

March 2009

Using language portfolios for all ages: inspiration for teachers, motivation for learners

30th Annual TESOL Greece Convention, Hellenic American Union, Athens, Greece.

Using language portfolios for all ages: inspiration for teachers, motivation for learners

Many approaches to student language assessment have been introduced and have gained widespread acceptance under the so-called '*movement of alternative assessment*' (Alderson and Banerjee, 2001). Perhaps the most noticeable initiative has been the increasing emphasis on 'language portfolios' that are said to impact on teaching and learning in such a way that transform the static, mechanical and disengaging moments into a continuum of moments combining assessment, instruction, and learning. This is the promise of an effective portfolio assessment program. The challenge is designing a portfolio program that works.

This presentation will provide an overview of portfolio assessment in and out of Europe and then will demonstrate how teachers can implement the technique in class. More specifically, the presentation will show how teachers can set up this innovative method with their EFL students of all ages and will discuss the benefits on both instruction and learning. It will also discuss the suitability of the use of language portfolios in traditional educational contexts, in exam classes and will make recommendations for their effective use.

Key words: language testing, portfolio assessment, positive washback