

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In his teaching, the wise man guides his students but does not pull them along; he urges them to go forward and does not suppress them; he opens the way but does not suppress them; he opens the way but does not take them to the place; ...If his students are encouraged to think for themselves, we may call the man a good teacher. (Confucius c. 500 B.C.)

Teaching is a complex process that can be conceptualized in a number of different ways. Traditionally, teaching has been described as what teachers do: that is, in terms of the actions and behaviors which teachers carry out in the classroom and the effects of these on learners. No matter what kind of classes teachers teach, they are typically confronted with the following kinds of tasks: selecting learning activities, preparing students for new learning, presenting learning activities, asking questions, checking student's understanding, providing opportunities for practice of new items, monitoring student's learning, giving feedback on student learning, reviewing and re-teaching when necessary, and so on.

Despite these high expectations about a teacher, the schools should be concerned with preparing good teachers who can become models for the students. They cannot deny that it is not easy to find a good teacher, especially from the fresh graduate student who does not have any experience in teaching. Some teachers, like fine wines, keep getting better with age. Others do not improve their

skills even after years of practice and remain at about the same skill level as the day they walked into their first classrooms. They do the same things all the time, the students will easily get bored and the teachers cannot reach their goals. For example, no matter how delicious a food is, if it is consumed everyday with the same performance and taste, although prepared by a professional chef, the writer believes that in three months, people will not eat it again for the rest of their life. Another example is many professional athletes, display raw talent in very early age, but they do not reach their athletic prime until their late twenties and early thirties, and only after many years of dedicated learning and practice. In writing, many great novelists write their best pieces in their later years only after producing several inferior and amateurish works. Becoming a truly accomplished professional teacher is no different. It takes purposeful actions, fueled by the desire for excellence, with the attitude that learning to teach is a lifelong development process, in which one gradually discovers one's own best style through reflection and critical inquiry.

Nobody can deny the fact that the greatest enemy of successful teaching is student boredom. Students frequently know what is going to happen in class and they know this because it will be the same as what happened in the last class and a whole string of classes before that. All teachers, whether at the start of their careers or after some years of teaching, need to be able to try out new activities and techniques. It is important to be open to such new ideas and take them into the classroom. But such experimentation will be of little use, unless they can then evaluate these activities. Teachers should know whether those new ideas were

successful or not. Then, teachers should know whether the students enjoy and learn something from those activities or not.

One way of getting feedback is to ask students questions. But in fact, not all students will discuss topics like this openly in class. Another way of getting reactions to new techniques is to invite colleagues into the classroom and ask them to observe what happens during the lesson and make suggestions afterwards. But sometimes, the class will not run naturally because of their presence and teachers cannot know the fact in such limited time. Teachers also cannot see their progress and achievement only in a very limited time. On the other hand, the new teachers usually have many difficulties in controlling the class during the lessons. They may read and know many books about teaching or may also understand many theories on teaching, but usually they still find many difficulties in practicing it in the classrooms. In some cases, what happens in the classrooms is totally different with what they have learned from the books. They must face many unexpected situations everyday and no one can help them every time they need it. So, they still need someone who can help them successfully through the process of teaching but they cannot only depend on their helps to become good teachers.

It is important to think of ways to improve the quality of teachers, solely not to be recognized as professionals but also to find ways to be effective facilitators of learning. Here, the quality not only lies in teaching, but also on the presentation of the information, which can prepare teachers to constantly re-evaluate themselves as professionals and help them in making steps and decisions in the course of

performing their duty. One way to build these representations of information is through organizing a portfolio.

A portfolio can simply be described as some tangible records of what someone has done. This entails whatever records or information a person has collected as a representation of what he or she has done as a form of evidence and documentation. Traditionally, people in professions such as architecture, art, journalism, and modeling maintain portfolios as a way of organizing and presenting samples of their work to potential employers and clients. The purpose of such portfolios is to demonstrate their professional skills and achievements.

Teacher portfolio is described as a collection of a teacher's work. Teachers whose classrooms reflect the best practices in education need innovative ways to document their performance. According to Beck (1996:3), (a professor of education at Southwest Texas State University),

Portfolios are perfect tools for staff development. Through the process of collecting, selecting, and reflecting upon material chosen for a portfolio, teachers learn a lot about their teaching, because they better understand why they do things they do in the classroom. They can become better teachers by going through this process.

In other words, reflecting on one's teaching cannot be done in a limited amount of time, but it is a lifelong process.

Based on the discussion above, the writer proposes to conduct a study on teacher portfolio as a tool of evaluation to become a reflective teacher. The writer chooses the teacher portfolio because it is a representation of the teachers' development over the years, combined with the result of their teaching philosophy, their experiences and their interactions with students. Teachers who

keep teacher portfolio are better prepared to involve students in keeping student portfolio. According to Anson (1994:10), “The act of creating and maintaining a portfolio may motivate teachers to improve their performance and develop themselves professionally”. In other words, teacher portfolio is a helpful tool for teachers to evaluate and improve themselves to be professional teachers. Teacher portfolio provides a much more effective presentation of teachers’ capabilities compared to traditional paper-based evaluation forms. In teacher portfolio, work exhibits can highlight important information about the teachers’ work in the classroom. Teachers in this case, are in a position to evaluate their own teaching. Moreover, teachers can decide and develop strategies for change.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Triggered by the fact that a teacher portfolio is a tool to evaluate teachers, the researcher is trying to find the answers to the following questions:

- 1.2.1 Can teacher portfolio be used to demonstrate the teacher’s progress and growth in the teaching process?
- 1.2.2 Can teacher portfolio be used as a tool of a teacher’s reflection to know more about a teacher’s strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study has two main purposes to achieve. It tries, above all, to find out whether:

- 1.3.1 teacher portfolio can be used to demonstrate teacher's progress and growth in the teaching process.
- 1.3.2 teacher portfolio can be used as a tool of a teacher's reflection to know a teacher's strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this research are expected to give some contribution to readers and teachers concerning the use of teacher portfolio and reflective teaching, to find their weaknesses and their strengths in the teaching process. It also helps both the experienced teachers and the inexperienced teachers to go through the process of learning and teaching and to find the solution for their problems, so it will increase their opportunity to become professional teachers, as a means to develop and improve them constantly. By having the analysis, the researcher expects that this research can be used to help teachers have an opportunity to manage and monitor their teaching, document their progress and achievements over time, articulate their achievement levels, and more importantly, experience success. Then, the researcher also wants to help teachers understand the subjects they teach and how to teach them to students; understand how the students learn and what to do if they are having difficulty; and help teachers be able to use effective teaching methods for those who are learning easily, as well as those who have special

needs. Furthermore, the writer hopes that this study can be used to help education practitioners to consider using classroom action research to further research the next time they encounter a challenge in their classroom.

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Since there are many kinds of teacher portfolio, the scope of this study was to discuss teacher portfolio for formative purposes, which are used in elementary school. The researcher chose the elementary school because teachers in the elementary school are usually so busy fulfilling their teaching responsibilities that they do not have time to evaluate themselves. Many of them think that teaching students in an elementary school is easier than other levels. As a result, they use the same teaching methods all the time and forget the students' needs.

Since the time was given to finish this study was limited, the researcher could not see the result as a lifelong project. So, there were some limitations in this study. First, the observation was done in two months, within nine meetings. In regard to the limited time, materials used as the samples were only under the three themes in three units. They are (1) Are you hungry? (2) We can make things (3) Sports and the games we play. These three themes were chosen since these were the themes of the class discussion when the researcher conducted this study. Second, being aware that there were many aspects to teach in English class such as Grammar, Conversation, Listening, Writing and Reading, she could not do the research in all classes. She limited this study only to observe her teaching

performance in Grammar class. Although students' *grammar might improve but* she cannot claim this is the result of the teacher portfolio.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In completing this study, the researcher used **five theories**, they were:

1.6.1 Reflective Teaching.

In this section, the researcher discussed the definitions of reflective teaching and the concept of reflective teaching.

1.6.2 Reflective teacher

In this section, the researcher discussed the process of reflection to become a reflective teacher and the benefits of being a reflective teacher.

1.6.3 The Nature of Evaluation

In this part, the researcher discussed the definition of evaluation, the purpose of evaluation and how to relate it with teaching practice.

1.6.4 The Nature of Portfolio

In this section, the researcher discussed the definitions of portfolio in general and what was portfolio used for.

1.6.5 The Nature of Teacher Portfolio

In this part, the researcher discussed the definitions of teacher portfolio, the history of teacher portfolio, the kinds of teacher portfolio and the purpose of using teacher portfolio.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

As a means of clarification of the idea in this research, the following construct and concepts are defined:

- *Portfolio* is a collection of ideas, artifacts, and products. It provides an authentic means for teachers to represent and assess their views and practices in regard to teaching as the results of their work (Arends, 1998:35).
- *Teacher portfolio* is a document created by the teacher that reveals, relates and describes the teacher's duties, expertise and growth in teaching (Doolittle, 1994:3).
- *Evaluation* is the act or process to find out the value or the amount of; estimate the worth or importance of appraise (World Book Dictionary).
- *Reflective teacher* is one who evaluates the start, purposes and consequences of his or her actions, material, ideological constraints and encouragement fixed in the classroom, school, and social contexts or one who is capable of monitoring, critiquing and defending his or her actions in planning, implementing and evaluating language programs (Zither and Liston, 1987:25).
- *Self-reflection* is a key strategy in assessment and evaluation. It asks teachers to contemplate what they created, what the experience was like, how they can evaluate their performance, and what new personal goals they can set to perform better in the future (McLaughlin and Vogt, 1996:109).

- *Phase* is one of the changing states or stages of development of a person or thing (World Book Dictionary). Phase in this research refers to the steps in doing the research.
- *Cycle* is any period of time or complete process of growth or action that repeats itself in the same order (World Book Dictionary). In this study a cycle refers to plan, act, observation and reflection that gives suggestions for the next (cycle).

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one gives the background of the study, along with the research problem, purpose, significance, scope and limitations, and theoretical framework of the study. This chapter also includes the definition of key terms. Then in chapter two, the researcher reviews some related theories and studies. There are theories on reflective teaching and reflective teacher. The researcher also discusses the nature of evaluation, the nature of portfolio and the nature of the teacher portfolio. Chapter three conveys the research design, the data of the study, the research instrument, the procedures of data collection, triangulation and the procedures of data analysis. Chapter four presents the findings and the discussions. Finally, in chapter five, the researcher writes about conclusions and suggestions.