ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT

EFFECTS OF PORTFOLIO IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT ON
CRITICAL READING AND LEARNER AUTONOMY OF ELT STUDENTS

NURCAN KÖSE

A Ph.D. DISSERTATION

Adana, 2006

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ÖZET

DOSYALAMA TEKNİĞİ UYGULAMASI VE DEĞERLENDİRMESİNİN İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜMÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖZERKLİĞİ VE ELEŞTİREL OKUMASI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Nurcan KÖSE

Doktora Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı

Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ

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Bu çalışmada dosyalama tekniği uygulamasının eleştirel okuma ve öğrenci özerkliği üzerindeki etkisini görmek için dosyalama tekniği değerlendirme sistemini iki İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümü hazırlık okuma sınıfında yürüttük. Çalışma aynı zamanda öğrencilerin uygulama sonucunda geçirdikleri değişikliklerle ilgili duygularını araştırmaya çalışıyor. Çalışma 2005-2006 döneminde Çukurova Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümünde okuyan 43 hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisiyle yürütüldü.

Çalışma boyunca yapılandırıcı bir yaklaşım benimsedik. Data toplama ve data analizinde doğal ve yorumlayıcı bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir. Data mulakat, focus group mülakatı, yazılı dökümanlar ve özerklik ve eleştirel okuma kontrol listesinden elde edildi.

Çalışmanın amacına ulaşmak için öğrencilerin çalışma öncesi eleştirel okuma hakkındaki düşünceleri ve çalışma sonrası düşünceleri ortaya çıkarıldı. Dosyalama tekniği uygulamasının öğrenci özerkliği üzerindeki etkilerini görebilmek için de özerkliği arttırıcı faaliyetler uyguladık ve data toplama araçları vasıtasıyla öğrencilerin özerklik gelişimi üzerinde yoğunlaşmaya çalıştık. Aynı zamanda öğrencilerin özerklik

ve eleştirel okuma hakkındaki düşünceleri ile control listesinde belirttikleri düşünceleri arasında bir karşılaştırma yaptık.

Çalışmanın sonuçları dosyalama tekniğinin eleştirel okumayı arttırdığı ve öğrenci özerkliğini geliştirdiği yönünde önemli anlamlar ortaya çıkardı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okuma Dosyalama Tekniği, Eleştirel Okuma, Öğrenci Özerkliği, Yapılandırıcılık.

ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF PORTFOLIO IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT ON CRITICAL READING AND LEARNER AUTONOMY OF ELT STUDENTS

Nurcan KÖSE

Ph. D. Dissertation, English Language Teaching Department

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ
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In this study we have implemented portfolio assessment system in two preparatory reading classess in the English Language Teaching department to see the effects of implementation on critical reading and learner autonomy of these students. The study also attempts to explore students' feelings of the change they underwent as a result of the implementation. The study was conducted with 43 preparatory class students studying at Çukurova University English Language Teaching Department in the academic year of 2005-2006.

During the study we adopted a constructivist approach. The data collection and data analysis was done via adopting a naturalistic/interpretative approach. Data were obtained from a set of interviews, a focus group interview, written documents, and the autonomy and critical reading checklist.

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the students' beliefs about critical reading were elicited at the beginning of the implementation and at the end of the implementation. To see the effects of portfolio implementation on learner autonomy we applied autonomy enhancing activities and through the data collection tools we tried to focus on the improvement in students regarding autonomy. Also, a comparison between their ideas about critical reading and autonomy in the checklist and their elicited beliefs was done.

It is suggested that the findings of the study may have siginificant implications for the use of portfolio to enhance critical reading and foster learner autonomy in preparatory reading classes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE AND CREDIBILITY

CHAPTER 5
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

—Joseph Addison

1.0 Background to the Study

Reading is something that is often taken for granted by literate people. However, when we try to define reading we may have difficulty in verbalizing it. Various researchers speak of reading in several ways. According to Walker (1996)

> reading is an active **process** (not a product, like history) in which readers shift between sources of information (what they know and what the text says), elaborate meaning and strategies, check their interpretation (revising when appropriate), and use the social context to focus their response (p .4).

The skill of reading is no longer regarded as a passive activitiy. The reader interacts with the text; tries to deduce his/her own meaning out of what s/he reads and while engaging with the text, s/he makes use of his/her background knowledge.

In Weaver's (1994, p.15) view, learning to read means learning to pronounce, learning to identify words, their meanings, and learning to bring meaning to a text in order to obtain value from it. That is to say, meaning changes from person to person. It depends on the social context the reader is in.

Similarly, Manzo and Manzo (1993) define reading as "the act of simultaneously reading the lines, reading between the lines, and reading beyond the lines." (p. 5). Reading the lines refers to the act of decoding and the act of pronouncing words; reading between the lines refers to the act of making inferences and understanding the

author's implied message; reading beyond the lines involves judging the importance of the author's message and using it in other areas in accordance with the learners' prior and background knowledge.

Vacca and Vacca (1996) offer the state of reading in a pictorial definition (Fig. 1.1). They divide the levels of comprehension into three as literal, interpretive, and applied. The literal stage is where the reader reads the lines to get information from the text. The interpretive stage is where the reader reads between the lines in order to put the information together, perceive the relationships, and make inferences. The last stage, named as applied, is where the reader looks beyond the lines so as to use the information to express his/her own ideas.

	Levels of Comprehension	
Getting information explicitly from the text	**Literal** ⟸⟹	Reading the lines
Putting together information, perceiving relationships, and making inferences	**Interpretive** ⟸⟹	Reading between the lines
Using information to express opinions and form new ideas	**Applied** ⟸⟹	Reading beyond the lines
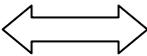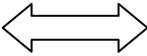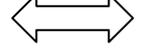
Figure 1.1 Pictorial Definition of Reading (Vacca and Vacca, 1996)

Concerning the above mentioned definitions of reading, our focus in this study will be mainly on reading between and beyond the lines. The reason for it becoming our main focus is that the rate of intellectual students in a country reflects the level of that country's development. Students who use gathered information to express opinions and form new ideas, namely students who use their metacognitive skills, are labelled as intellectuals. Research suggests that many students in higher education lack metacognitive skills (Baker, 1985). This is also the case in Turkey. High school students here are educated through rote knowledge. They are not accustomed to expressing their own opinions or initiating their own ideas. For instance, the University

Entrance Examination is basically a test of how much knowledge a student has been able to memorize in school. Thus, there is no more need to teach or emphasize critical thinking or critical reading in Turkish classrooms, and neither the higher order skills nor the metacognitive skills of the students are dealt with.

Emphasizing higher order skills is vital in learning as through these skills students can avoid rote learning and start to take responsibility for their own learning which leads to autonomy (Little, 1991). As this priority is not integrated into the Turkish education system, it makes Turkish learners "relentless rote learners, syllabus dependent, passive, and lacking initiative," which is regarded "as a surface approach to learning" (Biggs cited in Chanock, 2004, p.3).

However, to avoid the surface approach and to place emphasis on the application of learning, the idea of learning as well as teaching has changed its meaning throughout history, and most recently, it has become increasingly student-oriented. This move emphasizes the higher-order skills of the learner. Therefore, mainstream educators have been in search of new pedagogy and assessment tools that are closer to everyday life and replicate an authentic learning environment. At the same time, these approaches help unveil the autonomy hidden in the learner (McKenzie, Morgan, Cochrane, Watson, & Roberts, 2002).

One of the most helpful approaches that has gained popularity is the implementation of student portfolios (Graves, 1983; Tierney, Carter & Desai, 1991). A portfolio is an assessment tool as well as an integral part of the learning process itself. It is an approach that makes the learner feel that he/she has acquired a skill. More importantly, they gain a better understanding of knowing how to learn as well as being responsible, since it is the learner who is in the centre of the activity and has the power to assess his/her own work.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the use of portfolio implementation and portfolio assessment in teacher education programmes. For example, Dana and Tippins (in Avraamidou and Zembal-Saul, 2002) offered a type of portfolio for science teaching. Their aim was to establish a form "for self-reflection and evidence of the prospective teachers' thoughts and understandings of what it means to learn and teach

science to children" (p. 5). In their study, prospective teachers were asked to label a problematic area of science-specific pedagogy, and then to find evidence to solve the problem. These evidences were organised in teaching portfolios for further use. This was a way of encouraging prospective teachers to document knowledge and skills. At the same time, it improved reflection on professional growth.

Another study conducted by Wade and Yarbough (1996) documented how prospective teachers create personal meanings through portfolio development. Potential teachers created portfolios in order to collect documents about their learning and growth in a community service-learning project as part of a social studies methods course. In the study, the participants included a wide selection of materials in their portfolios, including artwork, cartoons, songs, poems, articles, cards, letters, photos, favourite quotes, and journal entries. Three data collection methods were used in this study: (1) prospective teachers' essays, (2) surveys, and (3) standardized, open-ended interviews. The results of their study indicated that many of the participants were aware of the personal meaning, satisfaction, and sense of accomplishment that resulted from creating their portfolios. The researchers of this study also claimed that the prospective teachers were making sense of this experience, realizing links to different aspects in their life and developing new understandings accordingly.

Stein (1999) found out that research is lacking in the field of teacher education concerning portfolios. He conducted a research on the development of professional teaching portfolios for the purpose of increasing student reflection and as a source of information for program improvement. Stein's study investigated the impact of implementing a portfolio assessment process on student reflection, student understanding of program goals, and using assessment information for the purpose of program review. The results of his study provided information about the processes of student reflection and growth in understanding that are cited as being important components of the portfolio process.

In some other studies, researchers found out that L2 students who were engaged in extensive reading over a period of time gained more abilities in skills like writing when compared to control groups who did not have much practice in extensive reading (Hafiz & Tudor, 1990; Tudor & Hafiz, 1989; Mason & Krashen, 1997). These studies are

examplifications for some of the benefits of portfolio implementation which is a way of making students read extensively.

Through these studies, we came to the conclusion that via portfolios students come to know their personal meaning, as well as gain a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. This discovery might lead them to initiate work and take responsibility for their own learning. We can also conclude that student reflection and growth in understanding are the key features that lead to learner autonomy.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

As stated before, students in Turkey are regarded as rote learners, who are passive, dependent to the syllabus and teacher, and who do not initiate their own works. Students are not taught to behave any other way. They are more focused on the products of their learning; that is, quizzes, tests, and grades rather than on the process of learning. As students are positioned into a university according to their grades, this is the supposed way to success. However, students should have a more important role in learning than simply memorizing and recalling information on tests. Advocates of process-oriented methods and instruction agree on the fact that traditional assessment techniques are often contradictory to contemporary ESL classroom practices. Standardized testing does not go hand in hand with process learning and has been discussed arduously not only in ESL, but all over the field of education (Moya and O'Malley, 1994). Therefore, ways of teaching and assessing the four basic skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, have been under investigation for many years (Holloway, 1999). In regard to these investigations, different approaches have been proposed.

Learning, as Daniels & Bizar (cited in Wilcox & Wojnar, 2000) state, is a process at all levels. In order to divert the focus from the product to the process of learning, performance assessment has been widely recommended. Many researchers have defined performance assessment in different ways. To illustrate, Brualdi (1998) states that "the performance based assessments represent a set of strategies …for the application of knowledge, skills, and work habits through the performance of tasks that are meaningful and engaging to students"(p. 1). Students are in need of monitoring and managing their own learning, and keeping track of it. When they are able to set their own goals, and

determine their level of achievement they will be able to redirect their attention as a result.

The U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) (1992) defines performance assessment as an approach used to monitor students' progress in alliance with previously organized learner outcomes. In this method of assessment, students are expected to create answers or products which show their knowledge or skills. Putting students in a position where they have to make their own meaning results in a deeper understanding of what they are doing. Similarly, Wangsatorntanakhum (1998) highlights that "performance assessment is a continuum of assessment formats which allows teachers to observe student behaviour ranging from simple responses to demonstrations to work collected over time." (Defining Performance Assessment, para. 4). Otherwise, teachers may not be aware of all the learning and understanding that takes place with their students.

Through performance assessment educators or teachers will be able to gain a dynamic view of their students' academic and linguistic development as well as knowledge. This can be done by adapting different measures to different contexts. Since performance tasks generally have more than one acceptable solution to different contexts, students are required to respond to a problem and then either develop it or defend it in a process. This process which requires the students' use of their higher order thinking skills (e.g., cause and effect analysis, deductive or inductive reasoning, experimentation, and problem solving) develops those skills without even the students being aware of it.

Mainstream educators pay interest to performance assessment since they agree upon the fact that single sit-down exams are not suitable to evaluate higher order skills or critical thinking skills that students should have acquired during their classes. To clarify, via impromptu tests, students' knowledge is evaluated within one to two hours for the whole semester, whereas performance assessment "is an exercise in which a student demonstrates specific skills and competencies in relation to a continuum of agreed upon standards of proficiency or excellence" (Pierce & O'Malley, 1992, performance assessment, para. 2).

There are various methods through which teachers can assess the performance of their students successfully (Office of Research, 1993). Some of them are:

- *Open ended or extended response exercises:* These are questions or other prompts that require students to explore a topic orally or in writing.

- *Extended tasks:* These are assignements that require sustained attention in a single work area and are carried out over several hours or longer.

- *Portfolios:* These are selected collections done by students over a long period of time.

An incompatibility between process learning and product assessment and a discrepancy between the information needed and the information derived as a result of standardized testing prompted educators to explore alternative ways of student assessment. (Moya and O'Malley, 1994).

Evidence from diverse sources has shown that portfolio implementation is cited as an alternative to standardized testing (Flood and Lapp, 1989; Jongsma, 1989; Şahinkarakaş, 1998; Valencia, 1990a; Valencia, 1990b; Wolf, 1989). The implementation along with portfolio assessment has been used widely in writing classes as well as literature classes at different developmental stages. Portfolio assessment is a kind of system that arose in contrast to sit-down examinations. Portfolio can be briefly defined as "a student's collection of data which shows the student's progress over time" (Şahinkarakaş, 1998, p.5). A broader definition is that of Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991), one of the best that reflects the procedure of portfolio:

> A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting content, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer, 1991, p.60).

As seen from the definitions, students gather the work that they have performed during the term in a file, called a portfolio. Their improvement is not evaluated according to a time constraint sit-down examination, but according to all their successes and gains that they experienced during the term. This process, that is preparing the portfolio and

evaluating it, is called *portfolio assessment.* This assessment type will be broadly discussed in Chapter 2.

This kind of process teaching and assessing has been used widely in many skills, and in spite of its minor disadvantages (which will be referred to in Chapter 2), it is regarded as a useful approach since it assesses not only the knowledge that students have gained during their classes, but also the higher order skills of them. Regarding process teaching, reading skills are the least touched upon. Yet, as reading is a highly complex mental activity it should be taught in process and assessed in process as well.

Students enrolling in universities in Turkey are expected to become a part of the academic environment by accessing to its discourse. Flowers and Mellon (1989, p. 8) define academic discourse in two phases: (1) "integrating information from sources with one's own knowledge and (2) interpreting one's reading/adapting one's writing for a purpose" These two practices include critical reading that involves questioning, looking for assumption and intentions, analysing, and synthesizing (Richardson in Rings, 1994).

However, as has been experienced by many university lecturers and the researcher herself, university students do not have the capabilities to meet these expectations. They are unable to read critically, which causes their being unaware of the author's major points and how these authors develop their text into a whole. As Thistlewait (1990) puts it they lack not only the ability, but also the interest in reading critically.

Students should not be held responsible for this shortcoming, since they practice what they have been taught. What is taught to students during their high school education is simply to answer the questions related to the facts given in the text. The purpose of reading, at least for university students, should not be to state the right information, but as Kirby (1986) puts it, to be able to talk about the mental debate that resulted from the reading. Hence, university students are expected to be not only critical thinkers but also critical readers.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is mainly twofold with some subaims. The first aim deals with critical reading whereas the second aim deals with autonomy. When reading skills are put into a hierarchy, critical reading is viewed as a 'higher order skill'. Therefore, as Rings (1994) claims, high school graduates are not fitted with instructions in critical reading since it is thought that they are unable to read critically until they have gained the 'lower order' skills.

The researcher believes that not much importance has been given to reading classes during highschool education in Turkey. As a part of the Turkish education system, students are given abundant types of tests and they do not confront any difficulties in comprehending them. The difficulties emerge when it comes to reading critically. Due to this fact, highschool graduates face a lot of problems during their first years in university. The researcher thinks that with the help of different strategies and approaches, students will be able to overcome these difficulties.

Secondly, again as a result of the education system in Turkey, courses are given in a teacher-centred atmosphere. This does not correspond with the students' growing as autonomous learners. Autonomy is a state where students are in charge of their own learning. They take the responsibility and are aware of the what, why, and how of their learning.

Briefly, this study has some specific purposes.
1. Revealing English Language Teaching students' critical reading skills through portfolio implementation.
2. Fostering these students' autonomy through portfolio implementation
3. Using an appropriate checklist to assess critical reading and learner autonomy

1.3 Research Questions of the Study

Considering the above mentioned purposes, we generated some research questions for this study:

1. What kind of attitudes and language skills do students gain through reflection in Reading Portfolio Implementation?
   a. By use of Reflection Shets
   b. By use of Cover Letters
2. Have students observed in themselves any changes at the end of the implementation?
3. Have learners perceived an improvement in their reading towards becoming critical readers?
   a. If "yes", how did this manifest itself?
   b. To what extent was this due to the implementation?
4. Does the Reading Portfolio Implementation enhance autonomy in terms of
   - Learner awareness
   - Subject matter awareness
   - Learning process awareness
   - Social awareness

1.4 Assumptions and Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. The first one is that individual variables such as age, sex, and socio-economic factors of the students have not been taken into consideration. Yet, as the students enter the same university exam and as they take the same language proficiency exam, it can be assumed that they will perform similarly.

Another limitation is that the study focuses on only two preparatory classes at Çukurova University whereas there have been five classes during the study and the study was conducted with only one teacher, the researcher herself.

A third limitation is the period of the implementation. Since it is the process that is significant in this study some more time would have been appropriate to find results that reflected greater accuracy.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Constructivism: Constructivism refers to the concept that students create their own knowledge within the context of their own experiences (Fosnot, 1996). Students learn by being actively engaged in doing authentic tasks, not by passively receiving knowledge. Personal knowledge is socially constructed within an active and collaborative learning environment.

Action Research: Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Thus, there is a dual commitment in action research to study a system and concurrently collaborate with members of the system in changing it in what is together regarded as, a desirable direction. Accomplishing this twin goal requires the active collaboration of researcher and student, and thus it stresses the importance of co-learning as a primary aspect of the research process.

Alternative Assessment: Alternative assessment is distinguished from traditional assessment in that it does not involve fact-based, multiple-choice testing, but involves on-going active student production of evidence of learning. Alternative assessment goes beyond the testing of facts and small procedures, calling for assessing complex knowledge and demonstrated capabilities that represent a "rich array of a student's abilities" (Bennett and Hawkins, 1993).

Performance Assessment: Performance assessment requires students to perform, demonstrate, construct, or develop a product or a solution according to a defined standard of achievement. The "Education Reform Study on Assessment of Student Performance" includes alternative and authentic assessment under the heading of performance assessment (U.S. Department of Education, 1997a).

Portfolio: A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting content, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer, 1991)

Reading Logs: These logs record students' written responses or reactions to the books, stories, or poems they read. They indicate students' appreciation of what they read and encourage them to think critically.

Reflection Sheets: These sheets are the reactions of the students as a result of the activities they are required to do.

Cover Letter: The cover letter is evidence of what students have learned and how they have progressed. The Cover Letter consists of two parts. One of them is 'About the author'. In this part students are supposed to write a brief autobiography. The second part is "What my portfolio shows about my progress as a learner". In this part students are supposed to write about their progress if any.

Critical Reading: Critical reading is closely related to increased interest in, and stress on, the cluster of intellectual modes variously called higher-order thinking skills, processing, reasoning, problem solving or critical thinking.

Harris and Hodges (1981) define critical reading as the process of making judgments in reading: "evaluating relevancy and adequacy of what is read." According to Thistlethwaite (1990, p. 587) "in critical reading, readers evaluate what they have read and make a decision. This decision may be to accept what the writer has said, to disagree with it or to realise that additional information is necessary before an informed judgment can be made."

Higher Order Skills: A term for skills that involve metacognitive processes through which an individual applies specific and broad knowledge to evaluate, create, plan, organize, communicate, interrelate, solve problems, and effectively perform tasks (Ball, 1998)

Lower Order Skills: According to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Bloom and Krathwohl, 1956), lower order skills would include applying, understanding, and remembering.

Prior Knowledge: The sum total of what the individual knows at any given point. Prior knowledge includes knowledge of content as well as knowledge of specific strategies and metacognitive knowledge (Knuth and Jones, 1991)

Metacognitive Awareness: The process of thinking about and regulating one's own learning. Examples of metacognitive activities include assessing what one already knows about a given topic before reading, assessing the nature of the learning task, planning specific reading/thinking strategies, determining what needs to be learned, assessing what is or is not comprehended during reading, thinking about what is important and unimportant, evaluating the effectiveness of the reading/thinking strategy, revising what is known, and revising the strategy. Metacognitive awareness is based upon four issues in this study: Learner, Subject matter, Learning process, and Social awareness.

Learner Autonomy: There is a broad agreement in the theoretical literature that learner autonomy grows out of the individual learner's acceptance of responsibility for his or her own learning (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). This means that learner autonomy is a matter of explicit or conscious intention: we cannot accept responsibility for our own learning unless we have some idea of what, why, and how we are trying to learn.

The learner must take at least some of the initiatives that give shape and direction to the learning process, and must share in monitoring progress and evaluating the extent to which learning targets are achieved. The pedagogical justification for wanting to foster the development of learner autonomy rests on the claim that in formal educational contexts, reflectivity and self-awareness produce better learning.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Recent educational theories have come to the common point that learning is a meaningful process: the onus of learning is the student, not the teacher. Students are responsible for themselves; it is their duty to make sense of the world and construct their reality. The teacher's role is only to assist them with this construction.

This shift from an objectivist tradition to accepting a more constructivist framework is not easy. However, to adhere to the shift of learning from teacher to student given above and to the framework of constructivism, this change is necessary.

In this chapter, we review the relevant literature to shed light upon the theoretical framework of this study. Our purpose is to give background information about the concepts of reading, portfolio implementation, portfolio assessment, learner autonomy, and critical reading within the frame of constructivism. Therefore, in this study the theoretical framework of reading portfolios will be based on Kelly's Personal Construct Theory and Schema Theory.

2.1 Constructivism

Piaget is the pioneer from whom contemporary constructivist approaches are derived. Children's direct experience and how they interacted with the environment in order to pass the different stages was emphasized in the early constructivist views. These views are no more supported by recent constructivists, yet they still claim that learning is constructed by an interaction of the individual with a rich learning environment. The following paragraphs outline the epistemological and pedagogical approaches related to contemporary constructivism.

Epistemology

In the history of epistemology, the trend has been to move from a static, passive view of knowledge towards a more adaptive and active view (Heylighen, 1993). Epistemology can be defined as an approach dealing with the theories about the nature of knowledge. It can be represented with the figure below (taken from Reeves, 1997) by showing objectivism at one end of the continuum and constructivism at the other end of the continuum:

Epistemology

Objectivism ←——————————————————→ Constructivism
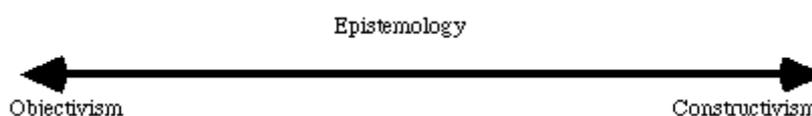
Figure 2.1 Epistemological Continuum (Reeves, 1997)

Objectivism stems from the work of Thorndike (1913) and takes up the belief that knowledge is distinct from knowing and that learning consists of acquiring truth which can be measured with experiments. In contrary, constructivism espouses that knowledge is within the bodies and minds of human beings. It does not have an existence on its own. Individuals construct the knowledge and this construction is based upon their prior knowledge, their experience, their reflection, or their schemata. It cannot be, as it is stated in the objectivist view, measured and evaluated but rather observed and found out through communication of any way. The approach that we take in this dissertation could be placed near the end of the constructivism approach in the above continuum.

Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the art or science of teaching and learning. In literature there is a clear distinction between instructivist and constructivist approach to teaching and learning (Duffy and Jonassen, 1992; Papert, 1993; Rieber, 1992)

Pedagogical Philosophy

Instructivist ←——————————————————→ Constructivist
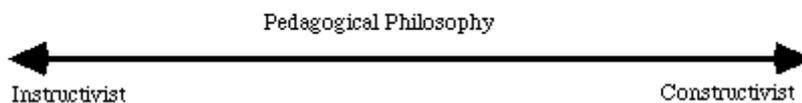
Figure 2.2 Pedagogical philosophy continuum (Reeves, 1997)

Goals and objectives that exist apart from the learner are given more importance by the instructivists. These goals and objectives drawn from a domain of knowledge are

portrayed and sequenced into learning hierarchies from lower to higher order learning. After this portrayal direct instruction is used to adddress each hierarchy by employing instructional strategies which stem from behavioral psychology. In behavioral psychology, not much emphasis is put on the individual needs of the learner. The learner is regarded as an empty vessel to be filled in.

As mentioned before, constructivism is in favour of the idea that knowledge is constructed, rather than passed on, by somebody else. Constructivist view takes into consideration learners' intentions, experience, and metacognitive strategies (Reeves, 1997). Learners who bring their ideas, feelings, and beliefs with them are given the opportunity to relate these to new information and reconstruct their existing knowledge. According to Jonassen (1997), constructivist models of pedagogy aim to create a rich environment for the learners where they have the opportunity to engage in interpreting the world and reflecting upon their own interpretations. Jonassen also suggests that if learners are led to build their own interpretation, they will have more ownership over their thoughts.

Duffy & Bednar (1991) suggest the following classroom practices which provide appropriate learning experiences for construction of meaning to occur:

1. The emphasis should be on reflective thinking and productivity in order for the students to be able to perform relevant tasks. This approach takes into account that students perform tasks in different ways and may acquire different skills.

2. Learning contexts should be rich in authentic activities allowing learners to work collaboratively and explore alternative perspectives and ideas.

3. Students should have the opportunity to work with "domain experts" who provide a model for the skills that the learners acquire.

To conclude, in order for an appropriate learning environment to happen, reflective thinking and productivity, collaborative learning through authentic activities, and the opportunity to ask field experts, whenever necessary, should be maintained.

2.1.1 Personal Construct Psychology

"Kelly (1955) published his theory as a potential alternative to both the dominant behaviorism and the various psychoanalytical theories of the time" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992, p.56). "….for Kelly, the person acts not in accordance with the way the world actually is but according to his or her 'construction' of it." (Ashworth, 2000, p.70). Kelly was trying to view persons as *acting as informal scientists* "who view the world by way of categories of interpretation ('constructs') which are open to modification in the light of experience." (Ashworth, 2000).

"For Kelly, learning is the active, creative, rational, emotional, intentional and pragmatic construction of reality" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992, p.58). People have their own constructions and by learning new things, adding new information to their old ones, they come up with their own construction of reality.

The theory which encapsulates Kelly's personal constructs is based on a fundamental postulate and eleven corollaries which elaborate on it:

Fundamental Postulate: *A person's processes are psychologically channellised by the way in which he anticipates events.* In his fundamental postulate Kelly implies that each person has his own reality and he interprets this reality in his/her own way. Zuber-Skerritt (1992) interprets the postulate in this way:

> (the fundamental postulate) states that people's behaviour in the present
> is determined by the way they anticipate events in the future through the
> use of personal constructs in order to forecast events (theory building) or
> to evaluate previous forecasts and their validity or efficiency (theory
> testing) (p.58)

After a thorough research of Kelly's fundamental postulate and its corollaries we can clearly state that they are relevant to the research on critical reading through portfolio implementation and assessment since portfolio implementation changes the individuals' perception of reading. Through the process that individuals undergo with portfolio implementation their point of view of reading is changed.

It can also be stated that in order to foster autonomy in learners, constructivism can be taken as a base because the road to autonomy goes through how people anticipate the events around them. It depends on how they regard the tasks given and to what extent and how they take the responsibility of fulfilling these tasks, and how they act accordingly.

Zuber-Skerritt (1992) summarised Kelly's fundamental postulate and its corollaries (1992) as follows:

> Kelly's fundamental postulate and his corollaries give a picture of the person/learner as a 'personal scientist', with a hierarchical construction system (Organization Corollary) which is personally unique (Individuality Corollary) and which can be explored by him/herself as well as by others (Sociality Corollary). Apart from their individuality, a group of people may be similar in terms of their construction of experience (Commonality Corollary). The development of intelligence or conceptual change depends on the permeability, i.e. the degree of openness for change, of a person's constructs (Modulation Corollary) and the balance between hierarchical integration and consistency of differing constructs on the one hand and their differentiation and inconsistency (Fragmentation Corollary) on the other. Finally, a person is not predetermined in his/her thinking, but can choose alternatives (Choice Corollary). His/her construing is both cognitive and emotional; the personal construct system is a holistic entity. If any part within the system is changed, this change will have implications for other parts of the total system. (p.58)

2.1.2 Constructivist Perspectives in Reading

In the 1970s, American researchers who studied discourse comprehension began to cite a work done by Bartlett earlier in the century. He had studied the reading of text yet, his work was neglected due to the preoccupation with behaviourism. In this study, Bartlett asked his subjects to read connected texts and after some time invited them to write the

recalls of what they had read. Analysing the recalls he found out that the subjects deviated from the original forms of what they had read and made some modifications. Bartlett explained these transformations through a constructivist approach. He claimed that his subjects were trying to do constructive processing where they related the new information with their existing knowledge (Spivey, 1998).

Spivey (1998) in her article asserted that "Constructivism portrays the reader as actively building a mental representation by combining new information from the text with previously acquired knowledge" (p. 3). Readers construct meaning of what they read by mixing their prior knowledge with the new knowledge they come across in the text.

2.2 Reading Comprehension

During the last two decades more importance has been given to the process of reading and due to this emphasis there has been a shift in understanding and describing this process. There was a traditional notion that readers were passive observers of writers, meaning was planted in the text and the readers had to find out what the words on the pages conveyed (Arieta, 2001). Research done by Goodman (1967) changed the way in which we understand reading. He brought forward the inclination that reading is an actual process of perception and identification and described it as a "psycholinguistic guessing game". He advanced that readers must have prior knowledge before reading any text and that this enables them to gather the important fragments out of the text so as to reconstruct it. With such importance given and the research done, this assumption has changed skills like reading and listening, that were defined as passive, and transferred them into skills that need interactive participation. To arrive at a good comprehension the background knowledge of the reader/listener interacts with the given input. Reading alone does not provide the reader with directions for how to formulate a meaning from the text. Comprehending the whole text, sentences, and each word requires the ability to relate the material to one's own knowledge.

Maria (1990) defines reading comprehension as

> the holistic process of constructing meaning from written text
> through the interaction of (1) the knowledge the reader brings to
> the text, i.e., word recognition ability, world knowledge, and

knowledge of linguistic conventions; (2) the reader's interpretation
of the language that the writer used in constructing the text; and (3)
the situation in which the text is read (p. 14-15).

The emphasis on any one of these three ideas results in the emergence of different models of reading. These models will be explained in the following section.

2.2.1 Development of Research on Reading

"The comprehension revolution" was a buzz word in the 1980s. David Pearson, when referring to that word, was actually talking about the movement from behaviourism to cognitive psychology. At that time traditional views of reading changed and became more cognitive oriented (Knuth &Jones, 1991).

In order to be able to follow the steps of the movement it would be appropriate to have a look at the old and new definitions of reading developed in the guide to curriculum planning.

Table 2.1 Old and New Definitions of Reading

	Traditional Views	**New Definition of Reading**
Research Base	Behaviorism	Cognitive sciences
Goals of Reading	Mastery of isolated facts and skills	Constructing meaning and self-regulated learning
Reading as Process	Mechanically decoding words; memorizing by rote	An interaction among the reader, the text, and the context
Learner Role/Metaphor	Passive; vessel receiving knowledge from external sources	Active; strategic reader, good strategy user, cognitive apprentice.

(Knuth &Jones, 1991).

As can be seen from the table above, the change in the research base is also the goal of reading, as well as the process and learner role. As a result, reading became a cognitive science where the goal is to construct meaning and self-regulated learning, where the reading process is an interaction among the reader, the text and the context, and where

the role of the learner is an active, strategic, good strategy user, and cognitive apprentice.

2.2.2 Models of Reading

All human beings possess rules or scripts that they use to interpret the ongoing in the world. In extracting meaning out of these ongoings, they make use of their social, cultural, and linguistic knowledge. Yet, how the meaning is elicited has been a focus of attention, since the process of extracting meaning gives us valuable knowledge about the reader's cognitive process while reading. Aebersold and Field (cited in Salatacı and Akyel, 2002) state that during the reading process, input is received and stimulates multiple learning processes. Thus, readers might use two different strategies to decode the text. They either start by decoding information at the sentence level, using bottom-up strategy, or they process information that each sentence gives them, using up-down strategies. Nunan (1991) implies that "in comprehending a given piece of language, we use what sociologists call interpretive procedures for achieving a match between our schematic knowledge and the language which is encoded systematically" (p. 68). Thus, we come across two different concepts: systemic knowledge refers to our linguistic knowledge from the point of view of phonetics, syntax, semantics, and discourse, whereas semantic knowledge includes our knowledge of the world. The latter one is stored in our brain, and it helps us to interpret the new information we encounter in the text. Widdowson (1990) determines that schematic knowledge is socially acquired, while systemic knowledge is constituted by the formal properties of a language. In the following section, the three main models – psycholinguistics, schema theoretic and interactive will be examined in detail. Yet, before concentrating on these main models we must briefly look at the early models, so as to recognize the ongoing process and the changes it has undergone with time.

2.2.2.1 Early Models

There are two outstanding models of reading –encoding model and decoding model. These models show how a reader derives knowledge or information from a printed text and what the assumptions might be when a reader approaches a text.

a) Decoding Model

The Decoding Model is constituted of two basic levels: sensation and perception. The sensation level exists of the movements of the eye when they focus on particular marks. As Plastina (1997) explains "eye movements progress in a series of alternating pauses (fixations) and quick sidewise movements (saccadic movements)." Speed, she continues, is slowed down by the continuous stop which interferes with perception, the combination of seeing, and recognizing meaning.

b) Encoding Model

Differences between writer intention and reader comprehension can be mostly seen when the reader and writer have different background knowledge, that is, when they have different life experiences. Readers sometimes interpret the meaning of a given text very differently from what the writer actually intends to give them. The process works in the way that the good reader comprehends the writer's original meaning by matching his/her background knowledge and his/her life experience to the writer's experience as well as by recognizing syntactic patterns. Although this process takes reading comprehension a step further, it still has some drawbacks, one of which is that not all meaning lies within the text.

2.2.2.2 The Main Models of the Reading Process

There are three main models of the reading process: the psycho-linguistic model, schema theory, and the interactive-compensatory model. Before dealing with critical reading these will be discussed in detail:

a) The Psycho-linguistic Model

Goodman (cited in Paran, 1996) claims that readers do not read every word, but sample the text, make hypotheses about the next word to be encountered, then sample the text again to confirm their predictions, and so forth. This is Goodman's classic view of reading as a 'psycho-linguistic guessing game'. This important perspective has been derived from Goodman's and Smith's reading research, shedding a new light on the process of reading. As Plastina (1997) states, both Goodman and Smith describe reading as a psycho-linguistic process, but while Smith's work essentially deals with a description of the linguistic and cognitive processes which need to be considered,

Goodman elaborates a model of reading, the previously mentioned 'psycho-linguistic guessing game'. The only main commonality in Smith's and Goodman's approaches is that they both view reading as a unitary and selective process. Its unitarity is due to the fact that it cannot be divided into further sub skills. There are two basic concepts – prediction and decoding- that might deepen our insight into this process. When the reader comes across a text, he interprets a selection of cues through the way of predicting, sampling, or operating. In this way, the reader confirms or corrects his guesses. With the help of prior knowledge, the reader interprets the meaning of the unknown or new elements that he encounters within a text. Decoding however, as stated previously, refers to the process where graphemic/phonemic input is transmitted into meaningful knowledge.

b) Schema Theory

Anderson, a respected educational psychologist developed Schemata theory. Regarding this learning theory, organised knowledge is viewed as a complex system of abstract mental structures which symbolizes one's understanding of the world. Actually, the term schema was first used by Piaget in 1926 and further expanded by Anderson so; it is not a very recent concept.

Human beings have the ability to interpret the world according to the rules and scripts they possess. As Widmayer (n.d) confirms "new information is processed according to how it fits into these rules, called schemata" (p.1). We not only interpret information with this schema, but also predict the everyday situations that constitute our life. Information which we cannot place in any of these rules or scripts is not easily comprehended or may be comprehended incorrectly. That is the reason why readers have difficulty in interpreting or comprehending unfamiliar subjects or texts. Alptekin (1993) states that "familiarity with dictionary definition of the lexical items and knowledge of the sentence structures in a text do not seem to be enough for learners to comprehend new information" (p.137). In Plastina (1997), Carell and Eisterhold state that "much of the meaning understood from a text is really not actually in the text, per se, but in the reader, in the background or schematic knowledge of the reader." Briefly, to fully comprehend a text a reader should have prior knowledge about the subject or at least there might be a familiarity with the text.

The psychologist Bartlett (1932) first introduced the term schema and claimed that schemata are an active organization of past reactions or past experiences. Hence, to be able to understand the changes reading comprehension underwent, we need to have an understanding of the theories lying behind it. Gunning (1996) defines a schema as the organized knowledge that one already has about people, places, things, and events. Kitao (1990) says that schema theory involves an interaction between the reader's own knowledge and the text, which results in comprehension. Stott (2001) introduces schema theory as describing "the process by which readers combine their own background knowledge with the information in a text to comprehend that text", and he adds that "all readers carry different schemata (background information) and these are also often culture-specific" (Helping ESL students, para. 1).

All the research done on schema theory comes to the point that readers have to activate their prior knowledge (background knowledge) to be able to interpret, comprehend, and use the new information given to them in any context. The missing point is how readers activate their schemata. Plastina (1997) clarifies this point by introducing two ways of activating schemata:

1. The reader receives the new information cognitively and relates it to his background knowledge "through retrieval or remembering." The new information is assimilated into the existing schemata where it can be changed or expanded according to the readers' life experience.
2. The reader may build a new knowledge with new schemata.

In both types, the reader takes pieces of information and tries to create sensible things that he can make use of later on. From these, says Plastina (1997), we can draw the conclusion that flexibility and creativity are two outstanding features of schemata.

 The belief on which schema theory is based is that whatever we comprehend, at the same time it involves our knowledge of the world. According to Anderson (1977, pp. 418-419) schemata have five significant characteristics to be based upon:

- Schemata are always organized meaningfully, can be added to, and, as an individual gains experience, develop to include more variables and more specificity.
- Each schema is embedded in other schemata and itself contains a subschema.
- Schemata change moment by moment as information is received.
- They may also be reorganized when incoming data reveals a need to restructure the concept.
- The mental representations, used during perception and comprehension, and which evolve as a result of these processes, combine to form a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts.

Two types of schemata are distinguished:
1. Formal Schemata
2. Content Schemata

Formal schemata incorporates background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical, organizational structures of different types of texts-here readers are said to possess background knowledge about or expectations of such factors in texts as genre, structure, audience, purpose.

Content Schemata deal with a text's knowledge content. Content schemata incorporates background knowledge and the content or subject matter of a text.

c) The Interactive-Compensatory Model

Recent researchers are still not satisfied with the process of reading comprehension. They have started to view reading comprehension as combining bottom-up process and top-down process simultaneously, which is called interactive processing. It is also claimed that these two processes influence each other. The pioneer of this model Stanovich clarifies this point by saying that

a compensatory interactive model of processing hypothesizes that

a pattern is synthesized based on information provided

simultaneously from all knowledge sources and that a process at

any one level can compensate for all deficiencies at any other level

(in Palastina, 1997).

Stanovich's Interactive Compensatory Model of the reading process is more widely accepted than Goodman's model, because Stanovich states that reading includes interaction with the text. He adds that when bottom-up processing does not work, top-down processing can interfere simultaneously or vice versa.

It has been seen that the reading comprehension development cannot be based on only one model. There are many factors that interfere with the reader's comprehension or interpretation of a text. When readers meet a new set of information as part of their evolving systemic knowledge they at the same time get involved in the culture of that piece of information. Therefore, to part systemic knowledge from schemata knowledge is a process that should be avoided.

2.3 Critical Reading and Learner Autonomy

2.3.1 Critical Reading

If students care to get the most out of the materials they are assigned, they have to learn to read critically or analytically. To be able to do these, they have to classify a debate into its basic parts, revise its major stages and turns, judge on its strengths, weaknesses, evaluate its reliability, and understand its empirical, moral, theoretical implications.

Critical reading according to Harris and Hodges (1981) is the process of making judgments in reading, in other words, criticizing the relevancy and adequacy of what is read. Similarly, Thistlewhaite (1990, p.587) states that

> in critical reading, readers evaluate what they have read and make
> a decision. This decision may be to accept what the writer has said,
> to disagree with it or to realise that additional information is
> necessary before an informed judgment can be made.

The idea here is that when we read something, the purpose is to try to understand what the aıuthor's intention is, if there is a problem posted, then identifying what that problem is, and how the problem can be solved.

When dealing with critical reading, we encounter two layers of reality: one that we can see and one that we cannot see. People, when decoding the text, see one of the layers

yet, they are oppressed by another invisible layer. Therefore, the purpose of reading is to make the invisible layer, the underlying meaning, visible and clear. This can be done with the help of using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy:
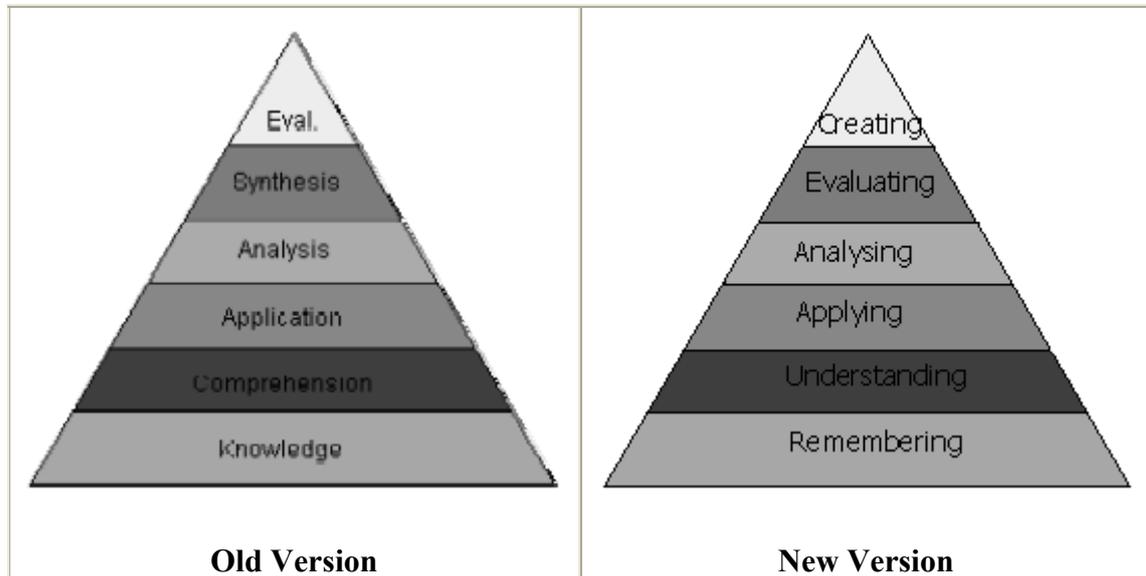
Figure 2.3 Old and New Version of Bloom's Taxonomy

Source: http://web.odu.edu/educ/llschult/blooms_taxonomy.htm

The reason for displaying both the old and the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy is to show how a more temporary thinking was reflected. In Bloom's original taxonomy the six categories were nouns whereas Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) changed these into verbs to show that thinking is an active process.

Tankersley (2005) explains the six revised categories in relation to reading skills:

Remembering is the category used for "shallow processing". Shallow processing refers to finding out factual answers, recalling, or recognition. In the reading skills this is known as finding out the answers to factual questions or recalling the text.

Understanding, the second category, reflects the act of translating, planning, or interpreting. When it comes to the relation with reading, it includes summarizing the text, classifying, or explaining the text.

Applying is defined as knowing when to apply acquired skills and why. At the same time it is the ability of applying known patterns to unknown situation. In reading skills it is the ability to apply, choose, dramatize, explain, or generalize the text.

Analyzing is the category where the text is broken into parts and where comparison can be made between the text and the backgorund knowledge of the reader. The following verbs apply to analyzing activities: analyze, categorize, classify, differentiate, distinguish, etc.

Evaluating, was placed at the top of the old version of Bloom's taxonomy as "Evaluation". However, in the revised version it is put into the fifth category " to reflect their idea that creative thinking (design) is more complex than critical thinking (evaluation)" (Tankersley, 2005, p. 2). In this category, students are expected to differentiate between essential knowledge and knowledge that is only interesting. As a result of this they will be able to evaluate necessary information.

Creating, the last category, also renamed and changed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2005), was named as Creating and it was upgraded into level six. Synthesizing means linking new information with the already existing prior knowledge and creating a new product of any kind.

In this study we regarded a critical reader as a person, who is able to deal with the higher order skills-applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating- as well as with the lower order skills namely understanding and remebering.

2.3.2 Learner Autonomy

As was stated in section 1.1 students' taking the responsibility of their own learning is not given importance in the Turkish education system. Therefore, higher order skills should be emphasized. In this section, we explore the notion of learner autonomy and why it might be problematic for many learners. At the same time, this section aims at revealing how autonomy can be fostered and ways of measuring learner autonomy.

2.3.2.1 Defining Learner Autonomy

Learner Autonomy has been defined in different ways by different researchers in different cotexts. Different words and phrases are associated with the term learner autonomy such as learner independence, independent learning, lifelong learning, or learning to learn.

Generally speaking it is the act of taking responsibility of one's own learning.

The ability to take charge of one's own learning means "to have and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:"

- determining the objectives;

- defining the contents and progressions;

- selecting methods and techniques to be used;

- monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);

- evaluating what has been acquired. (Little, 1995, p.7)

Learner Autonomy is a kind of concept that cannot be easily defined since it comes from various sources and leads to different implications. Before considering some of the most well known definitions in present literature, it would be wise to look at some concepts of autonomy. In Little's (1991) words autonomy is replacable neither by self-instruction nor by something that teachers do to their learners. He adds that autonomy is not "a single easily described behaviour" (p. 3-4) since it can appear in various ways.

Holec conveys that "autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (1981, p. 3). Accepted as one of the most familiar definitions, it describes one of the central aspects of the phenomenon. Similarly, Little (1991) describes autonomy as a "capacity for self-direction" which he adds, "is exercised in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of learning activities, and necessarily embraces both the content and the process of learning" (p. 4). As can be seen he includes metacognitive strategies – planning, monitoring, and evaluation- which are a must in an autonomous learning process. In their definitions of autonomy, both Holec (1981) and Little (1991) do not include the external factors in the autonomous learning process.

Dickinson (1987) takes the same path and claims that "an autonomous learner is one who is totally responsible for making and implementing all of the decisions concerned with his own learning" (p. 9). His view is also debatable since it is hard to expect every learner to implement his/her decisions regarding their learning process. However, as Menezes de Oliveira e Paiva (….) puts it, "it seems that both Little's and Dickinson's definitions can apply to the highest degree of autonomy, the one which enables the learner to choose what to learn, how and when, without the constraints of any formal educational context" (Defining Autonomy, para. 4).

Candy (1989) draws attention to another aspect of autonomy: the risk that formal education can impact onto the learners' freedom in making their own choices. He concludes that "autonomy is an innate capacity of the individual which may be suppressed or distorted by institutional education" (p. 101). It is accepted that autonomy is an innate activity. Therefore, the education system that the students are a part of has a vital role in their becoming autonomous learners. It depends upon the education whether or not the students will be suppressed by it.

For Littlewood (1996) motivation and confidence constitute willingness, whereas knowledge and skills are the bases for ability (p. 431), which can be understood from his following definition:

> We can define an autonomous person as one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions. This capacity depends on two main components: ability and willingness. Thus, a person may have the ability to make independent choices but feel no willingness to do so (e.g. because such behaviour is not perceived as appropriate to his or her role in a particular situation). Conversely, a person may be willing to exercise independent choices but not have the ability to do so (p. 428).

When it comes to types of autonomy, Littlewood declares three types of autonomy: autonomy as a communicator (learners who use the language creatively with appropriate communicative strategies), as a learner (learners who engage in independent learning using appropriate learning strategies), and as a person (learners who express personal meanings and create personal learning contexts). Yet, recently only the second

type is focused on. To illustrate, for Coterall (1995) autonomy is "the extent which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactics for taking control of their learning" (p. 195).

Similarly, although certifying that "learner autonomy is a problematic term because it is widely confused with self-instruction", Little states that

> there is broad agreement that autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning programme, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness (cf. Holec 1981, Little 1991). In other words, there is a consensus that the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and in interaction with others (2003, Definitions, para. 2).

All the definitions of learner autonomy have a common point: they refer to a concept that learners are involved in their own learning process. Through this involvement they clearly connect their beliefs, ideas, and thoughts with the world outside the classroom. In the case of language learning, it is to be able to use the target language apart from the classroom or their learning environment. In this way, learning becomes more than a way of rote memorization and it continues even after the education finishes during their lifelong learning. To improve the language learning, researchers (Little, 1991; Dam, 2000) believe that students should have control over the goals and content of the learning they are involved in. Students with a high metacognitive awareness, which is a must in fostering learner autonomy, have the ability to address their weaker points easily and can also take precautions accordingly in a more successful way.

No learner can be said to be completely autonomous or completely dependent. Therefore, we can portray learner autonomy across a continuum. At one end of the continuum we have dependent learners who do not have the opportunity to develop learner independence. On the other end we have the learners who have all the subskills such as, self-directedness or self-motivation, needed for autonomy. Research states that most of the students are somewhere between the continuum. Learners place themselves

within the continuum according to the studies they seek (Benson and Voller, 1997; Sinclair, 2000).

Above we stated that learners who can be defined as autonomous have mastered the subskills needed for learner autonomy. These subskills can be outlined in the following table (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Dependent and Autonomous Learners

Dependent Learners	Autonomous Learners
- rely heavily on the teacher - cannot make decisions about their learning - do not know their own strengths and weaknesses - do not connect classroom learning with the real world - think that the teacher is wholly responsible for their learning - do not possess metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness - are not able to plan their learning - need extrinsic motivators such as grades or rewards - do not reflect on how well they are learning and the reasons - are not able to assess their learning	- are self-reliant - can make informed decisions about their learning - are aware of their strengths and weaknesses - are able to transfer classroom learning with the real world - take responsibility for their own learning - possess metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness - plan their learning and set goals - are intrinsically motivated by making progress - often reflect on the learning process and their own progress - possess the ability to self-assess

Adapted from Mynard and Sorflaten (2003)

In the right hand column of Table 2.2 we can see the sub skills autonomous learners are expected to accomplish whereas on the left hand column we see the sub skills that dependent learners demonstrate.

In order to foster autonomy in students it is clearly seen that a sense of responsibility should be developed. At the same time students need to be encouraged to take an active role in making decisions about their own learning and improvement. Student autonomy

will grow as a result of their questioning the "Why, What, and How of their learning" (Little, 2004).

According to Ellis (1999) and Sinclair (1999), learners, who are expected to give informed decisions about their learning, need to have developed an awareness of at least four important areas of metacognition:

1. Learner Awareness
2. Subject Matter Awareness of the target language
3. Learning Process Awareness
4. Social Awareness

Learner awareness refers to learners being aware of themselves as learners mainly in terms of attitudes, beliefs, motivation, needs, and learning styles.

Subject matter awareness refers to learner awareness of the language as a system.

Learning process awareness refers to self-assessment, goal setting, monitoring progress, evaluating activities and organising time and resources (metacognitive strategies).

Social awareness refers to learner awareness of the presence of others in the classroom and their willingness to cooperate through interaction and collaboration.

In this study we will utilize Ellis (1999) and Sinclair's (1999) types of awareness. We will base the items that constitute our critical reading and autonomy checklist on the four types of awareness used by Ellis (1999) and Sinclair (1999). Through these items we aim to find out student level of awareness in terms of their attitudes, beliefs, and motivation; their awareness of the language as a system; their awareness of the metacognitive strategies; and their awareness of the presence of others in the classroom.

Developing learner Responsibility

According to Scharle and Szabo (2000, p. 4), "success in learning very much depends on learners having a responsible attitude." They continue by stating that autonomy or responsibility can be seen as aspects that students have in themselves in various degrees. Scharle and Szabo (2000, p. 7-8) identified four attitudes and skills as "building blocks of responsibility and autonomy". These are:

Motivation and self-confidence: "Motivation is a prerequisite for learning and responsibility development alike." Yet, this motivation should be developed intrinsically. Intrinsical motivation makes the learner more willing to take the responsibility. When it comes to self-confidence, the learner must believe that he has the capacity to manage his learning and they should be able to rely on themselves not only on the teacher.

Monitoring and evaluation: Scharle and Szabo (2000) state that when teachers encourage students to focus on their process rather than on the product of their learning they will make them examine the contribution to their learning consciously. This, they add, is the first step towards the development of responsible attitude. Self-evaluation, takes the students a step further because when evaluating themselves they have to take the role of the teacher and be as objective as possible. This way they can get an idea of their level of proficiency, detect their weaknesses and strengths.

Learning strategies: Teachers are responsible for showing students a variety of learning strategies. These strategies serve as tools that improve ones competence. Yet, if students are not aware of them they cannot be held responsible for them.

Cooperation and group cohesion: Cooperation should be encouraged in classrooms because through cooperation students see the importance of relying on each other. Through pair and group work students will be actively involved in completing a task.

While creating and analysing the first part of our checklist we took these building blocks into consideration. Yet, since one cannot expect to become responsible in one day, we need to focus on the stages of this process.

Stages in the process of developing learner responsibility

Scharle and Szabo (2000) labelled three phases which are named as raising awareness, changing attitudes, and transferring roles. They took raising awareness as the starting point because this is the place where students are presented to new view points and experiences. The second phase is changing attitudes where students start to practice the skills they were introduced to at the first phase. Changing attitudes is a slow process, since it takes time to leave the past habits and take up new ones. The last phase,

transferring roles, is the place where students take the most important t part in accomplishing tasks or giving decisions about their learning.

After having described the building blocks and the phases needed for the development of learner responsibility we started to implement the first phase of the process (raising awareness) described above. As stated above, while implementing the first phase we took Ellis (1999) and Sincliar's (1999) framework as a base (see section 2.3.2).

2.3.2.2 Measuring Learner Autonomy

Measuring autonomy is a debatable concept. Research shows that "capacity" is a key word during the stage of measuring autonomy (Sinclair, 2000). The hypothesis behind this keyword is that even autonomous learners cannot always be autonomous. There are different reasons for this premise like affective factors, psychological factors, physiological factor, motivational, or environmental factors. Briefly, these factors vary from hunger to a change in mood.

Measuring autonomy in terms of product might be misleading. A qualitative approach might be used to measure autonomy by evaluating the levels of metacognitive awareness. Sinclair (1999) developed such a qualitative framework. It is designed to find out the levels of metacognition in adult learners through interviewing techniques. Table 2.3 identifies the levels of metacognitive awareness accompanied by the language they are characterised with and typical examples.

While analysing the interviews, our focus was on levelling the students according to this framework. The results will be discussed in chapter 6.

Table 2.3 Monitoring metacognitive development of learners

Level of awareness	Language characterised by	Typical examples
Level 1 **Largely** **unaware**	• description with little or no rationale • formulaic or "shallow" rationales • broad statements with little or no support • a few naive questions • little or incorrect use of metalanguage	"I read the text then I answered the questions" "I need English to get a good job" "English grammar is very difficult"
Level 2 **Becoming** **aware** (transition stage)	Greater use of: • anecdotal evidence • introspection (expression of thoughts/feelings) • metaphor • "epiphanies" • metalanguage	"Yes, I've had problems with that… I made a big mistake…I was at my friend's house for a party…er birthday party….and a woman…" "I feel…" "I think…" "I've noticed that…" "learning phrasal verbs is like wrestling with a jelly" "I've just realised that this strategy – the one I've always used – doesn't work for me very well" "If my intonation is wrong, how will it effect the person who is listening?"
Level 3 **Largely** **aware**	Confident and competent use of the above *plus:* • descriptions of alternative strategies	"I could have learnt these words by writing them down with translations or by recording them on to a cassette listening, but I decided to use a word-web because I find I can remember the words more easily when I do this"

(Sinclair, 1999)

2.4 Portfolios

Portfolios are used in various professions to gather typical or best samples of performance. They were introduced initially as a way for artists, graphic designers, and other such professionals to show evidence of their work, illustrating their skill at applying knowledge to practice.

If defined in this way (as collection of work stored in folders over a period of time) portfolios will have little value either to students or teachers. Therefore, careful consideration needs to be given to what goes into a portfolio, the process of selection, and how the information is to be used. Otherwise, the portfolio may become little more than a resource file.

In this study we accept the definition of portfolio in education as:

> a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student reflection (Paulson, Paulson&Meyer, 1991).

While engaging with the literature of portfolios, we also considered the five features used by Moya and O'Malley (1994) as our basis:

1. Comprehensiveness
2. Predetermined and Systematic
3. Informative
4. Tailored
5. Authentic

Comprehensiveness

A comprehensive data collection and analysis features the breadth and depth of a student's capabilities. There are some objectives used by a comprehensive approach which help determining the breadth and depth of these capabilities. To illustrate, a comprehensive approach a) uses both formal and informal assessment techniques; b) focuses on both the processes and products of learning; c) seeks to understand student

language development in the linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective domains; d) contains teacher, student, and objective input; and e) stresses both academic and informal language development.

All these objectives were taken into consideration in the present study. Students were not only assessed through portfolios, but they also had their routine single-sit down examinations. We not only dealt with the products at the end of the implementation, but also how the students came up to this end.

Predetermined and Systematic

For a portfolio procedure to be reliable, it should be planned before the portfolio implementation. The purpose of the selection of a portfolio, the contents of the portfolio, data collection schedule, and student performance criteria should be portrayed in detail during the planning stage. Each entry in a portfolio should have a clear purpose that is easily understood.

Before the implementation of portfolios in this study, we had a thorough investigation on how portfolios are implemented. Four school semesters were spent on the piloting of the study. The action research cyle helped us whenever we encountered a problem during the stages. Each entry was explained to the students and its purpose was dealt with until it was clear to everybody.

Informative

Documents in a portfolio should be meaningful not only to the students but also to the teacher, staff, and parents. It should include all the necessary information that are needed in a portfolio item.

Students in this study were expected to prepare a cover for each task where they gave information about the task in an organized way. On these cover sheets they manifested the due date of the task, the references used, which draft it was, and the goal of the task.

Tailored

The purpose for which the portfolio will be used should constitute the important part of the portfolio procedure. Therefore assessment instruments and procedures are adapted to match information needs and reflect student characteristics. The portfolio should be

tailored in such a way as to show only the purpose of it, which might be classroom goals and objectives or individual student assessment needs.

In order to obtain this feature, students in this study were asked to explain the goals they have aimed at when starting the task.

Authentic

A good portfolio provides student information based on tasks that reflect authentic activities used during the classroom. Focusing on authentic language proficiency across sociolinguistic contexts and naturally occurring language tasks acknowledges the holistic and integrative nature of language development and focuses on communicative and functional language abilities rather than attainment of discrete, fragmented skills (Moya and O'Malley, 1994). The use of articles from newspapers, magazines, or novels instead of textbooks only revealed how beneficial it was for students to use authentic texts in their tasks during this study.

2.4.1 Advantages of Portfolios in Foreign Language Education:

Undoubtedly, the use of portfolios in the field of foreign language education has several advantages. To illustrate some, students are provided with opportunities to display quality to others. In this way, the students with weaker language skills strengthen their self-esteem and self-concepts as well. In our study, this was very obvious at the end of the first task (preparing a textbook) which took a long time and aimed to strengthen students' enthusiasm for portfolios.

Another advantage is that portfolios serve as an efficient vehicle for learning critical self-analysis and self-assessment. While working on their portfolios students learn to monitor their progress, set goals for their future studies, realize their own strengths and weaknesses, and identify their most efficient and suitable learning methods and contexts. In this study, sudents became aware of their own skills and were proud of themselves.

Contrary to customary and traditional methods used in foreign language teaching, the use of portfolios offers students practical opportunities to show their mastery of a foreign language. During the traditional methods that have been used so far, students

were restricted with very short time. Due to the crowded number of students in the classes students may not have the chance (opportunity) to show their skills in a limited time period.

Students also acquire organizational skills through the use of portfolios. During the process students learn to be organized which later on assists them in their correction and revision of their work (Johns, 1995).

2.4.2 Disadvantages of Portfolios

Along with its advantages, the portfolio has also some pitfalls. One of the most prominent disadvantages is that portfolios can be time consuming for evaluators. Since portfolios are evaluated in a process and since the activity is repeated until perfection, evaluators have to reread the revised drafts, which takes a lot of time when the number of students is taken into consideration.

A second disadvantage is the management of the collection and scoring process. The establishment of an objective scoring rubric might be challenging. The establishment of the scoring criterion has to be done by both the teacher and the students in accordance with the goals and objectives of the course. Managing this might cause some problems for the evaluator.

Another disadvantage, the last that we will mention here, is that the findings and conclusions drawn from the evaluation and analysis of the portfolios of a target group might not be compared to students in other institutions or even generalized. These findings are specific to the environment where the portfolio is implemented.

Apart from these, Elbow & Belanoff (1991, p. 14) list disadvantages regarding portfolio assessment:
- It puts more pressure on teachers because if a student fails, the teacher might feel s/he has failed
- Some teachers feel that it dominates the course too much
- The emphasis on revising can make lazy students rely too much on the help they receive from their teachers and peers.

2.5 Reading Portfolios

A Reading Portfolio is a showcase of a reader's growth, experiences, and achievement. It consists of

1. Self-selected, representative samples of the student's work drawn from real reading and responses to reading.
2. Written justifications for those selections.
3. Formal presentation of the justified selections to peers, teachers, and parents. (Assessment Strategies, para.2)

The main purpose of a reading portfolio should be to create an environment where students increasingly reflect upon, assess, and control their own reading growth according to program outcomes and goals. To promote this, there must be collaboration between teachers and students, with teachers structuring the planning, establishment, and implementation of portfolios, and students taking responsibility for the particulars of their own portfolios.

Such a student-involved classroom environment fosters student participation in the learning process. Learning that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of learning materials in a variety of ways are more likely to become critical thinkers.

Critical thinkers are critical and active readers as well. They question, confirm, and judge what they read throughout the reading process. Students engaged in such activities are likely to become critical thinkers and learners. Since reading portfolios require students to be involved in activities as questioning, confirming, and judging what they read, it is likely that they will become critical readers as well as raise their level of autonomy at the end of the portfolio implementation.

Characteristics of reading portfolios

Portfolio assessment is used in various settings, therefore, there is a wide variation of how portfolios are assembled, evaluated, and used. Yet, most of the characteristics can be found in almost all of the portfolio assessment programs. Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2001) give a list of characteristics that are valid for almost all kind of portfolios. Since

our focus is reading portfolios, we adopted these features and applied them to reading portfolios only:

1. A portfolio is a **collection** of works read and responded to either orally or written, rather than a single response to any text.

2. It enables the reader to display a **range** of reading performance, in different genres and for different purposes.

3. A portfolio possesses **context richness** insofar as it reflects closely the learning situation and demonstrates what the reader has accomplished within that context.

4. An important characteristic of most portfolio programs is **delayed evaluation**, giving students both the opportunity and the motivation to revise written products before a final evaluation is given.

5. Portfolios generally involve **selection** of the pieces to be included in the portfolio, usually by the students with some guidance from the instructor.

6. Delayed evaluation and selection offer opportunities for **student-centered control** in that students can select which pieces best fulfill the established evaluation criteria and can revise them before putting them into their portfolios.

7. A portfolio usually involves **reflection and self-assessment**, in that students must reflect on their work in deciding how to arrange the portfolio, and are frequently asked to write a reflective essay about their development as readers and how the pieces in the portfolio represent that development.

8. Portfolios can provide a means for measuring **growth along specific parameters**, such as linguistic accuracy or the ability to organize and develop an argument.

9. Portfolios provide a means for measuring **development over time** in ways that neither the teacher nor the student may have anticipated.

2.6 Portfolio Assessment

Until recently, assessment of any kind has been done through evaluating single sit-down examinations. However, as has been noted earlier, through single sit down examinations students are assessed only for that particular hour. Single sit-down examinations have some serious limitations two of which are as stated in Weigle (2002). Weigle used these limitations for assessing writing yet; it is rationale to use them for reading assessment also because students respond to reading in the written form:

1. the fact that *assessment* done under timed conditions on an unfamiliar topic does not accurately reflect the conditions under which most *reading* is done in non-testing situations or *reading* as it is taught and practiced in the classroom, and

2. the fact that it is difficult to generalize from a single *reading* sample to a much broader universe of *reading* in different genres and for different purposes and audiences (p. 197).

Portfolio assessment values the process, as well as the products, of reading. Samples that reflect the reading process will enable the teacher to monitor and focus continual instruction on strategic reading behaviours.

According to Kohonen there are 12 items with which we can compare standardised testing (single sit-down exams) and authentic testing.

Table 2.4 Comparison of Standardised Testing and Authentic Assessment

Standardised Testing	*Authentic Testing*
Testing and instruction are regarded as separate activities	Assessment is an integral part of instruction
Students are treated in a uniform way	Each learner is treated as a unique person
Decisions are based on single sets of data (test scores)	Provides multiple sources of data, a more informative view
Emphasis on weakness/failures: what students cannot do	Emphasis on strengths/progress: what learners can do
One-shot exams	Ongoing assessment
Cultural/socio-economic status bias	More culture-fair
Focus on one 'right answer'	Possibility of several perspectives
Judgement without suggestions for improvement	Useful information for improving/guiding learning
Pressures teachers to narrow teaching to what is tested	Allows teachers to develop meaningful curricula
Focus on lower-order knowledge and skills	Emphasis on higher-order learning outcomes and thinking skills
Forbids students to interact; promotes comparisons between students (norm-referencing)	Encourages collaborative learning; compares learners to their own past performances and the aims
Intrinsic learning for a grade	Intrinsic learning for its own sake

(Kohonen, 1999, p. 285)

As can be seen from Table 2.2, authentic assessment has some advantages over standardised testing. In authentic assessment, the individual as well as his strengths and

weaknesses are emphasized. Also, the higher order learning skills are given more importance than in standardised testing. Authentic assessment can be said to be in favour of a student-centered atmosphere.

2.6.1 Portfolios and Test Usefulness

Portfolio assessment should be based on the qualities of test usefulness. Bachman and Palmer (1996) constructed a model of the six qualities of test usefulness namely construct validity, reliability, authenticity, interactiveness, impact, and practicality. While assessing portfolios it might be helpful to consider these qualities especially when compared to single sit-down examinations.

2.6.1.1 Construct Validity

Portfolio assessment has a greater potential for demonstrating the validity of inferences about a broader construct or definition of reading than is possible with timed reading tests alone. We can broaden the construct of reading that is dealt with in reading portfolios in two ways. The first one is that there is a variety of reading samples included in the portfolio. These samples vary from different genres, to samples written for different audiences. This feature of the portfolios makes us feel more confident in making generalizations from the findings of the portfolio assessment to a broader reading domain. Secondly, the inclusion of multi-drafts of the responses to the readings permits us to see the students' ability in applying aspects of the reading process such as administering the stages of pre-, post-, and while reading.

Another aspect of construct validity that is worth mentioning here are the advantages that students gain as a result of the additional time given. Single sit-down exams might be a disadvantage for non-native learners of English. Allowing them to revise what they have read and how they have responded to it might give a more accurate picture of the reader.

2.6.1.2 Authenticity

Since students are expected to read not only their textbooks but also authentic texts which they may come across during their whole life, portfolio assessment is invaluable in this aspect. During the portfolio implementation tasks, students are required to use a multiple range of different texts from newspapers, magazines, novels to texts from the internet.

2.6.1.3 Interactiveness

Interactiveness is defined as "the extent and type of involvement of the test taker's individual characteristics in accomplishing a test task" (Bachman and Palmer, 1996, p. 25). Preparing reading portfolios helps the students use their language skills (orally and written), engage in reading and responding to texts, use their metacognitive strategies and topical knowledge, and activate their schemata. When compared to single sit-down examinations, portfolio assessment is certainly on the positive part of interactiveness.

2.6.1.4 Impact

Reading portfolios have lots of benefits for both the students and the teacher. The most important benefit is that portfolios give students the opportunity to reflect upon their work. Through these reflections students gain awareness of what they are doing, gain self-esteem, responsibility, and they develop a sense of an ownership of their portfolios. According to Murphy and Camp (cited inWeigle, 2002) "in the process of creating portfolios, students learn to exercise judgment about their own work, monitor their own progress, set goals for themselves, and present themselves and their work to others.(p.205)

Through the use of portfolio assessment, teachers can gain insight into their students' works over a time and a variety of genres. At the same time, via the reflections written by their students, teachers will be able to follow the process their students were engaged in.

2.6.1.5 Reliability

Reliability is a shortcoming area in portfolio assessment since it is problematic to score some aspects of portfolios. Portfolios in nature contain different entries which makes it difficult to be representative for them. In consequence, the more varied the activities the less reliable the portfolio will be.

In order to lessen these shortcomings some precautions might be taken: the entries of the portfolio can be relatively uniform for every student; the number of raters can be decreased, so as to avoid the dispute between them; well prepared rubrics can be used; the scoring criteria should be well-formed according to the context and should expressed distinctly. If these requirements are met reliability of individual classroom portfolios will increase.

2.6.1.6 Practicality

Practicality is another limitation for portfolio assessment. Although it is not very important in individual classroom settings, it still may be a limitation since it is not practical for students to find varied materials. It takes a lot of time, effort, and research to gather all the needed materials that goes into a reading portfolio. Also, not all students understand the benefits of revisiting works they have done earlier. When it cpmes to the instructor, it may be difficult and time consuming to arrange sessions in which portfolios are introduced. Because one single session will not be enough to make each student understand what a portfolio is, how the process will be conducted and the requirements needed to assemble a portfolio. Another point is the difficulty of arranging the content of the portfolio in accordance with the goals and aims of the portfolio.

2.7 Implementing Portfolio Assessment

In every assessment system there are some points and steps that must be taken into consideration. So it is with the implementation of the portfolio assessment system. While implementing the portfolio process special significance must be given to the purpose of the portfolio, the contents of the portfolio, and the scoring procedures of the portfolio. While students are in the assessment process, as a part of the portfolio

implementation, they also assess themselves. During the self-assessment process students are involved in making judgements about their own work. Race (cited in Rees & Shepherd, 2005, p. 31) suggests a number of benefits of self-assessment as it "deepens students' learning experiences, enables students to become familiar with the assessment culture in higher education, helps students to become autonomous learners, and helps them develop skills related to lifelong learning."

2.7.1   Purpose(s) of the Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment requires making decisions about the tasks to be given and the scoring criteria to be used. While giving these decisions, the focus must be on the purpose of the portfolio implementation and assessment. Therefore, before starting to implement the portfolio in the classroom, a significant amount of time should be spent to clarify the minutest detail of the purpose of the portfolio assessment. Since portfolios may be used for different purposes, some of them may overlap each other if not enough consideration is put in the matter.

2.7.2   Defining Portfolio Content

There are some questions that should be asked before determining the contents of a portfolio. These are as stated in Weigle (2002)

1. Who decides what goes into a portfolio?
2. What types of reading should be included in the portfolio? That is, should the portfolio include best work only, a range of work from a variety of genres, both in-class and out-of class work, and so on?
3. How many pieces should go into the portfolio?
4. What should be included in the portfolio in addition to students' classroom reading samples?
5. How can the authorship of the portfolio contents be authenticated?
   (p. 212-213)

The content of the portfolio changes according to the purpose of the assessment. Therefore, it cannot be stated that there is a single correct answer for any of these questions. Still there are some generalizations from which we can draw a proper answer

to each of them. In order to see the answer for each, we will discuss the questions one by one.

1. Who decides what goes in a portfolio?

To answer this question the purpose has to be taken into great consideration. If the portfolios are implemented to make students gain their self-esteem, feel responsibility, and foster student autonomy certainly students should be allowed to choose the entries that go in the portfolio.

Yet, sometimes students may not be able to choose the proper material to put in. In that case, it would be better to take professional advice from their teachers, instructors or raters of their portfolios.

2. What types of reading should be included in the portfolio?

There are three types of portfolios namely (a) showcase portfolios (contains students' best pieces only), (b) progress portfolio (documents students' growth and progress over time, (c) working portfolio (contains all work done for a course). To be able to answer the second question we have to know what type of portfolio is implemented. If it is a showcase portfolio, students should only include their last and polished drafts. If it is a progress portfolio, the teacher should be able to gain insight into every part of the portfolio, from its very early drafts till the last polished drafts. If it is a working portfolio, a wide range of reading assignments should be included in the portfolio.

3. How many pieces should go into the portfolio?

There is no rule of thumb for this question yet, if we assume that portfolios are used to show the depth and breadth of a students' performance, the answer should be the more pieces, the better. However, when we take construct validity and practicality into consideration, the answer would be just the opposite. Considering the time and effort spent by both student and teacher, it does not seem rational to prepare ten entries when five are enough to see the progress of the student.

4. What should be included in the portfolio in addition to students' classroom reading samples?

Apart from the responses to what they have read, students should include some other documents that the rater may use as orientation about the portfolio. We can divide these documents into two:

    a. Cover Letter:

A Cover letter is an essential part of the portfolio. It consists of two parts. The first part gives information about the author of the portfolio; a kind of autobiography. The second part is similar to reflection. There, participants are supposed to evaluate themselves as a whole: how they performed during the process, what they gained from the process, and what kind of changes, if any, they underwent.

    b. Reflection Sheets

Reflections are the key elements of portfolios. Through the reflection sheets, after each task, participants gain insight into their own work. They reflect on how they performed the task, why they chose the text, and what they have learned. This process awakens participants' self-awareness and fosters their self-assessment skills.

Writing reflection sheets for the portfolio is regarded as a meaning-making process. This writing should move the students to a point where s/he can see what s/he has accomplished up to now, what was successful and what might be improved in the future studies. This evaluation should be done both in terms of process and product. Fernsten and Fernsten (2005, p. 307) agree that in this way "the reflective piece continues the learning of the original lesson, allowing the individual to make connections between what was done and what could be done in the future."

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

In this chapter we explain and deal with the issues of planning, methodology, and epistemology. The research paradigm held in this study is a combination of action research and an interpretitive approach, yet we have also taken the other research paradigms into consideration to look at the reasoning behind our choice of this combination as our preferred methodology. We then go on to discuss our understanding of action research and the interpretitive approach.

At the end of this chapter we have also explained the evaluation of the portfolio. We focused on the credibility of the autonomy and critical reader checklist (see Appendix 12) that we used during the assessment of the portfolios.

Finally, information about the procedure followed during the implementation and assessment phase of the study has been described. The data collection tools and the data analysis methods used have been discussed as well.

3.1 Three Main Educational Research Paradigms

- The empirical approach (scientific/positivist/quantitative)
- The interpretitive approach (different interpretations of what is real/qualitative)
- The critical theoretic approach (action research)

In order to justify our choice of the combination of the interpretitive and critical theoretic approaches as our preferred methodology, we found it appropriate to consider the three research paradigms briefly.

The empirical paradigm:

According to the empirical approach, knowledge can be found only outside ourselves, it is external to us. The researcher and the knowledge are apart from each other and the researcher finds the knowledge by looking at it. There are different kinds of knowledge which we can apply to almost all the situations.

The empirical research paradigm is a quantitative approach which deals with facts, figures, and numbers. Eisner (1993) states that researchers in the empiricist paradigm approach the issues from an objective viewpoint, they are not subjected to make any judgements. Their only aim is to describe, interpret and explain the events. The researcher is a neutral observer and looks at the subject matter from the outside. Data collected in this paradigm is subjected to statistical analysis, therefore this paradigm is mostly called quantitative. In this approach, the use of the personal pronoun is avoided.

While searching for an educational paradigm for our study, we shifted between interpretive and action research. The empiricist view was not appropriate at all, because generally it deals with facts and figures. Our aim in this study was to deal with students' feelings, and the changes that they would undergo. Therefore, it would be not rational to measure them scientifically.

The interpretive paradigm:

The second paradigm to be dealt with is the interpretive paradigm. It favors a sociological perspective because the results are interpreted. People subjected to interpretive research look at the world from different perspectives. Bassey (1990, p. 42) explains this situation like that: "Because of differences in perception, interpretation and in language it is not surprising that people have different views of what is real." Interpretivist researchers aim at describing and interpreting the world in order to get shared meaning with others. Data gathering techniques are observation, field notes, notes and transcripts of conversation. This type of paradigm is usually described as qualitative.

Since replicability is not expected, participants in this paradigm are "treated as inanimate objects but subjects in themselves with complex responses and configurations

of interaction" (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p. 27). Both of the paradigms discussed so far are acceptable in the method of measurement.

The action research paradigm:

This paradigm is about researchers trying to improve their practice. As Carr and Kemmis (1986, p. 64) state "Action research is not about verification from the given event, but about intelligent action coming from wise judgements arising from immediate location of the event itself.

Lewin (1946) one of the first pioneers of action research, described a framework for action research which singled out a four-stage spiral of steps:

- planning
- acting
- observing and
- reflecting

Having confronted a problematic situation, an action plan is derived and implemented. It would be observed and reflected upon. If it does not lead to a conclusion, another cycle would be built and the same steps revised. The action research cycle (see section 3.8) will be dealt with in detail when introducing the implementation procedure of the study.

In this study, as stated before, we employed a combination of the interpretative and the action research paradigm. Our rationale for using this combination is that qualitative inquiry is naturalistic. Our aim was not "to manipulate the research setting" (Patton, 1990, p. 39). We were rather interested in looking at the different perceptions and different constructions that learners have in their natural environment and action research was used to put these constructs into action by following the action research cycle.

3.2   The Design of the Study

The aim of this study is to reveal English Language Teaching Department preparatory class students' critical reading skills and foster learner autonomy with the help of

portfolio implementation and assessment. In light of the theoretical framework that has been discussed so far we have come to the conclusion regarding the design of the study.

Starting form the point of view of constructivism, which views learning as the result of mental construction where new information is fitted together with already known one and which recognizes learning as a process, the study is embedded in Portfolio Assessment since it has become clear that meaning is what matters and it is not something that can be imparted from teacher to student.

In order to unveil the meaning in preparatory reading classes, portfolio assessment was implemented following an action research cycle. The change in their beliefs and feelings was obtained through an interpretative approach.

3.3 Participants

The participants in this study were chosen using a convenience sampling strategy. Different definitions of this strategy have been given in the literature on qualitative research. For instance, as Creswell states (cited in Cabaroğlu, 1999, p. 61) "a researcher may use this strategy because a whole group of individuals is available to take part or the participants volunteer to participate in this study". The sample in this study, consisted of the students who were attending the preparatory class at the time of the study which made them available as a whole group for the study.

Prior to the implementation of the study we attained information about the participants through a semi-structured literacy autobiography sheet (see Appendix 9). As a result of this sheet we aimed at gaining general information about the participants as well as finding out about their age, gender, and reading literacy state.

The literacy autobiography sheet consisted of 15 questions which aimed to stimulate their thinking about their own literacy development. The questions focused on such issues as their first recollections of reading and writing, whether or not they had any persons around them who read and so on. We did not analyse these sheet formally since our aim was only to stimulate their thinking about reading.

At the beginning of the study participants were ensured that no information about their identities would be given to any third person. Everything they told or wrote would be kept confidential and used only for the aim of the study.

The participants consisted of 43 preparatory class students at the English Language Teaching Department of Education Faculty of Çukurova University. All students range between the ages 18-20. Among 43 participants, 11 of them are male and 32 are female. At the beginning of their university education, participants as well as non-participants were given an English language proficiency test prepared and administered by preparatory year teachers at the English Language Teaching Department in Çukurova University. As a result of this test participants were structured to attend either the preparatory class or the first class of the ELT department for a whole academic year.

During their preparatory class education, students take 23 hours of English per week. These 23 hours are divided into five skills: six hours of Grammar, six hours of Reading, five hours of Writing, four hours of Speaking, and two hours of Listening Skills. Each course is given by a different instructor.

3.4 Ethical Issues

All of the students were aware that they were going to participate in a study. They agreed by giving their written consent (see Appendix 17) before we started to implement the study. Students were also given an Information sheet about the final assessment (see Appendix 3) of the portfolio so they were aware that they would be graded with their portfolios and were free to withdraw from the study whenever they wanted. Confidentiality was given importance to throughout the study. The names of the students have been kept anonymous; instead we have used code numbers for each student like ST1, ST2.

3.5 The Data Collection Tools

Data were collected from different sources during the implementation and assessment process of the study. One of our main collection tools in this study is the portfolio itself which took shape towards the end of the study. Parts that are obligatory in the portfolio

are reflection sheets, cover letters, reading logs (see appendix 8), home reading logs, vocabulary logs, and reading contracts (see appendix 7). Reflection sheets and cover letters constitute one of the main data collection tools within the portfolio.

To intensify the data collected, our second main data collection tool was a semi-structured interview conducted shortly after the beginning of the study and a focused group interview conducted at the end of the study. Additionally, the researcher's field notes were made use of whenever needed.

We developed two assessment tools which constitute our third data collection tool. One of them we named the Autonomy and Critical Reader Checklist (see appendix 12) and the other one is our Portfolio Project Assessment Page (see Appendix 10). Both of them were distributed at the end of the implementation during the assessment stage. We originated our own checklist as a result of an intensive reading of literature on critical reading and autonomy. The items for critical reading were based on Bloom's revised taxonomy whereas the items for autonomy were based on the expected goals as a result of the portfolio implementation. The Portfolio Project Assessment page (scoring criteria) was built on the tasks and the essential elements of the portfolio (see Appendix 2).

In the following section we will explain the data collection tols in detail. We will also give information about the language used in some of the tools.

3.5.1 Portfolio

There are some essential elements in a portfolio such as a cover letter, table of contents, core and optional entries, dates, drafts and reflection sheets. Since we are dealing with a reading portfolio, reading logs and vocabulary logs should be added to these essential elements as well. We will deal with only two of these (reflection sheets and cover letter) in this section since they were the parts that were analysed. The remaining ones will be dealt with in the procedure part (section 3.6).

3.5.1.1 Written Reflection Sheets

One of the ways we gathered data is written reflection in two different forms.

- We kept a reflective diary in which significant incidents were written. Sometimes also discussions with students and colleagues were noted.
- The students were responsible for reflecting on each task they did during the semester.

Prior to the data collection process, participants were given in-depth information on what reflection is. It was a problematic area for the participants in this study since they were not used to reflect on what they did. This range of written reflection opened up a huge range of data for us from which we could deduce our findings.

In reflection sheets again the potential difference of the competence in English language use was taken into consideration and since the aim was to elicit their beliefs, participants were free to use either their native language or the target language.

3.5.1.2 Cover Letter

Cover letters, as stated in Chapter 2, consist of two parts. In the first part students are required to write their own autobiographies. In the second part, which has been written at the end of the implementation, students are asked to write what they gained through the implementation, how it changed their view towards reading.

The same problem that we faced about language in the reflection sheets emerged also in the cover letter. To reach a harmony among the data collection tools the potential difference of the competence in English language use was taken into consideration and participants were let free to choose their means of communicating their progress in the cover letters.

3.5.2 Interview

When there is an assumption that the participants of a study have meaningful and knowable perspectives, the use of interviews as a data collection method might be acceptable. Since "the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone

else's mind" (Patton, 1990, p. 278), an interpersonal contact should be established with the participants.

Frechtling and Sharp (1997) identify two types of interview in evaluation research: structured interview and in-depth interview. In the structured interviews, the interviewer follows a rigid set of questions and tries not to deviate from these questions. An indepth interview is a dialogue between a skilled interviewer and an interviewee. Its goal is to elicit rich, detailed material that can be used in analysis (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). In-depth interviews encourage interviewees to give free and open answers. The most notable characteristic of in-depth interviews is the allowance of extensive probing and open-ended questions.

Patton (as cited in Frechtling and Sharp, 1997, para. 21) suggests questions that might be useful when dealing with in-depth interviews:

- What does the program look and feel like to the participants? To other stakeholders?
- What are the experiences of program participants?
- What do stakeholders know about the project?
- What thoughts do stakeholders knowledgeable about the program have concerning program operations, processes, and outcomes?
- What are participants' and stakeholders' expectations?
- What features of the project are most salient to the participants?
- What changes do participants perceive in themselves as a result of their involvement in the project?

Bringing forth the richest data and insight, admiting face to face contact, supplying opportunity to explore topics in depth, and allowing flexibility to the interviewer are some of the advantages that in-depth interviews offer to the researcher. Yet, there are also some disadvantages to be taken into consideration such as their being expensive and time-consuming, being in need of well qualified interviewers, and the difficulty of transcribing the large amount of data.

In this study we conducted an interview at the beginning of the implementation and a focus group interview (see section 3.5.3) at the end of the implementation. Through the interview we aimed to find out students' perceptions about the portfolio implementation and assessment. How they felt at the beginning of the implementation and what kind of changes if any they revealed at the end were our main concerns.

3.5.3   Focus Group Interview

Focus group interviews are carefully planned group discussions. They are a gathering of 8-12 people who share the same characteristics of the topic under investigation. The aim is to generate in-depth consideration of the topis discussed as well as to examine perceptions, feelings, attitudes, ideas rather than to reach consensus.

Although focus group interviews and in-depth interviews have much in common they cannot replace each other. Factors that should be considered when to use focus group interviews and when to use in-depth interviews can be seen in the following table:

Table 3.1 Which to use: Focus groups or indepth interviews?

Factors to consider	Use focus group when…	Use indepth interview when…
Group interaction	interaction of respondents may stimulate a richer response or new and valuable thought.	group interaction is likely to be limited or nonproductive.
Group/peer pressure	group/peer pressure will be valuable in challenging the thinking of respondents and illuminating conflicting opinions.	group/peer pressure would inhibit responses and cloud the meaning of results.
Sensitivity of subject matter	subject matter is not so sensitive that respondents will temper responses or withhold information.	subject matter is so sensitive that respondents would be unwilling to talk openly in a group.
Depth of individual responses	the topic is such that most respondents can say all that is relevant or all that they know in less than 10 minutes.	the topic is such that a greater depth of response per individual is desirable, as with complex subject matter and very knowledgeable respondents.
Data collector fatigue	it is desirable to have one individual conduct the data collection; a few groups will not create fatigue or	it is possible to use numerous individuals on the project; one interviewer would become fatigued or

	boredom for one person.	bored conducting all interviews.
Extent of issues to be covered	the volume of issues to cover is not extensive.	a greater volume of issues must be covered.
Continuity of information	a single subject area is being examined in depth and strings of behaviors are less relevant.	it is necessary to understand how attitudes and behaviors link together on an individual basis.
Experimentation with interview guide	enough is known to establish a meaningful topic guide.	it may be necessary to develop the interview guide by altering it after each of the initial interviews.
Observation by stakeholders	it is desirable for stakeholders to hear what participants have to say.	stakeholders do not need to hear firsthand the opinions of participants
Logistics geographically	an acceptable number of target respondents can be assembled in one location.	respondents are dispersed or not easily assembled for other reasons.
Cost and training	quick turnaround is critical, and funds are limited.	quick turnaround is not critical, and budget will permit higher cost.
Availability of qualified staff	focus group facilitators need to be able to control and manage groups	interviewers need to be supportive and skilled listeners.

Frechtling and Sharp (1997)

Frechtling and Sharp (1997) claim that "an important aspect of conducting focus groups is the topic guide" (para. 34). The topic guide is a summary statement of the issue that is going to be covered by the focus group. In our case, the topic guide was the answers given during the interview and some extra questions.

The participants in a focus group are expected to reply to the questions asked by the moderater (the focus group leader). In our study the moderater was the researcher herself. Participants listen to each other and may add to to their friends' views apart from their original answers. The discussion should not be dominated by one or two people and the moderator shoul keep the flow of the discussion. 1and a half to two hours is regarded as enough time for a focus group interview. In Frechtling and Sharp's (1997) view, "the objective is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others, and where new ideas and perspectives can be introduced" (para. 35).

The focus group interview in our study was used because it allows the collection of rich, in-depth data from the participants' own words. Also, the interaction amongst group members might reveal data that are not obtainable by individual interviews.

Focus group interviews have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage that we made use of in this study is that "focus group interviews can be used to gather more in-depth information on issues identified by questionnaires and interviews." (Optional Detailed Reading, Focused/Advisory groups, para.5).

3.5.4   Autonomy and Critical Reader Checklist

The autonomy and critical reacer checklist (see Appendix 14) which was designed by the researcher consists of two parts. The first part deals with the skills an autonomous learner should have acquired whereas the second part deals with the skills a critical reader should be able to display.

The items used in this checklist were built on the four areas of metacognition which as stated by Ellis (1999) and Sinclair (1999), should have been developed awareness of by learners who are expected to give informed decision about their learning. The second part of the checklist was based on the skills used in Bloom's revised taxonomy.

While preparing the checklist we mostly made use of the definitions of autonomy and the aspects of the phenomenon discussed in Chapter 2. We used the four areas of metacognition developed by Sinclair (1999) and Ellis (1999). Following are the main categories and what we aimed to find under these headings in our study.

1. Learner Awareness
    -   I share in the decisions that shape and direct my learning process
    -   I view myself as a continual learner and thinker
    -   I know why I am learning
    -   I know how I am learning
    -   I am confident that I can learn
    -   I am intrinsically motivated by making progress
2. Subject Matter Awareness of the Target Language
    -   I know what I am learning

- I know my strengths in language learning
- I know my weaknesses in language learning

3. Learning Process Awareness

- I can easily set short term goals for my learning
- I can easily set long term goals for my learning
- I actively seek to expand my repertoire of strategies for learning
- I take initiatives in my learning process
- I can take control of my learning by using the necessary tactics
- I can reflect on my work
- I take time to think about my own thinking
- I can match strategies to the learning task, making adjustements when necessary
- I can assess myself objectively

4. Social Awareness

- I can assess my peers objectively
- I ask for guidance from peers or the teacher
- I am able to transfer classroom learning to the real world

The same steps were taken when completing the second part of the checklist which aimed to find out to which extent students agreed or disagreed to their level of critical reading. For this part of the checklist Bloomm's revised taxonomy was taken as a base. We identified two categories and verified these into subcategories as follows:

1. Lower order skills

- I can remember previously learned material, recall facts, terms, basic concepts from a stated text
- I can demonstrate understanding of the stated meaning of facts and ideas

2. Higher order skills

- I can demonstrate understanding of the unstated meaning of facts and ideas
- I can solve problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts and techniques in a different situation
- I can examine and break down information into parts

- I can compile information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern
- I can present and defend opinions by making judgements about information based on criteria.
-

Students either agreed or disagreed upon the skills they thought to have acquired through the portfolio implementation and assessment. The percentages of students' thoughts on their levels are reflected in Table 5.7.

3.5.5 Scoring Criteria

The scoring criterion that we applied in this study was used to grade the portfolios. While grading the portfolios the essential elements (see Appendix 2) were taken into consideration. The portfolios were graded by the portfolio owner, a peer, and the researcher. The average of the grades given was taken and the final grade constituted %50 of their second midterm exam.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Pilot Study

Before getting involved in the actual study, a pilot study was conducted during the 2004-2005 academic year / fall and spring semesters. Throughout the study, seven different tasks (see Appendix 4), parallel with the schedule of the course (see Appendix 1), were given during the fall semester to the students and they were asked to fulfil the tasks and reflect upon them. For the spring semester students were given seven more tasks and again they were asked to fulfill and reflect upon them. At the end of each task, students, in pairs or individually, held tutorials with the researcher. During the tutorials the tasks were controlled and reflected on. At the end of the pilot study a semi-structured interview was conducted to elicit participants' beliefs about the portfolio implementation. At the same time students were asked to fill in the critical reader and learner autonomy checklist. Through this checklist we aimed to triangulate the data and find out whether students were aware of the changes they underwent after the implementations. The shortcomings of the pilot study and actions that were taken will be explained in the next section.

Shortcomings of the Pilot Study

As a result of the data analysis of the pilot study, some points in the main study were revised

 a. Although there are no specific guidelines about the participant number in qualitative research, Patton (1987, p. 58-59) states that "the sample size should be large enough to be credible given the purpose of the study, but small enough to permit adequate depth and detail for each case or unit in the sample."

 Therefore, the number of participants was increased during the main study as can be seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Change in Number of Participants

	Number of Participants	
	Female	**Male**
Pilot Study (2004-2005)	19	5
Main Study (2005-2006)	33	12

 b. At the end of the pilot study analysis, it came out that seven tasks per semester was an overload for prep-class students. So, the number of tasks was reduced to six main tasks in the main study.

 c. During the pilot study only one interview was conducted at the end of the study, yet to see the changes that grew out of the implementation two interviews were conducted in the main study. One shortly after the beginning of the study and a focus group interview at the end of the study.

 d. The researcher decided to deduce the level of their being critical readers through eliciting answers to the questions of a short story (appendix 15) based on Bloom's revised taxonomy.

 e. Some changes were made in the tasks given because as a result of the analysis of the pilot study interview, we found out that students were not satisfied with some of the task since they thought them to be repetitive. Therefore, various types of tasks were added and students were let free to choose among them.

    f.   As a result of the analysis of the checklist in the pilot study, we found out that some of the items were misleading. Therefore, we changed some of the items to make them clear to the reader.

Main Study

The "Implementation and Assessment of Portfolio in Reading skills course" in this study was conducted for one semester of an academic year following an action research cycle. The main purpose of this study was to see the effects of portfolio implementation and assessment on students' critical reading and their autonomy. An action research methodology and a constructivist framework were employed.

During the study, participants and the researcher met six hours a week during the Reading classes and once a week for conferencing. Each Conferencing session lasted for approximately 15 minutes per participant. The program lasted 24 weeks for the pilot study, namely four semesters and 12 weeks for the main study, namely one semester of an academic year.

The first weeks of the first semester were devoted to the introduction of portfolio since the students had difficulties in understanding the system. The students had difficulty in understanding the aim of the portfolio and they repeatedly asked the same questions about how to start the implementation. The questions were answered by the researcher again and again so as to make all students understand the aim and make them know what they have to do and not to do. They also were given a written information sheet at the beginning of the implementation (Appendix 17).

After embedding the implementation in the first weeks, we started to hold tutorials with the students. These tutorials lasted till the end of the implementation after each task. Sometimes, when the students needed extra information they were asked to get extra appointments with the researcher. During theses sessions the students talked about how they decided on the text to be used, how they decided on the task to be used, and why they choose this special task for this activity.

In the second week of the main study, students were given a short story 'The Lion and the Mouse' from Aesop's fables and were asked to answer the questions to this text. Our aim was to elicit the level of critical reader. The answers that we got to the

questions revealed that students were not good at answering the higher order level questions.

The researcher herself had to learn and understand the details of the portfolio and its implementation. Thus, the first weeks of the first semester and even the whole pilot study were a great experience for both the researcher and the participants. Following is a summary of the main study which consists of three aspects: 1. when the activity was done, 2. what was done, and 3. why it was done.

Table 3.3 A summary of the main study

WHEN	WHAT	WHY
03-07 October 2005	1. Introduction to the portfolio concept 2. First task 3. First Tutorial	1. To familiarize the participants with the topic, answer their questions when needed. 2. To orient them towards being critical readers via the first task. 3. To give them feedback about the process of their first task
10 October 2005	1. Short story and Questions	To elicit their level of critical reader through Bloom's taxonomy
24-26 October 2005	1. Evaluation of First Task by the researcher 2. Peer and Self-Evaluation 3. Choosing books to be read and signing Reading Contracts	1. To be able to give feedback about the product 2. To make participants set goals for their reading process
27 October 2005	Sheet for the following tasks was given	1. To make participants choose the task they want to do (decision making, goal setting, responsibility)
07-11 November 2005	1. Interview questions were prepared 2. Answers to the short story were analysed	1. To be able to revise the questions before conducting the interview 2. To set the level of participants being critical readers
14-18 November 2005	Second task was given and handed in by the participants at the end of the week (picture theme response)	To be able to give feedback about the product
14-25 November 2005	First interview was conducted	1. To elicit answer to Research Question 1, 2, and 3
29 November 2005	Third task was handed in	1.To be able to give feedback
23 December 2005	Fourth portfolio task was handed in	1. To be able to give feedback
January 2006	1. Interview Data was transcribed and analysed 2. Reflection Sheets were analysed	To be able to familiar with the research context more
13-24 February 2006	Focus group interview was conducted	1.To answer Research Question 1, 2,and 3 2. To triangulate the data
February-March	1. Portfolios were assessed using the Portfolio Scoring Criteria	1. To do the analysis 2. To grade the portfolios
March	1. Checklists were given to th students 2. Checklists were analysed	1. To triangulate the data
March	1.Member Check was done with the participants 2.Focus group interview was transcribed and analysed	1. To strengthen the credibility of the study 2. To triangulate the data 3. To see the differences in students' beliefs about portfolio

3.7   Tasks

The tasks given during the implementation were identified under four topics according to the higher order skills in Bloom's revised taxonomy: Creating, Evaluating, Analysing, and Applying. Apart from some obligatory tasks (see section 3.7.1) which all students had to do for their portfolios, they were let free to choose out of the given tasks (see section 3.7.2). The aim here was to strengthen their motivation to read more and respond to their readings according to their own choice. The tasks and the topic under which the tasks were handled are given in detail below:

3.7.1 Compulsory Tasks

Reading Logs
Reading logs are interesting and motivating documents throughout the implementation of portfolios in reading classes. Reading logs emerge as a kind of motivation task which frees the student from the stress of single-sit down examinations. There the student is the person who shapes the meaning out of the text. There, he/she has a place to give voice to his thoughts without assessment as the main goal.

The aim of Reading Logs is to make students gain the habit of reading and respond to it in a way. Therefore, students were asked to fill in their reading logs in the target language. This will help them to strengthen their writing skills as well as commenting skills in the target language.

Home Reading Logs
Home Reading Logs are similar to Reading Logs, yet they differ in regard to the length and frequency of the texts read. Home Reading Logs are especially designed for daily readings which take no more time than ten minutes. Through the use of these readings it is expected to make reading a lifelong habit.

Vocabulary Logs
Through vocabulary logs students reinforce their own learning by building a record of the new words they come across during their varied readings. They not only record the new words but also set strategies for reviewing them. Another benefit of vocabulary

logs is that they encourage students to select the words they want to revise and as a result students take responsibility of their own learning (Newton, 1999).

Reading Contracts

Reading Contracts are a part of the portfolio which aimed to make students aware of the fact that planning is a way to better learning, in our case: reading. Through reading contracts students will gain the characteristics of setting goals and decision-making.

3.7.2 Selective Tasks

1. Creating: Creating is linking new information with the already existing prior knowledge and creating a new product of any kind.

Activities that might be used to foster students' creating skills:

a. Book Review Cards: You are supposed to write book reviews for two of the books you have read. Your book reviews should include two paragraphs.

Paragraph One: It should not be a complete summary from the beginning to the end, but a teaser-like summary of the events/ideas in your book. Your paragraph should be just enough to tease the reader into being interested in the book. For instance, you can start with a question that might hook the reader.

Paragraph Two: In the second paragraph you are supposed to give your own opinion about the book. You should include a kind of rating of the book, and information on the type of reader that would enjoy the book.The aim was to determine the main idea or essential message and identify relevant details in a text.

b. Making Arguments:

1. Find a part of the book with which you do not agree. Find evidence to dispute the information and build a case for why you disagree. You can present your arguments to the class to "judge" whether or not you have been persuasive and logical in your arguments.
2. You can do the same activity while reading newspaper or magazine articles

The aim of this activity was to make students evaluate a text and make a decision according to their evaluation.

This is also an important feature of being a critical reader. As Varaprasad (1997) states "this decision may be to accept what the writer has said, to disagree with it or to realise that additional information is necessary before an informed judgement can be made."

c. Asking Questions: You can pretend that you are a teacher and want to lead a discussion about a book. What 10 questions would you ask the students and what might the students say in response to your questions?

Through the preparation of these questions the researcher aimed at making students develop strategies for evaluating and problem solving crucial to critical reading of texts. Another aim sought, since the questions are self-generated, instead of teacher-generated students are expected to take more responsibility of their own learning which will result in learner autonomy.

d. Sharing Facts: Before you begin to read a book, think about a fact about a book that you would like to share after reading. You could look for the most exciting part of the book, the funniest part of the book, the most interesting part, the most surprising part, the part the reader might like best, or any other detail. After the reading you can share your opinions with the other students in the class.

e. Reading Mysteries: If you are reading a mystery story, go through the story and identify key clues that the writer has included in the story to foreshadow the conclusion. Describe how the details work to build the conclusion.

2.Evaluating: Students are expected to differentiate between essential knowledge and knowledge that is only interesting. As a result of this they will be able to evaluate necessary information.

Activities that might be used to foster students' evaluating skills:

a.Textbook Evaluation: For the first task, which was a compulsory task, students were asked to prepare a textbook on their own after analysing various textbooks and their parts.

The aim of this task was versatile. First of all they were going to produce something of which they will be proud of. Their pride will lead to their being motivated higher. Also, it was aimed to make students find articles related to the same topic yet, handled from different perspectives. In this way the researcher wanted to encourage their evaluating skills. The topics in the textbook were restricted to five and students were asked to prepare different exercises for each topic. Through the analysis of the texts chosen and the exercises prepared, the researcher aimed to find out what kind of material students were interested in (suitability to their levels) as well as what type of questions they preferred to ask (higher order questions or lower-order questions) in addition to broadening their research skills.

b. Letters to Characters: Write a letter from one character in a book to another character. Characters can be from the same book or from different books for extra interest and fun.

c. Identifying with Characters: Identify one or two situations or incidents in a text that have happened to you at some point in your lives. Compare how you handled the situation with the way the characters in the story acted.

d. Interview Questions: Create five interview questions that you might ask the main character of a story. Write also the responses that you feel the character would make to the interview questions.

e. Stage production: Plan a stage or TV production of a particular book. Divide the work into three acts of two scenes each. A setting for each scene and stage instructions should also be included.

f. Setting: Compare where you live to the setting of the story using a graphic organizer. How would a particular story change if it were set in your environment? How could a story with a similar problem occur in your own environment? What challenges might

the characters face that would have been similar to the one they did face? For example, being "lost in a snowstorm" might be translated into "lost in a dust storm" for desert climates. How would the details need to change to accommodate this change in setting? Rewrite the part of the book using the new setting.

g. Casting: Pretend that you are a movie producer. You have a specific story to produce. What actor or actresses would you cast for each of the character roles and why? You should be able to justify your choices and point to the key details or information in the "script" that would support your decision.

3. Analysing: Analysis is being able to inspect, tear apart, classify, separate, and categorize data.
Activities that might be used to foster students' analysing skills:

a.Setting Goals: Students were asked to keep track of the pages they read per day. They were asked to set beginning goals and then increase their reading goals as they accomplish the minimal goals for pages read per day. They kept daily reading logs showing their progress on reaching their daily or monthly goals.

*b.Thinking critically***:** Try to be a critic and analyze what the author could have done to make the book more interesting to a reader. You might further develop this idea by writing a chapter, a new ending, or a new beginning as an example. Imagine a different ending for the book and analyze whether the new ending would have improved the book.

c.Time Lines: Create time lines showing the sequence of important events of a story, book, or character.

*d.Thinking about characters***:** a. Analyze which character in the book you most resemble. You should also explain how and why you have come to this conclusion. b. Compare the hero or heroine of the story to someone you admire. How are they alike and how are they different? Your responses could be either in the narrative form or on graphic organizers.

4. Applying: Applying is the ability of applying known patterns to unknown situations. Activities that might be used to foster students' applying skills:

a.Author's message: Write a summary of the message you think the author wanted to convey from his choice of plot or story conclusion. Summarize three to four events from the text that led to this conclusion. The aim of this activity was to "help students consolidate in writing the critical understanding and interpretation that they have derived from their interaction with the text or texts."

b.Rewriting the crisis: Change the crisis in a story to the opposite crisis. Interpret how this change might have impacted the story. Is there another crisis that the main character could have faced or could this crisis have been solved in another way? Write about how this might have changed the story.

c.Interpreting Photographs: For the second task students were asked to find a photograph from a magazine, a newspaper, or from their own photo collection. They were asked to write a theme response for that picture. The aim of this task was to make students aware that reading does not consist of only texts but also of visual images. At the same time the researcher was seeking answer to how students would interpret those images selected by themselves.

d.Keeping Journals: Keep a journal about a book that you are reading as a way of keeping track of your thoughts, questions, feelings or interpretations. You can write about the book or even make illustrations of scenes, key characters, or points that are important to you.

3.8 Action Research

As stated before the study was conducted through an action research cycle. The action research cycle used was adapted from Susman (1983) shown in Figure 3.1.
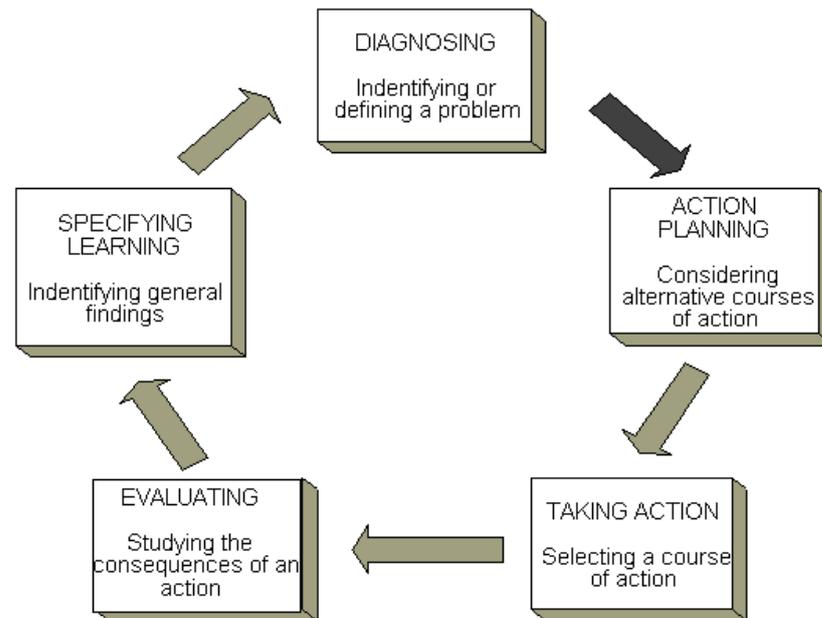
Figure 3.1 Action Research Cycle

3.8.1 Diagnosing

According to the action research cycle the first step to be taken is to identify or define the problem and collect data accordingly so as to have a detailed diagnosis. In our study the problem emerged as a result of the researcher's teaching experience and a thorough literature review about critical reading, learner autonomy, and portfolio implementation. Newly graduate highschool students, as a result of the education system, are not used to read critically, neither are they used to take initiations for their own learning.

3.8.2 Action Planning

The second step to be taken is Action Planning which constitutes the most important part of the implementation since decisions must be taken as accurately as possible before starting to implement the action. In this study, since the reading course was taken as a basis, various plans were done before the actual study started. Teaching Reading is a multi-faceted and complex process. Learning is not linear because students re-enter the reading process and revisit the necessary objectives. Students should be engaged in different kinds of skills: talking, listening, viewing, acting, interpreting, and valuing, as well as reading. "To know something is not just to have received information, but to

have interpreted it and related it to other knowledge one already has." (Educational Leadership, 1992, p.75) Therefore, as an initial step the outcomes and goals the portfolio will address were defined exactly, various tasks that go hand in hand with critical reading were prepared, students were informed about the implementation of the whole study, and a critical reader and autonomy checklist (*which might change in the course of time)* was prepared.

3.8.3 Taking Action

After the action planning done, and all the hindrances that might cross the path were shuffled aside the action started to take place. Students were assigned tasks (stated above) and given deadlines to complete their tasks as well as given time to reflect upon them. Tutorial sessions were held with the researcher who was at the same time their instructor. Feedback was given whenever found necessary. The required documents for the portfolio were filled in by the students. And without disturbing the syllabus of the Reading course the portfolio was implemented.

3.8.4 Evaluating

The evaluating step was done during the whole process within the tutorial sessions as well as at the end of the implementation, during the assessment process. Students were evaluated as a result of the feedback given by the researcher. Whenever needed students were asked to repeat the same task until researcher and student came to a consensus. Data obtained from students' reflection sheets and cover letters were analysed using content analysis.

3.8.5 Specifying Learning

After students had completed their portfolios at the end of an 18-week period (12-week in school and 6 weeks out of school on their own) they were asked to leave their portfolios for a more in-depth analysis by the researcher.

The Action Research Cycle consisted of diagnosing, action planning, taking action, evaluating, and specifying learning. Each action research stage made up a base for the

coming one. The aim was to develop the participants' actions and understanding. (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1988, pp.11-3).

3.9 The Assessment System

As a requirement of the English Language Teaching Department of Çukurova University, preparatory class students sat for two midterm examinations in each semester and a final examination at the end of the year. Since our study comprises only one semester, the researcher and the students decided to add their portfolio grade to the second midterm examination. The portfolio grade was %50 percent of the grade and the sit-down examination constituted the other %50 of the total grade.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES AND CREDIBILITY

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to clarify the procedures that we have taken during the analysis of the five data collection tools. Procedures for each tool will be explained step by step. The process of analysis of the interviews and written documents are almost the same. For these tools, we followed Cabaroğlu's (1999) analysis procedure of the qualitative data (see figure 4.1). The autonomy and critical reader checklist analysis procedure differs from the analysis procedure of the other tools. In the analysis of this checklist we used some simple statistics to show the rates of the students who agree or disagree with the items in the checklist. Therefore we can part this chapter into two sections. The first section will deal with the explanation of the procedure followed to analyse the data that have been obtained from the data collection tools: interview, focus group interview, reflection sheets, and cover letter. In the second section, the procedure that has been followed to analyse the autonomy and critical reader checklist will be discussed. Our aim is to clarify the analysis which led us to the categories that were obtained as a result of the analysis. Results of the interview and the other data collection tools are explained in Chapter 5 in detail.

Familiarisation

Coding/Labelling

Clustering

Defining Codes
Operationally

Retrieving and
Organising Data

Looking for
Interrelationships between
Categories
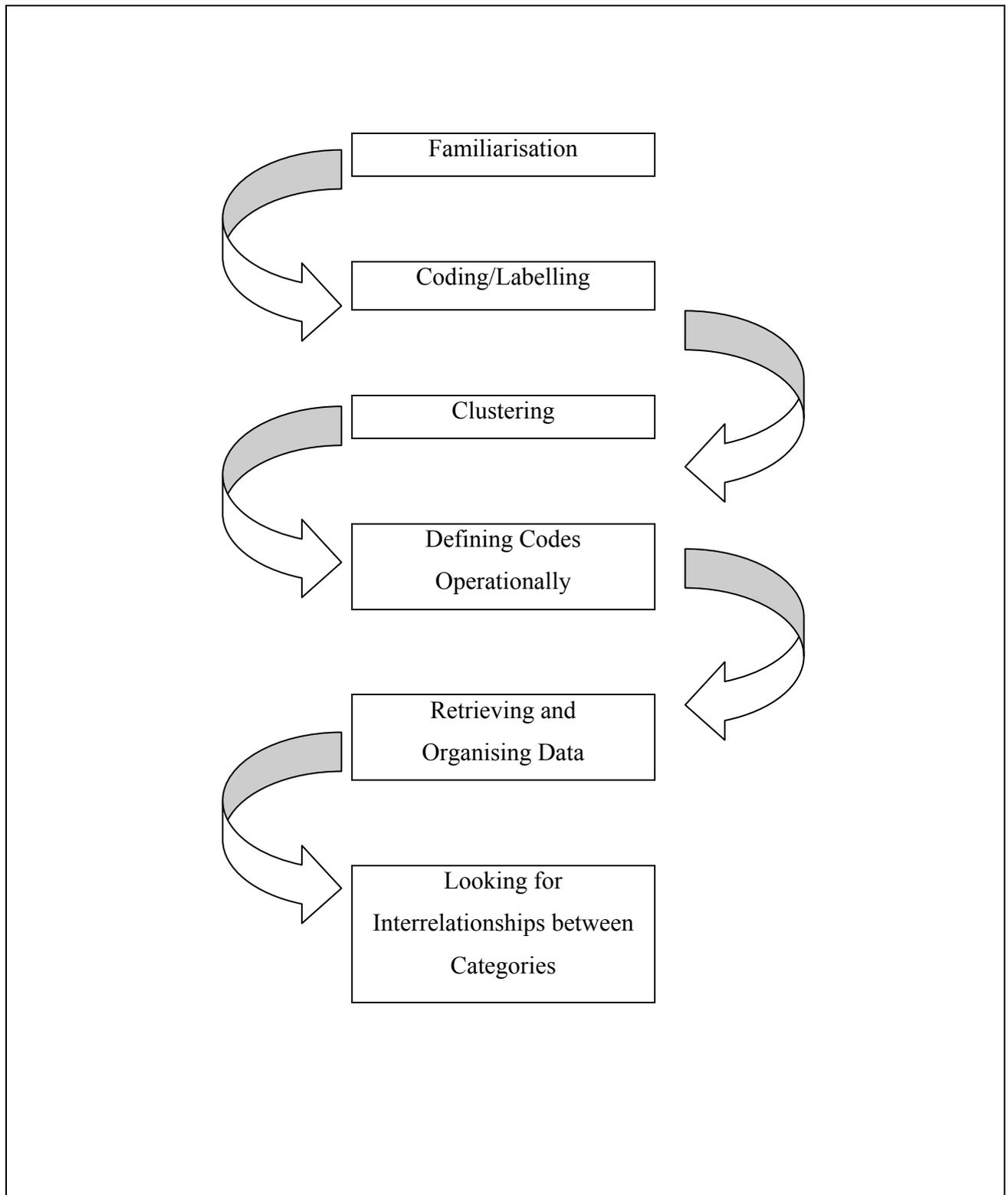
Figure 4.1 Simplified Overview of the Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure
(Cabaroğlu, 1999, p. 127)

4.1 Analysis of the Interview

Familiarisation

The aim of the interview (see section 3.5.2), which was conducted in the sixth week of the portfolio implementation, was to elicit direct answers to Research Questions 2, 3 and indirect answers to the rest of the research questions. After having read the verbatim transcripts for many times we decided on doing cross-case analysis -"grouping together answers from different people to common questions or analyzing different perspectives on central issues" (Patton, 1990)- since our aim was to find students beliefs about common questions. During the familiarisation stage words, phrases, or sentences, sometimes whole paragraphs that were found relevant to the research questions were underlined with different coloured pencils so as to prepare them for the coding stage.

Coding/Labelling

Coding, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) is analysis itself. They define codes as "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (p. 72).The coding stage started with "looking for recurring regularities in the data" (Patton, 2002, p. 465). As a result of these regularities we were able to find patterns that would go into categories. The codes put under a certain category should hold together in a meaningful way and the differences between the categories should be clear and bold. We then worked back and forth in order to verify the meaningfulness of the categories.

The criterion that we followed to make categories out of codes was that the same theme or issue should be mentioned by the participant or different participants for at least twice. In this study students' responses taken from the interview data regarding research question two and three were read many times and the recurring items or issues were underlined in different colours for different issues. At the same time the recurring regularities that seemed to constitute a pattern were written on the margins of the verbatim transcript.

Clustering

After having generated meaningful codes out of the verbatim transcripts, it was time for the clustering stage. This was done through reviewing the codes with the data together

and see which of them might fit together under a category and which differentiate clearly so as to create a new category for them. Clustering can be done in two different ways. The categories may arise from the data itself. The other way to come to these categories is to use a "start list" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). You create a start list as a result of the "conceptual framework, list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and/or key variables that the researcher brings to the study."(Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 58). In this study, clustering was done using both methods. Firstly, the researcher used a "start list" which emerged from the conceptual framework, relevant literature and some key variables that we brought to the study. Later on as we went through the data, new categories emerged out of the data itself.

Defining Codes Operationally

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), codes should be defined so as to put away with the confusion that might emerge as a result of their interpretation. Codes, they argue, can easily suggest different meanings to different interpreters. Since they "will drive the retrieval and organization of the data for analysis, they must be precise and their meaning shared among analysts" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 63). Therefore, to clarify the meaning of each code in this study, they were operationally defined in section five. First of all we thought about what kind of idea the code might evoke in the readers' mind and then we defined it in the way we used it in this study.

Retrieving and Organising Data

After having defined each code operationally, we started to retrieve and organize the chunks of data under their appropriate categories. In this study, we prepared a table for the codes, where we wrote each excerpt under its category. In this way we could easily retrieve the data when and where necessary.

Looking for Interrelationship between Categories

The last step to be taken was to look for the interrelationship between the categories found so far. The codes that emerged from the analysis of the interview were analysed again so as to see whether or not there might be any overlapping among them. After having another look at the verbatim transcripts and the codes we saw that giving some subcategories might help to enlighten the analysis. The subcategories are shown in tables in the next chapter.

4.2 Analysis of the Focus Group Interview

The analysis of the focus group interview was conducted in a similar way to the interview. The aim of this interview was to elicit students' changes in their beliefs about portfolio in general. At the same time we aimed to find answers to the research questions. The entire interview was transcribed. This transcription provided us with a complete record of the discussion and facilitated the analysis of the data. We followed the same steps that we had taken for the interview.

A different point that is worth mentioning here is that during the focus group interview, students were given the transcripts of their first interviews. Since our aim was to find out the changes in their beliefs, this stimulated recall helped us to prevent students from continula repetition. Instead of talking about the same things they focused on the changes that they saw in themselves.

Familiarisation

During the familiarisation stage, we read the verbatim transcripts many times to see whether any changes occurred between the beliefs from the first interview and the focus group interview. To make them more visible we highlighted the occurring differences or thoughts that students added and which were not talked about during the interview. These were sometimes words, sometimes phrases, and even whole sentences.

Coding/Labelling

In the coding stage as was explained before, we started to look for recurring themes among the changes that were highlighted before. As was done during the interview analysis we followed the same criterion; to create a code a theme or issue should be mentioned at least twice either by the participant or by different participants.

During the coding stage of the focus group interview, we paid more attention to the changes that students verbalised. With changes we meant to highlight the beliefs that they either did not mention in their first interview or the things that they had mentioned but about which they changed their minds during the focus group interview.

Clustering

In the clustering stage we organized the data into broad categories. The categories emerged out of the data. We did not have a starting list for the analysis of the focus group interview. Whenever we had a meaningful unit we compared it with the previous ones and the units we gathered from the first interview. If there was no similarity, then we created a new category. This stage continued until all meaningful units were categorised.

Defining Codes Operationally

The codes were defined in a very clear way so as not to give way to any confusion. As was stated above each reader might interpret the codes in a different way. Therefore, we had to be clear and precise about what we meant with each code. Sometimes it was necessary to break the codes into subtitles. This way, we tried to avoid the confusion that the codes might arise in the readers' mind.

Retrieving and Organising Data

The same way that was used during the analysis of the interview was also used for the analysis of the focus group interview. We made use of tables which showed us the categories and the excerpts that can be put under each category. Through this way it was easy to retrieve and organise the data in a planned way.

Looking for Interrelationship between Categories

The next step to be taken is to look at the relationships between the categories that we came up with. This can be done by looking at the data from different aspects like "associations, inversions, casuality or mutual relations" (Miles and Huberman, cited in Cabaroğlu, 1999, p. 143). In this study, we focused on inversions. The organised data was reread to find out whether or not students opposed or changed their beliefs in regard to what they said in the first interview.

4.3   Analysis of the Reflection Sheets and Cover Letters

The same steps that were taken during the interview analysis were also taken while analysing the reflection sheets given at the end of each task and the cover letters given at the end of the portfolio implementation. The only difference was that we did not have

to transcribe the reflection sheets. Yet, still we had to write the documents on the computer. Since students were free to use both the target language and their native language, we had to translate the documents. Not all the documents but only the excerpts that were made use of in the study were translated. Otherwise, since most of the students used their native language, it would take us a long time to translate all of them and this would result in a waste of time.

Familiarisation

The first step that we took was to write the documents on the computer and read them for many times. Our aim was to find whether students wrote about their gains after the completion of the activity. It was hard to find phrases, because students were not used to reflect on what they did. Therefore, we reread the reflection sheets as much as we could. While reading we underlined the phrases that might later on help us to categorise the data.

Coding/Labelling

In this step, as we did in the interview analysis, we started to look for recurring themes. We made use of the words, phrases, sentences that we underlined in the previous step. Here also we met with some difficulties because students reflected more on the activity itself rather than on the gains (if any) they came up with at the end. Since they were allowed to choose their own material, it was difficult to find recurring themes. However, through instant reading of the raw data, we were able to find suitable codes later on.

Clustering

In the clustering stage, we did not have a starting list of categories, but our categories emerged out of the raw data. Meaningful units were taken and compared with the previously found ones. When the meaningful units did not fit under any category, a new one was created for them.

Defining Codes Operationally

Keeping the aim of our study and our research questions in mind, we tried to define the categories that we found as a result of the analysis. The operational definitions of each category are given in the next chapter through the use of subcategories.

Retrieving and Organising Data

Through the use of figures and tables, we organised the data so that we could find the excerpts needed very easily. The retrieving and organising of the data was done by computer instead of cutting out the excerpts as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 176).

Looking for Interrelationship between categories

The same procedure that we followed for the interview and the focus group interview was followed for these written documents. After retrieving and organising the data through the use of computer, we looked for the relationship between the codes we generated from the reflection sheets and cover letters.

4.4 Tactics to Measure Credibility

There are many ways to test the credibility of a qualitative study. In order to answer the question "How can we increase our –and our readers'- confidence in what we have found?", Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest 13 tactics that can be used:

1. Checking for representativeness
2. Checking for researcher effect
3. Triangulation
4. Weighting the evidence
5. Checking the meaning of outliers
6. Using extreme cases
7. Following up surprises
8. Looking for negative evidence
9. Making if-then tests
10. Ruling out spurious relations
11. Replicating a finding
12. Checking out rival explanations
13. Getting feedback from informants

Not all of these tactics were used in this study. The ones that have been used are checking for representativeness, checking for researcher effect, triangulation, and

getting feedback from informants. Through these tactics, which will be explained in detail in the next sections, we tried to make the conclusions as clear as possible.

4.4.1 Checking for Representativeness

In order not to generalize wrongly from specific instances, special attention should be paid to sampling, generalizing, and drawing inferences. These, according to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 264), are the most common pitfalls:

Pitfall	Source of Error
sampling nonrepresentative informants	overreliance on accessible and elite informants
generalizing from nonrepresentative events or activities	researcher's noncontinuous presence at the site; overweighting dramatic events
drawing inferences from non representative processes	nonrepresentative informants and events; heavy reliance on plausibility good fit into emerging explanations; holistic bias

The first pitfall deals with the research design. The source of error as stated above might be the 'overreliance on accessible and elite informants'. In regard to this shortcoming, in our study, we used convenience sampling strategy. At the time of the study, there were five classes attending the preparatory class. Three of them were day classes and two of them were evening classes. To avoid this pitfall, two classes were chosen one of which attended the day classes and the other class attended the evening classes. The total number of the students in the classes was 45. However, two students, due to their being absent for a long time did not participate in the study. The other 43 students of which 31 were female and 22 were male participated voluntarily in the study. Since portfolio implementation is a workload in itself, this number was thought to be an appropriate number to represent the whole.

The second pitfall deals with the elicitation of the data. The source of this error is explained as the researcher's not being able to be on site the whole time which results in his/her giving much emphasis on dramatic events. Regarding our study, it can be said

that there is no place for such a pitfall because from the beginning of the study until the end the researcher was with the student. Apart from conducting the study as researchers, our presence was a must since we were in charge of the Reading course that the participants attended.

When it comes to the third pitfall, in order to avoid drawing inferences from nonrepresentative data, we applied the rule of creating categories only when the themes or phrases recurred more than twice. At the same time when deciding on the categories, we asked colleagues for a category check.

4.4.2 Checking for Researcher Effect

As Miles and Huberman (1994) state there are two possible sources of bias here: a) the effect of the researcher on the case and b) the effect of the case on the researcher. In order to avoid the bias stemming from the researcher effect we tried to stay on-site as much as possible. Although the landscape in this study was a classroom, we tried to hang around with the participants not only during classes but also whenever possible. These times were sometimes a trip with the participants and sometimes a chat about any topic they were ready to talk about. The researcher also tried not to show what she knew about the topic during the interviews.

Throughout the study, the researcher explained every step taken to the participant. The aim was to be clear and frank to them and not to leave any questions in their minds. From the beginning till the end they were repeatedly asked to see the researcher whenever they encountered any difficulties in regard to the study.

Another precaution that was taken in order to avoid this bias was that some of the interviewing was done off-site. The places chosen were convenient places chosen by the interviewees. Generally, the interviews were conducted in the department library. However, for the reasons stated above, the garden of the campus and sometimes the classroom were chosen as places suitable for the interview.

In order to avoid the bias stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher, more than one data collection tool was used to collect data. To intensify and triangulate the

data, three different tools were used in this study: interview, documentation, and checklist.

The research questions were kept in mind throughout the study. This helped us not to wander away from our focus point. At the same time it helped us to analyse the data in accordance with our research questions. The last thing that we referred to in order to avoid bias was to show our field notes to one of our colleagues. This was a safe way of avoiding bias because we had the chance of being observed by a third eye that could often see much quicker where and how we might be misled.

4.4.3 Triangulating

Following Denzin's distinction (cited in Miles and Huberman, 1994), there are three types of triangulation: a) triangulation by data source, b) by method, and c) by researcher. In this study, we used the data source to triangulate the data. Data were collected through interview, focus group interview, documents, and a checklist. As stated by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) "The use of multiple data collection methods contributes to the trustworthiness of the data."

In this study, interview data collected at the beginning of the study and focus group interview collected at the end of the study were compared. Through this we aimed to check the consistency of what the participants said about the same thing over time. Similarly, we checked the consistency between the reflection sheets and the answers given in the checklists. Through this we wanted to corroborate what participants reported during their interviews and what they wrote while reflecting on their tasks.

4.4.4   Getting Feedback from Participants

Another strategy that can be used to measure credibility is getting feedback from participants. It is one of the major and unique concepts in qualitative research where we can establish credibility.It is of great importance to make the participants see the categories emerged out of their interviews and check them against their perceptions.

During the member check, which was conducted two weeks after the evaluation of the portfolios in the 2005-2006 academic year, students were given the revised concept maps and were given the opportunity to revise them. Since the researcher was at the same time the instructor of the participants, there was no problem in finding the participants for a whole hour at the same place.

Yet, although participants were given information about the time of the member-check some of them did not attend the course that day. Also, one of the participants, who was available, rejected to participate in the activity due to some health problems. Therefore, the member-check was done with only 31 students out of 43. The researcher tried to reach the other participants by giving them copies of the findings and the evaluation form. However, none of them replied.

As was done during the analysis, the names of the participants were kept anonymous during the member check. Instead, we used the code numbers like ST1, ST2 during the whole study. In spite of our using code numbers, during the member check, some students tried to find out the owners of the interview excerpts. After the students got used to the process, they started to pay more attention to the meaning hidden within the excerpts instead of the owner of it.

At the beginning, students were reminded of the aim of the study which was followed by a brief summary of the study. During the summary, the most important aspects of the study, the startegies we used to analyse the data, and even a short explanation of how content analysis is done were explained.

At the end of the explanation, students were given the evaluation sheets and were asked to read them carefully. Then, they were alerted that there is a comment part at the end of the evaluation sheet and they were asked to feel free about any issue they agreed or disagreed with. Following is a table that shows the division of the participants' opinions about the given categories.

Table 4.1 Feedback from the Participants on Findings from the Interview

	I don't agree	I don't know	I agree
Categories	-	1	30

Although most of the students agreed to the categories in general, in the comment part they stated the points they do not agree with. Students who wrote their comments in the space provided mainly focused on their reading skills and language development in terms of creativity and productivity. Some of the students' comments are given below:

"I believe most of this items are valid and right for me. I can see those progress in myself and I agree with almost all of those items. You did the right classifications and generalisation. I think I have little motivation. We should choose materials myself in other project."

"I can say that the tasks have helped us in many ways yet, I can say that there are some missing points in 'productivity' and 'research skills'. Researching via the internet medium can be fast but it is not beneficient for us. Things that we are looking for are there ready for us, we are not fatigued while finding them. When coming to creativity we only write the things that you defined for us, therefore not everything that we prepare belongs to us."

"In the benefits of Reflection part questioning is unnecessary. Judging includes all the questions so there is no need for an extra questioning part."

"In my opinion, the definitions "improvement in judgement skills and objectivity" under the category of assessment are wrong. Because, there is no improvement in there. We judged our peers subjectively, for fear that their giving's poor marks to us. Finally, our evaluation was not objectively. We thought our marks while giving them theirs."

"I am not certain about responding to reading accurately. Actually, a lot of things have changed but I couldn't enrich this skill. With hope I try to contact with the writer but I could accomplish it a little. In a determined way I can say that portfolio is an activity that has brought many precious things."

"I don't think that there is a development in language, but not in writing language, we still have problems in speaking language."

"I do not agree with the 'fast reading' part in the Change in Reading category because I do not feel such a change in myself"

"I agree with all the parts except for the 'from theory to practice' in the Change in General part. Because I did not realise it.

Some participants were not content with only agreeing or disagreeing, they also wrote their feelings about the benefits of the portfolio implementation in general:

"I didn't meet a single of students who said 'Portfolio is not useful for me.' Everyone is glad of that improvement."

"I evaluated all of the things written here by students. I saw that all of the students developed themselves in many ways. They have lots of changes in their different skills. The portfolio is very beneficial for them."

"I agree most of the things I read. This is a very beneficial work for us. I feel better after these works. Because I learn many things. I benefit of portfolio very much. I think it is a developing work and I love preparing portfolio."

The feelings of these students revealed that portfolio improves students in many ways. It makes them feel the improvement in themselves. They can see the changes they undergo through the help of portfolios.

4.5   Analysis of the Autonomy and Critical Reader Checklist

The Autonomy and Critical Reader Checklist was designed for this study by taking into consideration the expected goals to be achieved at the end of the study (see section 3.5.4). The Checklist was analyzed to find out whether or not students beliefs matched with what they told us before either orally (through interviews) or in written form (cover letter, reflection sheet).

After collecting the checklists, we calculated the percentage of how many students agreed, disagreed or had no idea about each item in the checklist. After this first step we compared the results with our findings from the other data collection tools. The results will be shown in Chapter 5 in detail.

4.5.1   Validity

"Validation is the process of accumulating evidence that supports the appropriateness of the inferences that are made of student responses for specified assessment uses" (Moskal and Leydens, 2000, Scoring Rubric Development, Validity, para. 2). Three types of evidence are used frequently to support the validity of a data collection tool. These are content, construct, and criterion related evidence.

In order to support the validity of the checklist used in this study, we applied content related evidence by asking 20 teachers of English to match the characteristics of critical reader and autonomous learner as used in this study and the items in the checklist (see Appendix 12)

4.5.2   Reliability

Reliability means that the results of the analysis would also be obtained if different researchers repeated the research and analysis on another occasion. The respondents or participants involved may be different from those in the original research though they will be similar and be doing similar things. However, in this sense reliability might not be very fitting for qualitative research (Mason, 1996). According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 278) in reliability, "the underlying issue is whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods."

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the analysis of the data gathered through the tools namely, interview 1, focus group interview, cover letter, reflection sheets, and checklist. The analysis will be done in three sections in accordance with the data analysis tools: (1) the analysis and discussions of the interview results given at the beginning of the implementation and the results of the focus group interview given at the end of the implementation (see section 3.3.8), (2) the analysis and discussions of the results of the cover letter (see section 3.3.3) and reflection sheets (see section 3.3.2), (3) the analysis and discussions of the results of the checklist (see section 3.3.2) given at the end of the study.

In each section relevant examples from the interview, cover letter, and reflection sheets will be given. The excerpts that were chosen as examples constitute representative samples for the rest of the group. For reasons as have been explained in Chapter 2 participants were free to use their native language during the interview sessions and while writing their reflection sheets. Therefore, some of the representative samples have been translated by the researcher. Yet, in order to see the exact meaning the original form of the same samples are given in Appendix 16.

5.1 Findings from the Qualitative Analysis of Reflection Sheet 1

Reflection Sheet 1 was written as a result of the first selective task in the portfolio project. The first task was to prepare a textbook (see section 3.5). Participants were asked to write their reflections at the end of the task. The purpose of these reflections was to elicit their gains as a result of the task.

The analysis of the first reflection sheets was carried out at the end of the implementation. The analysis started with coding the recurring themes, issues, and patterns which was followed by clustering them into categories. As stated earlier in Chapter 4, categories were built up when themes were mentioned more than twice either by the same participant or by different participants. The analysis of the first reflection sheet data revealed that students gained different skills and attitudes which will be shown in Figure 5.1.

Gains at the end of first task			
Awareness	Higher Motivation	Responsibility	Improvement
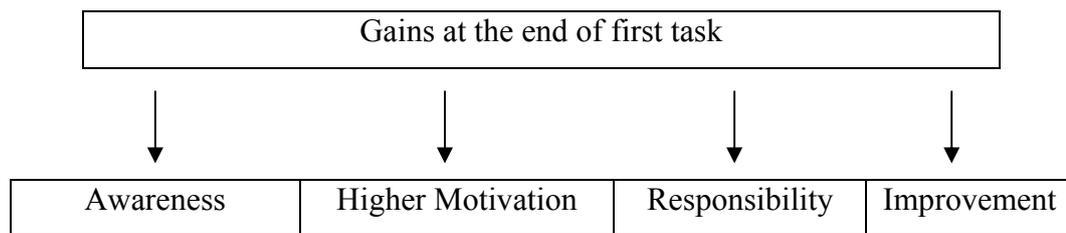
Figure 5.1 Results of the first reflection sheet analysis

The analysis of the first reflection sheets showed that students were aware of the fact that they had to take part in such an implementation so as to gain some specific skills. Categories that arose at the end of the analysis were Awareness, Higher Motivation, Responsibility, and Improvement. The following table gives the four categories with their subcategories and examples from the reflection sheets. The subcategories constitute the operational definitions of the codes that we came up with.

Table 5.1 Categories and Subcategories of the First Reflection Sheet

Category	Subcategories	Example
Awareness	- awareness of strength and weaknesses - awareness of monitoring progress - awareness of abilities	"If I had used the time given in a more effective way, a better and more detailed task would have come out." "I improved types of the question and the technique of question."
Higher Motivation	- in confidence - in pride - in increased productivity	"…to see that one can do something when he wants strengthens his self-confidence."
Responsibility	- in ownership - in initiating tasks	" And the most important thing is that it owns (*belongs*) to me."
Improvement	- in reading strategies - in research skills - in language use	"….I have learned the importance of research."

5.1.1 Awareness

Awareness in this study can be defined as the process of attending to and observing one's own sensing, thinking, feelings, actions and paying attention to the flowing nature of one's present-centred experience .This category was used by a high percentage of the participants not only in the first reflection sheet but also in the following ones as well as in the interview results. Students have stated that they were not used to such creative tasks, therefore as a result of dealing with these kinds of tasks they became aware of their weaknesses and strengths. Some of the students even tried to find solutions for their emerging weaknesses. The following excerpt is an example of how a student reflects on his weakness in time:

> ST8: …If I had used the time given in a more effective way, a better and more detailed task would have come out.

<div align="center">Reflection Sheet 1/p.2</div>

The following excerpt is an example of a student who claims that he had the ability but was not aware of it until having dealt with this activity:

> ST23: …Briefly, by completing this activity I understood that I can create a concrete product. I thank my teacher who helped me to discover this feature which was hidden in myself, but of which I was not aware.
>
> <div align="right">Reflection Sheet 1/p. 7</div>

Student 25 claims that he became aware of his commenting skills as a result of this activity:

> ST25: …Also, while I was preparing my textbook another thing that I became aware of was that my commenting skill was improving. We should not forget that the tiniest details can also be very important.
>
> <div align="right">Reflection Sheet1/p.7</div>

Raising awareness plays an important role in the field of metacognitive development. Sinclair (1999) developed a qualitative framework (see section 2.3.2.2) that can be used when finding out the levels of metacognitive awareness. The results of the analysis show that, according to this framework, we can place the students in this study in the transition stage of this framework. The reason for the students' being placed in this stage is their use of anecdotal evidence, introspection (expression of thoughts/feelings), metaphor, and metalanguage.

5.1.2 Higher Motivation

Higher Motivation was our second category that revealed itself at the end of the analysis. In psychology, motivation refers to the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior (Geen, 1995). In this study the term motivation is used in the sense of having the encouragement to do something. Confidence, Pride, and Increased Productivity were the subcategories that led to Higher Motivation. The following excerpt shows how highly motivated the student was at the end of his activity:

> ST4: …After finishing the topics, the questions and preparing my book, arranging my work in the format of a book and taking it into my hands, the only thing on my mind was happiness. I saw that my effort was not for vain and to

fulfil my responsibility by handing my assignement on time was another source of happiness for me.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 1/p.1</div>

Another student wrote about his happiness, since he saw himself in a different role. He stepped out of being a student and felt himself in the shoes of a professional writer:

> ST5: While I was preparing this textbook, I felt myself very happy. It was as if I was an expert, a professional writer. I was happy because I was doing something beneficial. I was proud of myself and my first textbook so much….I believe that my textbook will be a successful one. My sources, my preparations, and my struggle were wonderful, perfect, and excellent. I think,…I did and learned something good.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 1/p.1</div>

Student 21 wrote enthusiastically about her feelings. Her motivation can be felt very easily. She claims that the first activity reflects her five years of English education.

> ST21: …I completed the first part: questions. I raised my head and there was a strange glimpse of smile in my eyes. Never before had anybody told me to synthesize the things I know, and create a product out of them. The textbook was going to constitute nearly the five years of my whole English life. The exercise parts were passing one by one. To tell the truth it was gradually getting more and more enjoyable. At the end it was completed. Now I have a book that can be called 'made by F…' in my hands. It is all my own aggregation. It is really a great feeling.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 1/p. 6</div>

Motivation and learning are connected like music and dancing. Motivation leads students to getting more and more involved in their own work. Ormrod (2003) asserts that there is a strong emphasis put on motivation in education since it has various affects of how students learn and their behaviour towards subject matter. He concludes that motivation can:

1. Direct behaviour toward particular goals
2. Lead to increased effort and energy

3. Increase initiation of, and persistence in, activities

4. Enhance cognitive processing

5. Determine what consequences are reinforcing

6. Lead to improved performance.

Most of these features, if not all, were seen in the students of this study. The motivation that they gained as a result of the activities especially led to increased effort and energy. As can be seen from the excerpts given above, students, although tired and fatigued were happy to fulfil the requirements.

5.1.3 Responsibility

The category labelled Responsibility emerged as a result of students' starting to take initiatives and their feeling of ownership towards what they have done and learnt. When they start to do their work by themselves without much help from the teacher or anybody else, it gives them a strong feeling of responsibility. Being unaware, they start to initiate tasks they are not asked for. The student in the following excerpt went to the library without knowing the system of the library and found out how it worked so as to finish her assignment.

> ST13: ..I often went to the library for these materials. Yet, owing to the fact that I did not know how I would benefit from the library in the university, at the beginning of my research I had a problem about that. Then I asked and learned. I used the internet and visited websites related to my assignment. I went over many magazines in English quickly at the fourth floor of the library. I found my subjects used for my textbook among those magazines. Also, via internet I found suitable pictures. That got me to gain the research skills.
>
> Reflection Sheet 1/p. 4

Some of the other students stated that their feeling of responsibility increased via taking charge of their own learning. For instance student 16 talked about having found herself through this task. She says:

> ST16: …Firstly, while I was preparing the textbook, I could do something for my own (*self*). I could use my learnings by making them active. Consequently, it is my product. After I did it, I saw that I could do better things in the future. But

I should begin at first by doing early projects. I should improve myself. …I have always wanted to do something different like textbook since high school. I found it here, in fact, in reading.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 1/ p. 5</div>

Taking responsibility is an important part of gaining learner autonomy. Yet, since there are different kinds of responsibilities, one has to be careful about how to define responsibility in this case. Since the participants of this study are newly graduate high school students we decided to attach this label to the students who are aware of the what, why, and how of their learning. If students are aware of these facts they will perceive their learning from a different point of view. They will start to take the responsibility of the things they learn, why they are learning them and whether they will benefit from them as well as how they will learn them.

5.1.4   Improvement

In their first reflection sheets, students stated that the task improved them in many ways. This is why we labelled the category as Improvement, which we take as the positive effect of a process. However, improvement is a very broad term. Therefore, we subcategorised it according to the terms or items that the students used in their reflection sheets. The most mentioned item was change and improvement in reading strategies. Since students had to read at least five articles to be able to complete the task, they claimed that they perceived some changes and improvements in their way of reading. The following excerpt reveals the changes in a student's feelings:

> ST19: … Through this activity I learned how to read fast without using the dictionary, and how to understand the text in one reading. Additionally, through the information I gained I have no more difficulty in writing articles and it started to be easy for me to write them. If we go on doing such activities I think I will be very successful and beneficial in my own field which is English.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 1/p. 6</div>

Similarly,

> ST11: …I realized we should write to learn and change ourselves. We grow gradually especially our minds and thoughts grow as we learn, …. I thought after

this project, writing gives us lots of opportunity and it's a relieving activity but you should want to write, of course. We should look at life with smiling eyes and try to see the good aspects of life.Everytime we write, we recognize our personalities, feelings, thoughts. I believe as we live, for breathing we write our feelings and read to improve ourselves. I'm serious about these opinions.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 5

In addition to changes and improvements students also claimed that they became aware of new reading strategies:

ST21: … Through the textbook I learned how to read books, articles, magazines etc. I can clearly see where to find the questions and how to comment on them.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 6

Another student expresses his feelings about research in this way:

ST4: …Firstly, I learned how to do research. Preparing the questions and reading the texts one by one helped me to increase my grammer knowledge and also to check my previous knowledge.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 1

As can be seen from the above example, the student learned to do research as a result of the activity given. Through the constant repetition of the same tasks he claims that he improved his grammar.

5.2   Findings from the Qualitative Analysis of Reflection Sheet 2

Similar to the first reflection sheet the second reflection sheet was also due at the end of the second task which was a 'picture theme response.' Students were asked to find a picture and interpret it for this task. The aim of the researcher was to give students a small break after the first task which was a very demanding one. Yet, at the same time to make them focus on pictures and let them give their own interpretations. Here again they were asked to write about their gains (if any) at the end of the task.

As a result of the analysis of reflection sheet 2 only two categories emerged which we labelled as Different Perspective and Improvement. The same situation as it was in

Reflection Sheet 1 emerged with the category 'Improvement'. But this time we didn't have to subcategorise it since most of the students talked about improvement in different skills. The following table shows the categories and explains the way they were used in this study:

Table 5.2 Category Labels for Reflection Sheet 2 and their Operational Definition

Category Label	Operational Definition	Examples
Different Perspective	Having the ability to look at views from different points	" Our point of view increased…Each time I looked at it, it became clearer and gave me a different theme."
Improvement	Improvement in different skills	" But this task improved my commenting skills, it taught me that the important thing is not only to look at the picture, but also to see what it wants to tell and that I should be more careful."

5.2.1 Different Perspective

This category was labelled as Different Perspectives since a high percentage of the students revealed in their reflection sheets that this activity made them aware of seeing the details to which they had not paid much attention before. They also claimed that being aware of the details makes them see the picture from a different point of view. Looking at a text, whether it is a picture or a written text, from a different point of view is an important aspect of a critical reader. Although it is a very basic activity, students being unaware, started to take the first step towards critical reading through this activity. One of the students even admitted that he was not aware of his abilities and that this activity helped him to reveal them:

ST5:…It was a useful project for me because in the past I did not know my ability on this subject, writing a response for a photo. So, by the help of this activity, I dig up my this ability from the place where it was hidden.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 2/p. 1</div>

Another student reveals his beliefs about this activity in a very interesting manner:

ST8: …Although the picture I found told everything I tried to explain it with my sentences. I think that I have explained my thoughts and feelings clearly. At this point I understood that I have to explain my own thoughts, I believed that the topic shold be also evaluated from my point of view.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 2/p. 2</div>

Student 41's ideas are worth mentioning here. She clearly states that she has her own way of thinking which can belong only to her:

ST41: …In addition to this, I have started to consider about everything that I see and to comment on it any longer. I have a personal idea that is different from others too.

This student is aware of the fact that each person has the right to say a word about a text, whether it be written or visual. He knows that reading the text and getting information is not enough, but that a reader should also put his own thoughts about the text into words.

Still another student wrote that there is a hidden meaning in each picture by which she most probably meant the hidden main idea.

ST31…Explaining this photo took advantage of looking at a picture from a different way. I can study in detail on a photo which seems very ordinary at first. And thanks to this activity I can find the hidden message in the photo.

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 2/p. 6</div>

When coding this label as Different Perspectives, we meant to draw the attention to how every person constructs his own view from a text even if the text is a picture where everything is given clearly. Students found it challenging to create a theme response for

a picture where actually everything is already given. This helped them to look at texts critically.

5.2.2 Improvement

Improvement in different language skills like writing or speaking is one of the main concerns in this study. This is why we put it as a category: in almost every reflection sheet we came up with such a category. Also during the interview sessions a great majority of the students accepted that different kinds of their skills improved as a result of the portfolio implementation. In this section of the study students mostly claimed that through this activity they found a difference in their commenting and writing skills. To illustrate:

> ST1:… Through this assignement, I realised that I expanded my limits of creativity. I felt the joy of explaining my feelings in an easier way. I used the dictionary and learned new words and in the past I was used to build short sentences instead of long ones because I was afraid of doing them wrong. Briefly I believe that this assignement has helped me in many ways.
>
> Reflection Sheet 2 /p. 1

> ST3:…The things that I gained during this project are to choose the words I need while writing my thoughts, to organise the sentence structure, and to learn different words.
>
> Reflection Sheet 2/ p. 3

> ST4: … But this task improved my commenting skills, it taught me that the important thing is not only to look at the picture, but also to see what it wants to tell and that I should be more careful."
>
> Reflection Sheet 2/p. 1

> ST38… Especially when I finished writing this task I understood what I gained from it. Firstly through this task my creativity and my commenting skills increased.
>
> Reflection Sheet 2/ p. 12

Apart from their writing and commenting skills, some different students wrote about creativity, making inference and interpretation. We could not constitute a category out of these since they were not mentioned very frequently as to be able to categorize a chunk of data it should be mentioned at least twice by the same participant or by different participants.

5.3   Findings from the Qualitative Analysis of Reflection Sheet 3

As a result of the analysis of the third reflection sheets, which were handed in at the end of the two vocabulary activities done for the portfolio, three categories emerged: Change in Dictionary Use, Recognition of Vocabulary Learning Strategies, and Improvement. The change in dictionary use was bidirectional. Some students claimed that the use of these vocabulary strategies led them to less use of dictionaries whereas the other part stated that they got more intimate with their dictionaries during these activities. Students also stated that they made a great benefit of the vocabulary learning strategies as a result of these activites. Learners who are aware of different kinds of learning strategies tend to become more independent learners which in turn will lead them to be autonomous learners.

Improvement is the third category that we came up with. This improvement is slightly different from the ones we obtained as a result of the second reflection sheet in the way that the improvement that students saw as a result of these activities is at the same time a sign for their becoming critical readers. The following table shows the categories resulted from the third reflection sheets and how they were used in this study:

Table 5.3 Category Labels for Reflection Sheet 3 and their Operational Definition

Category Label	Operational Definition	Examples
Change in Dictionary Use	More Use of Dictionary	"This task oriented us to reading and mingling with the dictionary."
	Less Use of Dictionary	"…it thaught me to find the meaning of a word without checking it from the dictionary…"
Recognition of	Getting acquainted with	"…For example, now generally after

Vocabulary Learning Strategies	different vocabulary learning strategies	analysing the meanings of the words that I do not know, I can find their meanings…"
Improvement	In Writing skills	"…Despite everything it is a useful activity for improving our writing, grammer, and productivity…"
	In vocabulary	"..My vocabulary information expanded and improved because of this activity…"

5.3.1 Change in Dictionary Use

As stated before and as can be clearly seen from table 4.3, students started to feel a change as a result of the activities. The change is more towards becoming independent learners and critical readers. The change in their dictionary use habits resulted from their getting more acquainted with the vocabulary learning strategies. For example:

> ST11: … Instead of wasting my time with the dictionary I can advance by doing some brain exercises…

> Reflection Sheet 3/ p. 2

Student 11 finds dictionary use a waste of time. Instead of using the dictionary so often, he claims that one can find the meaning by doing some brain exercise which will result in his more and more getting acquainted with the learning strategies. Almost all of the students made similar comments about the less use of dictionary. The other part of the students claimed that it made them more familiar with the dictionary:

> ST2: …This task oriented us to reading and mingling with the dictionary.

> Reflection Sheet 3/p.1

Becoming intimate with the dictionary is also a necessary way of becoming an autonomous learner since the students will learn lots of things from the dictionary when they are on their own. Becoming autonomous does not mean letting the students on their own without teacher help and instruction. Yet, they may not always be in the supervision of a teacher. Autonomy plays a big role in such a situation. Being able to

use the necessary equipment in a useful and appropriate way will lead them to autonomy.

5.3.2 Recognition of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Starting to recognise the Vocabulary Learning Strategies will make students more independent learners. The more they learn how to deal with their own learning the more they will take charge of it. To exemplify;

> ST4: …The activities that I have done improved my vocabulary knowledge and at the same time they taught us to find the meaning of an unknown word without checking the dictionary. At the same time by using these words in a paragraph I learned their meanings and how they are used better.
>
> Reflection Sheet 3/ p.1

As a result of such a reflection, students will be expected to use these strategies in their future learnings. Another student reflected on his activity in a different way:

> ST13: … From this assignement, I learned that the unknown words can stick in my mind by using them in the paragraph. Moreover, I inferred that while reading any paragraph, we can understand the words' meanings by looking at their places in the sentence.
>
> Reflection Sheet 3/p. 3

She used a different learning strategy and came up with the point that it can be applied to any reading text. From this we can conclude that these strategies will be used by students in their other studies as well.

5.3.3 Improvement

As stated above the improvement students state to have experienced is different from the ones in Reflection Sheet 2. In this one, it is clearly seen, that there is a real change. Students started to get used to the implementation. As a result of this experience, they started to take out of it as much as they can. We subcategorised Improvement into: Writing Skills and Vocabulary.

Students found out that their writing skills improved as a result of such activities, since they were the central point in these activities. To illustrate;

> ST18: …Despite everything it is a useful activity for improving our writing, grammar, and productivity. Writing a paragraph with words that their usage is compulsory, gave us the chance of being more creative, extending our imagine world. I'm pleased with doing this activity because of its benefits to us. While doing this activity being free in writing is the most enjoyful side…
>
> Reflection Sheet 3/ p. 4

As can be seen from the reflection of this student, the activity helped her in some basic skills but at the same time, her being able to choose the topic, although some vocabulary items were a must in this activity, made her do the activity in a more relaxed way. Another student stated that it not only improved their writing, but also their speaking skills:

> ST19: …Writing paragraphs by using such key words improves our writing skills and helps us in our speaking skills by making our thinking easier in a short time.
>
> Reflection Sheet 3/p. 5

Here is another student talking about the improvement she gained:

> ST4: … Moreover, I inferred that while reading any paragraph, we can understand the words' meanings by looking at their places in the sentences. Also I learned how different words can be used in the sentence structure. And the most important one, I comprehended how much necessary using different words was in an article so as to make the article be attractive to readers.
>
> Reflection Sheet 3/ p. 21

She realised the importance of using different and rich vocabulary to enrich her writings. She at the same time started to grasp the significance of attracting other people's attention to what she wrote.

5.4 Findings from the Qualitative Analysis of the Cover Letter

A Cover Letter as stated earlier is an essential element of the portfolio.It consists of two parts one of which is the autobiography of the portfolio owner and the other one is the essay that shows the progress of the owner of the portfolio. The first part, autobiography, was due at the first week of the implementation. It was not anlaysed since the aim was only used to get more information about the participants. The second part is the most important part of the portfolio. Here, the student is given the opportunity to look back at what he/she has done during the whole process and criticise himself/herself. This is a kind of place where the students reflect on the activity as a whole. Since cover letters are given at the end of the implementation, they are the last documents to be evaluated.

Different categories emerged as a result of the analysis of the cover letters. To have a quick glance at all of the categories and their operational definitions, it would be wise to have a look at the table below:

Table 5.4 Category Labels for the Cover Letter and their Operational Definition

Category Label	Operational Definition	Examples
Organization	Planned, less time spent work	"The portfolio means organisation, arrangement I have always wanted to have throughout my life…"
Change in Feeling	Less Frustration	"…at first I did them because they were my homework and they were necessary. However, in the course of time, I discovered they taught me lots of things…"
Change in Reading	First step towards critical reading	"…Before the book activities I read the books carelessly, but now I will read the books for a purpose…"
	Monitoring Progress	"…But while doing it I assumed how they improved me…But now I could see what I did from the first to the end. Moreover I could see whether I improved or not…"
Ownership	Initiating Tasks	"I will give importance to three things… I don't know how to improve it but I study on it."
	Self-Confidence	"…I believe that I was doing something that everyone cannot do…"
	Responsibility	"…This activity provided me so many things; firstly, it taught me to do something in time and hand some works in time…"
Awareness	Strength and Weaknesses	"…I learned that I had a very big problem about my time using…"
Improvement	Language Skills	"…Thanks to portfolio our English improved especially there has been a great progress in our reading skills…"
	Productivity and Creativity	"…I can say that the portfolio activity made me creative…"

5.4.1 Organization

As a result of the analysis of the Cover Letters, a high percentage of the students revealed that the portfolio helped them to become organized in their studies.

Organization is a must in portfolio studies. Through the help of being organised, students stop wasting their time for unnecessary things. As a result of Organisation, students are able to follow their progress in an easier way. At the same time, it becomes easier to evaluate and assess the portfolio when it is organised. One of the students reveals her feelings about organisation in the following way:

> ST13: The portfolio means organisation, arrangement I have always wanted to have throughout my life…In the beginning as I said; the most important assistance of the portfolio on me is to teach how to organize paragraphs and activities…
>
> Cover Letters/ p. 1

Since it is a must to gather all the products with dates and early drafts throughout the portfolio implementation, students have to be organised to get full credit for what they have done so far. This leads to a lifelong habit as the student stated above. Another student looks at organisation from a different perspective:

> ST18: …We learned a lot of things with it. We firstly learned using our time in a right way…We also learnt working regularly.
>
> Cover Letters/ p. 3

Another student became aware of her misusage of time and promised herself to become more organised as a result of the implementation:

> ST8: …This portfolio activity taught me a very important thing: I understood that my using my time was very bad. I promised myself to use my time thoroughly after that. I learned that I have a very big problem about my time using. I am a kind of student who does not have proper studying habit and because of this I had very difficulties while preparing this study…
>
> Cover Letters/ p. 1

After being a part of such a study for a long time, students get aware of their strengths and weaknesses and start to reflect upon them. These kind of reflections lead them to set goals for their future studies. Another student stated that through being organised, she was able to follow her own progress. She could see the progress as she went through her portfolio.

5.4.2 Change in Feeling

This category emerged as a result of the students' repeatedly mentioning of their being afraid of portfolio at the beginning, yet, after starting to do it they changed their feelings towards it. They saw that starting to deal with the portfolio is not as difficult as they saw it at the beginning. The difficulty revealed itself because students were not used to these kinds of assessment types. To illustrate:

> ST9: Like every student I was also afraid when my teacher gave me such homework. Because, at first it seemed to me very difficult. I had never done such homework. And I thought I couldn't do these homeworks. But then I did all of them. Perhaps at first I did them because they were my homework and they were necessary. However, in the course of time, I discovered they taught me lots of things…
>
> Cover Letters/ p. 2

As stated above, students saw the portfolio implementation as a very complicated process at the beginning. Yet, when they started to deal with it, they understood that they would benefit much from it in the course of time. Another student states her change in feeling in this way:

> ST40: …To tell the truth, when I first saw the sample portfolios I was intimidated.I thought about how I could do it, how I could overcome it. Because there were so many pages in the folder that it was impossible not to be worried about it. My portfolio started with this anxiety. But with time this anxiety lessened.
>
> Cover Letters /p. 6

Students in this study had the opportunity to look at the portfolios done by other students. Since they were not familiar with the term 'portfolio' they talked about it as folder. The great number of activities and lots of pages in these folders has frightened the students looking at them. However, later on after they learned what a portfolio is and what to put in it, they got used to it. It became a habit for them. In this way they felt a change in their feeling which we named as less frustration in this study.

5.4.3   Change in Reading

The Analysis of the Cover Letters also revealed that students felt a change in their reading habits. The changes were diverse and varied among the students, yet the most notable one was a step towards critical reading. As a result of extensive reading and the activities done after this reading students started to become more critical in their readings. To exemplify:

> ST2: …Before the book activities I read the books carelessly, but now I will read the books for a purpose…

<div align="right">Cover Letters / p. 3</div>

This student is becoming aware of the fact that unless you have a purpose for reading, your reading will be of not much benefit to you. Being aware of the purpose of your reading is a step towards critical reading. If you have your purpose in your mind, you will be able to understand the text in a better way. Another student who gives his opinions of the use of reading strategies states that:

> ST19: …Also thanks to the ability of guessing the meaning of unknown words, an effective and meaningful reading has revealed. In the past reading was a kind of trouble for me. But now, by means of portfolio, I feel myself as a necessary part of reading…

<div align="right">Cover Letters/ p.4</div>

Student 19 talks about his becoming a necessary part of the text. He started to see the relationship between text, reader, and writer. He realised that to have a meaningful outcome of the reading these three elements should be in integration. The writer of a text tries to give his own opinion, but the critical reader who uses his background knowledge and his knowledge of the world understands the text in the way it fits into his schemata. Student 18 states her feeling about the same issue in this way: "I can think differently about the things which I read or see."

Another example comes from Student 32 who says that:

> ST32: …Portfolios learned (*taught)* me to read a book by examining much more and to see how I can criticize a book. Portfolio learned (*taught)* me to look at a topic from different angles…

<div align="right">Cover Letters/ p. 6</div>

Critical readers are the ones who are willing to take an active role in the process of reading. They are willing to reflect on the ideas they encounter throughout their reading. This is the stage that the students in this study tried to reach as a result of the portfolio implementation. Another important issue of critical reading was mentioned by the students many times in their cover letter. In different ways, they stated that they were able to see their improvement which we categorised as monitoring progress. To illustrate:

> ST14: …But while doing it I assumed how they improved me…But now I could see what I did from the first to the end. Moreover I could see whether I improved or not…

> Cover Letters / p. 2

The same issue is dealt with by another student where she says:

> ST9: …Then I have learned lots of vocabularies. And due to them, I understand the texts better. What's more, I have learned to think critically. Anymore I can see many different things when I look at a picture or read a book…

> Cover Letters / p. 3

While students deal with their activities, they are also aware of their improvements. They are monitoring themselves and since they are aware of their weak points they know how far they have progressed as a result of the portfolio implementation. They know the exact benefit of each activity. For example student 18 states that:

> ST18: …Thanks to portfolio our English improved especially there has been a great progress in our reading skills. Before portfolio my reading was poor, I couldn't read English fast. But now, it improved. With the reading log parts, I learned to read more critically…

> Cover Letters /p. 3

5.4.4 Ownership

This category emerged as a result of students' starting to initiate tasks and their revealing their self-confidence. We came to the conclusion that this behaviour and feeling were due to their taking possession of their learning because if it were otherwise they would not start to initiate tasks without being told to and also they wouldn't be

proud and self-confident as a result of them. A student for example stated what she wanted to do after talking about her weaknesses:

> ST14: …I think I will continue doing something like that. I will give importance to three things: 1. Vocabulary: I plan to continue vocabulary logs. 2. Speaking: I don't know how to improve it but I study on it. 3. I want to improve my gramer. Yes indeed even if I did so many activities I made a lot of gramer mistakes…
>
> Cover Letters /p. 2

She was aware of her weaknesses and made a plan accordingly. She started to take charge of her own learning as a result of seeing her improvement which came through the portfolio implementation. Another student states that even though we might finish the portfolio implementation in class she will continue to collect her products:

> ST4: …That is why even if our portfolio activities finish, I think of going on doing them…Because I think that I am doing everything for myself.
>
> Cover Letters /p. 5

Student 5 talked about the pride and self-confidence he gained as a result of the implementation:

> ST5: …I felt myself very happy and powerful. Because I believe that I was doing something that everyone cannot do…And I saw that I can use my knowledge and experience if it is needed…Also, by this work my self-confidence is improving day by day…Now, by the help of confidence that this activity gave me, I can do whatever I want.
>
> Cover Letters / p. 1

After gaining his self-confidence, he was sure of himself and the work he might do in the future. The strategies and techniques that the students used succesfully to improve themselves facilitated their learning for future cases. They are no more frustrated about what will come in the future. Student 7 talked about something different which he came up as a result of his portfolio studies:

> ST7: …After starting these tasks I kept on writing my diary which I had left for a while. From time to time I write in English in my diary. I guess starting with my diary is also a product of these acxtivities…
>
> Cover Letters / p. 5

He states that even though it is not a writing portfolio he started up to write his diary as a result of the implementation. Here we can see how the students are affected by different activities and how these activities reflect themselves in some other different activities. They lead them to become more self-confident, proud, and successful students.

Another subcategory of Ownership emerged as Responsibility as a result of the analysis. Responsibility unfolded itself in different ways. For instance student 7 started to feel responsibility as a result of the Home Reading Logs which he stated in his Cover Letter like that:

> ST7: …The Home Reading logs burdened us with daily responsibilities. Through these small responsibilities I understood that if you neglect small responsibilities they will turn into problems. That is why I do not neglect small responsibilities so as not to get into trouble. Briefly, I do not keep today's work until the next day…
>
> Cover Letters /p. 5

Student 37 stated that although we can not wholly give the credit for responsibility to the portfolio, still it was useful in creating more responsible students.

> ST37: Another thing that we acquired is responsibility. Actually, this is not something peculiar to the portfolio, because each homework assignement awakens a feeling of responsibility in the students, yet since we did a lot of assignements for the portfolio we can count it also.
>
> Cover Letters /p. 6

Another frequently mentioned issue under the category of responsibility was time. Students believed that the portfolio implementation helped them to organize their time and become responsible students who are able to hand in their works on time. The reason of this was the strict rules that were given about the deadlines at the beginning of the implementation. Since we were implementing a process to see the outcome, deadlines were of great importance in the portfolio. Student 25 for example, after talking about different benefits of the portfolio stated:

> ST25: …At last, that portfolio activity made me a responsible person. I
> learned to finish my homeworks on time.
>
> <div align="right">Cover Letters/ p. 7</div>

Similarly,

> ST22: …This activity provided me so many things; firstly, it taught me to
> do something in time and hand some works in time…
>
> <div align="right">Cover Letters /p. 7</div>

Responsibility, an important element of autonomy, started to reveal itself at the end of the implementation. This was due to different activities and students benefited not only from the activities themselves, but also from the things the activities required like handing them on time, giving page numbers, writing the dates on each draft. These small things resulted in big issues like organisation and responsibility as can be seen from the reflections of the students.

5.4.5 Awareness

Awareness is a relative concept. Being aware does not necessarily mean understanding. Yet, at least if people become aware of what they are doing, at which point they are standing, they might take their future steps accordingly. This is what emerged from our analysis. Students, started to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This awareness resulted in their taking decisions and setting goals for the future. One of the students stated that he was not aware of his abilities until he got acquainted with the portfolio:

> ST5: …Up to now, I haven't forced myself, my brain, my abilities such this.
> But, when I started doing this portfolio, I saw that I was an expert. Now, by the
> help of confidence that this activity gave me, I can do whatever I want.
>
> <div align="right">Cover Letters /p. 1</div>

He started to get familiar with his own capacity, which made him feel more self-confident. He knew that he would be able to do activities easily in the future.

Student 8 explained her concerns of awareness from a different perspective. Her problem was with time organisation. She explained her thoughts in this way:

> ST8: …I learned that I had a very big problem about my time using. I am the kind of student who does not have proper studying habits and because of this I had very difficulties while preparing this study. I used to delay my homeworks to the last day. I learned that this will be a very big trouble for me so I decided, actually started to use my time properly.
>
> Cover Letters /p. 4

This student was aware of her time problem even before the implementation started. What she understood through the implementation was that she had to deal with it right away. So, she had to start making decisions and setting goals about this problem. This she achieved at the end by saying '(I) actually started to use my time properly'.

Another student's awareness was related to her thinking strategies:

> ST11: …To start with, we learned to think. In the past, I didn't use to think well while reading or writing something, but now, I realized the importance of the way of thinking or comprehending.…Reflections provide us to be aware of what we did and why…
>
> Cover Letters /p. 1

She realized and became aware of the weakness in her thinking strategies and way of comprehension. She started to give more importance to the way she perceived knowledge given in texts and started to deal with it accordingly.

Students showed that they got aware from different points of view. These points varied from learner awareness to social awareness. They were aware in terms of their attitudes, beliefs, and motivation; aware of the language as a system; aware of the metacognitive strategiesand the presence of others in the classroom.

5.4.6   Improvement

Improvement is a category that was mentioned in almost all the written documents collected as data as well as the interview. As a result of the analysis of the cover letters, improvement emerged from two different issues: improvement in their language skills and improvement in productivity and creativity. Improvement of language skills was

due to the abundant use of different tasks whereas improvement in productivity and creativity seems to be the result of the use of students' higher order skills while performing the tasks. For instance, Student 14 states that she thought the tasks to be difficult but while doing them, she realised how they improved her (Cover Letters, p. 2). Student 18 gave her opinions about improvement in this way:

> ST18: …Thanks to portfolio our English improved especially there has been a great progress in our reading skills. Before portfolio my reading was poor, I couldn't read English fast. But now, it improved…The most important thing that we learned from there is using our English in an effective way…
>
> Cover Letters/ p. 3

After having done an extensive and intensive reading for a period of time, students improved their reading skills. Creativity and Productivity were the frequently mentioned issues where students claimed to have improved as a result of the implementation. To illustrate:

> ST2: …In highschool we were accustomed to test style and we didn't think much about English. Everybody says that university needs creative brains and we didn't know how to become creative. I can say that the portfolio activity made me creative…
>
> Cover Letters/ p. 3

Creativity is a mental process which involves the evolution of new ideas or concepts or the association of existing beliefs with new beliefs. Creativity requires the use of higher order skills. Since the activities were the ones in which students needed their higher order skills it is not very surpising that students improved their creativity.

5.5   Findings from the Content Analysis of Interview 1

The interview data obtained from the 43 participants were subjected to content analysis. The analysis revealed a set of seven broad themes (Table 5.5):

1. comments regarding the students' improvement in different skills and attitudes;
2. comments regarding the students' motivation;
3. comments regarding the improvement students perceived towards becoming critical readers;

4. comments regarding the changes in feelings of participants towards becoming autonomous;

5. comments regarding the reflectivity of the checklist within the field of critical reading and autonomy ;

6. comments regarding the benefits of reflection;

7. comments regarding the benefits of portfolio implementation in general

These comments have helped us to find particular answers to the research questions we sought in this study. Following is a table that shows us in what aspect each category has been used and excerpts that constitute examples for each category.

Table 5.5 Category Labels for the Interview Data and their Operational Definition

Category Label	Operational Definition	Example
Improvement	- in language - in research skills - in organisation	"…First of all I have never used a computer, never searched anything… Now for example when you give me a topic I do not think that I will have any difficulty…"
Motivation	- through choosing their own material to read	"…Maybe now I like it because I choose the text, the texts I like and that are suitable for me…"
Change in Reading	- reading for understanding -reading for self-improvement - fast reading	"…In the past I read for the sake of reading or for pleasure. Now I believe that I have to understand what I read…"
Change in General	- feeling - productivity - from theory to practice - point of view - initiation of tasks	"…I feel myself better because I started to do something…"
Self-/Peer Assessment	- objectivity - improvement in judgement skills	"…Of course it is something good. Human beings sometimes can not tell their own faults to themselves. Sometimes they cannot

	- awareness of weaknesses	even tell it to their friends. But through this I guess we learned to tell it. We improve our judging skills, our commenting skills. And we are doing this here for the first time …"
Benefits of reflection	- questioning - judging themselves - monitoring progress	"… I look at myself as a critique. I can criticize myself. I can see my weaknesses, I can comment. While writing a reflection I can comment on what I have written…"
Benefits of Portfolio	- responsibility - awareness - organisation - questioning -monitoring progress	"…With portfolio I do not feel myself empty. When I go home in the evening I have something to write. There is responsibility …"

5.5.1 Improvement

During the interview students frequently used the word improvement for different skills. As a result of the analysis, the part they mostly improved in was the use of language. Through extensive reading and responding to their readings, students were almost always dealing with the target language using their different skills. This resulted in their becoming aware of the improvement they displayed in their portfolios. For instance,

> ST1: … I noticed that the structure of my sentences changed. In the past I used to make shorter sentences now I am improving them…

> Interview 1/ p.1 (01.12. 2005)

She became aware of the change in her sentence structures. The extensive reading she has done has resulted in her using longer and more complicated sentences in her respondings. She is in a way starting to monitor her progress. Using short sentences might not be a wrong thing to do for a preparatory class student, yet she is aware of the fact that she cannot use short sentences for the whole time and states that she has started to improve them and will go on to do that. Another student compiles his gains in this way:

ST4: … When you are asking from the point of view of English learning since we read more English sources we improved our English, we improved our grammar, and we improved our fluent reading, we did it…

Interview 1/p. 8 (01.12. 2005)

This student also talks about the benefits he gained through the use of extensive reading, as a result through reading portfolios. S/He became aware that this process developed his/her skills in grammar and reading.

The second frequently mentioned improvement was development in research skills. Newly graduate students stated that they were not skilled in doing research because of the education system and they added that high schools didn't require these skills.

ST30: …If there is nothing I can say that before the portfolio I did not have any acquaintance with the computer. We just played games with our friends. Now for example, in order to find those 5 articles we searched a lot. I learned to use the internet at least how to do research.

Interview 1/p. 63 (30.11.2005)

Similarly another student relates his ideas in this way:

ST33: …Up to now we were given the books to be read and asked to read them, but now we are searching them ourselves, we are finding them, this is nicer.

Interview 1/p. 69 (30.11.2005)

Instead of giving them the opportunity to find out for themselves, they were given the material and asked to read it. Student 41 states it very clearly:

ST41:…First of all I have never used a computer, never searched anything. How can I search a topic? Where can I find the reated information? I had no idea about these. I am a person who came right from highschool. Our education system is also known. A system where the students stay with what they get from the teacher. It is the first time we have done something with our own effort. I mean without expecting anything from the teacher. We did a lot of research by using the computer. Now for example when you give me a topic I do not think that I will have any difficulty. How can I find information about a topic, where

can I find it, what kind of sources etc. I know all these. I learned how to use a computer through all these…

<div align="right">Interview 1/p. 85 (30.11.2005)</div>

Up to now, students regarded themselves as spoonfed. They were used to a teacher oriented way of learning and did not feel much need for taking responsibility for their own learning. With the help of the portfolio implementation they found the opportunity to find the material they want to read and respond to it accordingly. To be able to do this, they had to do some research which they were not good at. Through this experience they started to observe their own improvement and reflected upon it during the interview.

Another issue in which students felt improvement in was organisation. Through being organised they started to become aware of what would come next. In this way they started to initiate their own work without being told by the teacher. To illustrate:

> ST5:… Yes, of course there is a very big change in me. First of all it is in regard to responsibility and I did lots of things I have never done before with the portfolio. My researching skills improved. I learned how to do many things in an organized and systematic way…

<div align="right">Interview 1/p. 10 (01.12.2005)</div>

Similarly,

> ST8: …With the portfolio I learned organisation. Basically, I learned to do something in an organised way. Not only one thing but I learned to do many things in an organised way. Because there are a lot of tasks and we are doing them in a different way and we learned to put them in an organisation.

<div align="right">Interview 1/p.16 (01.12. 2005)</div>

Organisation is important in fostering learner autonomy and critical reading, because through an organised portfolio students will be able to follow and monitor their pogress. With the portfolio product over time students will have organized evidence in their hands (Stein, 2001). Through looking back and forth in their portfolios, they will see the difference between their first drafts and their last drafts. They will also become aware of

the process they underwent until reaching the best and most perfect draft. Student 13 reflects on it in this way:

> ST13: … Organisation, system, improvement. When somebody looks at it from the beginning to the end, they will see that the first task and the last task I have done are not the same because I can see my weaknesses gradually and I try to correct them.
>
> Interview 1/p. 28 (30.11.2005)

5.5.2 Motivation

The second category that we deduced out of the research questions is Motivation. Our aim was not to seek whether students were motivated to read more through the use of portfolios. However, it came out that the majority of the students did not have the habit of reading since they had been involved in solving tests for a long time. Some of the students stated that they had the habit of reading yet not in the target language. The most important issue that motivated them to read (even though it was reading done for doing their homework assignements) was having the opportunity to choose their own texts. For instance,

> ST3:…My point of view of reading changed. In the past when I read something in English although short, I got bored or I got the feeling that I would not understand it. I could not read a scientific article because I thought I wouldn't understand it or sometimes when I read the newspaper I had such a prejudice. I cannot understand these. I know English but I do not understand. It is something like when you have English for a long time and since you do not have the opportunity to talk to a tourist you cannot speak because of excitement and then you withdraw. Something like that. But now, you have to do it and you start doing it gradually and when you notice that you understand you go on and then you start enjoying it.…
>
> Interview 1/ p. 6 (01.12.2005)

As can be seen from this student's comment about how his reading habits changed after the reading portfolio, we can state that the use of portfolio motivated and encouraged him/her to read more. Students were in need of being pushed towards something. After getting aware of what they can do, motivation to do it came by itself. Another student

talks about how he was motivated as a result of having the chance to choose his own material:

> ST5: …In the past I did not like the reading course. I did not like reading. I did not like analysing the text given and answering the questions of the text. Reading was something unfavourable. We came across long texts. However after dealing with the portfolio I thought that this reading is something good, something that is a must, something beneficial. In the past we just read and answered the questions. It was boring. Maybe now I like it because I choose the text, the texts I like and that are suitable for me…

Reading was not one of his/her favourites, yet feeling the responsibility of doing his/her homework assignements with material choosen by himself/herself resulted in motivation to read.

5.5.3   Change in Reading

Another category that we deduced was the change students felt in their reading habits. This category we divided into three as: Reading for analysing, reading for self-improvement, and fast reading.

Students during the interview stated that they started to direct their reading towards reading for analysing. They verbalised it as understanding. In the past they used to read but did not pay much attention to whether they understood it or not. To exemplify;

> ST1: …In the past I read for the sake of reading or for pleasure. Now I believe that I have to understand what I read because this is very important for the activities I do. I mean I try to absorb what I read; I think about the characters, I compare them, now it is better…
>
> Interview 1/p. 1 (01.12.2005)

Similarly another student gives credit to vocabulary logs for this change in his reading:

> ST4: …Yet after learning these words I started to understand the book better, either book or newspaper. I read by understanding. In the past when I read something, I did not understand what they meant. I made up something from my

mind and said he might have said this or that. But now I can see what the words mean one by one…

Student 5 also states that through the use of vocabulary logs he started to understand the text in a better way:

ST5: …Previously I just read and passed and I did not understand % 90 of what I have read. When I did not know the meaning of a word I did not understand the whole paragraph. But now with the help of these vocabulary logs, I can say that I started to understand better…

The second subcategory that is worth mentioning is Self-Improvement. Students claimed that they started to read in order to improve themselves. They stated that in the past, reading was done for the sake of reading, whereas now they do this activity to improve themselves, to fatten their knowledge. For instance,

ST6: …I do not read for the sake of reading. I read by relating meaning to what I read. I try to gain something from what I read. Not for the sake of reading…

One of the students looked at the change of her reading from a different perspective. She stated that she used the texts to improve her world knowledge as well as her language skills.

ST26: …For instance, I started to read newspapers. I got the habit of reading newspapers. I read current events carry them into my life, think about them, criticize, and comment on them…

As an answer to the question about setting goals, a student mentioned about her perception of self-improvement. She states:

ST29: …I enjoyed what I read. I feel that I am improving and I decided not to sleep without reading for an hour. Absolutely, because in English you forget your English dies down…

Similarly another student states that one of her goals is improving herself through the use of extensive reading which they did a lot during the study:

> ST37: … I had only improving my English on my mind. How can I improve my English, I have only this on my mind. I constantly aim at studying more and I think that after finishing those four books they will be very beneficial for me. Because when I finished the first book I realised lots of differences in myself…

Interview 1/p.77 (07.12.2005)

Student 41 states that she no more reads for getting high marks. "The more important thing", she says, "is doing it for myself." She means that getting high marks is no more her only goal but the more important thing is to improve oneself academically through these tasks.

(Interview 1/p. 85 (30.11.2005)).

Students who read less can not read fast and understand what they read at the same time. The more they read, the better they will understand and the faster they will become. During the implementation students noticed that they are getting faster and faster as a result of extensive reading. When we asked students about the changes they felt in their learning, some students asserted that they became faster in reading. Their becoming faster ensued in their understanding better. To represent:

> ST18: …In regard to learning, in regard to perceiving English I started to be faster… Since my vocabulary knowledge increased I started to read more and faster…

Interview 1/p. 38 (02.12.2005)

Some students declared that the vocabulary logs had a big impact on their change in reading. Through the vocabulary logs, their active vocabulary increased and they started to use the dictionary less which resulted in fast reading. For instance:

> ST19: …previously while reading a passage I constantly used the dictionary but now the more we learn vocabulary from th passages we read the more fluent and fast we will be in the following …

Interview 1/p. 40 (02.12.2005)

Equally, when student 21 talked about the changes he felt for his own learning he states that:

> ST20: …I realised that my reading pace increased and that I understand what I read better. I saw that I finish the books faster and I started to enjoy them more…Yes, as I said my reading pace increased. My capacity of understanding my vocabulary knowledge increased. I can say that it helped us from many …
>
> Interview 1/p. 41 (02.12.2005)

The change that students felt in their reading can be obviously seen through the analysis of not only the interview but also the other data collection tools. It developed gradually and towards the end we inferred that students were able to handle with their reading on their own. They started to become responsible enough to decide what, when and how to read.

5.5.4 Change in General

This category emerged as a result of students' stating the changes they underwent. They talked about the feelings that they haven't felt before, yet which they recognised throughout the portfolio implementation. Some students noticed that they were able to do many things but since they were not asked to, they did not think of initiating it themselves. However, for the present time they said it started to get easier to do the work they are asked to as well as to start something on their own. When we look at Student 1, she states that;

> ST1: …I feel myself better because I started to do something, to produce something and I can see that my sentence structures …
>
> Interview 1/p. 1 (01.12.2005)

She feels herself better because she became aware of the potential she has. Similarly,

> ST3: …previously I did not have the opportunity to use English except for the tests and written things. But that book completely belonged to us. It makes you feel that you know something. You realise that, you become conscious of that…
>
> Interview 1/ p. 5 (01.12.2005)

After doing the activities and being a part of the implementation, doing everything by themselves, they realised that they also could achieve their goals as individuals. Many students stated that they started to be a part of the study in fear and frustration. Yet, with time these two feelings changed into more positive feelings. They realised the importance of being able to do either with the help of the teacher or without. Student 9 talks about her feelings at the beginning of the portfolio and states that she had difficulties to start which ended up in fear (Interview 1, p.18). Student 17 states her feelings about fear in a similar way:

> ST17: …I was worried when you first gave us this task. I mean I worried about how to do it and it was so complicated. However, when I started doing it I realised that I am doing something, I saw that I improved…
>
> Interview 1 /p.36 (30.11.2005)

Student 26 talked about how a part of her character underwent a change through the portfolio implementation. She says:

> ST26: …I have a kind of careless type of character. When I read something I immediately make something. But now I read every single word. And I do not have to know the meaning of every single word. In the past when I came across a word that I do not know I got into panic. Especially in these book readings there are lots of words that I don't know but which are not in my portfolio. But now I can guess the meaning of the words from the context (sentence). I mean I do not panic anymore. In the past I thought I need a lot of information in order to be able to read and I like reading but I could not do it in English. Because when I started to read something in English and when I did not understand something or when I did not force I just quit going on reading …
>
> Interview 1/ p.53 (30.11.2005)

Since students are graduates of the same education system, they were used to answering multiple choice questions where they had the answers in front of them. In our study, the point was to make students aware of what they knew and what they still had to learn. The student above knew her weaknesses and through extensive work started to overcome them.

The most frequent changes that students underwent were initiation of tasks. To illustrate;

students stated that by the help of the portfolio implementation they started to initiate tasks which they had not done before. They realized that they could do many things without a teacher. The teacher was no more in the centre of the class, but only a person who leads into the way, who is there to give direction, instruction when and wherever needed. Student 3 states this change in this way:

> ST3: …I did not have the habit of researching a topic except for when I was given a task but now when something comes to my mind I start to work on it …
>
> Interview 1/p.5 (01.12.2005)

As can be seen, in the past he expected somebody to stimulate him to to do something, whereas now he states that he can initiate his work by himself as soon as he finds there is a problem. This also is a way towards learner autonomy. Students know their weaknesses; know where to find the solution and head on to solve their problems. Similarly;

> ST41: …It is the first time we did something with our own efforts. I mean without expecting something from the teacher. For instance when you give me something now I do not think that I will have any difficulty in doing it. I mean I now know where to find information about a topic, how to find the information and which sources to use …
>
> Interview 1/p.85 (30.11.2005)

5.5.5   Self-/Peer Assessment

The fifth category that we deduced out of the analysis was self-/peer assessment. During the interview we asked students how they felt about assessing themselves and being assessed by their peers. Students related different feelings of this assessment type. It was obvious that the majority of the students had this type of experience for the first time. Therefore, they had difficulty in adapting themselves to it, because during the interview when they were asked about it, some of them stated that they could not be objective during the assessment. Yet, still some other students had a different opinion about objectivity and stated that it was not difficult for them to assess both themselves and their peers because it was a part of their improvement. The following excerpts show the two differing ideas about assessment very clearly:

ST5: …Of course it is something good. Human beings sometimes can not tell their own faults to themselves. Sometimes they cannot even tell it to their friends. But through this I guess we learned to tell it. We improve our judging skills, our commenting skills. And we are doing this here for the first time …

<div align="right">Interview 1/ p. 11 (01.12.2005)</div>

This student is talking about the improvement in his judgement skills both while he is assessing himself and his peers. He states that he is starting to become critical towards himself. Another student reveals his thoughts about assessment by saying:

ST8: …Very nice. If we would evaluate only our own portfolios or only our friends' portfolios it would not be that nice. I mean we should evaluate our own products. At the same time our product should be evaluated by a friend who is at the same level with us, not a teacher. We learn to be objective. We evaluated ourselves objectively. I think it was nice …

<div align="right">Interview 1/p. 17 (01.12.2005)</div>

She thinks that objectivity is an essential part of assessment. Students should have an idea of how well they peformed on a task. They should be able to evaluate themselves critically. Student 23's thoughts about assessment are quite different. He states that knowing that they will be evaluated by themselves makes them to control themselves more than usual:

ST23: …Of course there were things that we could not see. When we have a peer our peer shows it to us.When we know that we have a peer there we try to make less mistakes. Certainly it is something nice because while we are doing self-evaluation we control ourselves and try to make fewer mistakes. We do not write it and leave it uncontrolled. We write it as if it will be checked by somebody else. Actually I mean we do it with great care …

<div align="right">Interview 1/p. 48 (30.11.2005)</div>

The following excerpts show how students think that they are not objective while assessing due to some reasons like fear of getting low marks or offending their peers:

ST24: …I think I am not very…Not very objective. When your friend is your peer, to tell the truth you give high grades. When I graded myself I tried to give

low grades but then I was also afraid what if everybody gives himself/herself high grades and only me with a low grade. I had such a fear …

Interview 1/ p. 50 (30.11.2005)

Similarly;

ST30: … Actually, to tell the truth we could not completely tell what was inside us. For example there was a friend of mine whom I was not on good terms with. If I say something he/she will misunderstand me. And I had the fear that if I give him/her a low grade, he/she also might give me a low grade. We could not analyse it completely. Even if my peer has a very bad portfolio I can not give him/her a low grade. We could not be objective. At least it was like that this time …

Interview 1/ p. 64 (30.11.2005)

These students and many others (ST 3, ST 4, ST 6, ST 35, ST 37, ST39…), who have the same opinion about assessment are actually not very familiar with assessment. Therefore, it was difficult for them to be objective. During the second interview, we will see that some of them changed their opinions since they got used to this system and saw how it contributed to their improvement.

Almost half of the students stated that as a result of the self and peer evaluation they became aware of their weaknesses, were able to compare their works with their peers, and started to control themselves as a result of this.

5.5.6   Benefits of Reflection

The sixth category worth mentioning was benefits of doing reflection. Reflection in this study is regarded as the reactions of the students as a result of the activities.Due to the education system which the students were a part of, they were not used to reflect on what they did. During the implementation students were asked to reflect on whatever they did. They felt that this was an overload because after some time they did not find anything to reflect on. Yet, they still could see the benefits very clearly. When talking about benefits, students mostly mentioned questioning themselves, judging themselves, and monitoring their progress. The following excerpts show the opinions of students about reflecting:

ST1: …To make a homework assignment a real assignment, to make us see the truth, not only to do it for the sake of doing homework, but to see what we can do when we add our own thoughts to something. I think about what it made me gain because writing it on a paper shows it to me …

Interview 1/ p. 2 (01.12.205)

This student considers reflecting in the way that it makes her aware of what she is doing. Through the reflection she is questioning what she is doing. This will result in the better understanding of the why of her learning.

ST6: … I look at myself as a critique. I can criticize myself. I can see my weaknesses, I can comment. While writing a reflection I can comment on what I have written…

Interview 1/ p. 13 (01.12.2005)

Student 8 feels proud of writing reflections because she thinks that value is given to her thoughts through reflections. (Interview 1/p. 17). Similarly, student 9 also talks about how she feels during the reflecting period. She says:

ST9: …I enjoy to criritcize something that I have done myself. I enjoy looking at it and scrutinizing it. …

Interview 1/ p. 19 01.12.2005)

This student feels happy because she was given the opportunity to criticise herself. Student 11 confesses her initial feelings about writing reflections. However, after getting used to them she changes her opinion in this way:

ST11: …I have to confess: It cannot be after every activity! It started to get difficult but later on I started to write them in a few minutes without using a daft… Reflections started to be soothing…While writing them I can realize my improvement. We started to be more conscious. We started to get out of the student mood and step into not may be teacher mood yet we started to improve...

Interview 1/p.24 (01.12.2005)

In the beginning she thought of them as an overload, whereas later on she started to monitor her progress with the help of them. Reflection sheets made this student become aware of what she is doing, why she is doing it and how she is doing it. These will help

her in becoming a more autonomous learner. Similarly, Student 14 also talked about how reflection sheets helped her to question herself. She also did not know what to write as reflection at the beginning of the implementation. She thought of reflection as a kind of summary, yet throughout the implementation she understood that reflecting is in a way the gains that she had from that task. Therefore, she stated that they helped her to question herself. (Interview 1 /p.30).

Some of the students were still not aware of what a reflection is until the end of the portfolio implementation. For them it was a place where they wrote the same things continuously. To illustrate:

> ST21: … As I said reflections are standard I cannot write my reflections for everything I do because I feel almost the same after each task. We do different activities but I do not find anything to write. That is why I have difficulty in writing reflections …

> Interview 1/ p. 44 (02.12.2005)

When asked whether reflections are beneficial or not some students stated that they were not beneficial because they consisted of their own feelings which they stated were not worth mentioning (ST 25, ST 30, and ST 38).

As can be seen from the excerpts, students started with a negative view towards reflection, yet with time they became aware of their benefits and liked doing them. Only some of the students thought that they could not benefit from them throughout the implementation.

5.5.7 Benefits of Portfolio

The last question of the interview was about what the students thought of the portfolio in general. Students' answers varied. The phrases that were mostly used by the students are shown in Figure 5.2.
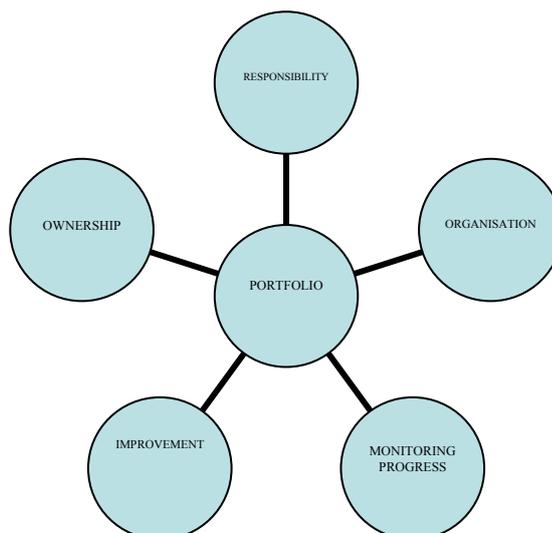
Figure 5.2 Benefits of Portfolio

As can be seen from Figure 5.2, the most frequently used phrases for describing the portfolio were Responsibility, Ownership, Organisation, Improvement, and Monitoring Progress. To illustrate these, the following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

> ST4: … I look at myself as a critique. I can criticize myself. I can see my weaknesses, I can comment. While writing a reflection I can comment on what I have written…
>
> Interview 1/ p.9 (01.12.2005)

This student talks about how organised and responsible he became as a result of the portfolio implementation. He also agrees that the portfolio helped him to feel like a real student. Similarly,

> ST6: …With portfolio I do not feel myself empty. When I go home in the evening I have something to write. There is responsibility …
>
> Interview 1/ p.13 (01.12.2005)

Student 6 feels herself responsible for writing something. She does not mention what she writes about, yet her feeling of responsibility has improved since she started to be a part of the implementation.

Students 9, 13, 24, 32, 36, and 41 talk about how they improved themselves and how they started to monitor their progress as a result of the implementation. To illustrate;

> ST9: …It is very difficult something that we are not used to but when we see its yields we think it is a must. I have difficulties while doing it but I see its benefits, its yields …
>
> Interview 1/ p. 19 (01.12.2005)

She is aware of the difficulties, however since she can see the benefits and the improvements in herself she is decisive about continuing to do the activities. Student 13 states that when she looks at the process she can clearly see a gradual improvement. When asked about what portfolio means to her she says:

> ST13: …Organisation, system, improvement, when somebody looks at it from top to end the first activity I did and the last activity will not be the same because I see my weaknesses gradually and I start to correct them.
>
> Interview 1/ p.28 (30.11.2005)

She not only sees the difference, but also becomes aware of her weaknesses and starts to correct them. This will lead her to becoming perfect in regard to making mistakes. The other students mentioned above also state the same things through different words. All of them agree that portfolio is a means to either improve themselves or make them aware of their progress.

Students 4, 8, 13, 34, and 40 stated that the portfolio helped them to become more organised. Organisation in a way leads to better understanding. Students will be able to follow their progress through an organised portfolio. One of the essential issues in portfolios is giving importance to its organisation. It is not only a bunch of folder. Through organisation students can see the difference between their first drafts and their last drafts. They can follow their progress in an easy way. To exemplify the following excerpts were chosen as representatives:

> ST4: …The things we have done up to now, brought us a studying system. It gave us responsibility …
>
> Interview 1/ p. 9 (01.12.2005)

ST8: …Putting lots of activities into an organization. With a single sentence.

Interview 1/ p. 17 (01.12.2005)

ST13: …Organization, system, improvement …

Interview 1/ p. 28 (30.11.2005)

ST34: …System comes to my mind. Responsibility, system, being more understandable comes to my mind. You are more understandable than general.

Interview 1/p. 72 (30.11.2005)

ST40: …Putting into a folder, system, being in a specific system …

Interview 1/p. 84 (30.11.2005)

All the students above agree that through portfolios they became more organised. Student 34 felt that through organisation it will be easier for others to understand her. It will make it easy for others to follow what she tried to do. As we stated before, organisation leads to better understanding. When students become familiar with organisation, they will make it a part of their life in the future. This will lead them to be more responsible and autonomous learners. They will be able to follow their own process in a comfortable and smooth way.

The last category that can be placed under the heading of Benefits of Portfolio was Ownership. Students started to take the responsibility of their learning by stating that it was their own work: A work that they could be proud of, something which gave them self-confidence. Therefore we coded it as Ownership which we defined as starting to stand for ones doings. For instance:

ST15: …Something that I have done for the first time. That is why it was good. The first product I created on my own.

N: If you would tell anybody about it would you say a product by me?

ST15: Yes.

Interview 1/ p.37 (30.11.2005)

She feels having produced something. When we asked her whether she meant a product produced by herself or not she answered in the positive.

ST23: …We started to create something this year. Something done with our own labour, completely with our own effort. Looking at them after some time is something nice. It is a work like that

Interview 1/ p. 48 (30.11.2005)

Similarly student 23 thinks that it is totally their own product. A product into which much effort was put. Students were proud of what they did. They became enthusiastic when they saw their own potential. Their initial thoughts were that the portfolio was a bit challenging, yet through time they got used to it. When they started to see their own progress, when they started to feel the pride that arose in themselves, they started to like it more and more.

5.6 Findings from the Content Analysis of Focus Group Interview

Focus group interview was our last collection tools to be analysed through content analysis.The reason behind our choosing Focus group interview is that as Glesne and Peshkin (1992) put it, interviewing more than one person at a time sometimes proves very useful; some young people need company to be emboldened to talk, and some topics are better discussed by a small group of people who know each other.

The data obtained from this interview were analysed keeping in mind research question 2 (Have learners observed in themselves any changes at the end of the implementation?), research question 3 (Have learners perceived an improvement in their reading towards becoming critical readers?) and research question 4 (Does the reading portfolio implementation enhance autonomy in terms of learner awareness, subject matter awareness, learning process awareness, and social awareness?). Through these questions we aimed to find out the changes (if any) that the students underwent during the implementation.

The first interview was conducted in the sixth week of the implementation and the focus group interview was conducted after the portfolios were assessed by the researcher, a peer, and the owner of the portfolio. The timing of the interview and focus group interview was fixed beforehand to see how students coped with the term portfolio and to see what kind of changes (if any) they underwent.

Findings from the analysis of the focus group interview were very similar to the findings of the Interview conducted shortly after the beginning of the implementation. Therefore, instead of focusing on the similarities we concentrated on the differences and the issues that were not mentioned in the first interview.

Three main categories emerged from the focus group interview: Self-Confidence, Consciousness, Initiating tasks. These categories and their subcategories have been defined in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Category Labels for the Focus Group Interview Data and their Operational Definition

Category Label	Operational Definition	Examples
Confidence	the ability to comfortably do something one thought he could not do and/or the willingness to explore what has not been explored.	"…Portfolio gave me a really big responsibility. I feel myself very sure when I do something because firsts are always hard to start. Portfolio was a first in my life…"
Awareness	-purposeful reading -questioning -monitoring progress	"…To tell the truth, I was never questioning what I read. When I started doing my portfolio I did it the same way and then I had to read some places twice. Then I said instead of reading it twice I should read it once and use my questioning skills and now I am doing it like that…"
Initiating Tasks	-starts voicing ideas	

5.6.1 Confidence

Some students, who were not sure about the implementation at the beginning, claimed that they started to become more and more confident during the focus group interview.

Since the first interview was held at the beginning of the implementation, this change in their feelings was an expected outcome.

> ST 6: …Portfolio gave me a really big responsibility. I feel myself very sure when I do something because firsts are always hard to start. Portfolio was a first in my life…
>
> Focus Group Interview /p. 4 (29.03.2006)

As she states, portfolio was a first in her life, yet as a result of it, she started to trust in herself. This confidence will lead her to do more things on her own. This again will result in her becoming an autonomous learner.

Similarly,

> ST 9: …The things I have told there are almost the same there is no big difference. Only I think that our confidence improved. I think I started to be more self confident than before …
>
> Focus Group Interview /p. 9 (29.03.2006)

This student accepts everything she said in the previous interview except for the confidence issue. Like student 5 she also feels more confident than in the past. Students got used to the challenges. They know the ways and how to reach their goals. Therefore, they start to feel more confident about their studies. The other students (ST13, ST12, and ST17) also stated how they became more confident. Confident students, participate more in their classes, they can initiate tasks on their own, and find solutions to their problems. All these features will lead them to become autonomous learners who question whatever they confront.

5.6.2 Awareness

Students reflected that they became aware of their way of reading as a result of the portfolio implementation. They started to recognize the strategies they were using while handling with their readings. They regarded the reading portfolio to be an effective tool in the improvement of English learning.

Students became aware of their weaknesses as well as in which areas they felt themselves improved as a result of the portfolio. A high percentage talked about how

their ways of reading, namely their reading habits changed. To illustrate, some of them said:

> ST4: … Yes I quite understood why, how, and what I learn because while doing an activity we do not do it superficially we do it according to the schedule you gave us. While doing research when you reed it intensively you become aware of what you are doing…
>
> Focus Group Interview/ p. 1 (27.03.2006)

> ST4: … I want to answer the question 'Can you see your improvement. When you look at my 5th activity you can see grammer mistakes that not even a primary school student can do. May be they are typing mistakes. When you look at the last activity you can no more see any of those mistakes. When we readand then write it we become aware of our mistakes because when we looked over them with you later on we corrected those mistakes. That's why we cannot see any mistakes in the last activities. I can say that we improved grammatically and also our reading.
>
> *N: Is there any difference in your reading?*
>
> ST4: … In the past I thought that I should finish my reading as soon as possible but now while reading I try to understand what the author says, what he wants to do. I read and think about the text. I make more comments.
>
> Focus Group Interview/ p. 2 (27.03.2006)

> ST5: …For example while preparing the textbook I realised that I have a problem with forming questions and this awareness was very beneficial. I mean I cannot form questions. This is my deficiency. The questions do not support the paragraph or they are weak ones.
>
> Focus Group Interview/ p. 3 (29.03.2006)

> Student 33: "…The portfolio activity was very beneficial. It was not something that we did in one hour and it gained us a lot. First of all when we are reading we no more read for the sake of reading. We pay attention to the parts that we have to, to the parts that we will use in the task, or we think about what it awakens in us. Because we did all of these both in the reflections and in the tasks…"
>
> Focus Group Interview /p. 3 (29.03.2006)

Student 35: …For an irresponsible person like me, the portfolio activity was really a very difficult activity. But I recognized that in the past especially in my novel readings, I only read for the sake of reading. To tell the truth, I was never questioning what I read. When I started doing my portfolio I did it the same way and then I had to read some places twice. Then I said instead of reading it twice I should read it once and use my questioning skills and now I am doing it like that…

Focus Group Interview /p. 4 (29.03.2006)

Awareness was seen throughout the implementation via the different tools that we used. As we will see later the kinds of awarenesses that were mentioned up to now will be also seen during the checklist. The items to which the students agreed or disagreed match the items we came across during the analysis stage.

5.6.3 Initiating Tasks

In this study, Initiating Tasks was taken as students' starting to voice their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. During the first interview students stated that they expected to have an education similar to the one they were used to. Teacher is at the center of the class, gives information about the course and lets the students to memorise. They were expecting a kind of rote learning. However, at the end of the implementation we came across different feelings of students.

With their increased confidence, they started to take their own initiations. During the focus group interview they explained that they were no more in need of a teacher during all of the stages of the tasks.

ST5: … I started to buy English newspapers but at the beginning I did not read them. I just stayed content with what the teacher gave me. But from now on I started to do different things.

N: Does it mean that you started to learn on your own. It does not have to be with the guidance of a teacher or during the class?

ST5: Yes I think we can do it on owr own.

Focus Group Interview /p. 3 (29.03.2006)

ST6: … It really happened to me as my friends have felt. Now I can understand that in past I did something only when teacher said to do that. Now I am doing something and I ask myself why I am doing these, what is the reason. And the things I did I want them to improve me not do such silly things.

Focus Group Interview /p. 4 (29.03.2006)

These two students accepted the fact that the implementation helped them to initiate tasks. This they revealed can be done without taking much help from the teacher. They set goals for themselves and tried to accomplish these by themselves. Student 6 also continued that initiating tasks gave her the confidence that is needed for establishing her own learning:

ST6: …Doing something on my own gave me confidence. When I do something without the help of a teacher I feel myself happy.

Focus Group Interview /p. 4 (29.03.2006)

5.7 Findings from the Autonomy and Critical Reader Checklist

The autonomy and critical reader checklist is divided into two parts. The first part is about autonomy and the second part is about critical reading. Students were given different items about these two categories and were asked to state their level of agreement with the statements. A three-point scale was used as agree, disagree, and no idea. Table 5.7 shows the results obtained from the evaluation of the first part of the checklist. Table 5.8 shows the results obtained from the second part of the checklist.

As a result of a comparison between the findings of the Autonomy and Critical Reader Checklist and the findings of the other data collection tools, we observed a high relationship between what the students wrote in their reflection sheets and cover letters, what they said during their interviews and how they replied to the items in the checklist. In the following section we give the results of the checklist and explain the items in it. The reasoning behind our choice of the four important areas of metacognition have been explained in Chapter 3.

Table 5.7 Evaluation of the Autonomy part of the checklist

	Items used in the Checklist	Disagree	No Idea	Agree
Learner Awareness	1. I share in the decision and initiatives that shape and direct my learning process	1	9	33
	2. I view myself as a continual learner and thinker	3	13	27
	3. I know why I am learning	-	-	43
	4. I know how I am learning	-	11	32
	5. I am confident that I can learn		4	39
	6. I am intrinsically motivated by making progress	1	6	37
	Total Number of Students (Responses?) (258)	5	43	211
	Percentage	**1.9**	**16.6**	**81.7**
Subject matter awareness of the target language	7. I know what I am learning	1	4	38
	8. I know my strengths in language learning	3	12	28
	9. I know my weaknesses in language learning	4	6	33
	Total Number of Students (Responses?) (129)	8	22	99
	Percentage	**6.2**	**17**	**76.7**
Learning process awareness	10. I can easily set short term goals for my learning	-	10	33
	11. I can easily set long term goals for my learning	1	8	34
	12. I actively seek to expand my repertoire of strategies for learning	3	18	22
	13. I can assess myself objectively	3	8	32
	14. I take time to think about my own thinking	3	5	35
	15. I can match strategies to the learning task, making adjustements when necessary	3	12	28
	16. I can reflect on my work	-	10	33
	17. I take initiatives in my learning process	2	4	37

	18. I can take control of my learning by using the necessary tactics	3	10	30
	Total Number of Students (Responses?) (387)	18	85	284
	Percentage	**4.6**	**21.9**	**73.3**
Social Awareness	19. I can assess my peers objectively	5	9	29
	20. I ask for guidance from peers or the teacher	5	9	29
	21. I am able to transfer classroom learning to the world	2	11	30
	Total Number of Students (Responses?) (129)	12	29	88
	Percentage	**9.3**	**22.4**	**68.2**

Learner Autonomy

The first part of the autonomy and critical reader checklist consisted of the items that reveal the level of autonomy students approached throughout the implementation. It is based on four metacognitive areas which we derived from Ellis (1999) and Sinclair (1999) who state that learners who are expected to give informed decision about their learning need to have improved themselves in these areas (see Chapter 3). To explain how our students responded to each item we will deal with each area in detail below:

Learner Awareness

Learner awareness refers to learners being aware of themselves as learners mainly in terms of attitudes, beliefs, motivation, needs, and learning styles. As can be seen from table 5.7 we had six items under this category. Generally speaking, almost %82 of the students agreed that they felt themselves aware as learners. However, when we look at each item carefully, we can see that Item 2 (I view myself as a continual learner and thinker) and Item 3 (I know why I am learning) are outstanding the others. Sixteen students out of 43 either disagreed or had no idea about their being continual learners and thinkers. For Item 3 just the opposite revealed itself. The whole participants agreed to this item. Through agreeing to the third item, it was obvious that the "implicit becomes explicit-pupils become aware of what they are doing and why" (Ellis, 1999, Why is the development of metacognitive awareness important? section, para. 4).

Subject Matter Awareness of the Target Language

Subject matter awareness refers to learner awareness of the language as a system. This area was divided into three items as awareness of what they are learning, their strengths, and their weaknesses. There was not a big problem with the awareness of what they are learning and their views about their weaknesses. However, when it came to the strengths, we found out that 15 students out of 43 either disagreed or had no idea about this item. Students were able to detect their weaknesses whereas they were not as competent in detecting their strengths.

Learning Process Awareness

Learning process awareness refers to self-assessment, goal setting, and use and control of learning strategies (monitoring progress, evaluating activities, and organising time and resources). Nine items were chosen to identify students' awareness about their learning process. Among these, item 12 (I actively seek to expand my repertoire of strategies for learning) and item 15 (I can match strategies to the learning task, making adjustments when necessary) were significant because in each item most of the students either disagreed or had no idea about them. This shows us that students still need help in the field of strategies. Item 17 (I can take initiatives in my learning process), on the other hand, shows us that students became confident enough to choose for themselves.

Social Awareness

Social awareness refers to learner awareness of the presence of others in the classroom and their willingness to cooperate through interaction and collaboration. Here we aimed to find out whether or not students were aware of the socialising through different tasks in the classroom. Three items were used to identify this type of awareness. Although not very significant, students revealed that they had problems in peer-assessment as well as in asking guidance from peers or the teacher. On the other hand, most of the students agreed to the point that they were bale to transfer what they have learned in the classroom to the outer world.

To sum up, a high percentage of the students revealed that they were conscious of these four metacognitive areas. These findings were strengthened with the findings from the other data collection tools. To what extent the data collection tools matched with each other will be discussed while revisiting the research questions in Chapter 6.

Table 5.8 Evaluation of the Critical Reading part of the checklist

Codes for the Items	Items used in the Checklist	Disagree	No Idea	Agree
Lower Order Skills	22. I can remember previously learned material, recall facts, terms, basic concepts from a stated text	--	12	31
	23. I can demonstrate understanding of the stated meaning of facts and ideas	1	8	34
	Total Number of Students (Responses?) (86)	1	20	65
	Percentage	**%1.1**	**%23**	**%76**
Higher Order Skills	24. I can demonstrate understanding of the unstated meaning of facts and ideas	1	10	32
	25. I can solve problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts and techniques in a different situation	2	10	31
	26. I can examine and break down information into parts	2	7	34
	27. I can compile information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern	2	12	29
	28. I can present and defend opinions by making judgements about information based on criteria.	1	13	29
	Total Number of Students (215)	8	52	155
	Percentage	**%3.7**	**%24**	**%72**

Critical Reading

The second part of the autonomy and critical reader checklist was based on the lower order skills and higher order skills of Bloom's revised taxonomy. Remembering and understanding were the items sought for in the lower order skills, whereas applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating constituted the higher order skills in this taxonomy (see Chapter 3).

Lower Order Skills

Since the educational background of our participants depended on rote learning there was no problem with the first two levels of the taxonomy. A high percentage of the students stated that they agree with the items used to identify the lower order skills.

Higher Order Skills

Our main concern was with the higher order skills which included creating, evaluating, analysing, applying, and inferencing. Except for the last two items there was a highly percentage of students who agreed to have gained these higher order skills. When it comes to the last two items which involve evaluating and creating, the percentage of the students who agreed decreased. This decrease is quite acceptable because proceeding towards the higher order skills is a process that needs time to develop in a student. Through the implementation, students accepted that they could not reach the top, yet started to head towards the right direction. They became aware of the track to keep in reaching the higher order skills.

Briefly, as the case was in learner autonomy, students admitted that awareness rose in them towards becoming critical readers. Their opininons were confirmed with the findings of the other data collection tools. How all the findings fitted together will be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present a summary of the findings and link them to the research questions we have started up with. Furthermore, in this chapter we will match the findings of this study with the findings in the literature whenever possible. Limitations of the present study and further comments as well as our reflections will be touched upon in this chapter.

6.1 Summary of the Findings

The research questions we seek to answer in this study mostly try to determine students' gains, changes, and improvements in regard to autonomy and critical reading. Before continuing to explain the findings it would be reasonable to explain how we came to learner autonomy and critical reading in this study.

While dealing with the literature review of the concept 'learner autonomy' we discussed learner autonomy as a perception which can be portrayed on a continuum at one end of which dependent students and the other end autonomous students can be seen. Throughout this continuum students develop their metacognition. They reveal this metacognition in an awareness of at least four important areas of metacognition: learner, subject matter, learning process, and social awareness (Ellis, 1999; Sinclair, 1999). Our research questions as stated above were mainly based on whether or not reading portfolio implementation and assessment could help learners see to what extent they could go on the continuum. In order to get answers to these questions, we looked for evidence in our students' metacognitive awareness through task completion, interviews, written documents (reflection sheets and cover letter) and the autonomy and critical reader checklist.

As for critical reading, we had Bloom's revised taxonomy as our basis. Students' critical reader level was elicited at the beginning of the implementation through a short story and it revealed that they were at a lower order skill level. During the implementation, tasks that stimulate critical reading were given to see to what extent these tasks would make students' critical reader level higher.

The findings revealed that as a result of the implementation, students started to become aware in many areas which might have led them to becoming autonomous learners. This awareness was also reflected in their critical reader level.

6.2 Autonomous Learning and Critical Reading through Portfolio Implementation

In this study we mainly tried to make our students gain autonomy and critical reading skills through the Portfolio Implementation and Assessment believing that they start their university education with the lack of these skills. For autonomy we could have observed and revealed this lack prior to this implementation in order to be more objective on our comments. Yet, as this was the students' we did not have this chance. Therefore, we made the assumption that our students should be placed very near to the 'dependent' end of the autonomy continuum discussed above. We based this assumption on our data collection tools: the information that we gathered through the initial interviews and the written documents as well as the experience that we had with our students in the pilot study. The results of the findings displayed an improvement in their location in the continuum. This was seen either directly through what students stated in their reflection sheets and the interview or indirectly through their performances of the tasks.

When it comes to critical reading, through the short story analysis at the beginning of the study we found out that our students were at the lower order skill level of Bloom's revised taxonomy (see Figure 2.1). The same reasons stated above for autonomy also shows us that we can place the students in this study in the lower order skill category of the taxonomy. The findings revealed that our students improved their critical reading skills as well.

Our aim was not to measure quantitatively the extent to which student fostered autonomy and critical reading. We rather focused on the learning experience of these students to be able to comment on the nature of learners' capacity for applying autonomous learning and critical reading. The analysis of the data obtained helped us to see whether the students were demonstrating critical reading and learner autonomy during the implementation. In the next sections we will argue how students appeared to be demonstrating critical reading and autonomous learning. We will also deal with the parts where students did not show any of these features and the possible reasons for this outcome.

6.2.1   Gains of Attitudes and Language Skills

Our first research question was *"What kind of attitudes and language skills do students gain through reflection in Reading Portfolio Implementation*

>   a. *by use of Reflection Shets?*
>   b. *by use of Cover Letters?*

Through this question, we aimed to find the kinds of attitudes and language skills students gained through reflection in Reading Portfolio Implementation. As Benson (2001, p. 187) comments

> while it is difficult to judge whether learners have become more
>
> autonomous or not in a global sense, it is possible to judge whether
>
> they are able to produce more effective learning plans, participate
>
> more in decision making processes, reflect more deeply on their
>
> learning, and so on.

Considering Benson's comment on reflection, we looked at this question from two points of view: by use of reflection sheets and by use of cover letters. Table 6.1 reflects a top view of the attitude and language skills gained throughout the implementation.

Table 6.1 Gains of Attitudes and Language Skills

Attitudes Gained	*Language Skills Gained*
Awareness	Language Use
Higher Motivation	Dictionary Use
Responsibility	Vocabulary Learning
Different perspectives	Writing Skills
Confidence	Reading Skills
Use of Metacognitive Strategies	

Gains in Attitude

In order to gain an attitude, there should be a change in this attitude. Attitude change is defined as

> the gradual or sudden transformation of attitude toward the attitude
> object: an idea, person, any tangible object, concept, etc. brought
> about by new information learned, or by events, natural or otherwise,
> or commercials etc. The change can be either positive or negative:
> from hating the object to liking it (positive change) or from liking to
> hating (negative change) (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

The analysis done in chapter 5 revealed that students who were described as passive rote learners had the capacity to become more autonomous as a result of portfolio implementation and assessment. Their attitude towards learning changed. Through the use of reflection sheets, students stated that they gained the following attitudes: awareness, higher motivation, responsibility, the ability to look at events from different perspectives, confidence, and the use of metacognitive strategies (see Table 6.1).

As explained previously *awareness* leads to the students' taking responsibility of their learning. Analysis of reflective data reveals that students in this study became aware of their strengths and weaknesses, of their monitoring progress, and of their abilities. While monitoring their progress, they started to strengthen their weak points and revise their strong points. The findings from the checklist support these points. To illustrate, when asked about their opinions about reflection, 33 students out of 43 agreed to the item that they can reflect on their work. Being able to reflect led them to awareness and awareness is the starting point to change the situation a person is in. Thus we can state

that by means of this awareness students gain their autonomy and start to act accordingly.

Motivation is another issue that was raised as a gained attitude. In section 5.1.2 we defined motivation as the sense of having the encouragement to do something.

Different issues throughout the implementation increased students' motivation. From students' interviews we found out that having the opportunity to choose their own material for their learning motivates students highly. Also being in the state of assessing themselves is another reason that increased their motivation. This gain in their attitude was empowered with item six in the autonomy and critical reader checklist (I am intrinsically motivated by making progress). As Vallerand (cited in Benson, 2001, p. 69) states "learners who are intrinsically motivated carry out learning activities for the pleasure of learning, for the satisfaction of achievement or to experience stimulation."

At the initial stages of the implementation, the motivation of the students developed extrinsically. Knowing the fact that their portfolios will be assessed motivated them to use their performance to the utmost. Towards the end of the implementation, they expressed their willingness for learning for their own improvement, as they gained intrinsic motivation.

Motivation led the students to taking more *responsibility* of their learning. There was an obvious increase in students' responsibility. Cover letters as well as interview results revealed students' feelings in regard to responsibility. Benson (2001, p. 69) states that "by taking control over their learning, learners develop motivational patterns that lead to more effective learning." As a result of the data analysis we found out that taking control over their learning was what almost all students agreed to. To examplify, 30 students out of 43 agreed to item 18 (I can take control of my learning by using the necessary tactics) in the autonomy and critical reader checklist. From all these we can conclude that motivation stimulates responsibility and responsibility stimulates motivation.

The students in this study became aware of their questioning skills. They no more accepted their learning as it is, but started to question it. They realised the What, Why, and How of their learning. Thus, they started to view the text from *different perspectives* which resulted in their constructing their own meaning from the text.

Confidence was another gain for the students in this study. They claimed that their self-confidence improved throughout the implementation and assessment. This revealed itself in students' behaviours towards their learning. They no more accepted portfolio as a workload but as a tool to improve themselves in various skills and attitudes. Their confidence displayed itself in their starting to initiate tasks, ideas, and taking part in the decisions of their learning.

According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 137), metacognitive strategies involve "thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned." Students in this study revealed these metacognitive strategies through reflecting on their tasks, setting goals for their forthcoming learning, monitoring their progress through locating strengths and weaknesses, and evaluating both their own portfolios and their peers' portfolios. Many students found out that there are different strategies of which they were not aware up to now and started to find the most suitable one for themselves.

Gains in Language Skill
Aside from the attitudinal gains, the students in this study improved themselves in various language skills: language use, dictionary use, vocabulary strategies, reading and writing skills. Among these, language use is a very broad term and comprises almost all the skills needed for efficient language learners. Students who want to be efficient language learners should be aware of all these skills. Throughout the implementation students declared that they acquired various language skills which led them to become more and more efficient.

To sum up, portfolio implementation and assessment helps students gain different attitudes and language skills like responsibility, motivation, confidence and the four basic skills of language. Reflection sheets and cover letters helped students to become aware of these attitudes and language skills. These attitudes were related with each other. The acquisition of one led to the starting of another one.

6.2.2   Self-Observed Changes

Our second research question was *"Have students observed in themselves any changes at the end of the implementation?"*

Our aim in generating such a question was to find out the changes students discovered in themselves. The findings of the cover letters and the interviews gave us a clear insight into the changes students perceived in themselves throughout the implementation. We can broadly group these changes as *change in feeling* and *change in reading*. Change in feeling can be classified into three: *Less Frustration, Self-Confidence*, and *Responsibility*. These changes depend on each other. Students who felt less frustration gained their self-confidence which resulted in responsibility.The most notable one of these was less frustration towards their learning. This frustration as the students explained was due to the heavy workload they were confronted with since in their previous education background they were not given much responsibility to take care of. After getting organised which is a requirement in portfolio implementation the frustration they felt at the beginning diminished.

Their self-confidence as stated above emerged in relation with less frustration. As a result, students started to initiate their task, to depend less on the teacher, to work collaboratively, and to assess themselves objectively. The autonomy and critical reader checklist supported what students said during their interviews and what they wrote in their reflections. To illustrate, 37 students out of 43 agreed to item 17 (I take initiatives in my learning process), and 32 students out of 43 agreed to item 13 (I can assess myself objectively). All these behaviours led them to responsibility. Students did not name these behaviours, yet they directly stated that they felt more confident and more responsible. Also, their confidence and responsibility were seen in their task performances.

When it comes to change in Change in Reading, we classified it into three: *Use of Dictionary, Step towards critical reading,* and *monitoring progress*. There were two different views about the use of dictionary: one part of the students started to be more dependent on the dictionary and other resources, whereas the other part felt the dictionary to be a burden while reading. Both of these views can be regarded as a step

towards autonomy. Students who became dependent on dictionaries and other resources tried to do something on their own without outside help. The other group became aware of the strategies that can be used instead of depending on dictionaries or other resources. Both of these situations display how students started to take ownership of their learning. The second subcategory which was seen especially in the cover letters and focus group interviews revealed how students started to compare their previous reading and their present reading. Their previous reading was a kind of mechanic reading with the aim of answering the questions to the text. However, their present reading started to become a vehicle for their own improvement. Students frankly claimed that reading for understanding and improvement became their prior aim when dealing with a text. All these show how students started to take their first steps toward critical reading.

Monitoring progress, another subcategory of change in reading, revealed how students became aware of the change in their reading. Since portfolio is a tool that evaluates the process, students had the opportunity to go over their process whenever necessary. They had a concrete proof of their progress. This helped them to monitor their progress and go back to strengthen the weaknessess they came across. Table 6.2 gives us a clear topview of the observed changes students felt in themselves.

Table 6.2 Self-Observed Changes

Change in Feeling	*Change in Reading*
Less Frustration	Use of Dictionary
Self-Confidence	Monitoring Progress
Responsibility	Steps towards critical reading
	-Reading for understanding
	-Reading for self improvement

6.2.3   Perceptions of Critical Reading

Our third research question was *Have learners perceived an improvement in their reading towards becoming critical readers?*
   a. *If "yes", how did this manifest itself?*
   b. *To what extent was this due to the implementation?*

Since one of our aims in this study was to reveal students' critical reading skills through portfolio implementation our objective in asking this question was to identify the peceptions of students in regard to critical reading. As a result of the analysis of the students' literacy autobiography (see Appendix 9) we found out that preparatory class students were not used to reading very much. The reason they gave was 'preparing for the university entrance exam'. These results necessitated to find out at what level of critical reader students were.

The level of students' critical reading in this study was evaluated through the answers they gave to a short story (see Appendix 15) at the beginning of the implementation. The questions that were asked were grouped under the categories of Bloom's revised taxonomy. The analysis of the given answers revealed that students had difficulty in answering the questions to the higher order skills which necessitate the use of metacognitive process through which an individual applies specific and broad knowledge to evaluate, create, plan, organize, communicate, interrelate, solve problems, and effectively perform tasks (Ball, 1998). This is how we came up with the assumption that the students in this study are at the lower order level. Through the given tasks we aimed to improve their level of critical reading towards the higher order level.

The results of the analysis of the initial reflections were evidence that students started to change their reading habits. Students, who stated that they got bored while reading in their literacy autobiographies (see Appendix 9), claimed that with the help of portfolios they learned to read books. Reading became a part of the way towards improving themselves. This shows us that students were not aware of critical reading at the beginning of the study. However, towards the end of the process students started to perform the tasks by using their higher order skills. They started to view any kind of text as a vehicle for further improvement and no more as a text whose questions should be answered. Briefly, we can say that at the beginning many texts offered the truth for the students; however, later on a single text changed into one portrayal of the facts, that is one individual's view on the subject.

This was supported with what they told during the focus group interview. They started to evaluate what they read and made decisions accordingly. They no more accepted what was given in the text without giving it a second thought. These second thoughts

led them to agree with the author, disagree with the author, or realise that additional information was needed before they could make an informed judgment. We can conclude that reading portfolios in nature help students to read extensively, intensively, and critically since reading is the necessary skill to complete their reading portfolios.

The findings of the data collection tools used throughout the whole implementation were supported with the results of the autonomy and critical reader checklist. In general, %72 of the students agreed to the higher order skills in the checklist. When we have a detailed look at the checklist we can see that students agreed to item 24 (I can demonstrate understanding of the unstated meaning of facts and ideas), item 25 (I can solve problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts, and techniques in a different situation), and item 26 (I can examine and break down information into parts) with a high percentage. Since the implementation was evaluating the process rather than the product these results were quite acceptable, because in time students' reading habits changed and priority was given to critical reading.

According to the checklist, at the end of the implementation students still faced problems with the top two levels (evaluating and creating) of Bloom's revised taxonomy. Only 29 students out of 43 agreed to item 27 (I can compile information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern) and item 28 (I can present and defend opinions by making judgments about information based on criteria). The other students either disagreed or had no idea which showed that they still need time to master these two skills. Critical reading requires getting at the deep structure of the text. It involves using logical and rhetorical skills. When we take the education system students graduated from into consideration, these results should not be considered as a big problem. To be able to get at the deep structure, students need time and instruction.

Our main focus was on the higher order skills of the students, however while focusing on them we also paid attention to the lower order skills. The results showed us that although we assumed that students had mastered the lower order skills we felt that the percentage that we came up with in the checklist (%76) was lower than we had expected. When comparing the percentages of the lower order skills (%76) and the higher order skills (%72) we observed that there was not a very significant difference between both. It can be inferred that when students are not faced with the higher-order

task, mastering the lower-order skills will not make sense. Up to now they were not asked to perform higher-order tasks, therefore they were not in need of the lower-order skills. Thus, in this study both their lower-order skills and their higher-order skills developed equally. Each of them stimulated the other one. The more they face higher-order task, the more they will be in need of lower-order skills. Eventually, both of the skills will improve.

Students' perceptions of their improvement in critical reading manifested themselves through the reflections they were supposed to write at the end of each task, through the cover letters, the focus group interview, and the autonomy and critical reader checklist. In each of these, students explained their perceptions in different ways which made us come up with the conclusion that their notion of critical reading has improved. This improvement was highly due to the implementation since students came to this level through a process. The findings clearly show us the improvement seen in students.

6.2.4   Enhancing Autonomy

Our fourth research question was *Does the Reading Portfolio Implementation enhance autonomy in terms of*

- *Learner Awareness*
- *Subject Matter Awareness of the target language*
- *Learning process awareness*
- *Social Awareness*

Learner Awareness

Awareness of skills and behaviours is a characteristic of learner autonomy. Awareness is the issue that we based our fourth research question on. By using awareness as a base, we aimed to find out whether or not reading portfolios could enhance autonomy. According to Scharle and Szabo (2001), there are some stages to be followed in the process of developing learner responsibility. One of these stages is learner awareness. Learner awareness refers to learners being aware of themselves as learners mainly in terms of attitudes, beliefs, motivation, needs, and learning styles.

During the analysis of the reflection sheets and cover letters, we saw glimpses of learner awareness regarding students' attitudes, beliefs, motivation, and learning styles. They realised the change in their attitudes toward learning which resulted in higher motivation. Through this awareness they felt the responsibility for their own learning. Students became aware of their needs and took their following steps accordingly. They also started to change their learning styles. They no more expected the teacher to feed them, but they started to fill in the gaps by themselves.

The results of the autonomy and critical reader checklist also revealed that %81.7 of the students agreed to the fact that they gained learner awareness. The only part students felt themselves weak in was item 2 (I view myself as a continual learner and thinker). Only 27 students out of 43 agreed to this item. This shows us that students still need to be stimulated to go on learning. Although they started to be motivated intrinsically, the period of the process was not long enough to trigger their continuity of their learning. On the other hand, all of the students agreed to item 3 (I know why I am learning) which shows that students have the ability to set goals and follow these goals until completion. By completing their goals they took the responsibility for their own learning which led them to becoming more autonomous.

Subject matter awareness of the target language

Subject matter awareness refers to the learner awareness of the language as a system. In this study students became aware of the fact that language is a whole and cannot be parted. Everything has meaning in its own context. When students accepted that their language skills improved they were aware that this improvement was due to their handling the language as a whole. When reading a text they did not see it as a text on its own but a text which needed to be responded to and which needed to be given meaning to. While dealing with the text, they also dealt with its grammar constituents, its vocabulary, and the meaning.

The results of the autonomy and critical reader checklist revealed that 38 students out of 43 were aware of what they were learning which included the language as a system through reading. 33 students out of 43 were aware of their weaknesses regarding the language as a system. However, 15 students out of 43 had difficulties in pinpointing their strengths. They were aware of their weaknesses yet could not stress their strengths.

Learning can be facilitated by making students aware of the range of strategies from which they can choose during language learning and use. If students are given the range of strategies, they will be able to stress both their strengths and weaknesses. This, as a result needs more time to be achieved.

Learning Process awareness

As stated in Chapter 2 learning process awareness refers to self-assessment, goal setting, monitoring progress, evaluating activities, organising time and resources, and gaining metacognitive strategies. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 137), metacognitive strategies involve "thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learned", behaviours that have been closely associated with autonomy in the literature.

Gipps (1994) comments that

> Assessment is a powerful tool: it can shape curriculum, teaching and learning; it can affect how pupils come to see themselves as both learners and in a more general sense as competent or not; through labelling and sorting pupils it affects how pupils are viewed by others; it controls access to further education and high status careers (p. 144).

When taking all these into consideration, to improve the area of self-assessment in the classroom, we chose portfolios as our main tool. Through the medium of portfolio work students had an opportunity to see their abilities and strengths and to realise their weaknesses with the belief that they could always improve them. When there is such a belief in students, they show great pride and ownership in their work which provides its own stimulation for constant improvement. These results were strengthened by item 13 (I can assess myself objectively) in the autonomy and critical reader checklist. This process which the students in this study underwent constitutes a part of the learning process awareness.

Goal setting is another part of learning process awareness which involves setting specific, measurable and time targeted objectives. It may be an effective tool for making progress provided that students are clearly aware of what is expected from them, if an objective is to be achieved. At the beginning of the study through the use of reading

contracts (see Appendix 7), students had the opportunity to become acquainted with setting goals. During the interviews, students reflected on the benefits of setting goals. They claimed that it helped them to achieve their goals more easily. Goal setting is a kind of motivation for students. Trying to reach their goals might build a feeling of responsibility within the student and achieving the specific goals would lead them to confidence. Having the necessary motivation, being aware of the responsibility to be taken and achieving their aim lead to the autonomy of the student. The interview results regarding goal setting were supported with the results of the autonomy and critical reader checklist where 33 students out of 43 agreed to item 10 (I can easily set short term goals for my learning) and 34 out of 43 students agreed to item 11 (I can easily set long term goals for my own learning).

Another issue taken into consideration in this process is monitoring progress. Students in this study could easily monitor their progress since portfolio implementation requires students' earlier drafts and later drafts. Through compiling all their work in the same folder, students were able to see their progress. This in conclusion made them aware of the progress they accomplished.

Students were asked to reflect on each task they have done. These reflections were a kind of evaluation of the tasks. Through them they became aware of what they were doing. In spite of the difficulties they came across while writing their reflections, they mostly talked about the benefits of reflecting on tasks during the interviews. Although reflections seemed to be a workload for them at the beginning of the implementation, in time students got used to them and became aware of their importance in the learning process.

Organisation is an issue that goes hand in hand with portfolio implementation. Without organisation a portfolio can be regarded as a simple folder. As Stein (2001) states the portfolio product provides the student with organized evidence of his/her work over time. When students were asked about the benefits of the portfolio during the interview sessions %90 percent of the students used the term 'organisation'. Portfolio helped them to become organised both in terms of time and resources.

Each item that we discussed above helped the students to become aware of their learning process. It can be said that all of them are related to each other. When one is missing there might be an incompetency in the others. Not all the students benefited from these equally, yet generally speaking we can say that the portfolio implementation and assessment process was a medium for students to become at least aware of these. Becoming aware of them triggered students to make use of them as much as possible.

Social Awareness

This is the awareness that refers to the presence of others in the classroom and their willingness to cooperate through interaction and collaboration. Students in this study revealed their social awareness mostly during the assessment stage of the portfolios. During the focus group interview students explained that while assessing their peer's portfolios, they realized their own weaknesses. It helped them to look at their own work from different angles.

Regarding the results of the autonomy and critical reader checklist, we can say that 30 students out of 43 agreed to item 21 (I am able to transfer classroom learning to the world). Through this item we inferred that students can use the learning that happened in their classroom settings throughout their lifes. They started to put theory into practice, which made us believe that the more students socialize with their peers and environment, the more they will make use of this socialisation.

The only issue that students had difficulty in was objectivity. Most of the students felt that they could not be objective while assessing their own and their peer's portfolios. When taking their education system into consideration this is quite normal because students were used to having teacher centered classess. However, through the portfolio implementation and assessment process, they were given the responsibility to take charge of their own learning and this necessitated assessing both themselves and their peers. This was a new situation for them which needs time to get used to.

To conclude in general, we can say that measuring autonomy in terms of product might be misleading. Therefore, a qualitative approach that measures autonomy by evaluating the levels of metacognitive awareness might be more acceptable. In this study, we used

Sinclair's (1999) qualitative framework (see Table 2.3) which is designed to find out the levels of metacognition.

According to this framework, learners in this study displayed a shift from largely unaware (Level 1) to becoming aware (Level 2). Some of the students even displayed largely aware (Level 3). They not only showed the confident and competent use of the characteristics of the first two levels, but also descriptions of alternative strategies.

Every learner has a part of autonomy hidden in himself/herself. One purpose of this study was to make students aware of the autonomy in themselves and to help them use their autonomy in their lifelong learning. The analysis of the data shows that students in this study started to become more autonomous as a result of the implementation. Students stated that they gained more confidence in themselves. There is a direct relationship between self-confidence and autonomy. Confident students start to take more responsibility for their actions, in our case for their learning. Also, students in this study started to initiate tasks without being asked for. They even suggested different strategies that might help them overcome their weaknesses. Confidence as has been proved in other studies (Childs, 2004) is an attitude that is in close relation with autonomy. Also when Candy (1991, pp. 459-466) listed more than 100 competencies associated with autonomy in learning, he included the item "the learner capable of autonomous learning will characteristically show confidence and have a positive self-concept." This also strengthens our point in including confidence as one of the gains.

As a concluding remark we can say that to be confident, to be motivated, to be responsible, to be able to use the metacognitive strategies one should be aware of all these. Awareness is the keyword that leads students to all the aspects necessary for autonomy and critical reading: Confidence, Motivation, Responsibility, and Use of Metacognitive Strategies.

6.3   ommendations for Future Research

6.3.1 Limitations of the Present Study

The aim of this study as has been explained in section 1.5 was to reveal English Language Teaching students' critical reading and foster their autonomy through portfolio implementation and assessment. Portfolios can be implemented only through a process. However, this study was conducted for only one semester (16 weeks). Since our aim is to find out whether or not students displayed a change in their autonomy and critical reading, this might be a limitation. Process should be observed for a longer time. For further research, the process might be observed for a longer time.

Another limitation is having not compared their sit-down scores with their portfolio scores. This might have given us an idea about whether they could use the strategies they acquired during the implementation in their sit-down exams. Also, the relationship between the portfolio implementation and students' success in their exam could have given us a different insight into the benefits of portfolio.

Implementation of this system with two classes (43 students) was a heavy workload for the researcher. Due to the number of the participants we had to cut short the time of the interviews because of the workload in transcribing and analysing them. Also the time spent for evaluating the portfolios, conferencing sessions, transcribing and analysing the reflection sheets was enormous. To be able to do an in depth analysis the number of the participants should be reduced because the workload is doubled in portfolio assessment system.

6.3.2 Scope for Future Research

This study is limited with only the implementation of portfolio assessment system on preparatory class students' reading course. For further research, implementation of portfolio assessment system can be expanded throughout the first grade to see the changes students experience with the process.

Another possible research topic might be the implementation of e-portfolios in reading courses. To be able to do this, students should have access to the internet and they should be familiar with using computers.

The last research topic that we might propose is to find out whether or not portfolios that have been implemented in only course are affecting the other courses that students are required to attend. While doing this we might also look whether they use the information and skills gained for the completion of their portfolios in their lifelong learning.

6.4 Personal Reflections

I believe that my portfolio experience which lasted for three years made me become a critical reader and an autonomous learner. I started to become aware of my own strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the study I knew my role as a teacher, a researcher, and a student, because I was learning by doing. With my participants I underwent the same cycles of the action research.

I started to look critically at everything I came up with. I also learned that every problem has a solution somewhere. Doing the same thing for some years helps the performer to look at the study from different points of view. Through the variety of solutions one can better him/herself.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Course Syllabus

NAME OF THE COURSE: HIN 103-104 READING

INSTRUCTORS: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şehnaz Şahinkarakaş

Mehmet Seyis

Nurcan Köse

HOURS PER WEEK: 6

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: Term1: McWhorter, K.T. (1993). Guide to College

Reading.Harper Collins College Publishers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- improve their reading comprehension skills

- read for skimming and scanning

- extract the main idea and differentiate between the main idea and the secondary ideas

- make an outline of a text

- make a summary of a text

- expand their vocabulary

- read and comprehend passages written on various theoretical modes: descriptive, narrative, classification, explanation, etc.

- analyse the passage in terms of organisation

- justify their answers to given questions, basing their judgements on various types of cues to be found in a particular text

- read and understand semi-authentic and authentic texts.

SKILLS	SUBSKILLS
Reading Types:	- skimming to obtain general information - scanning to locate specific information - identifying reference words - predicting content from the title, pictures, etc. - inferencing and reading between the lines
Vocabulary Development:	- guessing from context - word forms - using dictionary
Recognizing Discourse Markers:	- identifying discourse markers in texts for addition, exemplification, comparison, classification, description, definition, paraphrasing, elicitation, conclusion
Reading and Analysing Paragraphs:	- reading for specific information, finding the main and supporting ideas in a paragraph
Understanding the Writer's Purpose:	- recognizing the writer's style, the intended audience, source of the text
Reading for Outlining/Summary:	- conventions of outlining and summarising
Critical Reading:	- reading for criticism and discussion

Appendix 2

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE PORTFOLIO

It is important to include the following items in your portfolio:

1. Cover Letter: The Cover Letter consists of two parts. One of them is "About the author". In this part you are supposed to write a brief autobiography. The second part is "What my portfolio shows about my progress as a learner". You are supposed to write them at the end of the semester, but put them at the beginning of your portfolio. The cover letter will be an evidence of what you have learned and how you have progressed.

2. Table of Contents: Give page numbers to all of your activities and write their titles in the table of contents.

3. Entries:
    a. Core: You will see them in your schedule as Portfolio Tasks.
    b. Optional: These will be the items that you have chosen as extra activities.

4. Dates: Dates should be written on all entries so as to see your growth over time.

5. Drafts: Both the corrected/revised version and the first drafts of your tasks have to be in your portfolio.

6. Reading Logs: You are expected to complete a minimum of one hour of independent reading each week. Your instructor will provide specific directions regarding your choice of material.

7. Vocabulary Logs: You will be given your vocabulary logs by your instructor.

8. Reflection Sheets: Reflections can appear at different stages in the learning process. A brief rationale for choosing each item should be included. This can relate to each student's performance, to their feelings regarding their progress and/or themselves as learners.

Appendix 3

Information Sheet about Final Assessment

Dear Students;

The final assessment of your portfolio will consist of the following components.

1. A portfolio interview with the teacher and a small group of your peers
2. A written introduction to your portfolio including a synthesis of what your portfolio shows about you
3. A review of your portfolio by the teacher.

Interview

Your interview will occur during the week of …………….. . You will be interviewed alone.

You should be prepared to present the highlights of your portfolio and to discuss some of the important things you have learned this year.

The interview will last from 5 to 10 minutes. Interviews will occur during class time. A Schedule will be posted by ……………………… .

Portfolio Introduction

Please prepare an introduction that reflects your entire portfolio. In your introduction be sure to include information on how your portfolio is organized, what you are particularly proud of, and anything special you want a reviewer to notice. You should also include your goals for the next semester.

In addition to this basic introduction, select 3 entries that you feel best show who you are as a student.Try to choose entries that cover different subjects and different times of the semester. Give your reasons for choosing these entries and explain what they show about you and how they show it.

Final Review

Your finished portfolio is due on ………………………… . There are no extensions. Your portfolio will be assessed using the same criteria that were used for previous reviews.

Grading

Your portfolio grade will be ……….% of your second midterm exam.

Appendix 4

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR THE 1. TERM

Dear Students,
      This semester I will ask you to keep a reading portfolio which will be an evidence of your growth as independent, active and critical readers. It will be an enjoyable work, since we will do lots of things, learn lots of things, and assess all these together. Through your portfolio activities you will gain a habit of life-long learning.

      Here are the core activities and projects that you will work on during this term:

1. You are supposed to find a photograph from a magazine, a newspaper,or from your own photo collection. I wuld like you to write a theme response for your photo.
    The aim of the activity: Today's media is full of pictures, images that we are expected to interpret and understand. "Reading" images is a part and parcel of the century we are living in. Can you understand and response to what is going on in your picture? What is happening? What are the emotions hidden there? How does it fit in your world or in your culture? Those are the kinds of questions you should ask when interpreting a Picture.
    Deadline:
2. The second portfolio activity is thematic novel unit. While you are reading one of your novels you are expected to complete some activities.
       Before reading your novel: Survey your novel. Take a close look at your book.   Describe the different parts of your boks. Start with the cover (Is there a Picture? Is there a caption?). Then look on the inside of the cover. Look through the pages before
    the story starts. (What's there? A preface? A dedication?) Look at the back cover. (Is there a review? Is it good?) Look at the pages following the story. (Is there a glossary? A prologue? Something about the author?) Make note of everything about the boo except the actual story.
       While you are reading your novel you must complete 2 of the activities below:
    a. Keep a character log: Keep track of the characters by writing down each other's name, three adjectives to describe him/her, three things (actions) the character has done, two thoughts or something the character has said about another character in the book.
    b. Make a timeline. To show the events in the story make a timeline of when things are happening. Must portray at least fifteen important moments or events. Write at least 2 sentences per event.
    c. Keep a journal when reading a book. Must have at least five entries.
    d. Make a graphic organizer of your own. The organizer must show rising action (list events), climax, falling action, and resolution. Also include what you think the theme of the novel is (if you need help with themes, get help from your instructor)

     When you are finished with the novel you must complete number 1 and either number 2 or 3:

a. Write a test for your novel. The test must include 10 true/false questions, 10 multiple choice , and three short essay questions. The answers should also be included.

b. Write a one page response to the novel. The response should include something you learned from the book, what you liked/disliked about the book, whether or not you reccomend the book and why.

c. Do a presentation for the class. The presentation should be told from the main character's point of view and be a complete summary of the story.

Aim of the Activity: To be able to get something from a book without reading the story in it and then after reading it to identify the author's purpose and point of view. To be able to approach a novel critically.
   Deadline:

3. Your third activity: In groups of 5 choose a novel. Each student is supposed to choose a character and read the novel from the point of view of the character. Put yourself in the shoes of that character and try to retell or demonstrate the story in that way.

Aim of the activity: To be able to understand fairly long demanding texts and summarise them orally.
   Deadline:

   7. Mini-Project: As a mini project you are expected to prepare a mini dictionary ☺. Choose an appropriate theme or topic that you think might interest you. Find twenty words that in a way may be found under that topic. For each word prepare a sheet of paper in which you will demonstrate that word. Use you imagination to the utmost.
Deadline:

4. During your portfolio studies I would like you to prepare an I-Search Paper for each reading you do.You will be a given a K-W-L chart. Before reading the selected text fill the K and W part of the chart. Then read your text and fill the L part. While filling in the L part, you may make use of more than the source you have read.

Aim of the Activity: This technique aims to help students apply their higher order thinking strategies which help them construct meaning from what they read and help them monitor their progress toward their goals.
   Deadline:

I wish you good luck and success during your studies.
If any questions do occur to you, don't hesitate to see me. ☺ ☺ ☺

Nurcan Köse

Appendix 5

Portfolio Reflection Worksheet

Name: …………………………… Date of Learning Sample:

………………………

Entry Title:……………………………. Entry Date:

…………………………………..

Focus: Identify the category for this portfolio entry:

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………..

Describe your entry. You may use the following prompts.

- What is your entry about?
- Why did you choose this as an entry?
- What did you learn?
- How did you grow or change?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 6

PORTFOLIO REFLECTION

- Use this form to summarize your feelings about the pieces you have chosen for your portfolios.

1. Which piece was the easiest for me to do?   _____
2. Which peace was the hardest for me to do?_____
3. Which piece shows the most improvement? _____
4. Which piece makes me most proud?   _____
5. Which piece shows the most creativity?   _____
6. Which piece was the most fun to do?   _____
7. Which piece do I like the most?   _____
8. Which piece do I expect my teacher to
   like the most?   _____
9. Which piece would I like to do over
   again in order to improve it?   _____
10. What do I want my teacher to notice
    most about my portfolio?   _____
11. If I had more time what would I change
    about my portfolio?   _____

Appendix 7
READING CONTRACT

I, _____, do hereby agree to read_____ books and
report on them for the grade of_____. I further agree to use boks of at least 100
pages. I understand that books of substantially more than 100 pages may count for more
than one report if I obtain prior written approval from the teacher and attach that
approval slip to the record sheet when my book is reported.

I hereby agree to participate in the group when I am not reporting. I will follow all the
rules for cooperative learning groups.

Finally, I agree to use books read only since_____(date) and complete this contract
by_____(date). I will return this contract, signed by the appropriate parties, within
one week of the date it is written.

Student_____

Teacher_____

Scoring Scale: 100 = 4 books; 85 = 3 books; 60 = 2 books

Appendix 8

READING LOG

A reading log is an excellent place to collect information so that you can learn more about your attitude, habits, and preferences in reading. Keep track of your reading for the period of time specified by your instructor. When you have completed your chart, think about yourself as a reader. Use the following questions to guide you. Write what you learned about yourself.

1. When you look over your reading log, what do you notice about yourself as a reader? What do you like to read? How much do you read?
2. Overall, how would you rate the books you have been reading? Are they easy or difficult for you? Explain.
3. What is your favourite genre? What is your favourite book?
4. Who is your favourite author? Why?
5. Think about yourself as a reader. How would you describe yourself as a reader?
6. What would make you a better reader?

Appendix 9
LITERACY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The following questions have been developed to help you write your literacy autobiography. Please understand that this is a list of questions to stimulate your thinking about your own literacy development. You do not have to respond to each question and restrict your thinking. Be creative as you record your literacy experiences.

Name:

Age:

1. What are your earliest recollections of reading and writing?
2. Were you read to as a child?
3. Before you were able to read, did you pretend to read books? Can you remember the first time you read a book?
4. Can you recall your early writing attempts (scribbling, labeling drawing, etc.)?
5. Was a newspaper delivered to your home? Do you recall seeing others read the newspaper? Did you read the newspaper?
6. Did you subscribe to children's magazines? Did your parents or siblings have magazine subscriptions?
7. Can you remember any indications that reading and writing were valued in the environment in which you grew up?
8. Can you detail your first memories of reading and writing instruction?
9. Can you recall reading for pleasure in elementary school?
10. Did you ever use a public library? For what reason?
11. Do you feel that you have ever read a book that has made a difference in your life?
12. Were you a reader in your elementary, junior high, and high school? Did you read because it was required and/or for your own pleasure?
13. What is your all-time favourite children's book? Novel? Nonfiction work?
14. What contributions have your reading and writing abilities made to your life?
15. What are you currently reading? Writing?

Appendix 10

PORTFOLIO PROJECT ASSESSMENT PAGE

NAME:

	Maximum Points	Your Points			
		Self	Peer	Teacher	Average
Table of Contents	8				
Book Assignement 1	8				
Book Assignement 2	8				
Book Assignement 3	8				
Book Assignement 4	8				
Picture Theme Assignement	4				
Vocabulary Study 1	4				
Vocabulary Study 2	4				
Reflection Sheet for each Task	21				
Optional Tasks	5				
Home Reading Logs	7				
Vocabulary Logs	5				
Cover Letter	10				
Total	100				

Your Comments:

Appendix 11

Interview Questions

1. When looking at the portfolio activities you have done so far, could you tell me whether you felt any change for your own learning? In what ways?
a. Responsibility?
b.Monitoring your progress

2. Did you start questioning the a) WHY
                                        b)WHAT
                                        c)HOW of your learning? If yes how did you do it?
(Do you understand why, what, and how you learn?)
3. Did you start setting goals for your own learning?

4. Is there any difference between the way you approached reading in the past and reading after you started your portfolio implementation? If yes, what kind of difference?

5. Did the Home Reading Logs had any effect on your reading habits? If yes,what kind of?

6. Did the vocabulary logs had any effects on your reading habits? If yes, what kind of?

7. Is it difficult to write Reflection Sheets? Why/Why not?

8. Are they beneficial?

9. What do you think about self evaluation and peer evaluation? Do you find the system useful?

Appendix 12

Information Sheet

Dear Colleauges,

      I am doing my PhD dissertation on the "Effects of Portfolio Implementation and assessment on critical reading and learner autonomy of ELT students". I prepared a Critical Reader and Autonomy Checklist. To check the validity of this Checklist I would appreciate if you could match the characteristics of critical reader and autonomous learner as used in this study and the items in the checklist.

      Thank you for your kind cooperation.

                                 Research Assisstant

                                   Nurcan Köse

Characteristics of Critical Readers And Autonomous learners	1	2	3	4	5	My Checklist Items
Take initiatives						I share in the decision and initiatives that shape and direct my learning process
Can reflect on themselves						I view myself as a continual learner and thinker
Can give informed decisions						I know why I am learning
Can give informed decisions about their learning						I know how I am learning
Have confidence						I am confident that I can learn
Are motivated						I am intrinsically motivated by making progress
Involved in his own learning process						I know what I am learning
Are aware of their strengths						I know my strengths in language learning
Are aware of their weaknesses						I know my weaknesses in language learning
Plan their learning and set goals						I can easily set short term goals for my learning
Plan their learning and set goals						I can easily set long term goals for my learning
Possess metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness						I actively seek to expand my repertoire of strategies for learning
Possess the ability to self assess						I can assess myself objectively
Often reflect on the learning process						I take time to think about my own thinking
Has the ability to chose the appropriate strategies						I can match strategies to the learning task, making adjustments when necessary
Often reflect on their own progress						I can reflect on my work
Take responsibility for their own learning						I take initiatives in my learning process
Has the ability to chose the appropriate strategies						I can take control of my learning by using the necessary tactics
Interact with others						I can assess my peers objectively
Interact with others						I ask for guidance from peers or the teacher
Take a step from theory to practice						I am able to transfer classroom learning to the world
Remembering						I can remember previously learned material, recall facts, terms, basic concepts from a stated text
Understanding						I can demonstrate understanding of the stated meaning of facts and ideas
Inferencing						I can demonstrate understanding of the unstated meaning of facts and ideas
Applying						I can solve problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts and techniques in a different situation
Analysing						I can examine and break down information into parts
Evaluating						I can compile information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern
Creating						I can present and defend opinions by making judgements about information based on criteria.

Appendix 13

Evaluation Form for Member-Check Activity

Dear Student,

The basic aim of this activity is to get feedback of the analysis of the interview and the focus group interview. The feedback that you are going to provide is of great importance to my study and the research on student portfolios in general. The findings may not directly show what you thought, rather they are a generalisation of what the whole research showed us.

I would appreciate it if you could read the categories on the next page and indicate whether you agree or disagree. If you have any other comments, please do not hesitate to write them on the space provided.

Thank you very much for your kind co-operation.

Nurcan Köse

FINDINGS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW

Category Label	Operational Definition	Example
Development	- in language	
	- in research skills	
	- in organisation	
Motivation	- through choosing their own material to read	
Change in Reading	- reading for understanding	
	-reading for self-improvement	
	- fast reading	
	- responding to readin	
Change in General	- feeling	
	- productivity	
	- from theory to practice	
	- point of view	
	- initiation of tasks	
Assessment	- objectivity	
	- improvement in judgement skills	
	- awareness of weaknesses	
Benefits of reflection	- questioning	
	- judging themselves	
	- monitoring progress	
Benefits of Portfolio	- responsibility	
	- awareness	
	- organisation	
	- questioning	
	-monitoring progress	

I don't agree   I don't know   I agree

☐   ☐   ☐

Appendix 14

AUTONOMY AND CRITICAL READER CHECKLIST
NAME:

As a result of the portfolio implementation	1	2	3	4	5
I can easily set goals for my learning					
I can reflect on my work					
I can assess myself objectively					
I share in the decision and initiatives that shape and direct my learning process					
I am confident that I can learn					
I know why I am learning					
I know how I am learning					
I know what I am learning					
I know how successful I am					
I know what I will learn next					
I can think clearly about inaccuracies when failure occurs during tasks					
I actively seek to expand my repertoire of strategies for learning.					
I can match strategies to the learning task, making adjustments when necessary					
I ask for guidance from peers or the teacher					
I take time to think about my own thinking.					
I view myself as a continual learner and thinker					
I can remember previously learned material, recall facts, terms, basic concepts from a stated text (Knowledge)					
I can demonstrate understanding of the stated meaning of facts and ideas (Comprehension)					
I can demonstrate understanding of the unstated meaning of facts and ideas (Inference)					
I can solve problems by applying acquired knowledge, facts and techniques in a different situation (Application)					
I can examine and break down information into parts (Analysis)					
I can compile information in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern (Synthesis)					
I can present and defend opinions by making judgements about information based on criteria (Evaluation)					

Further Comments:

Appendix 15

The Lion and the Mouse

A small mouse crept up to a sleeping lion. The mouse admired the lion's ears, his long whiskers and his great mane.

"Since he's sleeping," thought the mouse, "he'll never suspect I'm here!"

With that, the little mouse climbed up onto the lion's tail, ran across its back, slid down its leg and jumped off of its paw. The lion awoke and quickly caught the mouse between its claws.

"Please," said the mouse, "let me go and I'll come back and help you someday."

The lion laughed, "You are so small! How could ever help me?"

The lion laughed so hard he had to hold his belly! The mouse jumped to freedom and ran until she was far, far away.

The next day, two hunters came to the jungle. They went to the lion's lair. They set a huge rope snare. When the lion came home that night, he stepped into the trap.

He roared! He wept! But he couldn't pull himself free.

The mouse heard the lion's pitiful roar and came back to help him.

The mouse eyed the trap and noticed the one thick rope that held it together. She began nibbling and nibbling until the rope broke. The lion was able to shake off the other ropes that held him tight. He stood up free again!

The lion turned to the mouse and said, "Dear friend, I was foolish to ridicule you for being small. You helped me by saving my life after all!"

Answer these questions as detailed as possible

1. Who was sleeping in the jungle?
2. What did the Mouse promise the lion?
3. When did the Mouse and the lion meet again?
4. What is the main idea of the story?
5. Tell the main events in the order they happened.

6. What caused the lion to let the Mouse go free?

7. Can you think of an example of a person returning a favor like the Mouse did?

8. How are the Mouse and the lion like real people?

9. What are the two main pats (or scenes) of this story?

10. What pattern or behavior do you see in the lion and the Mouse?

11. What is the moral of this story?

12. Tell this story in a new way. Use people instead of animals as characters.

13. What do you think the hunter will do when he finds the lion gone?

14. Do you know any other stories about mercy or kindness? Give examples.

15. How important do you think it is to be kind?

16. Do you think the lion and the Mouse did the right thing? Why or why not?

17. If you were the lion, would you let the Mouse go free? Why or why not?

http://www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/lion.html

Appendix 16

Original forms of the translated excerpts

ST8: …Bana verilen süreyi daha iyi kullansaydım   ortaya daha ayrıntılı ve iyi bir çalışma çıkacaktı.

Reflection Sheet 1/p.2

ST23: …Kısacası, bu aktiviteyi tamamalamakla istediğim her zaman somut bir ürün oluşturabileceğimi anladım. Sahip olduğum ama farkında olmadığım bu özelliğimi keşfetmemde yardımcı olan Nurcan hanıma teşekkür ediyorum.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 7

ST25: …Ayrıca textbookumu hazırlarken fark ettiğim diğer birşey de yorumlama kapasitemin artmakta olduğuydu. En ufak ayrıntıların bile gerçekten de çok önemli olabileceği unutulmamalı.

Reflection Sheet1/p.7

ST4: …Konuları, soruları hazırlayıp onları bir kitap haline getirdikten sonra onu elime aldığımda içimde sadece kendi emeğimle birşey meydana getirmenin mutluluğu vardı. Çalışmalarımın boşa gitmediğini ve verilen bir ödevi zamanında yaparak sorumluluğumu yerine getirdiğimi görmek ayrı bir mutluluk verdi.

Reflection Sheet 1/p.1

ST5: While I was preparing this textbook, I felt myself very happy. It was as if I was an expert, a professional writer. I was happy because I was doing something beneficial. I was proud of myself and my first textbook so much….I believe that my textbook will be a successful one. My sources, my preparations, and my struggle were wonderful, perfect, and excellent. I think,…I did and learned something good.

Reflection Sheet 1/p.1

ST21: …İlk kısım sorular tamamdı. Kafamı kaldırdım, gözlerimde garip bir gülümsemenin ışığı vardı. Daha once kimse bana bildiklerini sentezleyip bir ürün oluştur dememişti. Textbook benim neredeyse beş yıllık İngilizce hayatımın toplamı olacaktı. Egzersiz diye adlandırdığımız soru bölümleri bir bir geçiyordu. Açıkçası gitgide eğlenceli olmaya başlamıştı. Sonunda bitti. Şimdi elimde "made by F…." diyebileceğim bir kitap var. Tamamen benim birikimim. Gerçekten harika bir duygu.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 6

ST19: … Bu aktivite sayesinde sözlük kullanmadan hızlı okumanın nasıl yapılacağını, sadece bir okuyuşta konunun anlaşılabileceğini hisettim. Bunun yanında edindiğim bilgiler sayesinde makaleler yazarken hiç zorlanmamaya ve onları kolayca kağıda dökebilmeyi başladım. Bu tür aktiviteler yapmaya devam edersem uğraş alanım İngilizce de çok başarılı ve yararlı olacağıma inanıyorum.

Reflection Sheet 1/p.

ST21: … Textbook ile kitap, makale, dergi, vs. nasıl okunmalı onu öğrendim. Sorular nereden çıkarılır, nasıl yorumlanır, bunları daha iyi gördüm.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 6

ST4: … İlk once bir araştırmanın nasıl yapılacağını öğrendim. Soruları hazırlamak ve konuları teker teker okumak benim hem gramer bilgimi arttırdı hemde onları yeniden gözden geçirmem yardımcı oldu.

Reflection Sheet 1/p. 1

ST8: …Bulduğum resmi, her ne kadar resim herşeyi anlatsa da cümlelerle anlatmaya çalıştım. Duygu ve düşüncelerimi tam olarak anlattığıma inanıyorum. İşte bu noktada benim de düşüncelerimi anlatmam gerektiğine, konuların birde benim bakış açımla değerlendirilmesi gerektiğine inandım.

Reflection Sheet 2/p. 2

ST4: … Ama bu ödev benim yorum yapabilme yeteneğimi geliştirdi, önemli olan şeyin sadece fotoğrafa bakmak değil onun ne anlatmak istediğini görmek olduğunu ve daha dikkatli olmam gerektiğini öğretti."

Reflection Sheet 2/p. 1

ST38… "Özellikle de yazdıklarım bittiğinde bu aktivitenin bana kazandırdıklarını daha iyi anladım. Öncelikle bu aktivite sayesinde yaratıcılığım ve yorum gücüm gelişti.

ST11: … "Sayfa sayfa sözlük karıştırıp zaman harcayacağıma beyin egzersizi yaparak ilerleyebilirim…"

Reflection Sheet 3/ p. 2

ST2: …"Bu ödevimiz de bizi okumaya ve sözlük karıştırmaya yöneltti."

Reflection Sheet 3/p.1

ST19: …"Bu tür anahtar kelimeleri kullanarak paragraflar oluşturmaya çalışmak hem yazma becerisini geliştirir hem kısa sürede düşünmeyi kolaylaştırarak konuşmada bizlere yardımcı olur."

<div align="right">Reflection Sheet 3/p. 5</div>

ST40: "…Açıkçası yapılmış olan portfolio örneklerini ilk incelediğimde gözüm korkmuştu. Bunları nasıl yaparım, nasıl üstesinden gelirim diye çok düşünmüştüm. Çünkü dosya içinde o kadar çok sayfa ve aktivite vardı ki endişelenmemem imkansız gibiydi. İşte benim portfoliom bu endişe ile başladı. Ama gün geçtikçe bu endişem azaldı."

<div align="right">Cover Letters /p. 6</div>

ST4: "… Bu yüzden portfolio aktivitesi bitse bile onu devam ettirmeyi düşünüyorum…Çünkü herşeyi kendim için yaptığımı düşünüyorum."

<div align="right">Cover Letters /p. 5</div>

ST7: "…Bu çalışmalara başladıktan sonra yazmayı bıraktığım günlüğüme yeniden başladım. Arasıra İngilizce de yazıyorum günlüğümü. Günlük yazmaya başlamam da bu çalışmaların bir ürünü bence…"

<div align="right">Cover Letters / p. 5</div>

ST7: "…Home Loglar ise üzerime günlük sorumluluklar yükledi. Bu günlük çalışmalar sayesinde öğrendim ki küçük sorumluluklar ihmal edildiğinde büyük sorunlar haline gelebiliyor. Bu yüzden küçük sorumluluklarımı ihmal etmeyerek büyük sorunlarla karşılaşmıyorum. Kısacası bugünün işini yarına bırakmamaya çalışıyorum…"

ST37: "Başka bir kazandırdığı ise sorumluluktur. Bu aslında portfolio ya özgü değil, çünkü bütün ödevler öğrencide sorumluluk hissi uyandırıyor, ama portfolioda da birçok ödev yaptığımız için bunu sayabiliriz."

<div align="right">Cover Letters /p. 6</div>

ST30: "…Hiçbirşey yoksa bile daha önce internette işim yoktu. Sadece oyun oynardık arkadaşlarla. Şimdi mesela o 5 tane article ı bulmak için kaç kere araştırdık. İnternet kullanmayı öğrendim en azından araştırmayı."

<div align="right">Interview 1/p.63 (30.11.2005)</div>

ST33: "… Şimdiye kadar bize şey öğretildi..Mesela kitap okutuluyor alın bunu okuyun deniliyor. Şimdi kendimiz araştırıyoruz, kendimiz buluyoruz, daha güzel oluyor."

<div align="right">Interview 1/p.69 (30.11.2005)</div>

ST41: "…İlk başta bilgisayarla hiç uğraşmışlığım, bir araştırmışlığım yoktu. Bir konu nasıl araştırılır. Onunla ilgili nerden bilgi edinilebilir nerelerden bununla ilgili hiçbir bilgim yoktu. Ben liseden çıkıp gelen biriyim. Eğitim sistemimiz de malum. Öğrencinin öğretmenden aldığı kadarıyla kalan bir system. İlk defa kendi çabalarımızla birşeyler yapmaya çalıştık. Yani öğretmenden birşey beklemeden. Bilgisayardan bir sürü araştırma yaptık. Yani mesela şimdi bir konu verdiğinizde öyle zorlanacağımı zannetmiyorum. Yani bir konuda nasıl bilgi edinebilirim, nerelerden bilgi edinebilirim, ne tür kaynaklardan biliyorum. Bilgisayar kullanmayı bu sayede az çok öğrendim…"

Interview 1/p. 85 (30.11.2005)

ST5: "… Evet yani tabii ki değişiklik oldu benim için. Hemde büyük değişiklik. En başta bu sorumluluk manasında hem de ne bileyim hiç yapmadığım şeyleri yaptım bu portfolio ile. Araştırma kabiliyetim gelişti. Bir düzen sistem içerisinde ne yapmam gerektiğini öğrendim…"

Interview 1/p. 10 (01.12.2005)

ST8: "…Portfolio da düzeni öğrendim. En temel olarak bir şeyi düzenli bir şekilde yapmayı. Birşeyi demeyeyim aslında birçok şeyi düzenlemeyi sokmayı öğrendim. Çünkü birçok aktiviteyi bunların çoğu birbirinden farklı yapıyoruz ve bunları düzenli bir şekilde yapmaya çalışıyoruz."

Interview 1/p.16 (01.12. 2005)

ST13: "… Organizasyon, düzen, gelişim, birşeyleri baştan sona doğru insan baktığımda bitirdiğimde ilk yaptığım aktiviteyle son yaptığım aktivite bir olmayacak çünkü görüyorum yavaş yavaş yanlışlarımı ve düzeltmeye çalışıyorum."

Interview 1/p. 28

(30.11.2005)

ST3: "…Okumaya bakış açım daha once kısa da olsa İngilizce okumak sıkıyordu ya da anlayamayacağım gibi birşey oluşuyordu beynimde. Bilimsel bir makale okuyamıyordum sanki anlayamayacakmışım gibi, ya da gazette okurken böyle bir önyargı vardı bende. Buradakileri anlamam. İngilizce biliyorum anlamam. Aynı şey gibi uzun sure İngilizce görürsünüz ama turistle konuşamadığınız için onu görünce heyecanlanırsınız ya ben kesinlikle konuşamam deyip geri çekilirsiniz. Öyle birşey vardı. Şimdi bunu yapmak mecburiyetinde olduğumuz için yavaş yavaş başlıyorsun ve anladığının farkına varınca sürekli okuyor artık zevk almaya başlıyor o işten…"

Interview 1/ p. 6

(01.12.2005)

ST5: "…Eskiden ben reading dersini sevmezdim. Okumayı sevmezdim. Verilen parçaları incelemeyi, onunla verilen soruları araştırmayı sevmezdim, cevaplamayı sevmezdim. Reading bana ters birşeydi eskiden. Uzun uzun parçalar çıkardı karşımıza. Ama bu portfolio dan sonar bu reading in iyi birşey olduğunu, olması gereken yararlı birşey olduğunu öğrendim. Eskiden okuyorduk, soruları cevaplıyorduk. Çok sıkıcıydı. Birde kendi bulduğum parçalar, kendi beğendiğim, kendi tarzıma uygun parçalar olduğu için belki ondan seviyorum…"

ST1: "…Daha önce sırf okumak için okuyordum ya da zevk duyduğum için. Şuan anlamak gerektiğine inanıyorum çünkü yapacağım aktivitelerde bu çok önemli yani daha iyi özümseyerek okuyorum, karakterleri düşünerek, birbirleriyle kıyaslayarak şuan daha iyi…"

Interview 1/p. 1 (01.12.2005)

ST4: "…Ama bu kelimeleri öğrendikçe kitabı daha da iyi anlamaya başladım, kitap olsun gazete olsun. Okuduğumu bu sefer anlayarak okuyorum. Önceleri birşey okuduğum zaman ne anlatmak istediğini ne demek istediğini anlamazdım. Kendi kafamdan yorum yaparak, şöyle demiştir, şu olabilir. Ama bu kelimelerin ne demek istediğini birebir görebiliyorum…"

Interview 1/p. 8 (01.12.2005)

ST5: "…Önceleri sadece okuyup geçiyordum ve genellikle %90 anlamıyordum. Bir kelimeyi orda anlamayınca bir paragrafı anlamıyordum. Ama bundan sonar bu vocab loglar sayesinde daha iyi anlamaya başladım diyebilirim…"

Interview 1/p. 11

(01.12.2005)

ST6: "…Böyle sırf okumak için okumuyorum. Biraz daha anlam vererek okuyorum. Bana birşeyler katsın diye okuyorum. Sırf geçiştirmek için okuyorum…"

Interview 1/ p. 13

(01.12.2005)

ST26: "…Mesela gazete okumaya başladım. Gazete okuma alışkanlığım oldu. Gündemde olan bilgileri okuyorum hayatıma taşıyorum ve düşünüyorum ve onlar üzerinde eleştiri yorum yapıyorum kendime gore haberlerde…"

Interview 1/p. 54

(30.11.2005)

ST29: "…Okuduğum çok hoşuma gitti. Kendimin geliştiğini hisediyorum ve mutlaka akşamları bir saat okumadan yatmayacağım. Kesinlikle çünkü İngilizce de köreliyorsunuz, unutuyorsunuz…"

Interview 1/p. 61

(30.11.2005)

ST37: "… Sadece geliştirmek vardı aklımda İngilizcemi. İngilizcemi nasıl geliştirebilirim o var aklımda. Sürekli daha çok çalışmayı hedefledim ve o dört kitabı bitirdikten sonra bana çok yararı olacağına inanıyorum. Çünkü ilk kitabı bitirdiğimde kendimde birçok değişiklikler fark ettim…"

Interview 1/p.77

(07.12.2005)

ST18: "…Öğrenme konusunda, İngilizceyi algılama konusunda daha hızlı olmaya başladım… Kelime hazinem geliştiği için zorlanmıyorsun kitap okurken daha fazla daha hızlı okumaya başlıyorsun…"

Interview 1/p. 38 (02.12.2005)

ST19: "…daha önceden bir parçayı okurken sözlük sürekli kullandık ama şimdi kelime öğrendikçe okuduğumuz parçalardan daha sonraki parçaları düzenli bir şekilde hızlı, akıcı bir şekilde okuyoruz…"

Interview 1/p. 40 (02.12.2005)

ST20: "…okuma hızımın geliştiğini gördüm ve okuduklarımı daha iyi anladığımı gördüm. Kitapları daha çabuk bitirdiğimi gördüm ve daha fazla zevk aldığımı gördüm….Evet dediğim gibi okuma hızım arttı. Anlama kapasitem, sözcük dağarcığım. Birçok yönden yardımcı olduğunu söyleyebilirim…"

Interview 1/p. 41 (02.12.2005)

ST1: "…kendimi daha iyi hissetmeye başladım çünkü birşeyler yapmaya, birşeyler üretmeye başladım ve cümle yapılarımın da değiştiğini farkediorum…"

Interview 1/p. 1 (01.12.2005)

ST3: "…bana birşey verilmediği zaman herhangi bir konu hakkında araştırma yapma alışkanlığım yoktu ama şimdi yani birşey aklıma takılıyor hemen onun üstünde çalışmaya başlıyorum…"

Interview 1/p.5 (01.12.2005)

ST41: "…İlk defa kendi çabalarımızla birşeyler yapmaya çalıştık. Yani öğretmenden birşey beklemeden. Yani mesela şimdi bir konu verdiğinizde öyle zorlanacağımı

zannetmiyorum. Yani bir konuda nasıl bilgi edinebilirim, nerelerden bilgi edinebilirim, ne tür kaynaklardan biliyorum…"

ST5: "…İyi birşey tabii ki. İnsan bazen kendi hatalarını yüzüne söyleyemiyor. Arkadaşlarına da söyleyemiyor yeri gelince. Ama bunun sayesinde galiba söyleyebiliyoruz. Kendi kendini yargılama, eleştirme gibi yeteneklerimizi geliştiriyoruz. Ve ben bunu ilk kez burada yapıyorum…"

ST8: "…Çok güzel sadece kendimizinkini biz değerlendirsek ya da sadece arkadaşımıznı kini değerlendirsek olmazdı. Yani kendi eserimizi kendi gözlerimizle değerlendirmemiz lazım bence. Aynı şekilde bizim eserimizi başka arkadaşımız yani bir hocamız değil de bizimle yaklaşık aynı donanıma sahip birinin değerlendirmesi güzel. Objektif olmayı öğreniyoruz. Objektif bir şekilde değerlendirdik bence güzel oldu…"

ST23: "…Mutlaka görmediğimiz şeyler vardır. Peer olduğu zaman eşimiz bunu gösterir bizde bir yandan bir peer olduğunu düşünerek daha az hata yapmaya çalışıyoruz. Mutlaka güzel birşey çünkü self-evaluation yaparken kendimizi control ediyoruz hata yapmamaya çalışıyoruz. Yazıp yazıp bırakmıyoruz. Biri inceleyecekmiş gibi yapıyoruz. Daha doğru yapmaya özen gösteriyoruz…"

ST24: "…Ya ben aslında çok şey olmadığımı düşünüyorum. Objektif olmadığımı düşünüyorum. Hani arkadaşı olunca biraz daha fazla puan veriyor açıkçası. Kendime verince biraz daha düşük vermeye çalıştım ama korkum da vardı ya herkes kendine yüksek verirde ben sadece düşük verirsem. Öyle bir korku da vardı…"

ST30: "… Aslında doğrusunu söylemek gerekirse tam içimizdekini söyleyemedik. Mesela çok ta samimi olmadığım bir arkadaşım vardı. Birşey söylesem yanlış anlayacak. Birde şu korku vardı ben az verirsem o da bana az verecek gibisinden. Zaten tam bir inceleme yapamadık ki. ….Karşıdaki arkadaşımçok kötü olsa da ona kötü not veremem. Objektif olamadık. En azından şimdilik böyleydi…"

ST1: "…İşte belkide biz o ödevi ödev yapmak için yaptığımız gerçekleri görmemizi sağlıyor sırf onu ödev olduğu için yapmıyoruz da kendi düşüncelerimizi kattığımızda gerçekten neler yaptığımızı görüyoruz. Bana gerçekten ne kazandırdığını düşünüyorum çünkü sonuçta o kağıda dökmek onu bana gösteriyor…"

Interview 1/ p. 2 (01.12.205)

ST6: "… Bir eleştirmen olarak bakıyorum kendime. Eleştirebiliyorum kendimi…Eksikliklerimi görebiliyorum bir şeyler yorumlayabiliyorum. Reflection yazarken ne yazdığımı yorumlayabiliyorum…"

Interview 1/ p. 13 (01.12.2005)

ST9: "… Hoşuma gidiyor kendim yaptığım birşeyi eleştirmeyi. Daha böyle irdeleyerek bakmak hoşuma gidiyor…"

Interview 1/ p. 19 01.12.2005)

ST11: "…İtiraf edeyim: Hani her aktiviteden sonra da olmaz ki. Biraz zor gelmeye başladı ama sonradan birkaç dakika içinde karalama kağıdına bile gerek duymadan direk yazabiliyorum…Reflection lar rahatlatıcı olmaya başladı…Ben onları yazarken gelişimin farkına varıyorum. Biraz daha bilinçli olmaya başladık. Biraz öğrenci modundan çıkıp hani öğretmen değil ama biraz ilerlemeye başladık…"

Interview 1/p.24 (01.12.2005)

ST21: "… Reflection lar dediğim gibi hepsi standart çok fazla reflection yazamıyorum mesela her yaptığım şeyle ilgili yazamıyorum çünkü hepsinde aynı şeyleri hisediyorum neredeyse. Farklı aktiviteler yapıyoruz ama ben yazacak bir şey bulamıyorum. O yüzden reflection yazmakta zorlanıyorum. …"

Interview 1/ p. 44 (02.12.2005)

ST4: "…Şimdiye kadar yaptıklarımız belirli bir çalışma düzenini getirdi. Bir sorumluluk verdi. Bana kalsa ben birşey yapmazdım tüm sene boyunca öğrenci olduğumuzu gösterdi bize…"

Interview 1/ p.9 (01.12.2005)

ST6: "…Portfolio ile kendimi boş hissetmiyorum. Böyle akşam eve gidince birşeyler yazıyorum. Sorumluluk var…"

Interview 1/ p.13 (01.12.2005)

ST9: "…Çok zor nasıl olur alışık olmadığımız birşey ama yapınca getirilerini görünce olması gerekiyor diye düşünüyoruz. Ben zorlanıyorum yaparken ama getirisini görüyorum, faydalarını görüyorum…"

Interview 1/ p. 19 (01.12.2005)

ST13: "…Organizasyon, düzen, gelişim, birşeyleri baştan sona doğru insane baktığımda, bitirdiğimde ilk yaptığım aktiviteyle son yaptığım aktivite bir olmayacak çünkü görüyorum yavaş yavaş yanlışlarımı ve düzeltmeye çalışıyorum."

Interview 1/ p.28 (30.11.2005)

ST4: "…Şimdiye kadar yaptıklarımız belirli bir çalışma düzenini getirdi. Bir sorumluluk verdi…"

Interview 1/ p. 9 (01.12.2005)

ST8: "…Birçok aktivitenin düzene sokulması. Tek cümle olarak."

Interview 1/ p. 17 (01.12.2005)

ST13: "…Organizasyon, düzen, gelişim…"

Interview 1/ p. 28 (30.11.2005)

ST34: "…Düzen geliyor. Sorumluluk, düzen daha anlaşırlılık geliyor. Normalden daha anlaşılır oluyorsun."

Interview 1/p. 72 (30.11.2005)

ST40: "…Dosyalamak, dozen, belli bir düzene girdik…"

Interview 1/p. 84 (30.11.2005)

ST15: "…Benim ilk yaptığım bir şeydi. O yüzden iyiydi. Yani benim ilk yaptığım ürün şuan kendi başıma."

N: "Yani birine anlatacak olsan ortaya çıkardığım bir ürün mü derdin?"
ST15: "Evet."

Interview 1/ p.37 (30.11.2005)

ST23: "…Birşeyi oluşturmaya başladık bu sene. Kendi emeğimizle oluşan birşeyler yaptık. Tamamen kendi çabalarımızla. Bunlara zaman geçtikçe dönüp bakmak güzel oluyor. Bu yolda bir çalışma."

Interview 1/ p. 48 (30.11.2005)

STÇiğdem P.:"…Orda anlattığım şeyler aynı gibi çok farklı bir değişiklik yok. Sadece güven olarak biraz daha ilerlediğimin farkındayım. Güven açısından daha çok güvendiğimin farkındayım…"

Focus Group Interview /p. 9 (29.03.2006)

Student Sevim: "…Portfolio aktivitesi çok faydalıydı. Hani bizim bir saatlik sınavda yaptığımız şeyler değildi ve bize çok şey kazandırdı. Öncelikle kitap falan okurken artık sadece okuyup geçmiyoruz onun nelerine dikkat etmeliyiz biz onda hangi çalışmaları

kullanabiliriz ya da işte bizde ne uyandırıyor çünkü bunları daha sonradan hep yaptık reflection larda yaptık aktivitelerde yaptık…."

<div align="right">Focus Group Interview /p. 3 (29.03.2006)</div>

Student Soykan:"…Benim gibi sorumluluğu sevmeyen bir öğrenci için portfolio aktivitesi gerçekten çok zor bir aktiviteydi. Ama bundan önce yaptığım okumalarda özellikle kitap okumalarda veya makalelerde bir yazı onları sadece okuduğumu fark ettim. Aslında hiç sorgulamadan okuyormuşum. Portfolio yapmaya başladığımda ilk başta bunu o şekilde yapıyordum ve sorgulamam gereken yerlerde iki kere okumam gerekiyordu. Dedim ki iki kere okumak yerine sorgulayarak okumak ve bir kere de bitirmek daha mantıklı geldi ve artık öyle okuyorum.

<div align="right">Focus Group Interview /p. 4 (29.03.2006)</div>

ST4: … Evet az çok anladım niçin öğrendiğimi nasıl öğrendiğimi ve ne öğrendiğimi çünkü bir aktiviteyi yaparken onu sadece yüzeysel olarak yapmıyoruz sizin verdiğiniz çizelgeye yapıyoruz onları. Araştırma yaparken biraz onu derinlemesine okurken ne yaptığınızın farkına varabiliyorsunuz bir aktivite yaparken…

<div align="right">Focus Group Interview/ p. 1 (27.03.2006)</div>

ST4: … Gelişimini görebiliyor musun sorusuna cevap vermek istiyorum. 5. aktiviteme baktığınız zaman ilkokul çocuğunun yapmayacağı gramer hataları vardı. Belki bilgisayarla yazarken yanlış yapılmıştır. Diğer aktivitelere baktığınız zaman en son aktiviteye geldiğinizde diğer hataların hiçbir yok. Okuyup birde yazıya geçirdiğimiz zaman önceki hatalarımızı mesela siz bize göstermiştiniz şurada hata olmuş diye onları da düzelterek geliştiğimiz için son aktivitelerde hemen hemen hiç hata olmadı. Gramer açısından da okuma açısından da geliştik diyebilirim.

<div align="right">Focus Group Interview/ p. 2 (27.03.2006)</div>

N: Peki okumanda herhangi bir değişiklik oldu mu?
ST4: … Daha önceki okumalarda okuyayım bitsin vardı ama şimdi okurken acaba ne demiş ne yapmak istemiş ne anlatmak istemiş biraz daha düşünerek yorum yaparak okudum.

<div align="right">Focus Group Interview/ p. 2 (27.03.2006)</div>

ST5: … Mesela o textbook taki sorular daha önce benim orda büyük bir eksikliğim var onu fark ettim ve bence bu çok büyük bir yararı oldu fark etmem. Yani soru çıkartamıyorum. Eksiklik bu. Sorular o paragrafları destekleyemiyor ya da zayıf kalıyor.

<div align="right">Focus Group Interview/ p. 3 (29.03.2006)</div>

Appendix 17

CONSENT FORM

I hereby declare that I have been enlightened about the study to be conducted by the researcher Nurcan Köse. By signing this consent form I agree to participate in all the activities regarding this study.

Name:
Signature:

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Köse, Nurcan
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth: November 25, 1969, Antakya
Marital Status: Married
Phone:
Fax:
email: nurkose@cu.edu.tr, nurcan01@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
PhD	Çukurova University ELT Department	-
MA	Mustafa Kemal University ELT Department	1997
BA	Dokuz Eylül University Buca Educational Faculty ELT Department	1992
High School	Antakya Ticaret Lisesi	1988

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2001- Present	Çukurova University	Research Assistant
1994-2001	Mustafa Kemal University ELT Department	Research Assistant
1992-1994	Yayladağı Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulu	English Teacher

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Advanced German, Fluent Arabic

PUBLICATIONS

1. "How do pre-service teachers perceive themselves as readers and reading teachers", 2002

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
- 1996- 'TEFL in Context', Summer Institute, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu
- 1998- 'An English Miscellany2, Conference, Erciyes University, Kayseri
- 1998- 'It's a question of Motivation, Seminar, Adana

- 2002- 'Interchanges and Exchanges in ELT', Conference, METU, Ankara
- 2002- 'Modern Approaches, Methods and ELT Problems', Conference, Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta, (attended as speaker)
- 2002- 'Reassessing Assessment', Conference, Işık University, İstanbul
- 2003- 'Content Based Instruction', Summer Institute, Uludağ University, Bursa
- 2005- 3rd International Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching, Conference, Çukurova University, Adana
- 2005- 'Evaluation-A Requisite for Quality Learning', Rate-Quest Conference, Romania (attended as speaker)
- 2006-'Integrating EFL Skills Learning and Standards: The Challenges of Change', Conference, The American University in Cairo, Egypt (attended as speaker)

HOBBIES

Reading, Swimming, Languages

The students had a lack of knowledge and practice in reading strategies however after a comprehensive study, there was an improvement in their success. At the beginning as being the researcher, I had some worries about how to implement the strategies in the classroom. The number of the strategies Hülya Küçükoğlu / Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 70 (2013) 709 – 714 was another obstacle as the students might have found them confusing. Effects of portfolio implementation and assessment critical reading on learner autonomy of EFL students. Retrieved from http://www.belgeler.com/blg/12ta/effects-of-portfolioimplementation-and-assessment-on-critical-reading-and-learner-autonomy-of-elt-students National Reading Panel.