Chapter 8
Exploring Electronic Portfolio Assessment With Secondary Emergent Bi/ Multilingual Students

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the possibilities of electronic portfolio assessment for emergent bilingual or multilingual students in high school classrooms in the United States. In a three-year federally funded program designed to improve academic performance among culturally and linguistically diverse students at an urban high school in Honolulu, Hawaii, the author implemented electronic portfolio assessment (EPA) into academic English and heritage language classrooms in collaboration with curriculum and technology specialists. This chapter delineates how EPA was developed and implemented to enhance the academic and linguistic abilities of adolescent emergent bi/multilingual students while embracing their multifaceted and hybrid identities as heritage language speakers. It also presents both challenges and benefits that teachers and students experienced in the process of EPA. It concludes with suggestions for developing and implementing EPA for English language learners in similar contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Portfolio assessment has been extensively investigated as an important means of capturing a dynamic picture of academic and language development among emergent bi/multilingual students[i] in TESOL (Baturay & Daloğlu, 2010; Chang, Tseng, Liang, & Liao, 2013; Davison & Leung, 2009; Holmes, 2016; Lam & Lee, 2010; Lam, 2017; Lynch & Shaw, 2005; Romova & Andrew, 2011). As a viable alternative to standardized tests, portfolio assessment has been increasingly implemented into various educational programs (e.g., Barrot, 2020; Desyatova, 2020; Ward & Bennett, 2012; Zubizarreta, 2009). Despite the potential of portfolio assessment, however, how to store and manage portfolio materials has been a con-

cern shared by many educators. Teachers have been reluctant to employ portfolio assessment because traditional paper-based portfolios require a large amount of room to store. Also, management problems (e.g., how to update students' portfolios, how to transport records of student work) have been raised among teachers who otherwise would be interested in using portfolios in their classrooms.

A likely solution to these problems is the creation and storage of portfolios using computer technology. Electronic portfolio assessment (EPA) has emerged to maximize the benefits of portfolio assessment, using a variety of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) technology. Not only do electronic portfolios solve storage and management problems of a traditional paper-based portfolio, but they support an expanded notion of literacy that incorporates multimedia, including text, graphics, sound, and video (Kress, 2011). In other words, EPA provides an opportunity for emergent bi/multilingual students to embrace multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Knobel & Lankshear, 2014; New London Group, 1996) and recognize new ways of capturing the complex ways people read, write, and understand text in the technology-driven global community.

Further, EPA can encourage students to become responsible for their products as electronic portfolios are shared with a wider audience when compared to the teacher and classmates who are the usual audience for paper-based portfolios (Barrot, 2016; 2020). The result of this transfer of responsibility to students is that they are often more motivated to engage in the process of reflection and revision that deepens their understanding of curriculum content. Consequently, EPA can demonstrate student achievement and the growing capabilities in utilizing CALL technology to support lifelong learning (Baturay & Daloğlu, 2010).

This chapter describes an exploratory case of a program for emergent bi/multilingual students employing electronic portfolio assessment. The *Studies of Heritage and Academic Languages and Literacies* (SHALL) Program was designed to improve academic performance among culturally and linguistically diverse high school students in the United States by capitalizing on heritage language and cultural resources (Davis, 2009). This three-year federally funded program was implemented in collaboration with the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) and Harrison High School (pseudonym) located in Honolulu, Hawaii. To assess and facilitate student progress, SHALL incorporated alternative assessments that were congruent with its approach to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students who were also speakers of heritage languages, such as Samoan and Ilokano. Specifically, SHALL teachers and curriculum specialists employed EPA as an alternative to traditional student evaluation (i.e., standardized testing). This chapter first presents a conceptual framework for electronic portfolio assessment, followed by a sociolinguistic context unique to the state of Hawaii. The research site and the student population, along with research methods employed for the study, are discussed. Additionally, the process, the challenges, and the affordances of EPA in the SHALL program are presented. The chapter concludes with recommendations for developing and implementing EPA in similar contexts.

BACKGROUND

This study derives a framework for electronic portfolio assessment from two bodies of literature: portfolio assessment as alternative assessment in language education and a multimedia design process for the development of electronic portfolios. These complimentary processes are both essential for effective EPA development (Barrett, 2007). Understanding how these processes fit together may contribute to the development of electronic portfolios.

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