

As I look back over the past six months that I have spent assembling this product, I see some highlights and some things that I would do differently. One highlight is the rigorous schedule that required me to scrutinize my time management better and take my writing process skills to another level by freewriting when I was stuck or struck with a brilliant idea. As for things I would do differently, I wouldn't arrange to work four jobs during the elusive "free time" that the final semester portends with fewer courses.

My portfolio seminar advisor, Dr. John Hedgcock, described the workload of our course as "frontloaded" because he scheduled the deadlines for submission of draft material rather early in the semester. Busy with other responsibilities I had assumed, it was difficult for me to produce substantial drafts for feedback. Five weeks into the semester, I came to a critical juncture: Shed extraneous commitments or risk not having enough time to complete my portfolio for submission. I chose the former by quitting one job, finishing two others, and furloughing from a fourth to clear my entire schedule to work on the portfolio. After that decision, I generated higher quality drafts that received substantial feedback from my portfolio advisor and peers. Unfortunately, all of this feedback occurred after the time when either of them could offer written comments, which could have warned me of my portfolio's inadequacies when first submitted. Consequently, my portfolio did not pass.

I was not devastated by this event, but I was not expecting it either. I recovered by reading "The wings of defeat" (Millar, 1997) several times and completing my final semester's coursework. I commenced revision of my portfolio in mid-May with humble determination to learn from my mistakes and pay close attention to detail. The reader

should notice that I have meticulously revised each section that my faculty reviewers found wanting. I have added architectural and chalkboard drawings to my cover pages.

One of my mantras during the revision process was, “don’t think, just write.” To me, that meant that I should stop worrying about what I was going to write because I’d already spent four semesters developing the ideas. Now it was just time to produce. My peer reviewers caught on to this enthusiasm and praised me for it, but they also noticed the gap between my materials and the standards of the portfolio. Marie and Chris urged me to exemplify my position with personal anecdotes and define specific terms that I use. They were also very encouraging and structured their feedback in a way that was easy to understand. My revision process for section B2 summaries followed the five steps of feedback that Chris gave me.

My faculty feedback included similar admonitions, but in different terms. Dr. Hedgcock urged me to transform my position paper from a reader-responsible manuscript, which requires the reader to figure out what the author is writing, to a writer-responsible manuscript, which requires the writer to explain the terms and position he is writing about. My faculty reviewers from the first submission emphasized that the position paper was not yet entirely writer-responsible. I have added more examples, definitions, and sources to display my understanding of the topics discussed.

Now that the portfolio is finished for resubmission, I am in a position to reflect on the eight criteria for its assessment. I think that my ability to critically synthesize the breadth of ideas that I have studied during the course of my MA TESOL can be seen in the early versions of my position paper drafts because I cited very few scholarly sources and wrote primarily about my own ideas. The metamorphosis of the position paper

occurred when I covered the literature that related to my synthesized ideas. The act of comparing my own thoughts to the established theories of the field changed my writing voice to a more conservative and precise one.

The resubmission process has given me much more time to spend on checking minute details in my portfolio. I have used my copy of the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) to format all of the previously mentioned special areas in the portfolio. I believe them to be in conformity with APA style.

The experience of revising this portfolio has led me to review old textbooks, worksheets, projects, and to consult with my professors about concepts that I would like to cover in the artifact. Although the process was gradual, my review of the professional products that I have created during my past four semesters was self-motivated and reflective. I think that this long-term memory building exercise will contribute to my personal and professional development because I have increased my ownership and investment in the language teaching profession.

The process of freewriting really helped my personal voice to come out in the original and revised materials included in the portfolio. My personal interests such as Creole sociolinguistics, secondary education, and critical pedagogy can be plainly seen in the artifacts that I have included in sections A2, B2, and C. Initially I struggled to find my own voice because I compared myself to others in my portfolio seminar. When I stopped comparing myself to others and realized that the portfolio was the perfect channel for tailoring the assessment to my own strengths, my writing voice emerged.

I am sure that the materials that I have included in this portfolio will cover all four strands. My section B1 revised project covers language use, SLA, materials

development, and assessment. Because of the broad range of experiences that I brought with me to Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS), I have a broad spectrum of academic interests that could only be satisfied with work on a broad range of projects. I have tried to develop my professional abilities with different groups of learners, which can be seen in the three lesson plans of section C.

My cover note to section B2 explains how I have integrated theory, research, and practice during my studies at MIIS. Wallace's (1991) reflective teaching model requires the teacher to integrate these three elements. Ellis (1997) investigates the difficulty of doing so as a practitioner, but sees an opportunity with action research to continue the integration.

Fortunately, I have had the opportunity to contribute a few products of my MA TESOL work to the language teaching profession. The portfolio assessment that I designed for the English Language Village of Concordia College (located in section C) was received as a model for future alternative assessments in their summer IEP program. In addition, I intend to submit a copy of my B1 revision to the ESL program director at Everett Alvarez High School for their consideration to use at a future date.

In closing, I would like to thank you for reading my portfolio this far. I hope that you have learned something in the process and can share that insight with someone else. The true measure of one's learning is the ability to share knowledge with others by teaching. In that case, I have learned a lot from the process of preparing the portfolio!

#### References

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- Millar, N. (1997, October 1). The wings of defeat. *The Christian Science Monitor*, p. 19.
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