

## **Portfolio Assessment as an Effective Tool in Achieving Self-Regulation and Critical Reflection**

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**Abstract** - In tertiary level ESL writing classes, most students very often tend to remain passive and unmotivated because they lack self-regulation and critical reflection which are crucial in producing classroom assignments in terms of reflective essays and independent compositions. In such contexts, portfolio assessment (PA) is considered a powerful strategy to engage students constructively. A portfolio that collects the student's own writings with assessments mirrors her gradual progress in the course of engaging in classroom activities by allowing her to refer back and forth what she has included there over the stipulated period of time. Yet, there is a lack of empirical research on how the students' self-regulation and critical reflection can be enhanced by means of PA. Therefore, this research aims at exploring how teachers can foster self-regulation and critical reflection in the writing classroom through PA. Over a period of one academic year, the progress a group of 120 HNDE (Higher National Diploma in English) first-years made in their writing classes was observed while their writings were assessed and collected in individual portfolios. They were also facilitated to carry out self and peer evaluation of their writings, allowing them to assume responsibility for their learning and assessment. The results of the study indicate that the students manage to set learning goals, monitor their progress, regulate their adherence to the classroom ethics, and control their development in cognitive skills. The reflection sheets distributed at every session are considered to have encouraged the students to make critical judgements of their own writing. In conclusion, it is observed that portfolio maintenance is an empowering activity that contributes to self-regulated learning and critical reflection.

**Keywords:** portfolio, Self- regulation, Critical Reflection