The Impact of Portfolio-based Writing Assessment on EFL Writing Development of Chinese Learners

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Abstract

The present study focused on whether and how portfolio-based writing assessment (PBWA) can promote EFL writing development of Chinese university English majors. The current article reported a comparative study designed to investigate differences between the PBWA experimental class and the non-PBWA class in terms of writing products involving accuracy, complexity, fluency and coherence at the end of the experimental semester. The objective measurement data indicated that PBWA facilitated growth of EFL writing ability at least in some dimensions, specifically, accuracy and coherence. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research were discussed at the end of the article.

Key words: portfolio-based writing assessment; impact; Chinese EFL writer

1. Introduction

A body of evidence has indicated that portfolio-based writing assessment (PBWA) is now widely acknowledged as a promising alternative to the conventional direct timed essay test in English L1 context. Some scholars go even further, claiming that the use of portfolios is more beneficial to ESL/EFL\(^1\) students (Delett, Barnhardt & Kevorkian, 2001; Hamp-Lyons, 1995; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000; Song & August, 2002; among others). Although some researchers have recognized the potentials of PBWA in ESL/EFL, a comprehensive review of literature on writing assessment has led to the conclusion that most of the available literature on PBWA comes from English L1 context and that little attention has been drawn to the applications of PBWA in ESL/EFL context (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Hirvela & Pierson, 2000; Hirvela & Sweetland, 2005; Līu, 2003; Weigle, 2002). It is acknowledged...
that in the Western society students are encouraged to set their own goals, reflect on and take responsibility for their own learning and thus become independent and autonomous learners (Liu, 2003). By contrast, Chinese students are required to respect and follow their teachers who are the authorities in the classroom and the whole educational system tends to function for the sake of various standardized tests, even though some changes have emerged as the result of reforms from “examination-oriented education” to “quality-based education”. It is wondered, consequently, whether and to what extent PBWA, as a successful instructional and assessment tool in the Western culture, succeeds or fails in the case of mainland China EFL context. While there are numerous claims about the potential benefits of PBWA to ESL/EFL learners, little evidence is available to confirm whether and how far these claims appear to be upheld. There is far too little research on the practice and consequences of portfolio assessment with ESL/EFL learners (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Hedgcock, 2005). More empirical studies on impact of PBWA on ESL/EFL learners’ writing are called for (Hung, 2006; Ross, 2005).

2. Literature review

A tendency emerges from the long history of writing assessment: from indirect multiple choice test to direct timed impromptu essay test to PBWA (Hamp-Lyons, 2001, 2002). Since the 1980s, PBWA has gained increasing popularity mainly for two reasons. One driving force is growing dissatisfaction with timed impromptu essay test. The other is the development of writing instruction. Instructional approaches in ESL/EFL writing have in some respects parallel developments in English L1 composition. The traditional product-oriented model is out of date while process-oriented writing pedagogies are increasingly pervasive at least in American educational milieu (Hedgcock, 2005). Process approaches to ESL/EFL writing suggest that “it is unnatural for a learner to write a draft of composition and submit for a grade” (Cohen, 2001: 534). Therefore, a change of assessment paradigm is called for (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000). The PBWA is perhaps the standard-bearing alternative instrument in ESL/EFL composition assessment (Hedgcock, 2005; Weigle, 2002).

A number of studies focused on reliability and validity of PBWA, for example, Gelinas (1998), Song and August’s (2002), Renfrow (2004). Based on the findings of these studies, PBWA seems to be a valid instrument. As for impact of PBWA, the following research was touched upon.

Slovin (2001) investigated the participants’ writing experiences and perspectives by focusing on the students’ writing prompts, meta-narratives, and personal interviews. The study found that portfolios gave the students a new level of freedom by increasing their motivation, their independence, and their self-confidence and enabled them to take risks in their writing and promotes great thinking about the writing process itself.

In an exploratory qualitative case study, Alabelwahhab (2002) examined the introduction of the self-assessment portfolio as a method of EFL assessment. Data analysis revealed that most students enjoyed using the self-assessment portfolio and they found the
process of reflecting on one’s own learning to be helpful.

In the study done by Barootchi & Keshavarz (2002), 60 Iranian 16-year-old female high school sophomores took part in a Nelson English Language Proficiency Test, portfolio assessment, and a teacher-made achievement test. They found that the portfolio assessment was received positively by the subjects, which contributed to Iranian EFL learners’ achievement and their feelings of responsibility towards monitoring their progress.

Nunes (2004) carried out a project over the period of a year with a group of 10th grade students in a Portuguese EFL high school. The study drew some preliminary conclusions that students’ reflections could help the teacher make informed decisions and choices in the classroom, and also contributed to a greater student involvement in the teaching-learning process, and to more autonomous learners of English.

In Hung’s (2006) study, as a supplementary evaluation tool, the electronic portfolio project was implemented for one semester in an EFL class of 39 undergraduate students in Taiwan. The research found that the learners tended to positively perceive electronic portfolio as a learning and assessment tool, particularly for raising meta-cognitive and affective awareness and providing multi-dimensional perspectives on evaluation. Participating the project produced some impact on learners’ writing processes in that the learners generated a multitude of writing strategies and raised their awareness of the nature of academic writing and motivation for EFL writing.

However, different voices were also heard. In a classroom-based observational study of ESL writers working on portfolios through a semester, Hamp-Lyons (1995) found that some writers were not particularly motivated and did not take advantage of the opportunities offered by a portfolio-based assessment to create highly accurate and fully developed texts.

Similar evidence was provided in Hirvela and Sweetland’s (2005) case study. In two ESL writing courses where portfolio pedagogies employed were different, each student of the two was able to experience portfolios under meaningful conditions for comparison. The result showed that the participants were not hostile to portfolios but did not strongly endorse their use as employed in the courses that served as the research settings.

Liu’s (2003) study focused on ESL students’ experiences with writing portfolios in college composition course in America, especially their experiences with and views about the reflective writing component of their portfolios. She found that students reacted differently to their portfolio assignments. An apparent lack of interest for some students might have led to their reported low motivation whereas students with positive attitude to their portfolio experiences tended to spend considerable time and effort. Some students tended to focus their reflective writing discussions on what the teacher had mentioned or commented both inside and outside of the class.

In summary, PBWA seems to be a valid instrument from the perspectives of predictive and concurrent evidence but in terms of its impact on writing growth the results are mixed (See Table 1).
Five of the above eight studies revealed that participants adopted positive attitude to PBWA and their motivation for ESL/EFL writing has been enhanced. It should be noted that in the other three studies, in which learners showed mixed attitude to PBWA and not all of the participants were more motivated, Liu’s (2003) and Hirvela and Sweetland’s (2005) studies involved the participants mostly from the Eastern Asia. As discussed above, students in such a culture tend to adopt passive learning behavior. In addition, only one study done by Barootchi & Keshavarz (2002) considered writing products. Unfortunately, in this study the conclusion that PBWA facilitated writing achievement came from students’ impressive response.

Therefore, the following question seems unanswered: Can PBWA contribute to writing ability growth of EFL learners in the mainland of China?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research question
The present study was to explore the substantive effects of PBWA on Chinese EFL learners’ writing development. Therefore a comparative study focusing on writing products and a case study on writing process were simultaneously conducted. Due to space limit, only the research of writing product was reported here. The operational question was: Are there significant differences between the PBWA experimental class and the non-PBWA class in terms of writing products (accuracy, complexity, fluency and coherence) at the end of the experimental semester?
3.2 Context
A PBWA project was conducted in a local university in Zhejiang province from September to December in 2006. It was developed as an EFL writing teaching and assessment reform in an attempt to change the separation of teaching and assessment and search for a measure that could provide a full picture of students’ writing ability and a catalyst to trigger their motivation, improve their strategy and eventually foster their writing growth.

The present PBWA project was designed according to the general principles recommended by Hamp-Lyons and Cordon (2000) and the framework posed by Delett, et al. (2001).

During the PBWA project, the teacher managed to follow the PBWA principles in his classroom activities, specifically, he required the students in the experimental class to:

- Engage in discussing rating criteria;
- Collect their drafts and store them in a paper bag;
- Revise every essay at least twice according to the rating criteria;
- Evaluate their essays according to the rating criteria;
- Evaluate their peers’ essays according to the rating criteria.

At the end of the term, the students selected the best essays from what they had written during the term according to the requirements (For details about the contents in portfolios, refer to Appendix A). And then they wrote a reflective essay to recall the writing processes, explain their selections, analyze the strengths and weaknesses, and make a plan for the next term.

Each piece of students’ work in their portfolios and the whole portfolio were rated according to the final-version rubrics (See Appendix B) by the researcher and the involved English writing teacher independently. The final score of each portfolio was the mean of the scores given by the two.

3.3 Participants
Two sophomore English major classes with the same number, gender distribution and writing proficiency engaged in the present study. Both classes were taught by the same teachers except Basic English teacher. The writing teacher was 30 years old and had 4-year writing teaching experience. He had the PBWA experiences in his MA program in Auckland University of New Zealand. The benefits of PBWA rooted in his mind drove him to attempt to put it into practice in his EFL writing course. Naturally he volunteered to join the PBWA project and cooperate with the researcher.

Both of the experimental group, called Class A, and the control group, named Class B, consisted of 34 students aging from 18 to 21. Twenty-nine of them were females and five males in each class. 76% of them have been learning English for eleven years.

3.4 Design
This study was a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design, because the two classes were not randomly assigned. The two groups were taught the same curriculum through similar activities. The teacher gave both classes the same assignments and attempted to develop
and teach the same skills to them. In the EFL writing course, he tried to employ the process approach in which writing process, especially, revision, was highlighted. Essay tests were conducted before and after the PBWA project in both classes. And they were evaluated in an objective way.

### 3.5 Instruments

Two timed essay tests were applied to obtain information about every student’s writing ability. Given that common sense predicts and research has confirmed that writing proceeds much more easily on a topic that is familiar than one that is unfamiliar (McCutchen, 2000), the students in the two classes were asked to write a narrative essay on topics familiar to them without limitation of length. In addition, limited time might restrain the performance of EFL writers (Hartman, 2001; Weigle, 2002). EFL students were able to improve the linguistic accuracy of their essays with extra time (Polio, 1997). The best essays were produced by Chinese non-English majors in about 51 minutes and the ideal time for EFL writing test was 45 minutes (Wu, 2006). It was assumed that the English major sophomores were better than the non-English major sophomores in English writing ability. So, the essay test was completed within 50 minutes in the present study since the longer time would be beneficial for the higher-proficiency English learners (Wu, 2006). The texts were used as data to evaluate writing ability from the perspectives of accuracy, complexity, fluency and coherence in an objective way.

Linguistic accuracy refers to the absence of errors. Accuracy measurement as an indicator of writing development is based on the assumption that second language learners write more accurately, or produce fewer errors in their writing, as they become more proficient (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). It can be utilized to assess the effects of some specific intervention or program (de Haan & van Esch, 2005; Polio, 1997, 2001; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). One of the important problems in accuracy study is what types of errors should be accounted for. In light of EFL proficiency of the subjects (sophomores of English major) in the present research, all the explicit errors in syntax, morphology, lexical choice and punctuation errors were considered as Ellis & Yuan (2004) did in their study on Chinese EFL learners’ oral and written ability. The best measures include EFT/T (error-free T-units per T-unit), E/T (errors per T-unit) (Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Polio, 2001; Polio et al., 1998; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). In the present study, EFT/T was used (i.e., the proportion of the total number of the error-free T-units to the total number of the T-units of a text).

As for writing complexity three measurement ways have been identified in the literature: average length of a structure, frequency of a structure, and complexity ratio (Polio, 2001). The most widely used measure is: mean length of T-unit (MLTU), that is, the total number of words was divided by the number of T-units of a text (W/TU) (Ortega, 2003; Polio, 2001; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). This method was also utilized in the present study.

Fluency measures reveal how comfortable the writer is with producing language.
It is assumed that L2 learners can write more fluently, or write more in the same amount of time, as they become more proficient (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; de Haan & van Esch, 2005; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). Taking the variable length of words into consideration, S/M (number of syllables per minute) is recommended to measure writing speed (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Ellis & Yuan, 2004). In the present study, each essay was required to be completed within fifty minutes. So the formula of fluency used in the present study was: S/50, namely, total number of syllables of a text was divided by 50.

The measurement of accuracy, complexity and fluency is targeted to assess writing ability at the level of sentence. As far as discourse measurement is concerned, coherence is referred to as an important indicator. “Coh-Metrix**, developed by Graesser et al. (2004), is sensitive to cohesion relations, world knowledge, and language and discourse characteristics (Graesser et al., 2004; McNamara et al., 2002). As a reliable tool to explore coherence in EFL learners’ writing, Coh-Metrics provides two types of coherence, i.e., local and global coherence. The high-proficiency EFL writers were better at the latter while the low-proficiency learners depended more heavily on the former (Liang, 2006). In the current study, the compositions written by the two groups in pre- and post-project essay tests were put into computer with the original features including misspelling and misuse of punctuation. The texts were saved as Text form. Lastly these texts were read into Coh-Metrics one by one and the values of coherence and numbers of words and syllables have been calculated and stored in Excel for the purpose of further analysis.

4. Results and analysis

The results of pre-test before the project were analyzed in terms of accuracy, complexity, fluency, and coherence with the help of SPSS 12.0. The independent samples t tests indicated that there were no significant differences between the two groups at the significance level .05 (Table 2). In other words, the two groups were not significantly different in writing ability before the experiment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>-0.823</td>
<td>.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>1.139</td>
<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>1.427</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local coherence</td>
<td>1.915</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global coherence</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is the results of essay tests at the end of the project (See Table 3).
Table 3. A Summary of independent Samples Test of accuracy, complexity, fluency, and coherence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accuracy</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.8343</td>
<td>.06222</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.7830</td>
<td>.07314</td>
<td>3.117</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complexity</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.3909</td>
<td>2.55681</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.1577</td>
<td>3.04942</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fluency</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.4049</td>
<td>2.46525</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.1321</td>
<td>2.71081</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local coherence</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.0844</td>
<td>.39030</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>.8830</td>
<td>.30067</td>
<td>2.384</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>global coherence</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.3877</td>
<td>.47806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.0181</td>
<td>.26419</td>
<td>3.945</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for accuracy, students in Class A performed better than those in Class B ($t = 3.117$, $p < .05$). As for complexity, though the mean score of Class A was higher than that of Class B (Class A: 12.39; Class B: 12.17), no significant difference between the two groups was discovered ($t = .342$, $p = .734$). With respect to fluency, the mean score of Class A was also higher than that of Class B (Class A: 9.40; Class B: 9.13), but no significant difference between the two groups could be found ($t = .434$, $p = .666$). As far as coherence is concerned, there were significant differences between the performance of the two classes both in local and global coherence. Class A was apparently better than Class B (Local coherence: $t = 2.384$, $p < .05$; Global coherence: $t = 3.945$, $p < .05$).

To sum up, learners in Class A appeared to be more competent in accuracy and coherence, for they were encouraged to pay due attention to accuracy and coherence by the portfolio rating scales in the PBWA project. As mentioned in section 3.2, the participants were required to engage in discussing rating criteria, revise their essays and peers’ essays according to the rating criteria. They tend to appreciate the judging standards made by themselves and take pains to fulfill the assessment assignment. In comparison, students in Class B had no such experiences. Take Student named Cao as an example in the case study (Li, forthcoming), he described his experiences and achievement in the PBWA project in his interview and reflective essay:

I like the rating criteria. It is not so “cold” as the criteria I met before. So I try to adopt it… Through self-assessment, we can rethink our essays and we can evaluate them by ourselves. I assess every composition according to the rating criteria. In so doing, I am clear about my strong points and weak points… We can do the team-work to check others’ writing. It is a good way. My classmates can see my essay from different points of view. They tell me what kinds of mistakes I always make. And I know how to assess others’ essays. What’s more, we can discuss together. Discussion make[s] us more clear about how to use a word, how to build a good sentence, and how to make my essay as a whole body… When writing an essay I try to follow four steps: outline—draft—revision—final version. I revised my essays at least twice according to the teacher’s comments and classmates’
suggestions. And I found wording and sentence-making are important, but I pay more attention to coherence and the structure of the whole essay now.

The project witnessed the active involvement of the students in the writing practice. The activities seemed to lead to the improvement of their writing ability. But their writing ability did not reveal significant advantage over Class B with regard to complexity and fluency. The results might occur due to Chinese students’ reluctance to take risks to make use of complex expressions as some students explained in their interview (Li, forthcoming). The substantive reasons, however, need more research.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

PBWA, as a tool of learning, is believed to be an aid to promoting writing ability. Changes of accuracy, complexity, fluency and coherence can be the indicators of writing ability growth in different dimensions. The findings in the present study showed that the learners in Class A who were involved in PBWA project were not better than the control group (Class B) in every aspect. Significant differences between the two classes were discovered in terms of accuracy and coherence. In other words, students in Class A made fewer errors in expressions than those in Class B. This might be because they developed awareness of identifying errors in the PBWA project. Engaging in criteria-designing, revision and assessment might contribute to the changes. As far as coherence was concerned, the students taking part in the PBWA project paid more attention to coherence usually applied by the higher-proficiency writers. The PBWA learners were better in coherence as they planned a more detailed organization and made use of strategy on revision of coherence. In addition, under similar instruction, both classes developed their writing ability with respect to complexity and fluency to a proximate degree. There were, however, no apparent differences between the two groups regarding these aspects, which might be the results of short duration of the experiment. Therefore, the preliminary conclusion in this regard could be that PBWA helped writing growth overall, which confirmed the claim that PBWA is a learning tool as the findings of Barootchi & Keshavarz (2002).

However, there are some limitations of the study. To begin with, as a contextualized design, generalizability of the conclusion drawn from the present study is limited. Secondly, limitations in the research design must be noted. On the one hand, contamination effect tends to arise in that the teacher involved had many difficulties to keep a clear-cut boundary line between the PBWA and the non-PBWA instructions. On the other hand, the PBWA project only lasted for a semester as an assessment reform, so the writing development may not be sufficiently obvious in such a short time. The last limitation is the PBWA project per se. Though the involved teacher was familiar with and adhered to the general principles of PBWA, he still felt puzzled about the practical techniques suitable for his students. The teacher had such a heavy workload, which precluded him from devoting due time and energy to the project. Hence, the functions of PBWA seemed to be prejudiced to some extent.

Some suggestions could be generated from the present study for future research on
portfolio-based writing assessment.

Firstly, the current study centered itself on learners’ understanding of PBWA with the prerequisite that the teacher involved was accustomed with the philosophy and techniques of portfolio assessment. Since most EFL teachers in mainland China are unfamiliar with PBWA and teachers play an essential role in PBWA, more research should be undertaken to explore the teachers’ perception of this new approach to assessment.

Secondly, this study investigated how PBWA was perceived by 34 students in an English major class in a local university. Future research could be launched in other colleges or schools, where EFL learners have different English proficiency and background knowledge, for example, non-English majors, middle school students.

Thirdly, due to the limit of time and space, the current study only lasted for a semester. However, time might make a difference regarding learners’ attitude, strategy and writing ability. To put it another way, some effects might not occur in such a short time. Therefore, further research needs to be carried out for a longer period of time, for instance, a year or even longer.

Notes

1. EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language) were exchangeable in the present study.
2. One was Japanese who had portfolio assessment experience, the other, a Korean, had not.
3. Results of the case study would be reported in the other article.
4. Ms. Jiang, MA, associate professor, 13-year English teaching experience (Class A); Ms Shen, MA, associate professor, 15-year English teaching experience (Class B).
5. At the beginning, the topic was “My Freshman Year”; at the end, “An Unforgettable Experience”.
6. A T-unit is defined an independent clause and all its dependent clauses.
7. It seemed that a handful of students had completed their writing before the deadline, but they did not hand in their essays. They tried to check or pretended to check what they have written. So the time that all of them spent on writing was calculated as 50 minutes.
9. The same level is set for all t-tests in the study.

References


Li, Q. (forthcoming). *Chinese EFL Learners’ Perceptions of Their Experiences with a Portfolio-based Writing Assessment Project: A Case Study*.


Appendix A

Contents of portfolio

Part 1: Artifacts (the student’s own works):
(1) An essay describing a person or an event;
(2) An argumentation essay to argue for or against a point of view;
(3) A reflective essay to explain the reason why the pieces are selected and his/her writing growth progress as well as strengths and weaknesses;
(4) Two checklists of self-assessment.
(The first two essays should be presented with two drafts and the final product.)

Part 2: Attestations (others’ comments and suggestions)
(1) Teacher’s comments;
(2) Two checklists of peer-assessment.

**Appendix B**

**Rating Scales for Portfolio (Full mark: 50)**

| Name: _______ No: _______ Final score: _______ |

[1] Portfolio content (Full mark: 3)
(Note: If a portfolio contains all the necessary submissions, it gets 1 marks, if not, 0; if it is very easy to read, it gets 2 marks, with some difficulties, 1; hard to understand, 0.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completeness</th>
<th>Readability</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Full mark:1)</td>
<td>(Full mark:2)</td>
<td>(Full mark:3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[2] Revision (Full mark: 4)
(Note: If revision can be clearly identified in all the 4 dimensions, full mark is awarded, each dimension, 1 score.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Ideas/Content</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Wording</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay one: _____</td>
<td>Essay one: _____</td>
<td>Essay one: _____</td>
<td>Essay one: _____</td>
<td>[() + ()] / 2 =</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[3] Reflective essay (Full mark: 5)
(Note: The quality of the reflective essays is judged in terms of description of writing growth; reasons for selection; strengths; weaknesses and future plan. Each of the dimensions is valued as 1 score if the element can be identified clearly in the essay. Otherwise, the dimension gets 0 score.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>plan</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Full mark:1)</td>
<td>(Full mark:1)</td>
<td>(Full mark:1)</td>
<td>(Full mark:1)</td>
<td>(Full mark:1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[4] Essay (Full mark: 38)
(Note: Each piece is evaluated in terms of the following 6 dimensions. The score of each dimension is awarded according to the descriptions.)

1-------------------2-------------------3-------------------4-------------------5
 unacceptable poor fair very good excellent
### Criteria Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose/Audience</td>
<td>The degree to which the writer establishes and maintains a purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• communicates with the audience(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• employs a suitable voice or tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idea development/support</td>
<td>The degree to which the writer provides a thoughtful, detailed support to develop main idea(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>The degree to which the writer demonstrates logical order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• coherence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• transitions/organizational signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>The degree to which the writer includes sentences that are varied in structure and length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• constructed effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• complete and correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wording</td>
<td>The degree to which the writer exhibits correct and effective word choice and usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctness</td>
<td>The degree to which the writer demonstrates correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(...continued from p. 126)

### 基于文件夹的写作形成性评估对中国学生EFL写作能力发展的影响

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本研究探索基于文件夹的写作形成性评估(portfolio-based writing assessment, PBWA)对中国学生EFL写作能力发展的影响。本文报告了受试为英语专业学生的一项对比研究的结果。受试分为实验组(PBWA experimental class)和控制组(non-PBWA class)。两组的其它条件相同，实验组进行PBWA。一个学期之后的写作测试结果表明，实验组的写作能力在准确性和连贯表达等方面优于控制组，但在复杂度和流利度方面两组没有显著差别。文章还指出了本研究的局限和未来研究的方向。

**关键词：** 基于文件夹的写作形成性评估；影响；中国EFL学生；EFL写作能力

### 促进专业探索——“第六届全国英语写作教学与研究研讨会”综述

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本文通过概述2008年秋季在北京召开的第六届全国英语写作教学与研究研讨会，分析了我国英语写作教学研究的现状和热点。本届研讨会的主要议题可以归纳为：(1)国内外二语写作研究现状；(2)写作教学；(3)写作学习者和中国英语；(4)写作评估和测试；(5)写作教师专业发展。本文最后根据会议情况分析了中国英语写作教学研究的发展趋势。

**关键词：** 英语；二语写作；中国