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Fostering EFL learners' autonomy in light of portfolio assessment: Exploring the potential impact of gender

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment as a process-oriented mechanism on the autonomy of Iranian advanced EFL learners. A particular concern was to examine the potential effect of gender on portfolio assessment by taking the learners' writing ability into account. The participants were 80 male and female advanced EFL learners to whom the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002) was administered to check their homogeneity prior to the study in terms of autonomy; a truncated form of a TOEFL test was also given to the participants to assess their language proficiency. The participants were then randomly divided into 4 groups: 2 experimental groups (20 females in class A and 20 males in class B) and 2 control groups (20 females in class C and 20 males in class D). The portfolio assessment was integrated into the experimental groups to explore whether and to what extent their autonomy might enhance and also to investigate the possible effect of gender on portfolio assessment in writing ability. The portfolio assessment was based on the classroom portfolio model adopted from Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), consisting of 3 procedures: collection, selection, and reflection. In contrast, the control groups received the traditional assessment of writing. The data were analyzed using 2 independent samples *t* tests, mean, and the effect size. The results showed that the portfolio procedures considerably improved the autonomy of the participants. Also, gender had no impact on portfolio assessment.

Keywords: alternative assessment; portfolio assessment; autonomy

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Introduction

Although various ways of assessment (e.g., self-assessment, portfolio assessment, learner-centered assessment, and presentations) have been recommended in the literature, portfolio assessment has drawn researchers' attention (e.g., Graziano-King, 2007; Hedge, 2000; Hirvela & Sweetland, 2005) to the extent that L2 learners' growth can be revealed through applying portfolio in the classroom (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002).

With the advent of communicative language teaching, Brown (2004) introduced portfolio assessment as one of the most recommended assessments in the field of teaching. Moreover, Price, Pierson, and Light (2011) provided an accurate identification of portfolio assessment as "a collection of student work gathered over time" (p. 5). In other words, one of the noticeable features of portfolio assessment is focusing on L2 learners' achievements over a period of time.

One serious consideration is that because of providing a broader measure with respect to what the learner can do, portfolio assessment is virtually of a high value for him or her. Chen (2006) also believes that portfolio assessment may also strengthen the learner's autonomy.

Technically speaking, compared to the traditional assessment asking L2 learners to recall facts and answer pre-formulated questions, portfolio assessment does not deal with numerical grades because they cannot accurately describe L2 learners' ability. From another perspective, as a result of being a kind of formative and un-timed assessment, portfolio assessment shows a full-length portrait of L2 learners' ability. Moreover, although portfolio assessment enables L2 teachers to make better judgments about L2 learners' performance, it is not that much popular in L2 settings (Dysthe, 2008; Lam & Lee, 2010).

Reviewing the various studies (e.g., Coombe, Folse, & Hubley, 2007) supports the claim that assessment and instruction are related. Furthermore, portfolio assessment has been viewed and investigated from different angles. Regarding the content of portfolio assessment, it can be applied by L2 teachers, learners, peers, and administrators (Price et al., 2011). This type of assessment has the ability to offer teaching and testing simultaneously, enhance L2 learners' self-reflection and awareness, make them independent L2 learners, and promote cooperation among L2 learners and teachers (Tezci & Dikici, 2006).

Nevertheless, by introducing such alternative assessments as portfolio assessment, L2 teaching has experienced a shift in assessment practices. This fact may have accounted for the dissatisfaction with the traditional assessments. According to Moya and O'Malley (1994), three major considerations can be taken into account as the reasons for carrying out portfolio assessment:

1. Limitations of single assessment,
2. Complexity of the construct to be assessed, and
3. Need for adaptable assessment techniques in the classrooms.

Although portfolio assessment introduces new opportunities to language evaluation, language testing specialists have voiced some concerns about this approach. For instance, as Alderson and Banjeree (2001) argue, the aforementioned approach is more cost-effective and time-consuming for teachers, particularly in classes with large numbers of L2 learners. Another concern is related to the special skills required by teachers in order to implement this kind of assessment.

However, we have been long familiar with the Iranian classrooms in the realm of L2 learning that are mostly teacher-dominated with few signs of collaboration and responsibility on the part of the learners. Reviewing L2 teaching literature (e.g., Richards, 1995) shows that the various methodologies and assessments which try to make L2 learning a more pleasant experience and to make L2 learners more autonomous. Therefore, it is important to investigate the effect of such assessments (i.e., portfolio and traditional assessments) on L2 learners' autonomy and to consider the way autonomy interacts with portfolio and traditional assessments.

Literature Review

Alternative assessment, as a new approach in assessment, has recently appeared in the field of language testing (Bachman, 2000). Alternative assessment can be justified because language testing was traditionally identified with such formal assessment procedures as tests performed at a specific time for specific purposes (e.g., achievement; Tsagari, 2004). But a number of educators have criticized this traditional kind of assessment because of its washback effect: These "tests can be useful for collecting information about students' achievement under certain restricted conditions, but they are not particularly useful for collecting information about students' attitudes, motivation, interests, and learning strategies" (Genesee & Hamayan, 1994, p. 229).

On a closer look, L2 teachers limit the methods applied in the classrooms to traditional assessments; as a result, L2 learners apply more rote memorization and less cognitive activities to recall the isolated details. Furthermore, the two most important disadvantages of high-stakes standardized tests are the presence of passive learners and lack of attention to their needs (Alderson & Wall, 1993). In the same line, different scholars (e.g., Broadfoot, 2003; Gipps, 1994) also believe that high-stakes standardized tests have adverse consequences on L2 learners' motivation/self-confidence and may cause negative feelings such as anxiety. Besides, due to providing a norm-referenced approach rather than a criterion-referenced for assessment, such tests may encourage competition rather than personal involvement among the L2 learners (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

On the contrary, there are a number of terms in the literature to refer to alternative assessment. According to Tsagari (2004), the most frequent terms are *authentic assessment*, *continuous assessment*, *dynamic assessment*, *formative assessment*, and *portfolio assessment*. Tsagari classifies the benefits of alternative assessment as the following:

1. Representing a collaborative approach to assessment,
2. Evaluating the process and product of learning,
3. Producing meaningful results for stakeholders,
4. Supporting students psychologically,
5. Relating to cognitive psychology, and
6. Evaluating instruction.

In case of L2 learners' satisfaction with portfolio assessment, Wang and Liao (2008), through interviews, found that the learners experiencing portfolio assessment expressed greater

satisfaction compared to the control group experiencing traditional assessment. To investigate the role of portfolio in writing assessment, through investigating an e-mail-based L2 writing class, Marefat (2004) concluded that portfolio assessment was a positive approach for the majority of the participants. Conducting another writing portfolio project, Paesani (2006) emphasized portfolio importance in developing grammatical competence. Through studying a secondary school English preparatory class and contrasting portfolio and traditional assessments, Erdogan and Eylul (2001) claimed that portfolio assessment would increase learners' responsibility and motivation. On the other hand, they also mentioned such negative effects as taking a lot of time and effort due to including different types of tasks in portfolios.

Another important point is the concept of autonomy. Holec (1980) defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). According to Little (1991), L2 learners' autonomy can lead to three pedagogical benefits as the following:

1. Learner empowerment,
2. Learner reflection, and
3. Appropriate target language use.

As a well-known fact, L2 learners would deem responsibility for their own learning process through empowerment. Regarding learner reflection, it helps L2 learners to think about their own learning. Moreover, appropriate target language use makes L2 learners able to apply the L2 and to get along with the communicative purposes (Little, 1991). Going far beyond the above claims, Deci and Vansteenkiste (2004) maintain that autonomy is one of the main requirements for L2 learners to gain a sense of self-fulfillment. In fact, L2 learners are autonomous when they are quite willing to perform an activity. Paiva (2006) argues that autonomy is a sociocognitive system that is closely associated with the L2 learning system. Thus, it might be plausible to claim that autonomy involves the learner's mental processes and social dimensions. Moreover, concerning the relationship between autonomy and academic performance, Hurd (2006) indicated that motivation, tutor feedback, and autonomy played a principal role in satisfactory academic performance.

True as it may seem, to the best of the present researchers' knowledge, there is a scarcity of quantitative studies as to the (possible) impact of portfolio assessment on L2 learners' autonomy and the (potential) impact of gender on portfolio assessment with respect to writing. So, the present study was an attempt to investigate the following questions:

1. Do portfolio and traditional assessments differ in their effectiveness on L2 learners' autonomy with respect to writing?
2. Does gender make any significant difference vis-à-vis the impact of portfolio assessment on writing?

Method

Participants

First, the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002) was administered among 150 advanced EFL learners, male ($n = 70$) and female ($n = 80$), who were studying in two language schools in Isfahan, Iran, and who were selected based on convenience sampling, that is, the participants were selected on the basis of their availability. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 27, and none of them had any experience of studying a third language (e.g., French or German). Moreover, they had not lived in an English-speaking country for any significant period of time. As Table 1 shows, based on the mean score ($M = 108.5$) and the standard deviation ($SD = 45.36$) assessed by SPSS, 80 participants (from among the 150 EFL learners) whose level of autonomy was below the mean score were selected:

Table 1
Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Autonomy Questionnaire

Scores	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
	150	35.00	182.00	108.5	45.36

Second, in order to check the participants' homogeneity in terms of language proficiency, a truncated form of a TOEFL test (adopted from Barron's Test, 2004) was given to the participants. As Table 2 shows, looking at the output box giving the results of the Levene's test, an independent samples t test on the mean scores of the male and female participants indicated their homogeneity:

Table 2
Independent Samples t Test for the Homogeneity of the Participants

		Levene's test for						
		equality of variances			t test for equality of means			
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	95% Confidence	
						(2-tailed)	interval of the difference	
Proficiency		Equal variances				Lower		Upper
	assumed	8.53	.005	-2.96	78	.04	-2.98	-.58
	not assumed			-2.87	62.88	.06	-3.02	-.54

Then, the 80 participants were randomly divided into four groups: two experimental groups (20 females in class A and 20 males in class B) and two control groups (20 females in class C and 20 males in class D). The experimental groups were randomly selected in order to be tested through portfolio assessment, and the control groups were provided with the traditional approach of writing assessment. Table 3 summarizes the participants' characteristics:

Table 3

Characteristics of the Participants

	Groups	
	Experimental	Control
Female	20 (Class A)	20 (Class C)
Male	20 (Class B)	20 (Class D)

Thanks to the regulations, mixed classes were not allowed in the language schools. Therefore, one of the researchers gathered the data from the male participants, and the other gathered the data from the female participants.

Instruments

The instruments were the followings: The first instrument was the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002). This questionnaire consists of two main parts: The first part solicits the demographic information of the participants, and the second part has 40 items on a 5-point Likert scale about the role of autonomy in L2 learning (see Appendix A). The choices range from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The questions ask for the learner's perceptions about the roles of the teacher/the learner, self-evaluation, the learner's goal, planning, ability, progression, and mistakes in the course of learning, all of which contribute to the development of learner autonomy.

It should be noted that, through doing factor analysis, Kashefian (2002) confirmed the presence of five factors of learner autonomy in this questionnaire: learner independence, dependence on the teacher, learner confidence, attitudes toward language learning, and self-assessment. As to the reliability and validity of the above questionnaire, the former was measured through applying Cronbach's alpha. The internal consistency reliability coefficient turned out to be .78, showing that the questionnaire functioned well in terms of consistency. Regarding the latter, two experts in the field inspected the questionnaire and confirmed its validity.

The second instrument was a truncated form of the TOEFL Test of Barron adopted from Pamela (2004; the Listening section of the test was removed) to assess the participants' language proficiency and to make sure that they enjoyed the same level of proficiency, and accordingly, to homogenize them prior to the launching of the study. The test had 30 structure questions and 30 reading comprehension ones. In this study, the reliability coefficient of the test was high (Cronbach's alpha = .82).

The third instrument was portfolio assessment along with its guidelines. In the literature, there are several approaches for the application stages of portfolio assessment. The approach suggested

by Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) was taken as the model in this study. This portfolio assessment model is based on the classroom portfolio model and has three steps: collection, selection, and reflection (see Appendix B).

Procedure

The data collection process was based upon a 10-session experimental study (80 minutes for each session). Because the participants were not familiar with this type of experiment, the researchers explained the design, goal, and procedure of the portfolio assessment in the experimental groups (i.e., classes A and B) in the participants' L1 (i.e., Persian), answered their questions, and tried to omit the possible problems they would encounter. Then, the participants wrote about different topics that were in their textbooks or in which they were interested. Having received the participants' first drafts, the instructors (i.e., the researchers) read them carefully and wrote their comments based on the writing scoring rubrics. A modified version of the writing scoring rubric proposed by Wang and Liao (2008) was applied in the current study. The scoring rubric consists of five subscales: focus, elaboration, organization, convention, and vocabulary (see Appendix C).

Then, the participants were asked to reflect on their writings. As peer collaboration, they were also required to review their partners' written tasks. As an attempt to remedy the potential shortcomings, the participants could consult their instructors after the class in order to inquire about their potential questions. Then, they revised their writings based on the instructors' feedbacks and their own reflections.

At the end of the term, the participants in the experimental groups were asked to choose their three best writings for final evaluation. Through applying Lam and Lee's (2010) paradigm, the portfolio score was the average of the scores on those three final drafts. The writings of the participants were rated on a 25-point scale. The ratings were made by two instructors. To ensure the reliability of the portfolio assessment, each participant's score was the mean of the two raters' scores (total score = 75). In order to ascertain inter-rater reliability, the correlation coefficient using Spearman-Brown formula was found to be .89.

In contrast, the control groups (i.e., classes C and D) received the traditional assessment of writing. The instructors clearly explained about such different parts as developing the topic sentence, body paragraphs, and the conclusion. The participants were asked to write about different topics that were in their textbooks or in which they were interested. The teachers chose some of the writings during the term and tried to explain the problems that the students had in their writings through focusing on such different parts as topic sentence, body paragraph, and conclusion. Unlike the experimental groups, the participants in classes C and D were not required to reflect on their writings. Their writing ability was evaluated based on the final exam.

At the end of the 10-session period, the researchers administered the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (Kashefian, 2002) to the experimental and control groups in order to evaluate the effect of the portfolio and traditional assessments on their autonomy.

Results and Discussion

The first research question addressed the effectiveness of portfolio and traditional assessments on L2 learners' autonomy. To probe that, an independent samples *t* test was utilized to compare the experimental and control groups, as presented in Table 4:

Table 4

Independent Samples t Test for Autonomy in the Portfolio and Traditional Assessments

		Levene's test for		<i>t</i> test for equality of means				
		equality of variances						
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	95% Confidence	
						(2-tailed)	interval of the difference	
Equal variances		.396	.531	23.281	78	.000	Lower	Upper
assumed							72.9074	86.5425
Proficiency	Equal variances							
	not assumed			23.281	74.973	.000	72.9031	86.5468

Looking at the output box giving the results of the Levene's test for equality of variances, we can see that the significant level for the Levene's test is .531. Because it is larger than the cut-off .05, equal variances is assumed. By referring to the column labeled *Sig.* (2-tailed), the value for equal variances is .000. Because it is less than .05, there is a significant difference in the autonomy of the groups experiencing the portfolio and traditional assessments in writing.

In order to compare the experimental and control groups concerning the higher level of autonomy, the mean scores of the groups were compared:

Table 5

Mean Scores in the Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	40	169.6500		13.68988
Autonomy				
Control	40	89.9250	16.78276	2.65359

As Table 5 shows, the mean score for autonomy in the experimental groups experiencing the portfolio assessment is 169.65, and the one in the control groups experiencing the traditional assessment is 89.92. Therefore, the results verify that using portfolio assessment in the experimental groups led to a higher level of autonomy. Also, to test the magnitude of the difference between the groups, the researchers studied eta squared. Adopting commonly used guidelines (.01 = small, .06 = moderate, .14 = large) proposed by Cohen (1988, pp. 284-287), we

can see that the value of .874 for autonomy is a large effect, and it represents 87.4% of the variance explained by autonomy.

In order to probe the second research question and to understand whether gender made any significant difference with respect to the impact of portfolio assessment on writing, a second independent samples *t* test was employed the results of which are shown in Table 6:

Table 6

Independent Samples t Test for Gender Impact on Portfolio Assessment

		Levene's test for		<i>t</i> test for equality of means				
		equality of variances						
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	95% Confidence	
						(2-tailed)	interval of the difference	
							Lower	Upper
	Equal variances	.138	.712	.023	38	.982		
	assumed						-4.3800	4.4800
Proficiency	Equal variances							
	not assumed			.023	37.892	.982	-4.3804	4.4804

As Table 6 shows, because the *Sig.* value is larger than the cut-off .05, equal variances is assumed, and the *Sig.* (2-tailed) for equal variances is .982. Because it is larger than .05, there is not any significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female participants with respect to the portfolio assessment.

Discussion

Although one may claim that portfolio assessment is not so much common in L2 settings, many professionals (e.g., Dysthe, 2008; Lam & Lee, 2010) encourage the use of such assessment and believe that portfolio assessment paves the way for L2 teachers to have better judgments about L2 learners' performance. Also, one cannot deny such distinctive features of portfolio assessment as emphasizing the learner's efforts and achievement over a period of time because portfolio assessment is a collection of work gathered over time.

Therefore, the argument in this study supports the ones by Banfi (2003) and Yang (2003) who claim that the flexibility of portfolio assessment in classrooms could encourage the learner's autonomy and growth. It is so because portfolio assessment has the ability to encourage the learner's self-reflection and make him or her independent (Tezci & Dikici, 2006).

The findings of this study support Chen's (2006) hypothesis that portfolio assessment is virtually of a high value to strengthen the learner's autonomy, as a result of providing a broader measure with respect to what the learner can do. This could be explained by the fact that, by providing metacognitive knowledge, portfolio assessment makes L2 learners aware of their strengths/weaknesses and so helps them to become self-directed and autonomous.

As Genesee and Hamayan (1994) have mentioned, traditional assessments are not particularly useful to gather information about the learner's attitudes and interests. This fact can be explained with the limitations of the methods applied in the classrooms and enhancing the learners' rote memorization and lack of attention to their needs. Viewed from this angle, the present study—like Broadfoot's (2003) study—illustrates that portfolio assessment can remove negative feelings like anxiety, and consequently, can increase personal involvement between the learners.

Therefore, with the advent of portfolio assessment and increasing dissatisfaction with teacher-dominated classes, L2 teaching is in dire need of a shift in assessment practices. Everyday learning and teaching, in line with their abundant uses of assessment, are a testimony to this need. Thus, based on the results of the present study, in order to make L2 learning a more enjoyable experience and L2 learners more autonomous, this recent trend to writing assessment needs to be included in L2 classrooms.

Conclusion

The present researchers hope that the current study serves as a springboard for future studies. However, future empirical studies need to be carried out to examine portfolio assessment practices in depth. For example, we need to understand how portfolio assessment is actually undertaken in classroom interactions. Conducting studies like the present one could be a valuable help in a better and more effective testing of an L2, especially the writing skill. In other words, the results of studies like the present one may help L2 teachers and test designers to make L2 learners more autonomous and successful in taking the tests. In the same line, White (2003) argues that a better understanding of the learner's autonomy helps the teacher to recognize the importance of effective ways to test the learner, as well as helps the learner to take more responsibility for his or her own learning.

The results from the current study also suggest that writing portfolios can be applied in EFL classes whereby learning, teaching, and assessment are linked. In fact, teachers who are likely to seek to maximize learners' autonomy in writing can apply portfolio assessment along with their teaching. In addition, the findings from the present study suggest that in order to increase L2 learners' autonomy, writing performances during the term should be the target of evaluation as a formative process rather than a summative one.

The current study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted using only advanced EFL learners that may not be a valid representation of the population as a whole. Possibly, there could be future studies with intermediate learners, too. Second, portfolio score was the average of the scores on the three selected pieces of writing for each learner. Despite this limitation, quantitative scores may be accompanied by the qualitative profile of the learners' achievements. A further limitation of this study concerns other variables (e.g., affective factors and the learners' beliefs) which were left untouched. Moreover, to cast more light on the efficiency and effectiveness of portfolio assessment, it is incumbent upon L2 researchers to consider other skills (e.g., reading or listening) in their studies.

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Appendix A

Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

Sex: Major: Marital Status:

 Grade: Age: Average:

Directions: *Please show how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the numbers that match your answers.*

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1	2	3	4	5

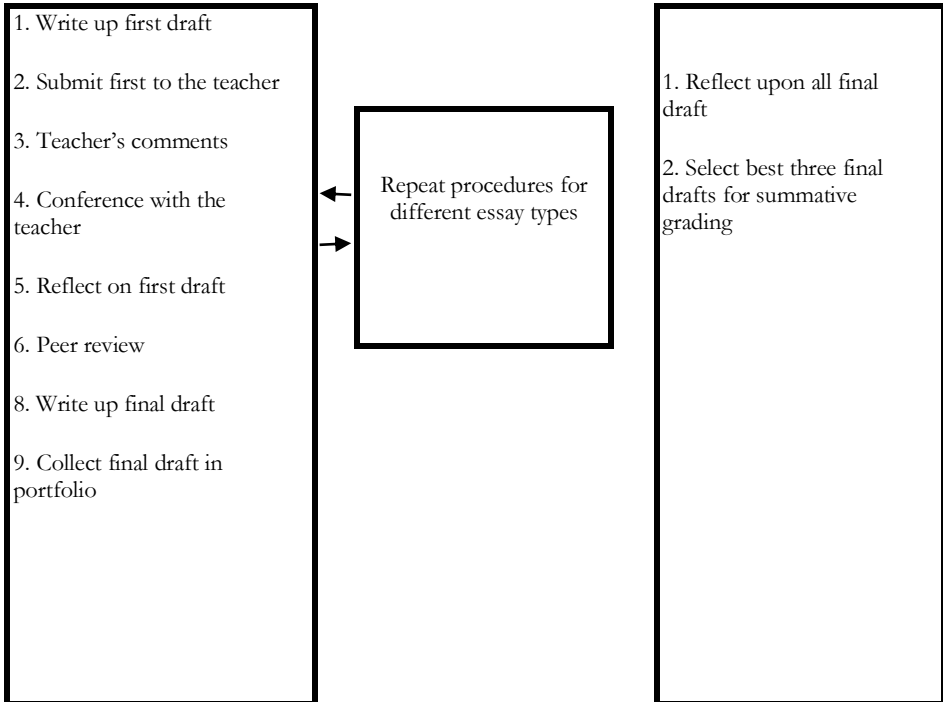
1	The teacher should offer help to me.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The teacher should tell me what my difficulties are.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The teacher should tell me how long I should spend on an activity.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The role of the teacher is to tell me what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The teacher should always explain why we do an activity in class.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The role of the teacher is to help me to learn effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
7	The teacher knows best how well I am.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The role of the teacher is to create opportunities for me to practice.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The role of the teacher is to set my learning goals.	1	2	3	4	5
10	The teacher should be an expert at showing learners how to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
11	The teacher should give me regular tests.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I need the teacher to tell me how I am progressing.	1	2	3	4	5
13	It is important to me to see the progress I make.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I know how to check my works for mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Having my works evaluated by others is helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Having my works evaluated by others is scary.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I have a clear idea of what I need of English.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I like trying out new things by myself.	1	2	3	4	5
19	My language learning success depends on what I do in classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
20	My own efforts play an important role in successful language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I myself can find the best way to learn the language.	1	2	3	4	5

22	I know how to plan my learning.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I know how to ask for help when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I know how to set my learning goals.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I know how my language learning progresses.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I know how to study languages well.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I know how to study other subjects well.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I have the ability to learn the language successfully.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I have the ability to write accurately in English.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I have the ability to get the score I try for in my next English test.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I know how to find an effective way to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I know best how well I learn.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I have been successful in language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I have my own ways of testing how much I have learned.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I am average at language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Making mistakes is a natural part of language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Making mistakes is harmful in language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
38	It is possible to learn a language in a short time.	1	2	3	4	5
39	Learning a language takes a long time.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I am above average at language learning.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Classroom Portfolio Model

Adopted from Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000)



Appendix C
Writing Scoring Rubric
Modified from Wang and Liao (2008)

Criteria	Descriptors	Scores
Focus	1. Having problems with focus or failing to address the writing task.	1
	2. Inadequately addressing the writing task.	2
	3. Addressing the writing task adequately, but sometimes straying from the task.	3
	4. Addressing most of the writing task.	4
	5. Specifically addressing the writing task.	5
Elaboration	1. Using few or no details or irrelevant details to support topics or illustrate ideas.	1
	2. Using inappropriate or insufficient details to support topics or illustrate ideas.	2
	3. Addressing the writing task adequately, but sometimes straying from the task.	3
	4. Using appropriate details to support topics or illustrate ideas.	4
	5. Using specific appropriate details to support topics or illustrate ideas.	5
Organization	1. The logical flow of ideas is not clear and connected.	1
	2. The logical flow of ideas is less clear and connected.	2
	3. The logical flow of ideas is mostly clear and connected.	3
	4. The logical flow of ideas is generally clear and connected.	4
	5. The logical flow of ideas is specifically clear and connected.	5
Convention	1. Standard English conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) are poor with frequent errors.	1
	2. Standard English conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) are inappropriate with obvious errors.	2
	3. Standard English conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) are fair with some minor errors.	3
	4. Standard English conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) are almost accurate.	4
	5. Standard English conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) are perfect or near perfect.	5
Vocabulary	1. Little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, and verb forms.	1
	2. Frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage. Meaning confused or obscured.	2
	3. Occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage, but meaning not obscured.	3
	4. Almost effective word/idiom form, choice, usage. Almost appropriate register.	4
	5. Effective word/idiom form, choice, usage. Appropriate register.	5