

The Effects of An English Writing Portfolio Project on Writing Attitudes and Achievements of Junior College Students

Mei-Hua Lan

Tzu-Hui Institute of Technology

Kai-Ping Wang

Shu-Zen College of Medicine and Management

Abstract

This study examined the effects of an English writing portfolio project on junior college students' English writing attitudes and achievements. Sixty-three English-major 4th graders from two junior colleges, Tzuhui and Shu-Zen, in southern Taiwan were involved in this sixteen-week study. The subjects were divided into the Experimental Group (EG) with portfolio-based writing instructions, and the controlled group (CG) without portfolios. Before the experiment, a retired GEPT was distributed. The t-test analysis showed no significant differences between the two groups, and it indicated the two groups had compatible English writing proficiency before treatments. Also, the Questionnaire on the Attitudes Toward English Writing (with 20 five-scale items), and the Achievement Test on the Target Grammar and Descriptive Writing (with 10 sentence-combination items and a picture-guided descriptive writing) were distributed before and after the treatments. The attitude questionnaire was designed by the researcher, and it had acceptable reliability (Cronbach $\alpha = .8193$) and validity (KMO=.828). The results of the t-test analyses on group comparisons of the pre-study and the post-study questionnaires indicated no significant differences in writing motivation, affections, values, beliefs and most items in blocking. The results of the t-test analyses for the differences between the pre-study and post-study questionnaires by both groups showed significant differences in writing motivation for the EG, but no significant differences in all aspects for CG. In addition, the t-test analyses of the achievement tests indicated significant differences between the EG and CG, and significant differences between the pre-tests and post-tests for the EG. The findings have confirmed that English writing portfolios have positive effects on motivating junior college students' writing, and on enhancing better writing achievements although it had limited effects on the other aspects of writing attitudes. The findings could provide important insights for the applications of portfolios for English writing instructions in technical colleges.

Keywords: alternative assessment; writing portfolio; writing attitude; writing achievements; writing motivation