, which are content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection. (Wallman, Lindblad, Hall, Lundmark, & Ring, 2008) Students are expected to reflect on how they feel and think when they are doing a task (content reflection). Then, they need to evaluate the effectiveness of their performance in finishing the task (process reflection). Finally, they need to reflect on why they use this approach to finish the task and how they will act on future situation. The development of the deepness of reflection is a transformative process and is very important to learning of knowledge, which is built from the acquisition of past experience which one uses to interpret present and future experience.

Reflection allows students to have a higher authority on learning because it provides opportunity for them to direct their own learning by choosing suitable individual learning tasks that suits and are relevant to their own needs and interests. Self-directed learning is focused on meta-cognitive controlling learning processes. People's commitment of learning is greater when they have a higher control over the learning method (Mezirow, 2000). William (1996) suggested that personally relevant learning tasks can stimulate intrinsic motivation in learning. According to Zimmerman (2008), self-regulation, motivational feelings and beliefs are considered as important initiators of self-regulated learning. The "factors of initial motivation", such as self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, task interest and value affect the motivation of learning. Intrinsic motivation is the enjoyment gained through the performance of tasks and there is a positive relationship between utility value, which refers to how individual's future plans are suited in tasks, and intrinsic motivation. Beliefs about one's ability play a prominent role in different motivation theories. In accordance with the attribution theory proposed by Weiner (1985), individuals who viewed ability as improvable characteristics over time have a high motivational consequences. Attributing success to ability has positive motivational consequences. Development of portfolio, especially the development of reflective skills, allows students to authorize the learning tasks which can further improve their

learning ability.

The motivational aspect about self-efficiency beliefs, task value and goal orientation can be measured by the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) designed by (Pintrich, 1991). It is a self-report instrument to assess secondary students' motivational orientations and the use of learning strategies for a secondary school course. The part of students' motivational perceptions is adapted to assess students' motivation for portfolio learning. The questionnaire aims to find out whether reflective portfolio learning promotes students' motivation in learning in term of value components such as task value, intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation; Expectancy component such as control of learning belief and self-efficacy for learning and performance and affective component such as test anxiety. In MSLQ, intrinsic goal orientation concerns about the extent which students perceive they to take a course because of the challenge and mastery they have. Extrinsic goal orientation concerns them to participate in a course because of the grades and rewards given. Task value concerns about the evaluation how interesting and important of performing a task is. Expectancy component: control of learning belief concerns about the belief the outcomes dependent on the effort they have paid. Self-efficacy for learning and performance concerns about the mastery of their learning skill. Test anxiety refers to whether they feel nervous to take a test.

Students who have developed a habit of reflection through the use of a portfolio could continue to reflect on their own performance well after the initial experience of portfolio construction (Grant & Huebner, 1998). Theoretically, portfolio learning in classroom level makes students experience the responsibility for their learning, which can stimulate their affective motivation (De Bruin, Van der Schaaf, Oosterbaan & Prins, 2012). However, there is research indicate that the quality of portfolio use could be affected by student characteristics and environmental factors (Chen, Liu, Ou & Lin, 2000). Students may get frustrated if they are asked to develop their own portfolio without enough guidance because of the open structure of portfolio, especially if their self-directed learning and reflective skills are not well trained. The above factors could reduce the positive effects of portfolio learning. Students can only write a surface and short reflection which students cannot structurally assess their own performance and plan for the future academic study.

1.2 English Learning in Hong Kong

English is a frequently used foreign language in Hong Kong. A teacher-directed learning environment is commonly observed in English lessons of Hong Kong. Teachers design and assign the learning tasks for students to absorb texts passively, which may hamper the development of students' self-directed learning skills because of the lack of opportunity to reflect of their learning progress and outcomes. It leads to present of off-task and other disruptive behaviors in typical Hong Kong classrooms (Cheung, 2001). It makes learning English like a memorization of grammatical rules instead of a meaningful language for communications. Teachers are fully responsible for assessing students' performance. They set all the learning targets and activities to all of their students based on their implementation of the curriculum designed from the government without much interaction with students. Students are weak in developing skill in formulating their educational needs and selection of suitable learning tasks.

In addition, Lam (2013) suggested that the traditional writing instruction in English lesson is generally exm-focused and product-based. Much effort in the lessons is prepared for Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (public exam for universities) There is no teaching of writing techniques in the English lesson as students are expected to hand in a 300–500 words composition after the topic is given to students in a

70-minute lesson (Lee, 2008). The composition is marked by teacher without much guidance given during the lessons. In a typical speaking class, students are separated into group with a topic given. Once they finish the group discussion for about 10 minutes, teachers immediately comment on their speaking skills and without much follow-up for future improvement.

1.3 How Reflective Portfolio Promote Students' Motivation in English Learning

The reflective learning portfolio allows students to revise on their draft work with peers and teachers with feedback returned. The purpose of the reflective portfolio is to provide a chance for students to improve their English through repeated feedbacks, modification of learning strategies and practices. Their final work would be marked only. Students' effort throughout the learning progress can change their final grade.

In a lesson with the use of reflective learning on writing and speaking, students are allowed to choose topics to present. The topics can be related to the latest social issues or even fairy tales. They need to prepare a draft summary of the issues and present to their peers. After peer's evaluation, they can make another draft. After writing several genres, students reflect on all drafts and consider their strength and weakness on writing and presentation. Their achievements were then graded accordingly.

2. Purpose of the Present Research

The aforementioned literature indicates the beneficial effects of learning portfolio on students' interest in learning.

The purpose of the research is to investigate the effect of portfolio learning on the motivation of junior form students in learning English.

There is 1 hypothesis in our research:

I hypothesize that relative to teacher-centred lesson (non-portfolio teaching), the development of student-centred learning portfolio motivates students to learn English, especially in intrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs and self efficiency.

3. Method

3.1 Subjects

The 152 participants in this study were students from secondary 1 to secondary 3 (aged 12 to 14) in different local secondary schools in Hong Kong. The students were mainly from the Southeast Asia and their cultural backgrounds were diverse, including Pakistani, Indian, Filipino, Nepalese and Chinese. The secondary schools located nearly to the experimental school are invited and selected randomly.

3.2 Materials

3.2.1 Reflective Learning Portfolio

Students in English lessons are provided with basic learning motivations which include genres about holidays, fairy tales and daily news in Hong Kong. They are expected to write a passage to introduce their findings and present in front of the classmates and they are graded by teachers after the completion of tasks. Students with reflective learning are provided with 2 chances of peer discussion and evaluation and 1 chance of discussion with teacher for further improvement before graded. In non-reflective portfolio class, students' work is submitted to teachers for grading after they have completed the tasks, without any peer or teacher's evaluation.

3.2.2 Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire

To assess students' motivation for portfolio learning, the part of students' motivational perceptions of MSLQ is adapted to assess students' motivation for portfolio learning. The questionnaire consists of 31 questions, which assess students' motivation in 6 aspects.

1) Intrinsic Goal Orientation (4 items; Cornbach's alpha = .553)
2) Extrinsic Goal Orientation (4 items; Cornbach's alpha = .642)
3) Task Value (6 items; Cornbach's alpha = .785)
4) Control of learning belief (4 items; Cornbach's alpha = .623)
5) Self Efficiency (8 items; Cornbach's alpha = .836)
6) Test Anxiety (5 items; Cornbach's alpha = .728)

The result of the motivation of MSLQ was statistically analyzed by SPSS. T-Test was performed to compare the motivation of 2 groups of students (with or without the use reflective portfolio) in learning English in term of expectancy, value and affection of learning.

4. Procedures

A quasi-experiment designed was adapted in the research. A group of students was instructed to compose the learning portfolio in the teaching curriculum for 2 school semesters, but another group of students was instructed with the teacher-directed learning style throughout the academic year with the same teaching curriculum.

Rubrics of the assessment of the learning portfolio are issued and students are guided to set goals at the beginning of the school semester and artefacts are documented as evidence of the learning process. Reflection is another important component of the portfolio learning that requires students to evaluate the learning process they have used and personal progress towards goals. Students are requested to present the self-reflection at the end of the school semester and different stakeholders, including themselves, teachers and parents will judge the quality of students' learning portfolio through the examination of documented processes and provide feedback for the development of the next portfolio.

After the completion of the academic term, they were invited to complete the MSLQ questionnaire (Pintrich, 1991), which was a 31-item questionnaire commonly used for assessing students' motivation in learning in term of their expectancy, value and affection of learning on Likert scale.

5. Result

Surprisingly, compared with portfolio group of students, non-portfolio group of students has a significant higher mean (alpha < .05) in intrinsic goal orientation, task value and self efficiency (Tables 1 and 2). There is no significant difference in extrinsic goal orientation, control of learning beliefs and test anxiety between 2 groups of students.

6. Discussion

It is observed that students without the use of portfolio have a significant higher mean in intrinsic goal orientation, task value and self efficiency. As the aforementioned literature, students who newly adopt the use of reflective learning may get frustrated especially if their self-directed learning and reflective skills are not well

trained. As the students under the portfolio group are trained to reflect on their work for half and year only, they may not master the skills in reflection well. In addition, they may not treat peer's comment seriously because some of the students think ungraded task is meaningless and time consuming. The quality of reflection is not deep enough that students cannot successfully identify their weakness in the work and make the corresponding plan to modify their learning styles. Further guidance is needed for students to get the advantages of portfolio learning.

7. Conclusion

Compared to portfolio learning, students in non-portfolio learning have a significant higher motivation in intrinsic goal orientation, task value and self efficiency. Further training in creating a reflective portfolio is needed for students to get the advantages of developing portfolio.

References

Barrett H. C. (2007). "Researching electronic portfolios and learner engagement: The REFLECT initiative", *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Vol. 6, No. 50, pp. 436–449.

Black P. and Wiliam D. (1998). "Assessment and classroom learning", *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 5, pp. 7–74.

Chen G., Liu C., Ou K. and Lin M. (2000). "Web learning portfolios: A tool for supporting performance", *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, Vol. 38, pp. 19–30.

Cheung C. K. (2001). "The use of popular culture as a stimulus to motivate secondary students' English learning in Hong Kong", *ELT Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 55, pp. 55–61.

De Bruin H. L., Van der Schaaf M. F., Oosterbaan A. E. and Prins F. J. (2012). "Secondary-school students' motivation for portfolio reflection", *Irish Educational Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 31, pp. 415–431.

Dewey J. (1997). *How We Think*, Courier Corporation.

Genesee F. and Upshur J. A. (1996). *Classroom-based Evaluation in Second Language Education*, Cambridge University Press.

Grant G. and Huebner T. (1998). "The portfolio question: A powerful synthesis of the personal and professional", *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 25, pp. 33–43.

Lam R. (2014). "Promoting self-regulated learning through portfolio assessment: Testimony and recommendations", *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, Vol. 6 , No. 39, pp. 699–714.

Lam R. (2013). "Two portfolio systems: EFL students' perceptions of writing ability, text improvement, and feedback", *Assessing Writing*, Vol. 2 , No. 18, pp. 132–153.

Lee I. (2008). "Understanding teachers' written feedback practices inHongKongsecondary classrooms", *Journal of Second Language*, Vol. 2, No. 17, pp. 69–85.

Mezirow J. (2000). *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Moon J. (2013). *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development: Theory and Practice*, Routledge.

Pintrich P. R. (1991). *A Manual for the Use of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*, Washington, DC: National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching and Learning, ann Arbor, MI.

Wallman A., Lindblad A. K., Hall S., Lundmark A. and Ring L. (2008). "A categorization scheme for assessing pharmacy students' levels of reflection during internships", *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, Vol. 1, No. 72, p. 5.

Weiner B. (1985). "An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion", *Psychological Review*, pp. 548–573.

Williams M. D. (1996). "Learner-control and instructional technologies", in: D. H. Jonassen, *Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology*, New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, pp. 957–982.

Zimmerman B. J. (2008). "Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects", *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 45, pp. 166–183.

Appendix A (MSLQ)

The following questions ask about your motivation for and attitudes about this class. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, just answer as accurately as possible. Use the scale below to answer the questions. If you think the statement is very true of you, circle 7; if a statement is not at all true of you, circle 1. If the statement is more or less true of you, find the number between 1 and 7 that best describes you.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all					very true	
true of me					of me	

1	In a class like this, I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2	If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in this course.	
3	When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.	
4	I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses.	
5	I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class.	
6	I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course.	
7	Getting a good grade in this class is the most satisfying thing for me right now.	
8	When I take a test I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer.	
9	It is my own fault if I don't learn the material in this course.	
10	It is important for me to learn the course material in this class.	
11	The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this class is getting a good grade.	
12	I'm confident I can learn the basic concepts taught in this course.	
13	If I can, I want to get better grades in this class than most of the other students.	
14	When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing.	
15	I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course.	
16	In a class like this, I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.	
17	I am very interested in the content area of this course.	
18	If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course material.	
19	I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam.	
20	I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course.	
21	I expect to do well in this class.	
22	The most satisfying thing for me in this course is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible.	
23	I think the course material in this class is useful for me to learn.	
24	When I have the opportunity in this class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.	
25	If I don't understand the course material, it is because I didn't try hard enough.	
26	I like the subject matter of this course.	
27	Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.	
28	I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam.	
29	I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.	
30	I want to do well in this class because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.	
31	Considering the difficulty of this course, the teacher, and my skills, I think I will do well in this class.	

Appendix B (Statistical Analysis of MSLQ of Different Groups)

Table 1 Mean Score between Portfolio and non-Portfolio Students in MSLQ

Group Statistics	School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	Portfolio	29	3.5259	.64207	.11923
	non-Portfolio	123	3.8232	.49767	.04487
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	Portfolio	29	4.1121	.61451	.11411
	non-Portfolio	123	4.0874	.61486	.05544
Task Value	Portfolio	29	3.7874	.55616	.10328
	non-Portfolio	123	4.0393	.52967	.04776
Control Of Learning Beliefs	Portfolio	29	3.7328	.55874	.10376
	non-Portfolio	123	3.9390	.62753	.05658
Self Efficiency	Portfolio	29	3.4957	.59432	.11036
	non-Portfolio	123	3.7713	.53291	.04805
Test Anxiety	Portfolio	29	3.3793	.82522	.15324
	non-Portfolio	123	3.3236	.79363	.07156

Table 2 Independent T-test of means between Portfolio and non-Portfolio Students in MSLQ

		Levene's test for equality of variances							95% confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Lower	Upper
Intrinsic goal orientation	Equal variances assumed	3.918	0.060	-2.730	150	.007	-.29731	.10892	-.51252	-.08210
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.334	36.327	.025	-.29731	.12739	-.55560	-.03902
Extrinsic goal orientation	Equal variances assumed	.047	.828	.194	150	.846	.02467	.12691	-.22609	.27544
	Equal variances not assumed			.194	42.239	.847	.02467	.12687	-.23131	.28065
Task value	Equal variances assumed	1.105	.295	-2.282	150	.024	-.25194	.11038	-.47004	-.03384
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.214	40.827	.032	-.25194	.11379	-.48176	-.02212
Control of learning beliefs	Equal variances assumed	.698	.405	-1.624	150	.106	-.20627	.12701	-.45723	.04469
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.745	46.193	.088	-.20627	.11818	-.44413	.03159
Self efficiency	Equal variances assumed	1.360	.245	-2.451	150	.015	-.27565	.11248	-.49791	-.05340
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.290	39.298	.027	-.27565	.12037	-.51906	.03224
Test anxiety	Equal variances assumed	.008	.930	.338	150	.736	.05573	.16506	-.27042	.38189
	Equal variances not assumed			.330	41.095	.743	.00573	.16912	-.28580	.39726