ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to share the observed behaviors and reported experiences of a teacher and Spanish 1 students as they progressed through the portfolio assessment process. The study was completed in a large urban high school in eastern Pennsylvania with seventeen participants from a Level One Spanish Class. The class met every other day for the entire school year. Methods of gathering data included teacher observation, surveys, interviews and conferences, and student work including class assignments, projects, and portfolio entries. Teacher field notes that included transcripts of detailed class discussions and observations were also part of the data methods employed. The study suggested an increase in reflective thinking for some but a lack of reflective thinking for others. Some lower- motivated students, identified by a survey, were not able to reflect well and often needed prompting by the teacher. The beginning of the year survey also suggested that low self-motivated students are better motivated by knowing that they will be required to look back on their work and eventually will need to display it in their portfolio.

Organization was a major issue in the portfolio process. The study suggested that students who are not organized in their daily school work were most likely going to have the most difficulty with the portfolio organization process as well.