

Using Electronic Portfolio to Promote English Speaking Ability of EFL Undergraduate Students

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Abstract : Lack of exposure to English language in the authentic English setting naturally leads to a lack of fluency in the language. As a result, Thai EFL learners are struggling in meeting with the communication 'can do' descriptors of the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) required by the Ministry of Education. This initial phase of the ongoing study, employing the e-portfolio to promote the English speaking ability, probed into the effects of the use of e-portfolio on Thai EFL nursing students' speaking ability. Also, their opinions towards the use of e-portfolio to enhance their speaking ability were investigated. The participants were 44 undergraduate nursing students at a Thai College of Nursing. The participants undertook four lessons to promote their communication skills according to the CEFR criteria. Throughout the semester, the participants videotaped themselves while completing the four speaking tasks. The videos were then uploaded onto the e-portfolio website where the researcher provided them with the feedbacks. The video records were analyzed by the speaking rubric designed according to the CEFR 'can do' descriptors. Also, students were required to record self-reflections in video format and upload onto the same URL. Students' oral self-reflections were coded to find out the perceptions towards the use of the e-portfolio in promoting their speaking ability. The results from the two research instruments suggested the effectiveness of the tool on improving speaking ability, learner autonomy and media literacy skills. In addition, the oral reflection videos revealed positive opinion towards the tool. The discussion offers the current status of English speaking ability among Thai EFL students. This reveals the gaps between the EFL speaking ability and the CEFR 'can do' descriptors. In addition, the author raises the light on integration of the 21st century IT tool to enhance these students' speaking ability. Lastly, the theoretical implications and recommendation for further study in integrating electronic tools to promote language skills in the EFL context are offered for further research.

Keywords : EFL communication, EFL speaking, English communication, E-learning, E-portfolio, speaking ability, Thai EFL learners

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