

USING E-PORTFOLIO AS AN ONLINE TOOL FOR L2 ASSESSMENT

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Abstract: *L2 assessment is a key moment in the process of teaching and learning of foreign languages. There are new challenges that recently have become relevant for the assessment of the online teaching and learning process. It is necessary not only to track the progress of students, but also to identify problematic aspects of the educational process and to see its subsequent adjustments. The article discusses the use of an e-portfolio as a tool for assessing the knowledge of L2 and some other relevant soft skills. The article discusses that formative e-assessment as the most reliable way to control the process of language acquisition and brings examples how e-portfolios can be used for these purposes.*

Keywords: *formative assessment, e-portfolio, e-assessment, online learning, and teaching, L2.*

There is no doubt about the central role which assessment plays in teaching and learning languages [2]. Assessment is also very important for online educational process. The introduction of ICT in classrooms has greatly influenced the way the assessment has been carried out. The researchers have studied well the facilitation of ICT into classroom instructions [2, 7, 11], but the area of online assessment still remains the subject of interest and research.

The researchers discuss the use of both summative and formative assessment for online learning of English. It is clear in the existing literature that summative assessment has a role to play in recording the students' performance for administrative reasons as well as to ensure their progress to the next level of study, but it is formative assessment (or assessment for learning) is "the process of establishing how

much and how well students are learning in relation to their learning goals to inform tailored feedback and support further learning” [2, p. 229]. In addition, formative learning, as on-going process, which is not necessarily concerned with grades as it provides feedback as a descriptive comment instead of a numeric representation of the students’ performance. From the definition it is possible to state that formative assessment focuses on monitoring learning and the feedback is meant to be used as “feed-forward” which allows students to incorporate the comments they have received and apply them to improve their performance. This aspect of assessment seems deeply rooted in the learning-teaching process, since it informs any following teaching and evaluates how learning objectives have been met.

If we view online learning as the possibility, not a limited-range option, we must find best practices that can guarantee that students can take part in online assessment that adequately and effectively replicates assessment in the physical classroom [2]. It is also important that the e-assessment methods could help students to create collaborate and interact with the community of learners and focus on more than simple recall. It is also important that e-assessment necessary for that learning to be transferable, which means that the knowledge tested, and the skills evaluated are what learners will need in their professional settings [2]. In other words, part of our e-assessment best practices should be the avoidance of simply recall of knowledge and the promotion of assessment types that engage learners with more than one level of Bloom’s taxonomy.

Formative e-assessment, a term coined by Pachler et al. [2] refers to “the use of ICT to support the [.....] process of gathering and analysing information about student learning [...] and of evaluating it in relation to prior achievement and attainment of intended as well as unintended learning outcomes” [2, p. 229]. In other words, formative-assessment tools employ learner-centered approaches which focus on the process of learning/ One of such tool can be the use of portfolio. Portfolios can serve as an assessment tool in teaching and learning, since they can help students monitor their progress, receive peer and teacher’s feedback based on which they can reflect and self-assess their learning processes and skills, personalise their learning, report their experiences authentically, improve themselves and generally become more active and autonomous agents of their own learning [1, 3, 9, 14, 19].

In general, portfolios can refer to a purposeful collection of students’ work that documents their progress over time. It been widely used for teaching and learning in all levels of education [3, 6]. The elements of the portfolios cover various writing samples, reading logs, reflections, and peers’ comments to teachers’ feedback. The main function of portfolios is to provide an opportunity for learners to monitor their own progress and take responsibility for meeting goals.

In recent years, with the development of online teaching and learning, portfolios have moved to an online e-portfolios to make distributing student work relatively easy [16 With the reference to paper based portfolios, e-portfolio is an online or digitized collection of objects, which can show the achievements in the area of L2 of a student, or a group of L2 learners or even a community or an organization. In most cases these objects are arranged as a collection consisting of text-based, graphic, or multimedia elements archived on a Web site, or LMS, or on any other electronic media.

However, as an assessment tool, an e-portfolio is not a simple collection. It can also be used as an administrative tool to manage and organize work created with different applications and control who can see or discuss the work. E-portfolios are not limited by assessing the product only. The benefits of an e-portfolio are based on the exchange of ideas and feedback between the author and those who view

and interact with the e-portfolio. E-portfolios can be used for assessing writing process, as well as it provides the possibility for assessing the reflection, revision, and collaboration [13].

The researchers consider three main types of e-portfolios, namely student e-portfolios, teaching e-portfolios, and institutional e-portfolios. Also, in academic setting, e-portfolios can be categorized into such types as showcase portfolio, which highlights major achievements; learning portfolio that demonstrates a learning process with a focus on feedback; assessment portfolio, which is used to assess the competency of students on specific standards or topics [13].

The e-portfolios can also have different functions depending on the type. Thus, they are used to plan educational programs; to document knowledge, skills, abilities, and learning; to track development within a program; to find a job; to evaluate a course; and to monitor and evaluate performance [13].

It is important to note that blogs are considered by the scholars as a form of e-portfolios. Moreover, with the interest in Web 2.0 technologies, blogs have experienced significant development recently as a tool for assessment of L2 achievement over the time [5, 8]. When serving as one type of e-portfolios, blogs "...enable users to interact with and have their work viewed by others inside and outside the classroom" [15]. Also employed for L2 purposes, blogs allow the students move from being observers to participants, turning them into the active doers of public blog domains [4].

Comparing e-portfolios and traditional portfolios, the researchers believe that the electronic one has a number of advantages over traditional portfolios. First of all, they mention accessibility, the ability to easily duplicate and store the artifacts. Also, it is very easy to constantly update the e-portfolios, to add hyperlinks, audio and video data, in other words all those devices that provide a more dynamic presentation of the content [12]. Additionally, it provides the students with the ability to establish the crosslinks between different types of media, artifacts, as well as various website and apps [10]. This possibility stimulates the students to develop their technical and creative skills and to learn new things. That is why e-portfolios are a well-established practice that helps students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills [18]. E-portfolios are included into the list of the eleven high-impact practices that have the greatest effect on student learning, understanding, and engagement [17].

Therefore, as it can be seen, the instruments of e-portfolio assessment provide a great possibility to establish formative assessment for L2 acquisition, giving the students the opportunity to see their growth over the time. By using e-portfolios as an assessment tool, educators can focus more on measure students' achievements rather than highlighting their weaknesses. It also involves both students and the teacher in the ongoing process of selecting samples of student work for inclusion in the e-portfolio.

It is also important to emphasize that the use of e-portfolio develops students' self-assessment skills as they can monitor their learning process, see their strengths and weaknesses, and try to overcome them. It also helped them to take responsibility for their learning process and be aware of the progress of their learning [19].

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