Master's thesis:

Using Portfolio Assessment to Improve the Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students

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Using Portfolio Assessment to Improve the Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Master Degree in Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

Although portfolio assessment emerged a while ago, it has received little attention in the Libyan context. Given this fact and the need for effective strategies to enhance students' writing skills, this study was conducted to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students. Furthermore, it illustrates how components of the portfolio contribute to students' progress. Since there is a limited use of this assessment method, an exploratory research design was employed, then for in-depth understanding of the research topic, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. Quantitative data (students' drafts scores, pre/post- test scores, and self-assessment sheet) were analysed through SPSS program whereas qualitative data from students' portfolios (teacher feedback and overall reflection sheet) were processed systematically using content analysis. The findings of the study support findings of other studies and reveal that there is a positive impact of portfolio assessment manifested in significant improvement in students' writing proficiency. Moreover, the results highlight the important role of teacher feedback and self-assessment in developing students' metacognitive awareness and providing them with clear guidance for improvement. This is achieved through indicating students' strengths and weaknesses and giving them suggestions for enhancement.

Declaration

I, Aya Abdullah Abo-lkasem, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled "Using Portfolio Assessment to Improve the Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students" is the result of my own independent research and work.

All sources of information, data, and ideas drawn from the work of others have been duly acknowledged and referenced according to academic conventions.

This study was conducted in compliance with the ethical standards and research regulations of the Libyan Academy of Graduate Studies.

Date: ————————————

Signature: ————————————

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents, who lit my path when it grew dim, who believed when belief was hard to find, and who gently turned the impossible into stepping stones.

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First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, for granting me the strength, patience, time, and ability to complete this dissertation. Without His guidance and blessings, this journey would not have been possible.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, research questions, significance of the study, methodology, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

As researchers continue to conduct studies and come up with new findings, developments take place in different majors, and English language teaching is not an exception. New teaching methods, assessment techniques as well as learning approaches are being emerged in order to enhance the teaching-learning process. As a result, concepts such as learner-centred approach, problem solving approach, authentic assessment and other new methods have replaced the traditional ways of teaching and are widely used nowadays. However, this is not totally true when it comes to the Libyan context where the traditional methods are still the mostly used. As a result, students face many challenges in learning the different language skills, especially writing.

Writing is not simply producing a number of written words to express an idea. According to Nunan (2003), writing is the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statements and paragraphs clearly. Therefore, in order to produce a good piece of writing, learners need to follow some stages such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, etc …, and consider some writing aspects, like content, organisation, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. However, having the teachers concentrating only on the final product and ignoring the process will

not help learners to improve their writing skills, and here comes the role of portfolio assessment.

In this study, the researcher is willing to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students in the Department of English at Africa University for Humanities and Applied Sciences.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Writing is one of the most challenging skills to master, requiring effort, time, and consistent guidance from both teachers and learners (Raimes, 1983). In Libya, however, writing instruction is still shaped by traditional, test-oriented methods that focus more on passing exams than on developing real writing ability. Most teachers assess writing holistically, giving a single overall score without detailed feedback, which leaves students unsure of what they did well or where they need to improve (Hamp-Lyons, 1995). Yet, feedback is essential in helping learners grow as writers (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2018). To make writing instruction more meaningful and effective, alternative approaches such as portfolio assessment can be used. Portfolios allow students to receive continuous feedback, reflect on their progress, and take greater responsibility for their learning (Nguyen, 2021). Despite its potential, portfolio assessment has not been widely adopted in Libya, largely because many teachers are unfamiliar with its use. For this reason, this study explores how portfolio assessment can enhance the writing skills of undergraduate students in the Department of English at Africa University for Humanities and Applied Sciences.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The research aims to:

1. Investigate the impact of using portfolio assessment on students' writing skills.

2. Explore how different elements of the portfolio support students' progress.

1.4 Research Questions

The research answers the following questions:

1. What is the impact of portfolio assessment on the development of students' writing skills?

2. How does portfolio assessment support students' development?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the use of portfolio assessment in the Libyan context. By examining key elements of portfolio assessment, such as teacher feedback and student self-assessment, it shows how these practices can actively support students' learning, helping them understand their strengths, identify areas for improvement, and make real progress in writing. Furthermore, the findings may encourage teachers to integrate portfolio assessment into their writing classes as a practical and effective tool, moving beyond traditional testing methods. Finally, this research can serve as a valuable reference for other educators and researchers, providing a foundation for further studies on alternative assessment approaches and contributing to the improvement of teaching and learning in Libya.

1.6 Methodology

This exploratory research adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the impact of using portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students in addition to exploring how components of the portfolio contribute to students' progress. This study was applied to eight students enrolled in a writing class at Africa University for

Humanities and Applies Sciences. The participants were selected using convenience sampling strategy. Data were collected through students' portfolios which included their drafts, assessment rubric, teacher feedback, self-assessment sheet and the overall reflection on the portfolio experience, in addition to pre- and post-test. As for the data analysis, the numerical data obtained from students' first and final drafts in addition to the pre/post-test scores, and the self-assessment checklist were processed using SPSS program. On the other hand, the text data collected from students' portfolios, particularly teacher feedback and open-ended questions in the overall reflection sheet, were analysed using content analysis.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This dissertation consists of five chapters organized as follow:

- Chapter One is the introduction, and in which background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, methodology, and finally, the organization of the study are presented.

- Chapter Two is the literature review, which reviews the literature related to the research topic. It includes information about the concept of writing, assessment, and portfolios. It also reviews previous studies related to implementing portfolio assessment in writing classes.

- Chapter Three deals with the research methodology. It illustrates the research design and the sampling technique used in this research. Furthermore, it justifies the instruments and the methods used to collect and analyse the data.

- Chapter Four presents the data analysis process and discusses the results.

- Chapter Five consists of the conclusion, recommendations, suggestions for further research, and finally limitations of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has introduced the research topic generally by stating the research problem, aims, questions and significance. However, this chapter sheds light on the theoretical concepts that are directly related to the topic, specifically, concept of writing, writing as a process, concept of assessment, traditional assessment vs alternative assessment, assessing writing, holistic assessment, analytical assessment, concept of portfolio, historical background and evolution, theoretical frameworks underpinning portfolios, types of portfolios, advantages of portfolios, disadvantages of portfolios, portfolio design and creation, implementation of portfolio, assessment using portfolio, challenges in using portfolios, and finally, previous studies related to portfolio assessment.

2.1 Concept of Writing

Writing plays an essential role in most life aspects as it serves a main function, i.e., communication (Weigle, 2002). In a such literate world where letters, words, and sentences are all around us, in the streets, on food packages, on user manuals, emails, newspapers, books, etc, no one wants to be left behind for not knowing how to write. However, teaching and learning writing is not as easy as it seems to be for both teachers and learners. Before dealing with the complexity of writing, how different scholars and researchers defined writing should be explored.

The meaning of writing goes beyond simply putting words on a piece of paper or typing them on screen, it is a skill, and any skill is often acquired through practice. As stated

above, writing is a communication device writers use to express themselves. Byrne (1988) argues that when we write, we create sentences in a specific manner and connect them to express our ideas in meaningful texts. The ways of expressing oneself differ depending on the purpose, i.e., letters have different style and different words than news articles, and scientific books differ from magazines or comic books, etc. This brings us to the fact that to be able to write effectively, writers need to think about the purpose of their text and their audience, (to whom the text is written). Regardless the genre of writing, Nunan (2003: 88) sees writing from two perspectives as a 'process' and as a 'product'. The process is the act of thinking about and organizing ideas and writing them down, then checking the text for any mistakes before producing the final draft. On the other hand, the product is the fruit the reader gets as a result of the preceding steps.

2.1.1 Writing as a Process

The writing process starts before writers put their words together on paper. Lannon (2012) believes that in order to produce a satisfactory piece of writing, writers should plan first. Thus, the process starts with a pre-writing stage like thinking about the purpose of the text, to whom the text is written (audience), and what information to include. Once they get a clear picture about the topic, they start thinking about how to organize their ideas on paper, how to start and how to end their text. After getting done with their first drafts, writers revise them to check the organization, the content, and the coherence. Then, comes the stage of editing where they check the text in terms of structure, mechanics, grammar, etc., and make the needed correction before submitting the final product. Although these stages seem to be done in a linear order, they are, surprisingly, done recursively, i.e., "writers constantly review and modify their texts" (Hyland 2009: 80).

2.2 Concept of Assessment

Assessment is considered as one of the crucial elements in the teaching-learning process as it guides instructors to adopt the best methods and strategies to enhance the teaching-learning process. Loannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2003: 4) state that assessment is "a general term which includes all methods used to gather information about children's knowledge, ability, understanding, attitudes, and motivation". From this view, it can be said that the main purpose of assessment is to collect data about learners. Then these data are analysed, by teachers and decision-makers, and used as a reference to set educational goals, designing curricula, and adopting the suitable teaching strategies and approaches (Phakiti and Leung, 2024).

It has been claimed by Hyland (2003) that assessment could generally be done for either summative or formative purposes. Summative assessment aims at demonstrating learners' accomplishment at the end of the course, often for reporting purposes. On the other hand, formative assessment intends to provide ongoing insights into learners' strengths and areas for improvement. Consequently, teachers can provide students with feedback about their performance and make decisions based on their results. This aligns with the claims of Black and William (1998) that students learn most effectively when assessment is used to actively support the learning process through providing students with regular feedback, opportunities for self-assessment, and clearly defined criteria to guide their progress.

Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provides a useful way to understand how assessment can do more than simply measure what students know. The ZPD refers to the gap between what learners can do on their own and what they can accomplish with guidance from a teacher or a more capable peer. This perspective highlights the important role of feedback, reflection and guidance in helping students make progress.

Building on this, Wood et al., (1976) introduced the idea of scaffolding, which describes the temporary support given to learners to help them complete tasks they could not yet manage independently. In writing instruction, scaffolding can take many forms, such as teacher feedback on drafts, guided peer collaboration, or structured reflection activities. These practices provide ongoing support, timely feedback, and opportunities for students to actively engage with their learning.

Whether it is summative or formative assessment, the process of collecting information about learners has been affected by different approaches. In the past, language testing was mainly concerned with using correct grammar, vocabulary, and translation of texts from the native language to the target one, which was criticized of being inauthentic and neglecting all communication means (Brown and Abeywricama, 2018). Then, attention was directed towards the assumption that language abilities are connected to each other and they cannot be assessed separately. This resulted in the emergence of what was called integrative testing, where the main focus was on dictation and cloze tests (fill in the blanks using the correct word). It was believed that this type of tests requires good language competence and covers many language aspects (Oller 1979 cited in Brown 2018). Then, researcher continued to come up with different theories, approaches, and types of language assessment each with its pros and cons.

An interesting theory says that the best way to make students learn effectively is to encourage them to use the language inside "the classroom without being formally graded" (Brown and Abeywricama, 2018: 6). The matter of grading students' performance causes anxiety and tension as they are afraid of making mistakes and getting low grades. To solve this problem, teachers may use one of the non-test tasks where students perform, in a stress-free environment, to be guided and corrected rather than being graded. It is

significant to shed light on the importance of integrating such alternative assessment tasks in language teaching instead of relying, solely, on standardised tests to assess learners.

2.2.1 Traditional Assessment vs Alternative Assessment

Traditional assessment according to Chirimbu (2013: 95) "measures performance indirectly by checking knowledge and abilities outside their real context of usage". Pen-paper tests, multiple choice questions, true and false, and essay questions are examples of summative traditional testing tools that focus on assessing the final product in a timed-test and pay no attention to the learning process. Consequently, students respond to single items irrelevant to the real world and receive no feedback from the teacher irrespective of their final scores (Armstrong, 1994; Baily, 1998 cited in Brown, 2018). Despite all its shortcomings, traditional assessment can be used effectively to serve the function it was designed to serve. Nevertheless, attention has been recently directed to alternative assessment methods due to their efficiency in promoting the teaching-learning process.

Alternative assessment refers to the substitutional tasks that are used to assess learners over a period of time instead of timed tests (phakiti and Leung, 2024). Through alternative assessment, teachers focus on the process of learning rather than the final product, which allows them to monitor and track learners' progress and provide immediate feedback to rectify possible challenges. Accordingly, teachers can make decisions regarding the teaching methods to be applied and the educational goals to be achieved. One of the alternative assessment methods that has been given magnificent attentiveness in the last few years is the portfolio assessment.

2.2.2 Assessing Writing

Writing is considered as a productive skill that people use to convey messages and communicate ideas and thoughts. Consequently, their work should be well written for this goal to be achieved. However, the difficulty is not only in putting words together to form sentences and sentences to form paragraphs but in producing a well-written piece of writing, especially when using a second language. In addition to being hard skill to master, writing appears to be hard to assess due to the plentiful conceptions that are included within it. Both Weigle (2002) and Brown and Abeywickrama (2018) highlight the idea that before carrying out any assessment procedure, teachers should take account of several concerns to achieve the most advantageous results of the assessment process. Some of these concerns include the ability to be focused on when assessing writing such as the ability to construct grammatical sentences, correct spelling, paragraph structure, cohesion and coherence of ideas, or handwriting. Also, it should be borne in mind the different writing genres as each type has its unique language and structure. In addition, factors such as the purpose of the assessment, how the results will be dealt with, test takers and test evaluators as well as the scoring criteria and test validity and reliability should be taken into consideration when assessing writing.

Hout (2002) mentioned that assessing writing has been developed over time. Formerly, teachers have assessed writing aspects, namely grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure, using multiple choice questions. Then, the essay assessment has taken place in the nineteenth century. The problem in using essays to assess writing abilities was their reliability because different ratters give different scores for the same piece of writing. To solve this problem, more reliable assessment methods like holistic and analytic scoring were originated (Starch and Elliott, 1912; Cooper 1977 and White, 1994 cited in Hout, 2002).

2.2.2.1 Holistic Assessment

Holistic assessment deals with writing as a whole product rather than analysing its components separately (Fulcher and Davidson, 2007). Teachers adopting this assessment technique do not give nor get detailed feedback about students' performance owing to the fact that they give an overall score for a written text based on their perception of how good it is. Consequently, the issue of reliability is generated. That is, what seems good for one teacher might be the opposite for another. To address this issue, it has been suggested that two or more professional teachers grade the written text using specific rubrics as guidance for writing quality (Hyland, 2003).

2.2.2.2 Analytical Assessment

Analytical assessment originated from the need for more criterion-referenced evaluation methods in education. It emerged as an alternative to norm-referenced assessments, which compare student performance against a group average. Thus, the analytical approach aligns with constructivist theories of learning, emphasizing individual progress and detailed feedback (Gipps, 1994).

In particular, analytical assessment is a method of evaluating students writing by scoring distinct components such as content, organization, grammar, and mechanics. This approach contrasts with holistic assessment, described earlier, which assigns a single overall score. Analytical assessment is particularly useful in writing portfolios, where it provides detailed feedback and supports both formative and summative evaluation (Lam, 2018).

As pointed out by Lam (2018) and Weigle (2002), analytical assessment offers several advantages in the context of writing portfolios:

- It provides detailed feedback on specific writing traits, aiding student revision and learning.

- It enhances transparency and fairness through clearly defined criteria.

- It supports metacognitive development by encouraging students to reflect on their writing.

- It aligns closely with instructional goals and learning outcomes.

2.3 Concept of Portfolio

Basically, portfolio means portable papers. The word originates from the Latin word 'portafoglio' where 'Porta' means to carry and 'foglio' means papers (Lam 2018: 3). In the field of education, according to Lam (2018), portfolio means a continual collection of students' work to be used as a reference to improve their learning. It is also defined as "tangible evidence of accomplishments and skills that must be updated as a person changes and grows" (Tierney et al 1991: 43). Portfolio is defined as "a record of the child's process of learning: what the child has learned and how she has gone about learning; how she thinks, questions, analyses, synthesizes, produces, creates; and how she interacts intellectually, emotionally and socially-with others". (Grace, 1992 cited in Vangah et al 2016: 226),

2.3.1 Historical Background and Evolution

Portfolios have long been used in disciplines such as art and architecture to showcase a body of work. Their adoption in writing assessment began in earnest in the 1980s and 1990s alongside the rise of portfolio-based writing instruction as educators sought alternatives to standardized testing. The shift was driven by a desire to capture the complexity of student writing development over time (Olds, 1997).

Initially there were paper-based, but as digital technologies advanced, portfolios have evolved into digital formats (e-portfolios), enhancing accessibility and interactivity, and allowing for multimedia integration and easier sharing (Ngui et al., 2022). Moreover, to reduce the burden of portfolio assessment procedures and to support reflective learning, institutions such as the University of Minnesota and the University of Michigan have adopted e-portfolio platforms (Cambridge, 2010).

Analytical assessment then became a natural fit for assessing the portfolio format, enabling the evaluation of multiple aspects of writing across various drafts and genres (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000). Analytical rubrics became essential tools for evaluating multiple drafts and genres. This method supports both formative feedback and summative evaluation, making it a versatile tool in writing pedagogy (Park, 2004; Lam, 2018).

2.3.2 Theoretical Frameworks Underpinning Portfolios

The evolution of portfolios in education reflects a broader pedagogical shift toward student-centered learning and authentic assessment (Barrett, 2007). Therefore, it can be said that portfolio assessment is grounded in constructivist and socio-cognitive theories of learning. Constructivism emphasizes learning as an active, reflective process, and aligns with the emphasis of portfolios on student self-assessment and metacognition. Vygotsky's social development theory further supports the use of portfolios as means of encouraging constructive dialogues between students and instructors, hence fostering deeper learning (Olds, 1997; Ngui et al., 2022).

Additionally, portfolios align with experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), which emphasizes the role of reflection in learning from experience. Portfolios provide a structured space for learners to reflect on their writing processes and outcomes. The use

of portfolios also resonates with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, particularly the concept of self-efficacy, where students gain confidence through documenting and reviewing their own progress and that of their peers.

2.3.3 Types of Portfolios

Portfolios can be broadly categorized into working (nonselective) and final (selective) types. Working portfolios include all drafts and informal writings and supporting formative assessment (Olds, 1997). Final portfolios are carefully organised collections of polished work, often accompanied by reflective commentary, and are used for summative assessment or professional presentation (Olds, 1997).

Other types include developmental portfolios, which track growth over time; showcase portfolios, which highlight best work for external audiences; and assessment portfolios, which are used for grading or accreditation purposes. For example, the University of Arizona's writing program uses developmental portfolios to assess student progress across semesters (University of Arizona, 2023).

2.3.4 Advantages of Portfolios

Portfolios offer several pedagogical benefits. They facilitate holistic assessment, student reflection, authentic learning, and feedback-rich environments. Portfolios also provide a comprehensive view of a student's writing development and encourage metacognitive awareness and self-regulation. Portfolios also simulate real-world writing tasks and audiences and facilitate ongoing feedback and revision (Olds, 1997; Ngui et al., 2022; Institute for Academic Development, 2024).

Moreover, portfolios support differentiated instruction by allowing student diversity in which students with varying needs and backgrounds can demonstrate learning in their

own ways. Portfolios also promote ownership of learning and can serve as tools for career readiness. Zubizarreta (2009) highlights how portfolios enhance integrative learning by connecting academic, personal, and professional experiences.

2.3.5 Disadvantages of Portfolios

Despite their benefits, portfolios present some challenges. Most of all, they are time-consuming, potentially subjective, and may become cumbersome to cope with. Moreover, Nonselective portfolios can lack focus, and e-portfolios require digital literacy and reliable internet access (Ngui et al., 2022; Olds, 1997).

Additionally, instructors may face difficulties in maintaining consistency and reliability in grading portfolios. Students may also struggle with the reflective component if not adequately supported and motivated. According to Yancey (1999), successful portfolio implementation requires careful planning and staff development support to mitigate associated challenges.

2.3.6 Portfolio Design and Creation

Effective portfolio design must involve defining clear objectives, providing structured guidelines, and allowing student agency. It also involves the capacity of students to take ownership of their learning, make choices, and aligning tasks with course outcomes (Olds, 1997; Institute for Academic Development, 2024).

Portfolio design considerations should include the selection of artefacts, reflective writing, and the use of assessment rubrics. Andrews University (2023) recommends using a design template that includes a table of contents, learning outcomes, and reflective prompts to guide students in creating their portfolios.

Designers must also consider the audience, the types of writing to be included, and the reflective components that will accompany the artefacts. According to Barrett (2007), portfolios should be structured to support both learning and assessment, incorporating student choice and voice. Templates and rubrics can guide students in selecting and organizing their work, while digital platforms such as Google Sites offer flexible tools for e-portfolio creation (Abrami and Barrett, 2005).

2.3.7 Implementation of Portfolio

Successful implementation of portfolios requires educational staff orientation and training, technological support, and staff collaboration (Ngui et al., 2022; Olds, 1997). Staff collaboration and institutional support are also critical for successful implementation, within and across departments especially in programs that seek to implement longitudinal portfolios. As emphasized by Lorenzo and Ittelson (2005), sustained portfolio initiatives are important for institutional commitment and infrastructure.

Implementing portfolios effectively from the students' point of view requires a phased approach that includes scaffolding strategies and ongoing support. That is, institutions should provide training workshops and tutorials to familiarize students with portfolio preparation and the use of online platforms (Buyarski and Landis, 2014). Students should therefore be introduced to the portfolio process early in the course, with clear guidelines and timelines. As noted by Buyarski and Landis (2014), embedding portfolio tasks into the curriculum ensures that students view them as an integral requirement rather than supplementary.

Technology plays a vital role in the implementation of portfolios. Digital platforms must therefore be user-friendly and accessible, as some students may need training in digital

literacy. According to Chen and Light (2010), institutions should provide technical support and ensure that e-portfolio systems are compatible with existing learning management systems. Regular check-ins and formative feedback help maintain student engagement and portfolio quality throughout their period of study.

2.3.8 Assessment Using Portfolios

Assessment strategies include holistic scoring, analytic rubrics, self and peer assessment, and reflective commentary (Institute for Academic Development, 2024; Olds, 1997). Portfolio assessment can be conducted using holistic or analytic approaches. Holistic scoring evaluates the portfolio as a whole, while analytic scoring uses rubrics to assess individual components such as organization, grammar, and reflection (Yancey, 1992). Self-assessment and peer review are also valuable in promoting student agency and critical thinking. As Andrade and Du (2007) suggest, involving students in the assessment process enhances transparency and motivation.

Rubrics used for analytic portfolio assessment should be transparent and aligned with learning objectives. Instructors can incorporate reflective statements into such portfolios to gain insights into students' learning processes. As suggested by Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), combining multiple assessment methods enhances validity and reliability in portfolio evaluation.

Including all the above practices in the assessment process, shows that portfolio assessment is more than just a method for grading. It is a process that helps students develop their skills, take ownership of their learning, and gradually become more independent and confident writers.

2.3.9 Challenges in Using Portfolios

Despite their pedagogical benefits, portfolios present several challenges. Key challenges include scalability, reliability, resistance to change, and digital equity (Ngui et al., 2022; Olds, 1997). Scalability is one of the major issues; assessing and managing portfolios in large classes can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Educational staff may be faced with student resistance due to unfamiliarity with portfolio pedagogy or concerns about grading subjectivity (Batson, 2002). Large-scale implementation may also strain instructor resources and require institutional support. Resistance from instructors may stem from unfamiliarity or scepticism.

Digital equity is another concern in using portfolios. Students with unreliable internet access or inadequate digital skills may struggle with e-portfolio platforms. According to Lorenzo and Ittelson (2005), institutions must address these disparities through training and infrastructure support. Addressing digital equity also involves ensuring all students have access to necessary technology and support services (Cambridge, 2010). Moreover, maintaining student motivation over time can be difficult especially in longitudinal portfolios that span over multiple semesters.

2.4 Previous Studies Related to Portfolio Assessment

Although portfolio assessment is not widely used in the Libyan context, it has been under investigation in many other contexts. Some of the studies about implementing this assessment method in writing classes are addressed below.

Shofiyah (2014) conducted action research which aimed to improve the writing skills of grade VIII D students of SMP Negeri 2 Piyungan by using portfolio assessment. The study concluded that using portfolio assessment helped learners to improve their writing skills through practicing more in the classroom in addition to the regular feedback given

by the teacher. Moreover, using portfolio assessment made the writing process more interesting, and students were motivated and confident.

Aishyah (2015) conducted a study seeking to answer the question about the significance of portfolio assessment in improving students writing skills. It was found that portfolio assessment was an effective method when used to improve the ability of eleventh grade students of MA Nurul Islam Tengaran to write hortatory exposition texts. However, learners felt bored because they had to do a lot of writing tasks.

Another research was conducted by Suwaed (2018) on EFL undergraduate students' perceptions of using portfolio assessment in writing classrooms. The study was conducted at the English department in the Faculty of Arts at Sabratha University with thirty-eight participants. The research aimed to know learners' attitudes towards using portfolio assessment as well as their exam preferences. The findings revealed that most of the students preferred portfolio assessment to the traditional tests. Participants confirmed that portfolio assessment improved their writing skills in terms of grammatical competence, organization and language use. Furthermore, it increased their motivation and engagement in the classroom. On the other hand, some students mentioned that portfolio assessment was time-consuming and put them under pressure due to the large amount of assignments they had to do (Suwaed, 2018).

Similarly, Bolghari and Aghaalikhani (2019) conducted research that aimed to explore students' reactions to the portfolio assessment. The study concluded that students did not like the process which had a negative effect on some of them. That was due to abundant work to do so they felt exhausted and overloaded despite the significant improvement in their writing proficiency.

The above reviewed studies showed that portfolio assessment is a useful assessment tool to be used in writing classes to improve learners' writing skills despite the fact that the process could be labour-intensive and in some cases, therefore it is met with reluctance by students. However, there is a lack of research on how components of the portfolio support students' development. Hence, by conducting this research, the researcher believes to see notable improvements as a result of using portfolio to assess the writing skills of the learners at Africa University for Humanities and Applied Sciences. She also fills the gap by illustrating the contribution of the self-assessment and teacher feedback to students' progress.

2.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the literature related to the concepts of writing, assessment and portfolios. In addition, it reviewed previous studies about using portfolio assessment in writing classes. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology and the steps followed by the researcher to conduct this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the methodological procedures employed for this research. It presents the research design and sampling. Thereafter, attention is directed to the data collection procedures by providing some details about constructing the documents to be included in the students' portfolios. Moreover, it clarifies both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods used in this study including inferential statistics and document analysis. Finally, the chapter ends by highlighting the most important elements discussed throughout it.

3.1 Research Design

When researchers attempt to explore more about a phenomenon, situation, method or any subject that has received inadequate attention, the best research design to employ is the exploratory research (Stebbin, 2001). Accordingly, to achieve the research aim of investigating the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students, an exploratory research design was adopted.

Kumar (2011) defines exploratory research as a research that is conducted to examine a subject or an idea that has not been thoroughly studied. In other words, this approach has been chosen to attain familiarity as well as new insights into a subject that has received little attention (Kothari, 2004), which, in this case, is the impact of implementing portfolio assessment on students' writing skills in addition to how components of this assessment tool support students' development.

Additionally, the researcher decided to follow a mixed-methods approach to allow for more comprehensive understanding of the topic by gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. The former is used to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing skills, and the latter for gaining deep understanding of how elements of the portfolio support students' writing progress.

3.2 Target Population and Sample

As the title of this study indicates, the target population consisted of undergraduate students in the Department of English at Africa University for Humanities and Applied Sciences. This university has been chosen for two main reasons. First, due to the limited use of portfolio assessment in the Libyan context, permissions to apply this technique and conduct the study were granted by the head of the Department of English and the teacher of the writing course in this university, allowing easy access to participants. Second, as the adopted research design was exploratory where the goal is to obtain an in-depth understanding of a topic instead of generalizing the results, it was more suitable to work with a small-sized sample. As Marshall (1996: 523) states, "An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question". This was more feasible in a private university compared to a public university with a large number of students per one class.

The researcher collected data from all eight students enrolled in writing III class. Considering the nature of the exploratory research, the sample size was appropriate, as small samples are considered acceptable when the goal is to explore a process in depth (Cohen et al., 2018). Given the aims of the study which are to explore the impact of portfolio assessment and to know how it supports students' progress, the sample size, which is consistent with the mixed-methods approach adopted by the researcher, did not affect the validity of the results.

Due to the limitation of implementing portfolio assessment in writing classes, convenience sampling strategy was utilized. According to Creswell (2012), convenience sampling is utilized when participants are readily accessible and willing to participate. The choice of this sampling strategy was influenced by several considerations, such as availability, time constraints, and the feasibility of conducting the study within the given timeframe.

3.3 Research Instruments

The primary tool used to collect the data was through content analysis of students' portfolios. Students' portfolios consisted of many documents including their first and final drafts, assessment rubric, teacher feedback, self-assessment sheet, and an overall reflection on the portfolio experience. All of these files enabled the researcher to track learners' progress throughout the semester and allowed for in-depth understanding of how these elements supported students' progress.

However, for more valid research findings, Creswell (2009) suggests using more than one source of data. Hence, the researcher intended to use a secondary data collection instrument, particularly, pre-test and post-test. Data obtained from comparing the results before and after implementing the portfolio assessment strengthened the research findings. More details about constructing these two instruments are given in the following subsections.

3.3.1 The Portfolio Files

Portfolios contain learners' drafts and self-assessment sheets in addition to 'teachers' feedback' (Hyland 2003 cited in Shofiyah 2014: 24-25). Therefore, the researcher discussed the construction of the portfolio files with the teacher assigned to give the course.

3.3.1.1 Students' First and Final Drafts

As the main concern of this study is writing skills, it is, obviously, essential to have some written tasks, done by students, for the teacher to review, assess, and reflect on. Thereby, students' portfolios included their first drafts along with the pre-writing procedures, like brainstorming, and their final drafts after receiving the teacher feedback. Consequently, they could track their progress stepwise through comparing both drafts.

3.3.1.2 Assessment Rubric

Both the researcher and the course teacher agreed on adopting a general analytical rubric to assess students' writing skills. An analytical rubric enables both the teacher and the students to get more details about students' performance as it deals with each criterion of the written text, namely, "content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics", independently (Brown and Abeywricrama 2018: 304). The rubric included in the portfolio was direct and simple for instructional and comprehension reasons (See Appendix B). However, for research purposes, another detailed analytical rubric, presented in Appendix C, was used to analyse the data.

3.3.1.3 Teacher Feedback

Students need to get feedback on their tasks with a view to know their "strengths, the progress they have made, and what they need to do to improve their performance further" (Macken and Slade 1993; Feez, 1998 cited in Hyland, 2004). Thus, the teacher provided constant written feedback on every task the students performed as an element of the portfolio files (See Appendix D).

3.3.1.4 Self-assessment Sheet

Self-assessment encourages students to direct their attention towards the learning process rather than the final result (Lam 2018).

For the students to be actively engaged in the portfolio experience, they got some control over their learning by assessing themselves through a number of questions addressed in the self-assessment sheet shown in Appendix E where they could select more than one option for each question. According to Lee (2016 cited in Lam 2018: 45), integrating self-assessment in writing sustains "student self-regulated learning" since students continually observe the range of achieving their set goals.

The data obtained from students' self-assessment sheets enabled the researcher to know more about learners' awareness and understanding of their strengths, weaknesses and learning objectives, and how this, as a part of the portfolio assessment process, supported improving their writing abilities.

3.3.1.5 Overall Reflection on Portfolio Experience

In order to obtain more data related to the second research question about how elements of the portfolio support improving students' writing skills, participants completed an overall reflection sheet related to their experience with the portfolio assessment. The sheet included open-ended questions to give the researcher deep understanding of how the portfolio assessment contributed to students' progress, (See Appendix F).

All these documents within the portfolios enabled the researcher to track students' progress throughout the whole semester and provided the necessary data for answering the research questions.

3.3.2 Pre-test and Post-test

The participants sat for a test before the implementation of the portfolio assessment to help determine their writing proficiency. Students were required to write a short

paragraph about a familiar topic like a memorable day. In accordance with the results of the pre-test, both the teacher and the researcher established the starting point and set the course goals.

At the end of the course, participants completed another test based on the same inquiry framework as the pre-test. Comparing the results of both tests indicates the improvement in the students' writing proficiency as a result of implementing the portfolio assessment.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

As has been indicated above, two instruments were used to collect the data. Before taking the first step in the data collection process, the researcher took permission from the head of the Department of English, the course teacher, and the participants to conduct the study and confirmed that the data would be used only for research purposes.

Starting with the pre-test in the first lecture, participants were asked to write a short paragraph talking about a memorable day they would never forget. The main objective of this test was to determine participants' proficiency level in writing, in addition to using it as a comparative reference for the post-test taken at the end of the course to measure the extent of improvement.

The researcher also talked to the participants about the concept of portfolio assessment and how it is meant to improve their writing skills, as well as the importance of setting objectives to be achieved by the end of the course. Furthermore, the implementation procedure was thoroughly explained, to eliminate any ambiguity or misunderstanding.

After sitting with the course teacher and discussing the documents included in the portfolios, the practical part began in the second lecture and lasted until the end of the semester, where the researcher attended all lectures and was directly involved in the implementation process. Every lecture, after explaining the lesson, there was a practical session where students applied what they have learnt. They started with the pre-writing stages, i.e., brainstorming their ideas and writing their first drafts, then revising and editing them. After that, they completed the self-assessment sheets before submitting their work to the researcher for evaluation and provision of the written feedback. Finally, the participants wrote their final drafts based on the given feedback. This process continued during the whole semester. After finishing the implementation, students filled the overall reflection sheet to reflect on their experience of using portfolio assessment and how it affected their writing skills. Finally, the post-test took place at the end of the semester.

3.5 Preparing Data for Analysis

Due to the use of two research instruments to collect the data, scores of students' drafts and pre/post-tests in addition to content analysis, two different analysis methods were used, namely, inferential statistics and content analysis. The students' portfolios included both quantitative and qualitative data.

The numerical data obtained from students' first and final drafts in addition to the self-assessment checklist were processed using SPSS program. On the other hand, the text data collected from students' portfolios, particularly teacher feedback and open-ended questions in the overall reflection sheet, were processed by means of several steps proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018). These steps include starting with arranging the data and putting it together, reading it, coding the data by sectioning it into categories, creating themes, and finally, presenting the results.

Further, since the pre-test and post-test method (numerical data) was used to validate the research, it was meant to, statistically, measure the improvement in students' writing skills. Ahead of deciding upon the method used for comparing test scores while considering the small sized sample of the research, the Shaperio-Wilk test was conducted, using SPSS program, to check normality of the data. According to Cohen et.al. (2018: 734), "researchers should test for the nature of the distributions to see if they conform to the normal curve, as this has an effect on the choice of statistics". The test results showed normal distribution curve for the pre-test scores. The p-value was greater than significance level 0.05, as illustrated in Appendix 6. Hence a parametric test (paired samples t-test) was used to compare pre-test and post-test scores, as this type is appropriate when measuring "two related samples". That is, the writing skills of participants being tested at two different points, to be specific, before and after implementing the portfolio assessment (Cohen et. al. 2018: 795).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two essential concepts researchers should consider when conducting a study as both factors preserve the trustworthiness and the credibility of the results (Bryman 2012). Validity is defined as the degree to which the research studies what it is meant to study (Litosseliti 2025). On the other hand, reliability relates to how precise and accurate the research is. In essence, reliable research refers to one that "if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context …, then similar results would be found" (Cohen et al. 2018: 268).

Taking this into consideration, and to maintain the valuableness of the research, the researcher adopted a mixed method approach (triangulation between methods) to strengthen the research results, i.e., by using different data collection instruments to answer the same research question. The researcher can judge the validity of her study

when both instruments demonstrate the same result (Mason 2002; Denzin 1970 cited in Cohen et al. 2018).

To confirm that the portfolio files used to collect data are accurate and precisely answer the research questions, they have been checked by the supervisor and the teacher assigned for the writing course, where the study was conducted. All the files have been structured clearly except for the self-assessment sheet which was first structured as open-ended questions, but the course teacher suggested changing the questions into a checklist form to prevent any misunderstanding or irrelevant answers and get more valid data. Furthermore, to ensure consistency of data collection, the researcher applied the same conditions for both the pre-test and the post-test. All these steps facilitated achieving valid and reliable findings related to exploring the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

'Ethics' refers to "the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work, or are affected by it" (Saundres et. al., 2007: 178). Likewise, Creswell and Creswell (2018: 146) assured that researchers should consider 'ethical issues' throughout the research procedures including the planning phase preceding the study and sharing the collected data, and storing it. Consequently, the researcher followed particular steps to address ethical considerations.

As a starting step, a formal written approval (See Appendix A) was taken from the Head of the Department to enable the researcher to proceed. Thereafter, a verbal consent was obtained from all parts involved in the research procedures. Afterwards, the researcher affirmed that participants had the right to take part or withdraw at any

stage. To maintain confidentiality, the researcher assured that the data collected would be used for research purposes only and participants' identities would remain anonymous (Bos 2020). It has also been asserted by the researcher that the data would be reported precisely as obtained from the participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

3.8 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter extensively illustrated the research procedures that were used in order to achieve the aim of exploring the impact of implementing portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students.

The researcher explained the adopted research design and justified the selection of the mixed approach data collection instruments. These instruments included students' portfolios (both quantitative and qualitative); to track students' progress throughout the semester as well as getting in-depth understanding of how the portfolio components contribute to this progress, and pre-test and post-test (quantitative); to compare the results before and after the implementation of the portfolio assessment. Then, attention was directed towards the data analysis process, and the validity and reliability of the research. The following chapter will present the data analysis in detail along with the discussion of the findings.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the data analysis along with the discussion of the findings. It begins by introducing the analysis of the quantitative data obtained from the students' drafts scores, pre/post-test scores, and the self-assessment sheet. This is followed by an in-depth review of the qualitative data obtained from the teacher written feedback and the overall reflection on the portfolio experience. Then, attention is directed towards the findings and their discussion.

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis was carried out using SPSS program. This data was meant to answer the first research question through comparing students' scores before and after the implementation of the portfolio assessment and statistically measuring the impact of this technique on students' writing skills. The statistical symbols used in this section are defined below according to Field (2018):

- **M** stands for mean and it means the average score.

- **N** stands for the number of participants.

- **SD** stands for standard deviation and it indicates how much scores vary from the mean.

- **t-value** refers to the test statistics produced by the paired samples t-test.

- **df** refers to the degree of freedom; related to the number of participants.

- **p-value** indicates the probability that the obtained results occurred by chance.

4.1.1 Students' First and Final Drafts

In order to accurately track students' progress, their first and final drafts were analysed analytically by dealing with each writing aspect separately. The used rubric was adopted from Brown and Bailey (1984, cited in Brown and Abeywickrama, 2018: 39-41). Each criterion was rated on a 20-point scale. After processing the data to check data normality using Shapiro Wilk test (See Appendix G), two tests for the distribution of the two different data types were used. That is, paired samples t-test was used for normal data distribution and Wilcoxon signed-rank test for non-normal data distribution, the results were as follow:

Regarding the organization criterion, the scores distribution was non-normal; hence it was processed using Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. The median score increased from 16 in the first draft to 19.16 in the final draft as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Median statistics for organization scores

Statistics		
	Organization First Draft	Organization Final Draft
Median	16.0000	19.1667

Table 2 demonstrates that this improvement was statistically significant on account of z = -2.53 and p-value = 0.011 i.e., less than 0.5

Table 2: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Test Statistics	
	Organization Final Draft M – Organization First Draft M
Z	-2.533[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.011

In addition to the organization improvement, table 3 clarifies mean difference between first and final drafts for the other four criteria. As illustrated, students have shown increase in the content mean score from 15.95 (SD = 1.64) in the first draft to 18.25 (SD = 0.97) in the final draft. The grammar competence has also improved from first to final draft. The mean score in the first draft was 15.25 (SD = 0.98), which grew to 18.50 (SD = 1.08) in the final draft. Furthermore, the mechanics criterion mean in the first draft was 15.25 (SD = 0.81) whereas it reached 18.70 (SD = 0.62) in the final draft. Finally, the analysis of the style and quality of expression criterion showed students scored a mean of 14.95 (SD = 1.26) in the first draft then it increased to 18.29 (SD = 1.18) in the final draft.

Table 3: Paired samples t-test statistics for normal data distribution of the writing criteria

Paired (First and Final drafts)		M	N	SD
Pair 1	Content First Draft	15.9583	8	1.64691
	Content Final Draft	18.2500	8	.97183
Pair 2	Grammar First Draft	15.2500	8	.98802
	Grammar Final Draft	18.5000	8	1.08379
Pair 3	Mechanics First Draft	15.2500	8	.81162
	Mechanics Final Draft	18.7083	8	.62836
Pair 4	Style First Draft	14.9583	8	1.26538
	Style Final Draft	18.2917	8	1.18773

Table 4 contains the results of the paired t-test sample that was run to measure the improvement. It shows that the least mean is (2.25) in grammar and the greatest mean is in mechanics (3.45). It also presents an equal p-value (<.001) for all criteria. This indicates an extremely significant improvement in the four criteria, i.e., the probability of getting these results by chance is less than 0.1%.

Table 4: *Paired samples t-test to measure improvement in writing criteria*

Writing Criterion		Mean Difference	t	df	p-value
Pair 1	Content	2.29167	7.857	7	<.001
Pair 2	Grammar	3.25000	13.000	7	<.001
Pair 3	Mechanics	3.45833	14.205	7	<.001
Pair 4	Style	3.33333	12.472	7	<.001

4.1.2 Pre-test and Post-test Scores

As illustrated in the methodology chapter, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare test scores before and after the implementation of the portfolio assessment. The descriptive statistics in table 5 shows an increase in the scores of the post-test with a mean of 78.75 (SD = 5.18), compared to the pre-test mean of 68.88 (SD = 15.21).

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of pre- and post-test scores

Tests		Mean	N	SD
Pair 1	Post-test	87.75	8	5.175
	Pre-test	68.88	8	15.207

To measure whether this difference between tests scores is statistically significant, another paired sample t-test was processed using SPSS program. The results revealed a statistically significant improvement with a p-value of 0.006, i.e., less than 0.05, as shown in table 6 below.

Table 6: Results of paired samples t-test for pre- and post-test scores

Paired Samples		Mean	t	df	p-value
Pair 1	Post-test – Pre-test	18.875	3.950	7	0.006

4.1.3 Students' Self-assessment Sheet

The self-assessment sheet was used to help students reflect on their learning and identify their strengths and weaknesses. After completing each writing task, they reflected on the process by responding to eight questions (open- and closed-ended) in a checklist form, where they could select more than one option for each item. The results revealed the following:

In question one, students have been asked to identify the task goal. All students had the same writing task each time, hence their responses were the same for this question; task one goal was to write a comparison paragraph, task two was a process paragraph, and task three was a narrative paragraph.

Question two was about meeting the goal, which was harder than expected for some students. Those who did not meet the goal attributed this to several factors. These include limited topic knowledge as student 8 stated *"I did not meet the goal because I don't know much about the topic"*, level of language proficiency, student 5 wrote that *"I have ideas in my mind but I don't know how to connect them together in a form of a paragraph"*, or poor planning. For example, one of the students has always had to leave early, and as a result, she ignored the prewriting stage and jumped to writing the paragraph without planning how to state the topic sentence or what relevant supporting details she should include. This was her reason for not meeting the goal, she stated, *"Because I need to leave quickly. I don't have enough time to think about the topic"*. Table 7 below shows the percentage of meeting the goal.

Table 7: Did you meet your goal?

Percentage	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Yes	75%	62.5%	87.5%
No	37.5%	25%	12.5%

In question three, students were asked about their feelings while working on tasks. Table 8 below shows how students' feelings changed across tasks. While positive feelings like confidence, pride and excitement increased gradually over tasks, negative feelings like nervousness, challenge, and confusion decreased each time students performed a new task. Students justified their positive feelings like confidence and pride for topic familiarity and high proficiency level where fewer mistakes were made. On the other hand, negative feelings were caused by misunderstanding of the prompt, lacking knowledge either of the topic or language accuracy.

Table 8: How did you feel while working on this task?

Feelings	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Confident	37.5%	37.5%	87.5%
Proud	25%	25%	62%
Excited	37.5%	50%	75%
Nervous	62.5%	37%	25%
Challenged	50%	73%	12.5%
Confused	62.5%	37%	12.5%
Others	0%	0%	0%

Regarding question four, students were asked to assess their performance in terms of things they think they did well. Their answers varied among the three tasks, as implied in table 9, indicating learning awareness and knowledge growth. In addition to the given options, some students added more features such as *'spelling'* and *'writing style'*.

Table 9: What things do you think you did well?

Options	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Use good paragraph structure	25%	50%	75%
Include related ideas and evidence	25%	62.5%	75%
Use different sentence structure	50%	75%	75%
Use variety of vocabulary	37.5%	75%	75%
Use correct grammar	37.5%	62.5%	87.5%
Use correct punctuation	50%	62.5%	62.5%
Others	12.5%	12.5%	0%

Question five asked students about things they learnt from the task and the results in table 10 show that their knowledge has increased across tasks in most of the aspects. Some students added answers that were not included in the given options, such as *"new vocabulary"* and *"better understanding of instructions"*. For instance, ST 2 wrote, *"Now I know if the task is about how you do something, I should write steps"*.

Table 10: What did you learn from this assignment?

Options	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Organizing my ideas	37.5%	37.5%	50%
writing better introductions and conclusions	25%	50%	75%
Adding more supporting sentences to produce detailed text	37.5%	62.5%	75%
Writing more clearly	12.5%	50%	62.5%
New vocabulary	62.5%	12.5%	37.5%
Using the correct grammar	50%	37.5%	62.5%
Using transitions to connect my ideas	0%	25%	62.5%
Others	0%	12.5%	12.5%

For question six, according to the results shown in table 11 about steps students followed to complete tasks, few students applied pre-writing steps in task 1, as shown in the table below, only 25% read the topic carefully before they started writing their drafts. 12.5%

gathered ideas through brain storming. However, these percentages have increased in tasks 2 and 3 indicating that students applied more pre- and post-writing steps to help them produce well-written paragraphs.

Table 11: What steps did you take to complete this task?

Pre- and post-writing steps	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Reading the topic carefully	25%	75%	50%
Brainstorming	12.5%	75%	100%
Planning the paragraph outline	12.5%	37.5%	25%
Organizing my ideas	37.5%	50%	50%
Reviewing my text	25%	62.5%	87.5%
Checking mistakes and editing them before submitting the final draft	0%	62.5%	87.5%
Others	0%	0%	0%

Question seven dealt with the challenges faced by participants while writing. The most challenging parts for most of the students were with thinking of ideas related to the topic and using interesting, concise vocabulary as 62.5% have checked these two items in the first task as presented in table 12. Organising ideas was selected by 50% whereas 37.5% chose using good sentence structure. Nevertheless, the challenges varied depending on the task type and familiarity especially when it comes to vocabulary as ST 1 stated, *"I don't know how to express my ideas because I don't know enough vocabulary related to the topic"*. Other students have added their own challenges as well. For instance, ST 3 added *"focusing on one main idea"* while ST 4 mentioned, *"Using the punctuations in the correct place"* and the same issue was addressed by STs 5 and 7.

Table 12: What was the most challenging part of this assignment?

Challenges	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
Thinking of ideas	62.5%	37.5%	12.5%
Organizing my ideas	50%	50%	12.5%
Using correct grammar	25%	12.5%	25%
Using interesting vocabulary	62.5%	12.5%	50%
Using good sentence structures	37.5%	12.5%	62.5%
Using detailed supporting sentences and evidence to make your writing engaging	50%	37.5%	12.5%
Others	12%	25%	25%

The last question in the self-assessment sheet was about students' improvements since their last writing. Table 13 shows the results. Some students added their own improvements. For instance, ST 2 added, *"clarity and being more concise"*. She also stated that *"I can write well-structured paragraphs with clear introduction and relevant supporting sentences and good conclusion"*. STs 3 and 8 echoed the same thing regarding paragraph structure. Moreover, ST 6 noticed that her paragraphs became more coherent and cohesive as she learnt *"how to use linking words to connect my ideas"*.

Table 13: How has your writing improved since your last piece?

Improvements	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
used better and clearer ideas	25%	62.5%	62.5%
used more interesting vocabulary	37.5%	50%	50%
made fewer grammatical mistakes	12.5%	75%	75%
organized my ideas more clearly	12.5%	50%	87.5%
improved my punctuations	12.5%	50%	62.5%
become more aware of writing styles	25%	62.5%	75.5%
Others	0%	25%	25%

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data was collected to provide an in-depth understanding of how portfolio assessment supported students' progress in writing skills. This data consisted of the teacher's written feedback and students' overall reflection on the experience, and it was analysed using content analysis, which involved systematically coding the responses and grouping them into categories based on similarities (Elo and Kyngas, 2008).

4.2.1 Teacher Feedback

One of the main components of portfolios is the teacher feedback. After analytically assessing students' drafts, they have been given detailed feedback on each task about their strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for next steps. To understand how this feedback contributed to students' progress, these three categories were used as main themes in the analysis process, then, by going through all the given feedback and reading it carefully, sub-themes for each section have been coded.

4.2.1.1. Strengths

Under the strengths category, comes the positive points regarding students' performance. The most frequently repeated strengths among students across the three tasks were paragraph structure and writing strong topic sentences especially in task 3. However, in task 1, only STs 4 and 5 ended their paragraphs with a concluding sentence. Due to the teacher feedback, most of the students were able to write paragraphs with clear, correct structures in task 3. Students have been also praised for their ability to use correct grammar and verb tense in most of the tasks.

Moreover, sentence structure was also repeated consistently as a well-done feature particularly in the second and third tasks, where students began to vary their sentence forms and use more compound and complex sentences. Additionally, word choice was

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also praised in the last task feedback where most of the students used more precise and various words.

4.2.1.2 Weaknesses

In addition to the positive points, the teacher also pointed out areas that needed improvement and, therefore, students had to work on. The most frequent issues observed in the first task were spelling, punctuation and capitalization errors. Many students started their sentences with lower-case letters and ignored using punctuation marks to separate or end their sentences which resulted in run-on sentences. However, this issue was less repeated in task 3. In task 1, students also struggled with producing well-formed paragraphs with topic sentences, relevant supporting details, and concluding sentences. For instance, few students started their paragraphs with clear topic sentences or accurate concluding ones. Additionally, many students were challenged by presenting complete and clear ideas. For instance, in the first two tasks, most students wrote short and vague sentences without fully expressing their thoughts. However, this issue disappeared in the final task. Furthermore, few other comments were also noted regarding grammar such as subject-verb agreement and incorrect verb tense in addition to lack of use of transitions especially in the first two tasks. Despite some earlier feedback, STs 3 and 8 continued to make the same mistakes regarding sentence structure in addition to limited vocabulary use.

4.2.1.3 Suggestions for Next Steps

Alongside commenting on students' strengths and weaknesses, it was essential for the teacher to provide guidance for improvements by suggesting steps to be followed by students to enhance their writing skills. One of the most common recommendations was reviewing drafts before submitting them to check for any grammar, spelling,

capitalization or punctuation mistakes. Students were also encouraged to clarify their ideas and fully express them by advising them to read similar texts for better understanding of how ideas are developed and expanded in addition to brainstorming their ideas to gather as much details as possible. Finally, it was also recommended that they make the written text more engaging and interesting by using a variety of words and different sentence forms.

Overall, the teacher feedback provided instructions throughout the portfolio process to guide students towards improving their writing skills. Across tasks, it was obvious that most students have taken the teacher's comments into account and applied most of the given advice. There were notable improvements in some areas like paragraph and sentence structures, organization, content and grammar, especially in task 3. On the other hand, some challenges, like punctuation and vocabulary range, persisted with certain students.

4.2.2 Overall Reflection on the Portfolio Experience

The overall reflection sheet was completed by students at the end of the portfolio-based writing course. The aim was to explore how this alternative assessment tool helped them improve their writing skills. After thoroughly reading students' answers, themes and codes were derived from their responses using the content analysis method. Table 14 presents a summary of these themes and codes.

Table 14: Summary table of themes emerged from the overall reflection

Theme	Codes	Related Questions
Organization and clarity	Paragraph structure and logical development of ideas	Q1, Q4 and Q8
Language accuracy	Grammar, punctuations, spelling and fewer mistakes	Q1, Q4, and Q8
Vocabulary and style	Descriptive language and variety of vocabulary	Q1 and Q8
Planning and prewriting strategies	Pre-writing steps: brainstorming and planning	Q4 and Q5
Reflection, feedback and metacognitive	Identifying strengths and reviewing drafts	Q2, Q3 and Q6
Self-directed learning	Responsibility and goal setting	Q6
Motivation and emotional growth	Pride and motivated due to notable progress	Q7
Cognitive growth of writing concepts	Awareness of writing as a process of many stages instead of one final product	Q3 and Q5
General writing development	Overall better writing performance	Q1, Q5, and Q8

In question 1, students were asked to provide an example of how their writing has improved during the portfolio process. Some highlighted paragraph structure and organization indicating that portfolio assessment strategy enabled them to produce coherent and logically structured paragraphs. For instance, ST 2 stated, *"My ideas are all organized and related to each other and my paragraphs are well-structured"* whereas ST 3 wrote, *"My writing is now more organized in terms of ideas and structure"*. ST 5 added, *"My paragraphs became more organized and clearer. I learned to use proper transitions to link my ideas and avoid unnecessary details"*. Other students called attention to lexical variety. For example, ST 1 mentioned, *"I am able now to write correct sentence structures and use variety of vocabulary"* while ST 7 wrote, *"I learnt to use descriptive language to make my writing more engaging"*. Additionally, students have pointed out improvement in writing mechanics such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling, ST 6 stated, *"I learned to use the correct punctuation mark in the correct place*

besides minimal improvements in grammar and vocabulary". ST 8 added, *"My writing has fewer grammar and spelling mistakes because I started to review what I write"*. Also, ST 4 reflected on the process of editing and how it increased the awareness of common errors in addition to ideas flow as he declared, *"My writing has improved since I began reviewing and editing my work which helped me correct small grammar and spelling mistakes and sometimes sentence order to make the paragraph clearer"*.

The second question was about students' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses through the self-assessment sheet. Students' responses indicated development of metacognitive awareness as the self-assessment helped them identify what they could do well and what they needed to work on in addition to their ability to decide upon their next learning objectives. Regarding this aspect, ST 1 commented, *"By reflecting on my writing, I became more aware of my weaknesses and strengths so I know what I need to work on, what I need to revise, and what goals I need to achieve"*. STs 3, 6, 7 and 8 echoed similar answers. Moreover, students' reflection on their writings have directed them towards improving specific skills ST 2, for instance, stated, *"I discovered that I need to improve my skills in organizing my texts and choosing the right words for each paragraph type"*. On the other hand, ST 4 expressed only limited benefits of the self-assessment which reveals that not all students were equally engaged in self-assessment either due to lack of assessment skills or considering it carelessly.

Teacher feedback was the subject of the third question. Based on students' answers, it can be seen that students needed some guidance to help them overcome their challenges. Most students affirmed that reinforcing their strengths and spotting their weaknesses in addition to recommending precise advice together was the cornerstone of their progress. ST 4

remarked that teacher feedback supported his understanding of writing as a skill involves particular steps and that these steps are as much important as the final product.

Moreover, the fourth question queried about how students' writing proficiency was improved as a result of the portfolio. Across answers, the most common aspect was organization skills as many students, including STs 1, 2, 4, and 7, stated that their ideas became clearer, more connected and well-structured in terms of strong introductions, fully expressed bodies, and good conclusions, Additionally, some students, including 5, 6 and 8, have emphasized the role of pre/post writing steps, like planning and reviewing, in producing better texts. ST 5 reported, *"By reviewing my writing before submitting it, I could spot minor mistakes like spelling, punctuation and capitalization"*.

Students' responses to the fifth question about their perception of writing before and after the portfolio experience reflected a shift from seeing writing as a single activity done to produce texts to a multiple-stage process that needs critical thinking, planning and editing. ST 5 wrote that *"Before the portfolio I used to write the task and submit it immediately, but now I know that when I revise my draft, I can correct a lot of mistakes and make my writing better"*. ST 6 declared that *"It deepened my understanding of the process and that I need to brainstorm first to collect ideas then write them down and then revise to edit them"*, and many students had similar perspectives. Further, ST 8 showed coherent awareness by stating that *"Writing is not about writing separate sentences. My ideas should be connected so the reader can understand my topic"*.

Question six revealed that portfolio assessment, further, promoted autonomous learning through self-assessment. Some students underscored the importance of setting learning objectives as motives for improvement. In particular, ST 5 stated, *"The portfolio helped me take some responsibility for my learning by making me actively reflect on my work*

and track my progress. This progress encouraged me to put effort into revising and setting goals to achieve". Additionally, reflecting on their performance allowed students to recognize their weaknesses and pushed them to take action to overcome them through revising and expanding their knowledge regarding specific aspects. For instance, ST 2 wrote, *"When I knew my mistakes, I had to work hard to correct them",* and STs 1, 3, 7 and 8 expressed similar perceptions. All of these benefits reflect growth in students' self-regulated learning and boosted their engagement in the assessment process.

Question 7 questioned the relationship between motivation and perceiving students' progress. ST 2 stated, *"Seeing my writing becoming better made me want to write more".* And almost all students have expressed positive feelings and motivation boost as a consequence of seeing their progress.

Finally, students were asked to compare their writing before and after the portfolio implementation. All students reflected on noticeable improvements in their writing. Initially, most of their paragraphs contained several grammar, mechanics and organization issues in addition to incomplete, disconnected thoughts. However, by the end of the treatment, the majority of the students were able to produce well-structured, error free, and coherent and cohesive paragraphs.

Overall, the portfolio assessment contributed to students' progress through directing their focus to the writing process, involving them in assessing their performance and providing them with clear feedback.

4.3 Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented in relation to the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of portfolio assessment on the development of students' writing skills?

2. How does portfolio assessment support students' development?

The study revealed the following positive findings regarding the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing skills

1. Improvements in all writing criteria

Based on the results emerged from comparing students' performance in the first and final drafts and the pre/post-test scores, there was a statistically significant improvement ($p = 0.001$) in all five writing criteria.

Regarding the organization criteria, at first, producing a well-structured paragraph was challenging for most of the students. Their writings missed effective topic sentences, logical development of supporting details, good conclusions and coherent sentences. However, through ongoing portfolio assessment by which students received consistent feedback from the teacher and guided learning through self-assessment along with pre and post writing steps (brainstorming and editing), their writing gradually improved. As a result, they were able, at the end of the semester, to produce well-formed paragraphs with clear introductions, topic sentences, and logical conclusions in addition to using transitional phrases to connect ideas and enhance cohesion and coherence.

Moreover, in their first drafts, students struggled with developing ideas related to the topic they were writing about. Sometimes, they wrote incomplete thoughts, lacked evidence or full development of the ideas, and paragraphs were somewhat off the topic.

However, the final drafts showed enhancement in students' ability to remain focused on the task and to develop relevant ideas as they mastered the brainstorming technique which helped them filter their ideas and include only the related ones.

Additionally, most students showed advanced proficiency in grammar by generating good sentence structure, with very few run-on sentences or fragments, and correct use of verb tenses.

Concerning writing mechanics, initially, students struggled with using the correct punctuation marks and capitalization with some problems in essay format. However, these mistakes have decreased in the final drafts, as students were able to generate well-formed paragraphs with less capitalization mistakes and good use of punctuation marks.

Finally, students used better and more precise vocabulary in their final drafts in addition to developing more appropriate writing tone in relation to each paragraph type which positively affected writing style.

For more valid results the researcher used pre- and post-tests to compare students' writing proficiency before and after the implementation of portfolio assessment. Aligning with the results of the analytical scoring of students' drafts, post-test scores showed significant improvement, (p-value = 0.006), in students writing skills indicating that portfolio, indeed, helped enhancing their writing proficiency.

The findings of this study support the ones by Shofiyah (2014) and Aisyah (2015), which highlighted the significant impact of portfolio assessment on enhancing students' writing skills. While this study did not investigate students' attitudes, as explored by Bolghari and Aghaalikhani (2019), it aligns with their conclusion that portfolio assessment has a positive effect on writing performance, even though some students expressed negative attitudes towards the process..

As for how components of the portfolio support students' development, the results showed the following:

1. Self-assessment Helped Students Reflect on Their Work

The self-assessment checklist appeared to increase students' awareness of what they did well and what they need to work on which enabled them to track their progress. It helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses in addition to encouraging them follow pre- and post-writing steps to produce better writing.

2. Teacher Feedback Played an Important Role in Students' Progress

Teacher comments about students' strengths and areas for improvement made a clear difference, especially for students who took them into account and used them as reference when rewriting their final drafts. As a result, those who applied the recommendations given by the teacher showed significant improvement.

Subsequently, self-assessment and teacher feedback have clearly contributed to students' progress which aligns with Vygosky's Zone of Proximal Development theory, as students were able, through the guidance of "more capable peers" (teacher feedback), to produce better writing than they would do independently (Vygosky, 1978 cited in Alomari, n.d: 1). Moreover, the self-assessment enabled students to recognize their own levels by identifying their weaknesses and strengths. Consequently, knowing what they needed to work on, students set learning objectives to be achieved at the end of the course which served as a motive for improvement. As Wood et al. (1976) stated, comprehension of the solution must precede production. That is to say, learners must be able to recognize a solution to a particular class of problems before they themselves are able to produce the steps leading to it without assistance.

In addition to supporting the work of Shofiyah (2014), who highlighted the role of teacher feedback in students' progress, this study adds to the literature by exploring how self-assessment contributed to students' progress through developing metacognitive awareness skills.

3. The Overall Process Had Supportive and Significant Role in Students' Progress

The overall reflection illustrated how the portfolio experience shifted students' understanding of writing. Instead of focusing on the final product, they directed their attention to the whole process; starting with brainstorming ideas and planning to reviewing and editing drafts before submission. Students have also developed metacognitive awareness through constantly reflecting on their writing using the self-assessment checklist in addition to the teacher feedback. Additionally, portfolio assessment turned the assessment process into a tool for learning instead of a tool for evaluation. That is, it goes under the formative assessment approach as it includes timely teacher feedback, self-assessment and clear criteria which all together reinforce learning and improvement (Black and William 1998).

4.4 Summary of the Chapter

The study aimed to explore the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students. The results demonstrated significant improvement in all writing aspects. Moreover, the study illustrated how self-assessment and teacher feedback contributed to this progress through increasing students' awareness of their learning and following teachers comments for better writing production. The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies regarding the effectiveness of using portfolio assessment to improve students' writing skills. Further, the results are conducive for the role of the

portfolio components in students' progress which added to the literature and filled the gap of how portfolio helps with students' improvement.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0. Introduction

This final chapter highlights the main findings of the study based on the data collected from students' portfolios, namely, first and final drafts, pre/post-test scores, self-assessment sheet, teacher feedback, and overall reflection on the process. The chapter also highlights study limitations and provides recommendations and suggestions for further research. Finally, it concludes with the core points of the study.

5.1 Conclusion of Whole Study

Writing is one of the most challenging language skills. Students often struggle with what ideas to put on their papers and how to put them. To resolve this issue, researchers constantly examine, study, and explore different strategies, approaches, methods and techniques to contribute to the writing teaching process. Similarly, this study was conducted to explore the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Africa for Humanities and Applied Sciences, in addition to illustrating how components of the portfolio contributed to students' progress.

Through analysing students' drafts, pre-post-test scores, teacher feedback, self-assessment sheet, and overall reflection, the results revealed a positive impact of this technique, and students have shown significant improvement not only in their writing skills, but also in their understanding of its nature. Students realized that employing pre/post-writing steps is the key in order to produce a good piece of text. They have also developed metacognitive awareness through self-assessment process. Moreover, the

teacher feedback provided clear guidance for students' progress through highlighting their strengths, spotting their weaknesses, and providing suggestions for enhancement. Hence, it can be said that teaching writing involves more than evaluating students' final products. Analytical scoring, constant feedback, and self-regulated learning, which are components of the portfolio assessment, are all effective factors that support students' development.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the data analysis and the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Incorporating portfolio assessment into writing and other subjects to support students' development.
2. Encouraging students to think of writing as a process containing many stages, and every stage matters as much as the final product.
3. Providing detailed teacher feedback on students work to raise their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and guide them to improve.
4. Reinforcing students' metacognitive skills by involving them in the assessment process through self-assessment.
5. Organizing workshops to train teachers in implementing portfolio assessment effectively.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study explored the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing skills of undergraduate students in the University of Africa. It also illustrated how this assessment method contributed to students' progress. However, considering its limitations, suggestions for further research are presented below:

1. A similar study can be conducted on a larger sample size and in different contexts to seek results generalizability.

2. A comparative study can be made to compare how portfolio and traditional assessment impact students' outcomes in writing skills.

3. Taking account of technology, further research can be conducted on using digital portfolios and explore its contribution to the process.

4. Light can also be shed on teachers' perceptions regarding portfolio assessment in addition to the challenges they face and the strategies they employ when implementing this method.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

While the findings provided useful insights into the positive impact of portfolio assessment on students writing skills as well as how elements of this assessment tool supported their progress, this study had some limitations.

First, the sample size was relatively small, due to the limited use of portfolio assessment. Although the small sample size of this study does not, negatively, affect the results, it limits the generalization of the findings to wider populations.

Second, since the researcher was directly involved in the portfolio process by assessing participants' work and providing feedback, there is a possibility of unintentional bias in both the implementation and the analysis. However, students' writings were scored using a clear, detailed rubric to reduce the risk.

Finally, as the data collected from students' self-assessment and overall reflection sheets contained their viewpoints, this data may be subjective and influenced by personal thoughts.

Regardless these limitations, the study still provides valuable insights into how portfolio assessment can support students' progress in writing skills.

5.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter summarises the whole study. Furthermore, it includes implications, suggestions for further research, and limitations of the study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The formal written approval from the Head of the Department

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

السيد : رئيس قسم اللغة الإنجليزية جامعة افريقيا للعلوم الإنسانية
والتطبيقية
كلية طبرق وبعد

أنا الطالبة آمنة عبد الله ابوالقاسم محمد مقيدة بالأكاديمية الليبية
للدراسات العليا غزور ـــ تحت رقم قيد 21701155
والآن انا بصدد لإعداد رسالة التخرج
عليه اطلب من حضرتكم السماح لي بحضور محاضرات كتابة اكاديمية و
وانشاء 3 وذلك لدمج بيانات الرسالة مع حفظ السرية التامة

نأمل منكم الموافقة على طلبي هذا

مع خالص الشكر والتقدير

مقدم الطلب

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Appendix B: Analytical rubric used for instructional purposes included in students'

portfolios

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Comments
Organization					
Content					
Grammar					
Mechanics					
Style					

Appendix C: Detailed analytical rubric used for research purposes adopted from Brown and Bailey (1984)

Criteria	20-18 Excellent to Good	17-15 Good to Adequate	14-12 Adequate to Fair	11-16 Unacceptable	5-1 Not college-level work
Organization: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion	Appropriate title, effective introductory paragraph, topic is stated, leads to body; transitional expressions used; arrangement of material shows plan (could be outlined by reader); supporting evidence given for generalizations; conclusion logical and complete	Adequate title, introduction, and conclusion; body of essay is acceptable but some evidence may lacking, some ideas aren't fully developed; sequence is logical but transitional expressions may be absent or misused	Mediocre or scant introduction or conclusion; problems with the order of ideas in body; generalization may not be fully supported by the evidence given; problems of organization interfere	Shaky or minimally recognizable introduction; organization can barely be seen; severe problems with ordering of ideas; lack of supporting evidence; conclusion weak or illogical; inadequate effort at organization	Absence of introduction or conclusion; no apparent organization of body; severe lack of supporting evidence; writer has not made any effort to organize the composition (could not be outlined by reader)
Logical development of ideas: content	Essay addresses the assigned topic; the ideas are concrete and thoroughly developed; no extraneous material; essay reflects thought	Essay addresses the issues but misses some points; ideas could be more fully developed; some extraneous material is	Development of ideas is not complete or essay is somewhat off the topic; paragraphs aren't divided exactly right	Ideas incomplete; essay does not reflect thinking or was hurriedly written; inadequate effort in areas of content	Essay is completely inadequate and does not reflect college-level work; no apparent effort to consider

		present			the topic carefully
Grammar	Native-like fluency in English grammar; correct use of relative clauses, prepositions, modals, articles, verb forms, and tense sequencing; no fragments or run-on sentences	Advanced proficiency in English Grammar; some grammar problems don't influence communication, although the reader is aware of them; no fragment or run-on sentences	Ideas are getting through to the reader, but grammar problems are apparent and have a negative effect on communication; run-on sentences or fragments are present	Numerous serious grammar problems inference with communication of the writer's ideas; grammar review of some areas clearly needed; sentences are difficult to read	Severe grammar problems interfere greatly with the message; reader can't understand what the writer was trying to say; unintelligible sentence structure
Punctuation, spelling, and mechanics	Correct use of English writing conventions: left and right margins, all necessary capitals, paragraphs indented, punctuation and spelling; very neat	Some problems with writing conventions or punctuation; occasional spelling errors; left margin correct; paper is neat and legible	Uses general writing conventions but has errors; spelling problems distract reader; punctuation errors interfere with ideas	Serious problems with format of paper; parts of essay are not legible; errors in sentence punctuation and final punctuation; unacceptable to educated readers	Complete disregard for English writing conventions; paper illegible; obvious capitals missing, no margins, severe spelling problems
Style and quality of expression	Precise vocabulary usage; use of parallel structures; concise; register good	Attempts variety; good vocabulary; not wordy; register OK; style fairly concise	Some vocabulary misused; lacks awareness of register; may be too wordy	Poor expression of ideas; problems in vocabulary; lacks variety of structure	Inappropriate use of vocabulary; no concept of register or sentence variety

Appendix D: Teacher feedback template

Criteria	Comments
Strengths	
Areas for Improvement	
Suggestions for Next Steps	
Teacher's Signature	

Appendix E: Students' self-assessment sheet

Note: from question 3 to question 8 you can choose whatever describes your situation (you can choose more than one option).

1. **What was the main goal or focus for this writing task?**
2. **Did you meet your goal?**
   - Yes.
   - No. Because ………………………………………..
3. **How did you feel while working on this assignment?**
   - Confident because …………………………………………………
   - Proud because …………………………………………………..
   - Excited because ………………………………………………….
   - Nervous because ………………………………………………….
   - Challenged because …………………………………………………
   - Confused because …………………………………………………
   - Others …………………………………………………………
4. **What things do you think you did well?**
   - I used good paragraph structure (introduction, body, and conclusion).
   - I included related ideas and evidence.
   - I used different sentence structure.
   - I used variety of vocabulary.
   - I used correct grammar.
   - I used correct punctuations
   - Others ………………………………………………………….
5. **What did you learn from this assignment?**
   - Organizing my ideas better.
   - Writing better introductions and conclusions.
   - Adding more supporting sentences to produce detailed text.
   - Writing more clearly.
   - New vocabulary.
   - Using the correct grammar.
   - Using transitions to connect my ideas.
   - Others ………………………………………………………….
6. **What steps did you take to complete this task?**
   - Reading the topic carefully
   - Brainstorming
   - Planning the paragraph outline
   - Organizing my ideas
   - Reviewing my text
   - Checking mistakes and editing them before submitting the final draft
   - Others …………………………………………………………..
7. **What was the most challenging part of this assignment?**
   - Thinking of ideas
   - Organizing my ideas
   - Using correct grammar

- o Using interesting vocabulary
- o Using good sentence structures
- o using detailed supporting sentences and evidence to make your writing engaging
- o Others …………………………………………..

8. How has your writing improved since your last piece?

Since my last piece of writing I have:

- o used better and clearer ideas
- o used more interesting vocabulary
- o made fewer grammatical mistakes
- o organized my ideas more clearly
- o improved my punctuations
- o become more aware of writing styles
- o Others …………………………………

Appendix F: The overall reflection on the portfolio experience

Please answer the following questions about the portfolio experience you have had in this writing course. The aim of these questions is to know whether the portfolio supported your writing development and how.

1- Please provide an example of how your writing has improved during the portfolio process.

2- How did reflecting on each piece help you understand your strengths and areas for growth?

3- How did the teacher feedback help you improve your writing?

4- In what ways do you think your writing improved as a result of using the portfolio?

5- How has your understanding of writing changed since you started this portfolio?

6- How has the portfolio helped you take more responsibility for your learning and progress?

7- How has seeing your progress over time affected your motivation to improve?

8- Were there any patterns or common mistakes you noticed across different pieces? How did portfolio help you overcome them?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Appendix G: Normality test for each criterion

Tests of Normality			
	Shapiro-Wilk		
Writing Criteria	Statistic	df	Sig.
Organization First Draft Mean	.687	8	.002
Organization Final Draft Mean	.750	8	.008
Content First Draft Mean	.953	8	.745
Content Final Draft Mean	.973	8	.921
Grammar First Draft Mean	.905	8	.322
Grammar Final Draft Mean	.937	8	.583
Mechanics First Draft Mean	.961	8	.818
Mechanics Final Draft Mean	.930	8	.520
Style First Draft Mean	.919	8	.419
Style Final Draft Mean	.835	8	.067

Appendix H: Test of normality (pre-test)

	Test of Normality		
	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
pretest	.899	8	.286