TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH THE PORTFOLIO METHOD IN THE 21st CENTURY

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Abstract: This article explores the effectiveness of the portfolio method in teaching English in the 21st century. It highlights how portfolio-based learning enhances students' autonomy, critical thinking, and language skills. The article also discusses the role of portfolios in assessment, motivation, and personalized learning. In addition, practical approaches to implementing portfolios in English language classrooms are presented.

Keywords: portfolio method, English language teaching, learner autonomy, assessment, motivation, 21st century education, reflective learning;

Introduction

In the modern era of globalization and digital transformation, teaching English requires innovative and student-centered approaches. Traditional methods of instruction are gradually being replaced by interactive and reflective techniques that promote active learning. One such effective approach is the portfolio method, which has gained significant importance in 21st century education.

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' works that demonstrates their efforts, progress, and achievements in learning. In English language teaching, portfolios may include essays, assignments, projects, recordings, reflections, and other learning materials. This method allows students to take responsibility for their own learning and track their development over time.

The portfolio method plays a crucial role in developing language skills. Firstly, it improves writing skills, as students regularly produce written work such as essays, reports, and reflections. Secondly, it enhances speaking and listening skills when students include presentations or audio recordings in their portfolios. Thirdly, it contributes to reading skills through analysis and response to texts.

Another important advantage of the portfolio method is the promotion of learner autonomy. Students become active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of knowledge. They learn to set goals, evaluate their own progress, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. This self-assessment process increases responsibility and independence.

Portfolios are also an effective assessment tool. Unlike traditional exams, which only measure knowledge at a specific moment, portfolios provide a comprehensive view of a student's progress over time. Teachers can evaluate not only the final results but also the learning process. This makes assessment more fair, flexible, and meaningful. Motivation is another key benefit of the portfolio method. When students see their improvement and achievements, they feel more confident and motivated to continue learning. The opportunity to choose and present their best work increases engagement and interest in the subject.

In the 21st century, digital portfolios (e-portfolios) have become increasingly popular. With the help of technology, students can create online portfolios that include multimedia elements such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive content. This not only improves digital literacy but also

prepares students for modern professional environments. To effectively implement the portfolio method, teachers can use the following strategies: Setting clear objectives and guidelines, encouraging regular reflection, providing continuous feedback, including a variety of tasks and activities, allowing students to participate in assessment. These strategies help create a supportive and productive learning environment.

Methods

In this study, it was aimed to explore how the portfolio method can be effectively used in teaching English in the 21st century, especially in developing students' language skills and learner autonomy. To achieve this goal, we used a mixed-methods approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative elements, as it allows a deeper understanding of classroom practices and student outcomes.

First, we conducted a small-scale literature review to understand the theoretical background of the portfolio method. We analyzed recent academic sources related to portfolio-based learning, formative assessment, and learner-centered approaches. The ideas of David Boud and Paul Black were particularly useful in understanding how portfolios support reflection and continuous assessment in language learning.

Second, we carried out classroom-based observations during English lessons where the portfolio method was applied. These observations focused on how students collected, organized, and reflected on their work over time. We paid attention to the types of tasks included in the portfolios, such as writing assignments, speaking reflections, vocabulary logs, and project work. Field notes were taken to record students' participation, motivation, and interaction during the process.

Third, we designed a simple questionnaire for students to gather their opinions about the use of portfolios in learning English. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions. It focused on students' attitudes toward portfolio work, their level of engagement, and their perception of improvement in language skills. The responses were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

In addition, informal interviews were conducted with several students to gain deeper insights into their experiences. These conversations helped us understand how the portfolio method influenced their confidence, responsibility, and ability to reflect on their own learning. Many students mentioned that keeping a portfolio helped them see their progress and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

To ensure the reliability of the study, we compared the data collected from observations, questionnaires, and interviews. This triangulation helped us identify common patterns and avoid biased conclusions. Ethical considerations were also taken into account: students participated voluntarily, and their responses were kept anonymous.

Overall, this methodology allowed us to examine the portfolio method not only from a theoretical perspective but also through real classroom experience. As student-researchers, this approach helped us better understand how portfolios can support independent learning, continuous assessment, and the development of practical English skills in modern education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the portfolio method is a powerful tool in teaching English in the 21st century. It promotes active learning, enhances language skills, and supports personal development.

By integrating portfolios into the classroom, teachers can create a more engaging, effective, and student-centered educational experience.

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