How to enhance students' <u>reflection skills</u> about their L2-writing competence using portfolio and self-assessments

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1/6 Institutional framework

- compulsory subject within the Bachelor's degree programme Transcultural Communication

- **German Language and Culture - Advanced**

- for students of German as a Foreign Language

- advanced level C1, 6 hours per week, 7.5 ECTS

- Summer term (March to June 2016), 26 students

- Learning outcomes:

  - understand complex **textual** structures, infer implicit meanings and recognize **cultural** phenomena

  - produce appropriate (spoken and written) texts on a wide range of topics

  - clearly structure and logically organize texts

- various in-class or home writing **assignments**
- different text genres and **topics**

  1) arts and culture   3) environment and ecology

  2) social norms and taboos   4) economy and sustainability

- stylistic coherence and textual cohesion
- risk taking and linguistic experimentation
- formal correctness in grammar, orthography and punctuation
- adequacy and appropriacy of expression
- terminology and idiomatic range

Rating

Matrix

student hands in writing assignment

⬇

teacher corrects it with detailed written feedback

⬇

student revises text (active self-confrontation)
and hands in original and revised text one week later

3/6 **Fostering students' reflections skills** Part **II**/II

end of semester > students hand in

- **Portfolio** (original and revised texts, during summer term)

- **Written reflection** on the development of their writing skills

  - analyzing and categorizing **errors**
  - highlightening textual **strengths**
  - analysis of time management (submission deadlines) and **self-organization** (meticulous collection of texts)

revise texts and meet submission deadlines

reflect and write reflectively

reflect on their own learning

self-direct their learning

reflect on their L2 writing and self-organization skills

self-assess their academic performance

reflect on their willingness to take responsibility for their learning outcomes

- Students > stressed and **irritated** for being asked a reflection and a self-assessment of their writing competence

- used to writing assignments as evaluation or examination tools

- L2 writing as an instrument for *thinking* and *clarifying* one's thoughts didn't meet their **expectations**

- used to years of **external** assessment at school and university

- reluctant to compliment themselves fearing to *show off*

- quite **demanding** correcting and revising procedure, but worthwhile and helpful > increased self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses

- painful yet **eye-opening** experience > confrontation with smaller and bigger failures

- starting point for a detailed **action plan** to work on German language skills

- **honest analysis** of possible reasons for errors > lack of concentration, time pressure or sloppiness

- opportunity to build **rapport** between student and teacher, based on mutual respect and fairness

- desire for **guidance** and support in the reflection process, for recognition, appreciation and **trust**

- benefit for students: discover an instrument for critical and **clarifying** thinking for their whole lives

- benefit for teachers: a better **understanding** of *the students'* way of thinking, of seeing and perceiving teaching and learning activities

- importance of
  - teacher **support** and motivation
  - a very **clear** and detailed **task** formulation for inspiring writing assignments

- shortcomings
  - the risks that some learners **embellish** or **underestimate** their performance
  - time-consuming
  - balancing act between self-opening and self-protection

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Thank you for

your attention!

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