

CHAPTER I

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1.1 Background of The Study

Based on the writer's empirical observation it is found that students in Indonesia tend to be more passive than those abroad. The fact then leads to a big question of how those passive students can be changed into active when the teaching learning activity occurs.

Many people think that the change of passive into active will not be possible since there is a sound difference in cultural background between Indonesia and foreign countries, such as Europe or America. However, despite of the difference, all human beings in this world - no matter whether he is an Indonesian or European or American - is created equally. Thus, it would not be impossible to change Indonesian students into active students. Therefore, the teacher should think of the way how to make them actively involved in the teaching learning activity. The best way to do is by giving them scores or evaluating everything they do in class. In so doing students are, as many psychologists say, conditioned to a certain condition/situation so that the expected response can be achieved. The response in this case refers to the students' active involvement in the teaching and learning activity. Being

conditioned in a situation where students are no longer able to act as they wish in class, since everything they do will be evaluated, students will do what they are assigned to do as best as they could; And so the teacher wins the students' attention in class.

Being active in class may be clarified as active participating in class which includes doing assignments and giving opinions. In doing the assignments all students all over the world are the same but not in expressing opinions. Expressing opinions can actually be done orally or in written. However most Indonesian students are not used to doing that; they still have to learn it. So, let them express their opinion on a piece of paper then. In this way students are also able to improve their writing ability. In order to know how successful the students are in expressing their ideas and so in improving their writing ability an observation concerning students' written opinion and improvement in their writing ability should be done. This study, nevertheless, must take place in a writing class.

As it is said before, the technique used to make students become more active in class is by giving or evaluating them when they are doing their assignments and expressing their opinion. However it has to be boldly underlined that the evaluation toward an assignment has an interdependency to the following assignments. The evaluation toward a student includes the evaluation of the progress, effort and accomplishment he makes throughout the whole semester.

Thus a collection of students' work is necessarily required to demonstrate the students' progress, effort and accomplishment later. If a student's work does not make any progress or show no effort and accomplishment after the teacher has given him clues where he makes the mistakes and how he can make a better composition - then the score will be low. Moreover, if the student's opinion reflects high progress, effort and accomplishment - the score will be high. Such kind of evaluation can be found in the so called *Portfolio Assessment*. It is defined as a purposeful and systematic collection of students' work that demonstrates students' progress, effort and accomplishment in one or more subject areas (Bastidas, 1996:24). The main characteristic of this assessment is the opportunity given to the students to express opinion as a way to make a self-reflection of themselves in doing the assignments.

Because of the limited of time, the observation cannot be done in all Writing classes of all universities. Therefore, only one Writing class was chosen. The chosen Writing class is of the English Department of the Widya Mandala Catholic University - Surabaya. Knowing that through narration students start to learn expressing opinions about certain object, Writing II students of the third semester of the academic year 1997 were chosen as the subject of this observation. Either the group or the samples of this study are chosen randomly. Due to the limited time this observation will restrict the sample to only eight students taken based on the simple random sampling.

Hopefully, the effort to make Indonesian students become more active in the teaching learning activity will show its success by this study.

1.2 Statement of Problem

This thesis intends to answer one major question and two sub-questions, they are :

1. is portfolio assessment effective enough to be used in writing class ?

The above effectiveness of portfolio assessment is clarified by the following sub-questions :

- a. is portfolio assessment able to demonstrate students' progress, effort and accomplishment ?
- b. is portfolio assessment able to make students more aware of the difficulties in the process of writing ?

1.3 The Objective of The Study

This study has three main objectives to achieve. It tries, above all, to prove that portfolio assessment is really effective to be used in writing class. The effectiveness above refers to the portfolio assessment's ability to show students' progress, effort and accomplishment, as well as the ability to show the students' awareness of the difficulties in the process of writing.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

As the title of this thesis is Portfolio Assessment As A Means of Evaluation System in Writing Class, this study will therefore provide the nature of Writing, the nature of evaluation, the nature of portfolio, the nature of assessment and the nature of portfolio assessment including some points about students' self-reflection which is supposed to be the main emphasis of portfolio assessment.

1.5 The Significance of The Study

This study will contribute these following points to the teachers of the Writing class, to the students and to the teacher-training faculty. In general :

1. teachers will be made aware of the role of portfolio assessment in Writing class
2. students will not view Writing as a burden but as something that really encourages them to write more about their feelings and thoughts toward something
3. the teacher-training faculty will be able to see that portfolio assessment may also be used as a means to assess students' achievements besides the midterm and final term exams

1.6 The Assumption

There are some assumptions that have to be taken into consideration in this study. They are :

1. the students of the Writing II class from which the data are collected, are more or less, of the same level
2. teacher's role in applying the underlined assessment is only a guide which monitors the students' learning process without decreasing students' independence in the teaching learning process
3. the teacher of the above Writing class is qualified and knows about the portfolio assessment
4. the materials used are suitable for the students as they are already determined by the faculty
5. the analyzed progress is taken based on the students' score and on the decrease of mistakes made by the students. This is also done to analyze the students' accomplishment
6. the students' awareness of the difficulties in the process of writing will be shown from the students' reflections

1.7 Scope And Limitation

The discussion of portfolio assessment will be limited to only as it is used in a Writing class, especially in the Writing II class at university level. For in the Writing II class students deal more with describing others (persons, objects, places, etc.). And the Writing II class will only be the one at the third semester named as Group A. The group and the samples of this

study are chosen randomly using the simple random sampling. Therefore, the only analysis and interpretation of this portfolio assessment application done in the above mentioned group will be discussed in this study.

The underlined analysis and interpretation will be taken from students of group A registered by the year 1997. They are now at their third semester in the English Department of the Catholic university of Widya Mandala - Surabaya.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, these following definitions have to be made clear :

1.8.1 portfolio : systematic, purposeful and meaningful collections of students' work in one or more subject areas (Da Fina, 1990)

1.8.2 assessment : evaluation of one's performance using clear criteria and weighting systems agreed (David, 1995)

1.8.3 portfolio assessment : a collection of students' work assembled over time for an identified purpose which demonstrate the student as an autonomous learner -- possessing the knowledge abilities, skills and content to fulfill the stated purpose of the portfolio. A portfolio allows considerable student choice in showcasing individual interest and talents (Barndford, 1993)

1.8.4 evaluation : a process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting information to determine the extent to which pupils are achieving the instructional objectives (Gronlund, 1985)

1.9 The Organization of The Study

This study seizes five chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction, the background of the study, the objectives of the study, theoretical framework, which includes the nature of writing, the nature of evaluation, the nature of portfolio, the nature of assessment, and the nature of portfolio assessment; Moreover, the first chapter also contains the significance of the study, the assumptions, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition of key terms and the organization of the study.

The second chapter conveys some related literature of the nature of writing, the nature of evaluation, the nature of portfolio, the nature of assessment, and the nature of portfolio assessment and some related studies.

The third chapter talks about the research design, the population and sample, the data collection, the instrument, the procedure of data analysis, and the data analysis technique.

The fourth chapter displays the data analysis and findings. While conclusion and some suggestions are the content of the fifth chapter.