

Portfolio Assessment as a Remediation Scheme

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Abstract – *This is a case study research which described the performance of the three selected basic education students enrolled in a Special Reading class where the mode of assessing students' learning used was portfolio assessment. The portfolio assessment designed to the selected students underscored collaboration between and among the students, peers, teacher and parents.*

Findings show that portfolio assessment helped improve the selected key informants' Reading performance. The development of positive attitudes such as willingness to learn, sharing of ideas, cooperation and self-confidence among the selected students served as avenues for their growth and development. Their desire to learn more was highly observed among them and was documented in their interview transcripts. Further, self-reflection provided a bright horizon in the development of the selected key informants' complex skills.

Keywords – *portfolio assessment, collaboration, case study, Special Developmental Reading*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the academic subjects which is a basic sub-area of Language Arts together with listening, speaking and writing. It is a process of getting meaning from print. According to Tadros, Reading is described as a combination of interrelated skills needed to comprehend meaning from varied texts [1]. These interrelated skills are essential in the development of comprehension and vocabulary skills, the requisites for effective reading. Afflerbach and Cho validated this notion affirming that Reading is a dynamic and complex process which involves skills, strategies and prior knowledge [2]. On the other hand, Hinson pointed out that reading is characterized as a range of flexible, adaptable strategies rather than a scope and sequence of skills [3]. For Luz, reading is a skill which requires the development of a habit that must be exercised daily if it is to be retained and enhanced [4]. Constant reading improves proficiency which ultimately develops other comprehension skills. In the Philippines, Cristobal underscored that the ability to read and write is one of the government's priorities in promoting literacy [5]. Literacy promotes empowerment to every individual for his/her social interactions and provides an avenue to think on what he/she can do to become productive. With these concepts, Reading can be classified as a classroom engagement with the application of teacher's

varied strategies aimed to enhance students' complex skills.

When a reader is engaged to reading, the process of constructing meaning from the written texts emerges and comes in different ways. Further, Alexander & Jetton reiterated that during reading concentration is necessary to regain specific ideas in the formulation of inferences [6]. Other complex skills such as interpretation and integration of information are well facilitated to synthesize and evaluate text features.

In most reading classrooms, students are passive learners who are seldom given opportunities to express themselves. To enhance students' involvement in the learning process, an authentic literacy assessment is required to improve comprehension, vocabulary as well as develop complex skills. Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner posited that in an authentic assessment classroom, students demonstrate their competencies, knowledge and skills [7]. Students' creativity and ingenuity are significantly observed on the presented outputs from the authentic tasks they engaged in.

Moreover, Hirvela & Pierson emphasized that in an authentic assessment classroom, tasks are intended for student ownership and output revisions representing meaningful literacy use [8]. Revisions of students' outputs involve reflection and evaluation to improve their work and specifically monitor their growth and progress. For Hodgman, authentic assessment has often

been considered as a productive tool for increasing students' engagement, learning, and confidence [9]. Students' active involvement in authentic tasks enhances their self-confidence while presenting their outputs in front of the class. Ownership of learning is considered as one of the best classroom practices since students create and perform the assigned tasks authentically.

Further, authenticity is best explained when assessment tasks are highly interesting which require the enhancement of higher order thinking skills and demonstrate high levels of student participation. In addition, a critical dimension of authenticity is reflected when the degree of an assessment task mirrors some reality outside the classroom.

Kreber, Klampfleitner, McCune, Bayne, & Knottenbelt contended that authenticity is a complex and multi-dimensional practice that includes a moral component where the needs and best interests of the students are negotiated and critically reflected on [10]. Students' active involvement in the completion of authentic tasks reflective of originality and personal ownerships is highly manifested. For Frey, Schmitt & Allen, authentic assessment becomes integrated with instruction and provides a room for skill-building development and does not merely serve as a classroom evaluation tool [11]. Further, Mueller unveiled that authentic assessment is a form of assessment where students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills [12].

In the teaching of Reading, Valencia, Hiebert and Afflerbach underscored that authentic assessment is geared towards the assessment of varied kinds of literacy abilities utilizing contexts similar with the actual activities in which those abilities are used [13]. Further, they gave emphasis that authentic assessment provides opportunities to assess different dimensions of literacy such as the use of classroom-based information, students' involvement in evaluation and the utilization of students' abilities. The involvement of real or authentic learning activities for concept development in some reading selections is evident in a Reading classroom. Because of its authenticity, Van Wyk and Carl, pointed out that authentic assessment provides a more comprehensive picture of the learner's performance, growth and progress [14].

Airasian and Russell suggested that authentic assessment, as a form of assessing students' learning comes in three types, namely; performance-based,

affective and portfolio [15]. In this study, the researcher opted to use portfolio assessment as an evaluation tool which served as an alternative to paper and pencil test in the teaching of Reading.

According to Popham, portfolio assessment is the collection and evaluation of samples of student's works over an extended period of time [16]. Samples of students' works include journals, diaries, artworks and other classroom written activities. This collection should include evidence of student reflection and self-evaluation, guidelines for selecting the portfolio contents, and criteria for judging the quality of the work.

Moreover, Fernsten highlighted the significance of portfolio assessment as an evaluation tool used to document student's learning based from his/her work samples [17]. Thus, a documentation of student's progress & achievements is monitored and well facilitated.

The use of portfolio assessment provides opportunities to parents, teachers, administrators, students and other school stakeholders to evaluate the outputs and observable products depicting student performance. These students' learning outcomes are called portfolios.

For Pierangelo and Giuliani, a portfolio contains student's work samples, permanent products and test results from a variety of instruments and measures [18]. This conception was validated by Thomas, et., al, disclosing that a portfolio must be more than just a collection of test results, journal entries, homework, graphs of student performance, or the products of student's activities [19]. All work samples of the students should be contained in a folder for personal reflection and evaluation. Further, de Valenzuela's concept of a portfolio is somehow related with Fernsten and Thomas, et., al., specifying that a portfolio is a systematic collection of student's works and related materials that depicts his/her activities, accomplishments, and achievements in one or more school subjects [20]. Airasian and Russell likewise confirmed that a portfolio is an extended performance assessment which includes multiple samples of students' products [15]. These products are placed in a folder for students to collect, select, perfect, reflect and exhibit.

Portfolios have been considered as one of the most effective and innovative learning tools in the classroom. For Cimer, portfolios have motivated learners to develop study habits, promote self-awareness and

enhance affective learning outputs [21]. In addition, Lucas posited that portfolios often document students' best work and may be used for evaluation of students' abilities and improvement [22]. This best work is usually called exhibit portfolio, showcased in a conference attended by various school stakeholders such as parents, teachers, classmates and others. Lastly, Lucas affirmed that portfolios provide a rich context for assessing students' learning for they provide opportunities to reflect on their work and considered as best assessment tools representing classroom-based performance integrated in the curriculum [22].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to describe the Reading performance of basic education students enrolled in a Special Developmental Reading Class. Further, the use of portfolio assessment as an evaluation tool in assessing students' learning was looked into in the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a case study research utilizing three basic education students as cases. According to Yin, a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon in its real-life context [23]. This implies that a case study allows the researcher to look at the phenomenon or the case in its contextual aspect cascading to its in-depth analysis. Moreover, Hancock and Algozzine reiterated that a case study is an intensive study of a single unit or system [24]. In-depth data collection is utilized to obtain the key informants' perspectives. Zucker also disclosed that a case study can be an alternative to the traditional descriptive designs focusing on the key informants' information as the core of the study [25]

The procedures used in the study included the identification of cases who served as key informants. They were purposively selected for the reason that they were the students in the Special Developmental Reading (SDR) class which the researcher supervised. Their continuous attendance in the special class from the start of the study until it ended also served as another criterion for their selection in the study.

Since it was an SDR class, lessons taken from the regular Reading class were repeated for students' topic mastery and comprehension development. A portfolio day was scheduled after every regular Reading class where journals, diaries, artworks and other classroom written activities were done. All portfolio samples were

graded as students' outcomes. In terms of best pieces, students chose their entries which they feel were truly deserving as showcase portfolios. These portfolio entries were kept in a folder for students' references in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, thus monitoring their growth and development.

An in-depth understanding of each "case" was determined with the profile and performance in the regular Reading class as bases. Extensive information was gathered using multiple forms of data collection such as participant observations, interviews in the form of open-ended conversations with the key informants and documents in the form of archival records such as student records. Pseudonyms were used not to disclose the key informants' identities and to observe their privacy.

Results and Discussion

The following are the detailed descriptions of the three selected key informants as cases:

Case 1. Mikee

At nine years old, Mikee can hardly comprehend the lessons in the actual classroom situations. She is the only child of a father who works as a chemist and a mother who works as a school nurse. She is a timid student and a passive learner before she joined the Special Developmental Reading class.

During the first grading period, Mikee got a satisfactory grade in Reading. It was the mother's decision, nevertheless, for her to attend the remedial class at the start of the second grading period.

After orientation and giving out of instructions and tasks on portfolio concepts, Mikee started working on her first entry bearing her expectations on her favorite topic in Reading.

Sample 1 presents Mikee's first entry, without any label at all.

Portfolio # 1

I want to learn more about Murmur Diphthongs, now that I am Grade 2.

Ex. 1. far-fur
2. corn-sharp

Good! You have just started your portfolio. What do you want to know from your portfolio? **Teacher**

This journal entry is assigned to the key informants on Murmuring Diphthongs. Mikee further provides two examples to show that she learned the lesson. Her teacher's comments encourage her to learn more the lesson.

Sample 2 shows Mikee's second portfolio piece with her the evaluative comments of her classmates.

Portfolio # 2	
When I was in Grade 1, my teacher not lesson the Silent Consonants because my teacher in Grade 1 is not my teacher in Grade 2. And today I was no the Silent Consonants because I was in Grade 2 now.	
Ex. right	walk
know	talk
Good O*-----	Ciara
VS-----	Paige
Good-----	Teacher

Group sharing of each one's portfolio is done in class. Each student gives her personal rating on her classmate's work. Rating is descriptive since it is the school's grading system. As observed, the student manifests positive attitudes towards group work.

Sample 3 reveals Mikee's reflections.

Portfolio # 3	
I enjoyed doing my portfolio because it made me understood my lesson. At first, I tought my portfolio was wrong. But as my teacher taught me how to do it, I felt secured.	

Mikee writes a reflection and discloses her feelings of nervousness during the teacher's conference and happiness after understanding the nitty gritty things on portfolio writing. Likewise, she also exhibits her feelings of enjoyment working with her portfolios because it made her understood the lesson. Her initial thinking of incorrect entries makes her feel nervous. But with the help of her teacher, she feels secure because of her understanding of portfolio writing. In comparing her work with others, Mikee considers hers as good entries. She is very happy extending her assistance to her classmates such as teaching them the correct spelling of certain words. She expresses happiness working with them. With regard to the revision of her portfolio entries, Mikee conveys her appreciation of her mother's help. Both of them enjoy the learning engagement they

have. Sample 4 presents the evaluation of Mikee's mother.

Parent's Evaluation Form			
	Original	Revised	Comments
Portfolio 1--	4	7	original entries are unclear, revised are ok.
Portfolio 2—	7	8	started to understand the lesson
Portfolio 3—	3	6	has a spelling difficulty
Portfolio 4—	8	9	learned the lesson
<u>Mikee</u>			Mommy
Daughter's Name			Parent's Signature

In the evaluation form of Mikee's mother, it is noted that Mikee's ideas in her original entries are not so clear, but the revised pieces which are done with her help, are clean, neat and correct. Moreover, the teacher's evaluation during Parent-Teacher Conference is positive revealing Mikee as an active participant in class activities.

Sample 5 presents Mikee's best piece.

Portfolio #4	
When I was in Grade 1, I did know the Homonyms Because I am a Grade 1 only and now I am Grade 2, so I know now.	
Ex. sea-see	meat-meet
would-wood	rode-road
knew-new	

For Mikee, this entry is her best piece. She is very enthusiastic selecting this entry and feels happy showcasing her output.

Case 2. Paige

The youngest in the brood of three, Paige is 8 years old. She is a cute and chubby girl, friendly and nice to deal with. She shares her things with her classmates and very approachable. Both of her parents are engaged in business.

As a student, she is outspoken. She actively participates in class and enjoys the discussions. She expressed excitement when the special class was oriented to portfolio writing because it was a new concept that was entirely different and not been tried

before. Her willingness to learn was evident from the start. This was shown by her regular class attendance. Her active interaction in class was visible.

Paige involved her parents in portfolio assessment by sharing with them her best entries. The parents, however, did not have enough time to evaluate her entries primarily because of being preoccupied in their family business. The evaluation form for the parents was returned to the teacher without any rating.

Sample 6 shows Paige's portfolio entry on comprehension skills development.

Portfolio # 7
Comprehension Skills

What will you do during rainy days?
I will not play outside because it is raining. I will get sick. I am absent.

Her answer reveals her resistance to play outside due to bad weather. For Paige, playing outside under the rain makes her sick. She cannot attend the class if she's absent.

Sample 7 presents Paige's entry with evaluative comments from her teacher and classmates.

Portfolio #4
Homonyms

When I was in grade 1 I did not have a lesson in Homonyms. When my teacher come in, we greet her, Good Morning and then she greet us, Good morning, then she teach us our lesson.

Ex. called-cold sud-sad
 mop-map cat-cut

VS-----**Mikee**
Good-----**Ciara**
Congratulations! Please write legibly and neatly-----
Teacher

Sample 8 reveals Paige's best piece on silent consonants.

Portfolio #2
Silent Consonants

1. Comb-Sheila has a new comb.
2. Thumb-Her thumb is bigger than mine.
3. Castle-She made a beautiful castle.
4. Palm- The baby has a soft palm.
5. Aisle- The bride walked down the aisle.

Paige considers this entry as her exhibit portfolio because she knows how to construct sentences out of given words with silent consonants. As observed, she is very confident and very happy of her accomplishment.

Case 3. Ciara

Ciara has a positive attitude towards portfolio concepts. She seems to be overconfident of herself in answering the questions. In class, she enjoys group work and volunteers to whatever task the teacher requires. On the other hand, she has spelling and sentence construction deficiencies. She tries to overcome these by constant reading. Aside from attending the Special Developmental Reading Class, she has a tutor who assists her in her academic deficiencies.

Sample 9 shows Ciara's portfolio entry on antonyms.

Portfolio # 6

When I were in Grade 1, we didn't have a lesson in antonyms. But when I reached Grade 2, our teacher gives us lesson in antonyms. Now, I know some words that are different in meanings.

Ex. good-bad happy-sad
 rich-poor fat-thin

Ciara feels confident because she understands antonyms. She considers her entry as a good one because for her, it's too easy.

Sample 10 presents Ciara's entry with her teacher and classmates' comments.

Portfolio #7

Answer the question in 1-2 sentences.
Why was Lucita happy?
Because she help the poor woman.

Good----**Paige**
VS-----**Mikee**
Dear Ciara,
You answered it correctly. Very Good!-----**Teacher.**

Sample 10 reveals Ciara's best portfolio piece on what to do during rainy days.

Portfolio #7

What will you do during rainy days?
Do not go outside on rainy days. You might get sick.

For Ciara, this is her best entry because she answered the question correctly. Confidence is developed in her as she continues attending the Special Developmental Reading class.

Evaluation of the Contents of the Portfolio

This section provides an assessment of the portfolio contents from the point of view of the teacher, students, parents and their collaborative interaction. Positive attitudes towards portfolio activities were manifested.

Teacher-student interaction and vice versa

The students' first portfolio samples were not organized and neat. In terms of content, the ideas were unclear because of inaccurate sentence construction and misspelled words. This happened because they did not grasp the portfolio content despite the initial move made by the teacher.

In the succeeding entries, the teacher scheduled a conference with each student for the purpose of improving her work. The teacher-student interaction helped in clarifying concepts that they misunderstood and the problems they encountered in portfolio development. This interaction motivated the students to learn more and encouraged them to develop positive attitudes towards portfolio development.

Learning outcomes were very much manifested through verses, drawings (not presented as a sample) sentence construction, dialogues and answers on given questions.

Peer-Peer Interaction

As the students work with their journals, the teacher collaborated through group interaction. Students showed their sense of leadership and confidence among themselves. They manifested active participation in group work. Sharing of ideas between and among themselves was evident. Each willingly shared her opinion to her classmates. They expressed their desire to learn more. Self-reflection served as an instrument in bringing out students' best practices as shown by improvements in their work. They submitted their assigned tasks on time.

Teacher Portfolios and Record of Achievement

The use of lesson plan served as the teacher's portfolio. Daily prepared lessons were taught and instructional materials were used in the development of students' portfolios.

Observations, oral interviews and portfolio ratings were used as records of achievement. A five-point scale with descriptive values was used for a non-credit grade.

One remedialist revealed:

I prefer portfolio activities than paper and pencil test. In taking paper and pencil test, I need to spend more time studying and reviewing. In portfolio activities, I can express myself and my answers are correct.

Another student remedialist attested:

I love attending portfolio class because I am not shy of answering, no competition in class.

These verbatim accounts simply state that student's preference towards portfolio activities is evident. Students dislike paper and pencil tests because it entails a lot of time reviewing and studying. Unlike portfolios, the classroom atmosphere is informal where students feel they are not afraid of answering the teacher's questions, healthy environment where nobody competes and everybody feels oneness despite academic deficiencies.

The ratings received by the students in the regular Reading class were compared with the non-credit grade in portfolio. It appeared that the grades were maintained within the very satisfactory range. Portfolio ratings revealed an improved descriptive grade from the first to the last samples.

Comparative Grades: Before and After the Institutionalization of Portfolio Assessment

Records revealed that the first quarterly marks of the three cases were satisfactory and fairly satisfactory. These were the ratings before portfolio assessment was instituted. The parents' desire for their daughter's improvement in the acquisition of basic reading skills was their ultimate purpose of enrolling them in the Special Developmental Reading Class. Such decision was made upon their regular Reading teacher's recommendations.

The Special Developmental Reading Class was conducted two weeks after the distribution of cards. It was at the start of the second quarter when portfolio activities were introduced. The development of positive attitudes towards group activity and active class involvement were among the notable changes evident from the students who were into portfolio assessment.

Further, the students' grades from second to third quarters were very satisfactory, indicative of early success of portfolio assessment.

The fourth quarterly marks and final averages of the chosen cases were very satisfactory after portfolio assessment was introduced. This proved that the students' willingness to attend and interest/enthusiasm towards portfolio activities were developed among them. This concept is shown in Figure 1.

Regular Reading Grades of the Three Selected Cases

First Grading	Second Grading	Third Grading	Fourth Grading	Final Grade
Mikee				
82 (S)	86 (VS)	85 (VS)	88 (VS)	85 (VS)
Paige				
81 (S)	87 (VS)	82 (S)	88 (VS)	85 (VS)
Ciara				
79 (FS)	89 (VS)	88 (VS)	89 (VS)	86 (VS)

Mikee had difficulties in comprehension and word recognition skills before the start of the portfolio assessment activities. With portfolios, she was able to focus attention on what she is reading.

Paige, who received a satisfactory grade, improved after portfolio activities were introduced to her. She got a very satisfactory grade on her second quarterly mark, but made it to satisfactory grade, when she stopped attending Special Developmental Reading Class. It was her parents' decision not to attend anymore after receiving a very satisfactory grade. After the third quarter, she attended again the Special Developmental Reading Class where she maintained very satisfactory grades in her fourth mark and general average.

Paige had a hard time coping with her lessons, but after the institutionalization of portfolio assessment, she improved academically. Likewise, her willingness to learn was a positive indicator which her teacher observed and recorded.

Ciara had both comprehension and word recognition skills deficiencies. She received a fairly satisfactory grade before portfolio assessment was introduced. With her continuous attendance and active participation in portfolio activities, her grades improved from second to fourth quarter. Further, her general average in reading proved to be very satisfactory. Her performance during and after portfolio activities were introduced improved keeping her under the very satisfactory range.

The evaluation of the study before, during and after the institutionalization of portfolio assessment,

therefore contributed to the improved academic performance of the three selected cases.

Parents' Involvement

Parents' participation was evident. An evaluation form was sent to them to facilitate rating of their daughters' performance. They assisted their daughters in revising their best portfolio entries. They rated the original and revised portfolios using a ten-point scale. They even wrote comments with regard to their daughters' entries. Further, this evaluation served as a monitoring scheme with regard to their daughter's academic performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The portfolio assessment designed to Special Developmental Reading students emphasized collaboration between and among the students, peers, teacher and parents. The formal and informal methods of assessment were used as evaluation tools. Informal assessment tools included self-assessment or reflections, teacher-student conferences, peer critique or suggestive comments and group assessment. Formal assessment tools were mainly the evaluative analysis of students' work samples using the prepared criteria. Keeping students' entries served as evidences of their progress. It was agreed that a non-credit grade be given to remedialists. This documentation would be useful for parent conferences and a reference of the next reading teacher.

In this study portfolio assessment was proven authentic in which the task is not only genuine, but it was done in real-life context. Self-assessment was a reflective practice in which a student made reflections and evaluations of her own work. Further, the individual student's growth and progress was documented through portfolios.

Portfolio assessment should be implemented in all grade levels and integrated in all subject areas. Parents as active partners in educating their children should be supportive of every school's academic and non-academic endeavours regardless how preoccupied they are.

The study further recommends that additional key informants is needed to further undergo an in-depth analysis of the data. Another study on Mathematics Developmental Class where the same key informant enrolles will be utilized as samples is recommended to cross validate the remedialists' performance.

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