THE EFFECTS OF PORTFOLIOS ON DEVELOPING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY[i]

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Abstract:

This study aimed to look into the effects of portfolios in developing writing skills among students who major in tourism at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. The study was conducted on fifty third-year students. Random assignment of participants to an experimental or control group of twenty-five students each. For fulfilling the objective, a quasi-experimental research design was utilized. Both groups were given a pre-test to determine their writing performance and sub-skills of focus, elaboration, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics before the treatment. Throughout the study, the experimental group was instructed with portfolio assessment, whereas the control group was trained in the conventional method. After receiving the treatment, students in the experimental group were also required to complete a survey regarding the effectiveness of using portfolios to improve writing skills in English classes. The attitude survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Other data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with learners who are representative students at different levels. The results of student questionnaires and student interview data showed that most students had positive attitudes regarding using portfolios to improve their writing skills in English classes. They all believe portfolios could help develop their writing ability. Though the limitation is unavoidable, the study is expected to benefit teachers, students, and researchers of the related studies.

Keywords: attitude, portfolios, writing ability, writing achievement

1. Introduction

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a national objective for the 2011–2025 strategy period (Prime Minister, 2012, 2017). English is a required subject for all

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educational levels. At every educational level, students are required to exhibit standardized English proficiency, a benchmark delineated by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which meticulously categorizes six tiers of language mastery, spanning from A1 to C2, as delineated by governmental sources such as the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and authoritative figures like the Prime Minister. It is stipulated that primary school pupils should attain proficiency at level 1, while those enrolled in both lower and upper secondary institutions are expected to attain proficiency at level 2. Upon reaching tertiary education, non-English-major students are mandated to achieve a minimum proficiency level of 3, whereas their counterparts in English majors are obligated to reach a level of at least C1 or higher, reflecting the evolving exigencies of linguistic competence within the academic landscape.

The research was conducted in a university where the curriculum for teaching English is divided into two stages:

1) Basic English (three 30-period courses) with a focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing to develop proficiency;
2) English for specific majors mainly focusing on occupational purposes to help learners meet the requirement concerning the objectives of the curriculum which is about tour guide orientation.

The requirement for graduation is B1, but the minimum level for an international tour guide certificate is B2. If students get a B1 which is just for university requirements, it will not benefit them much. For this case, B2 is a better option in terms of meeting required levels from school and expanding their career opportunities.

However, teaching English at the second stage for non-English major students is a challenge due to large-sized classes with time constraints, students' limited knowledge and unequal levels of English proficiency, and their low motivation. In EFL/ESL contexts, it is acknowledged that writing skill is not easily acquired. Many Vietnamese EFL learners have encountered difficulties in academic writing at school (Luong & Nguyen, 2008; Nguyen, 2009). This situation is also for the third-year tourism majors at the research site, who are learning to write academic essays. Furthermore, candidates find it difficult to write in English when they apply for a job (i.e., writing a cover letter, a curriculum vitae, or documents in English). It can be assumed that Vietnamese EFL learners' writing skills may hinder them from getting a good job.

Given the reasons mentioned above, this paper aimed at exploring third-year tourism majors' perceptions after a writing course in which they were given freedom and rights to decide about their learning with the employment of portfolios and examine whether the students' writing skill was improved or not. As for the role of the portfolio process on students' writing performance (in terms of developing students' performance and their attitudes), this study aims to answer two following research questions focusing on students' learning attitudes and their writing improvement respectively:

Research Question 1: What are students' attitudes toward portfolios?

Research Question 2: To what extent do portfolios help students improve their writing skills?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Portfolios

The concept of a personal portfolio, as described by Brown (1995), is frequently cited as "*a private collection of evidence, demonstrating the continuing acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes, understanding and achievements. It is both retrospective and prospective, as well as reflecting the current stage of development and activity of the individual*" (p. 3). That means a portfolio might comprise content from various sources selected by the individual. This content includes information that can convey to others the owner's qualities, abilities, and talents and offer an indication of prospective progress (Brown, 1995) since they document the progress as well as the growth of the person and the improvement by providing a critical examination of the paper's contents.

According to Hamp-Lyons (2000), a portfolio is a collection of works that can be logically characterized into three subordinate categories: collection, reflection, and selection. To be more specific, they believe the characteristics of a well-organized portfolio consist of collection, range, context richness, delayed evaluation, selection, student-centered control, reflection, improvement, and development. Figure 1 will show the diagrammatic form of the theoretical relationship between these types.

Figure 1: Characteristics of Portfolio Pedagogy and Assessment
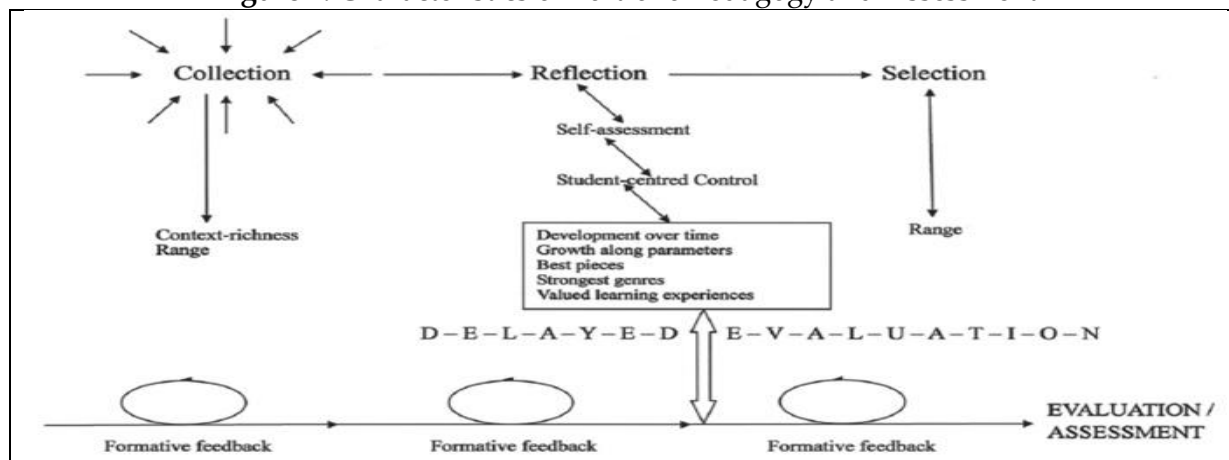

Source: Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000, p. 122.

2.2. Writing Skills

According to Spratt and William (2005), writing is an activity that may be classified as one of the toughest skills since it requires the production of language rather than the perception of speech. In addition, they stated that writing is a continual creative activity that consists of four phases of action, including prewriting, organizing, drafting, and polishing (revising and editing) (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). According to Richards and Renandya (2002), writing is the most challenging task for students to learn since it demands not only the development of ideas but also the translation of these ideas into perceived text. As a result, writing is the skill that students struggle the most to acquire. The learners' internal and exterior environments also contribute to their difficulties with

writing. The former focused on the students' poor English writing skills, while the latter highlighted their inadequate academic writing quality (Husin & Nurbayani, 2017). Nguyen (2015) identifies six obstacles to writing, including insufficient vocabulary, inappropriate grammatical structures, insufficient feedback from teachers, motivation loss, inadequate sources for reference, and time constraints. In addition, Tran (2018) investigated how EFL instructors felt about evaluating student writing. The study found that although teachers specifically confirmed the necessity of writing, they did not prioritize writing assessments and sought to use many evaluation methods due to the large size of the class and the different levels of English competence of different students. Furthermore, the intricacy of assessing and teaching writing, which is compounded by variations in class size and students' varying degrees of English proficiency, further complicates the task of resolving writing challenges in academic environments (Tran, 2018).

How to generate a piece of writing effectively is not as easy as students think since writing constituents means a lot to do. Figure 2, presented by Raimes (1983), illustrates what a writer must deal with to generate a piece of writing. These include the purpose (reasons for writing), the process (how to get started, how to write the first draft, how to revise after writing), the organization (word choice, syntax, grammar, mechanics), and the content (how to put the ideas in cohesion and coherence). Therefore, instructors must focus on different features differently. The act of writing is a complex undertaking that entails various stages, including ideation, thought organization, concept translation into coherent text, and final product improvement via revision and editing. Despite this, learners frequently face a multitude of challenges throughout their educational journey. Given the intricate nature of these matters, educators must implement all-encompassing approaches, including the utilization of portfolios, to proficiently direct students through the writing process and cultivate their growth as writers (Weigle, 2002).

Figure 2: Writing Constituents
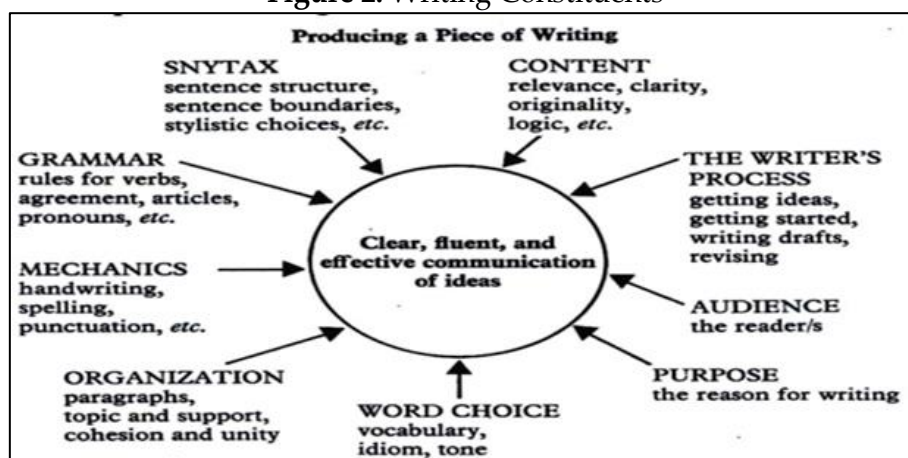
Source: Raimes, 1983, p. 6.

2.3. Related Studies

Numerous studies have been conducted on learners' attitudes toward portfolios as a tool for teaching writing skills. Most of the findings indicate that learners hold a positive view of portfolios as one of their useful tools for learning writing. Yang's (2003) analysis surveyed students' attitudes toward portfolio use. The results indicate that most students found portfolio evaluation to be beneficial for improving their English proficiency in their learning progress. Hirvela and Sweetland (2005) examined ESL writing portfolios in their study. At first, participants believed that portfolios were rather time-consuming, and they did not think they would make much progress. Aydin (2014) researched portfolio maintenance in EFL writing. One of his research findings demonstrated that EFL authors have favorable attitudes toward portfolios. Ucar, S. (2016) proved that students had positive attitudes toward using portfolios to enhance their writing skills in ESP classes.

In addition, portfolios are shown to be effective in assisting students with their writing in terms of writing improvement. The portfolio is "*a purposeful collection of students' works that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievement in given areas*" (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p. 99). Concerning the effect of portfolio evaluation on target language writing skills, numerous individuals have stated that portfolios are useful for encouraging students to write better in the target language (Lam, 2016).

Overall, portfolio evaluation can be useful for enhancing writing if instructors are properly trained to use it and consider portfolios a crucial component for enhancing students' writing skills. Therefore, portfolios in the above research are efficient for improving learners' attitudes and enhancing their writing ability.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Course Description

In this course, students were expected to apply the sentence structures and paragraph writing acquired in previous classes. The 45-period course was completed in fifteen weeks, which included one week for a midterm exam and one week for a final exam; thirteen weeks were devoted to instruction and practice. This course is intended to allow students to compose academic essays. After the course, students will be able to compose opinion essays. In addition, it was anticipated that learners in this study would engage in autonomous learning.

3.2 Participants

Participants of the study were fifty third-year students who majored in tourism. Under the university's online registration system, they are randomly divided into two groups: the experimental (25) and control (25) groups. The former was taught using portfolios (multiple drafts), while the latter was taught conventionally (with only one draft). In addition, participants were required to complete English for Tourism 1 before enrolling in this course, so it was presumed that they were familiar with the writing process, including planning, composing, refining, and editing.

3.3 Teaching Procedures

Figure 3 depicts the experimental instructional procedures consisting of the following phases.

Figure 3: Procedures of the Portfolio Process
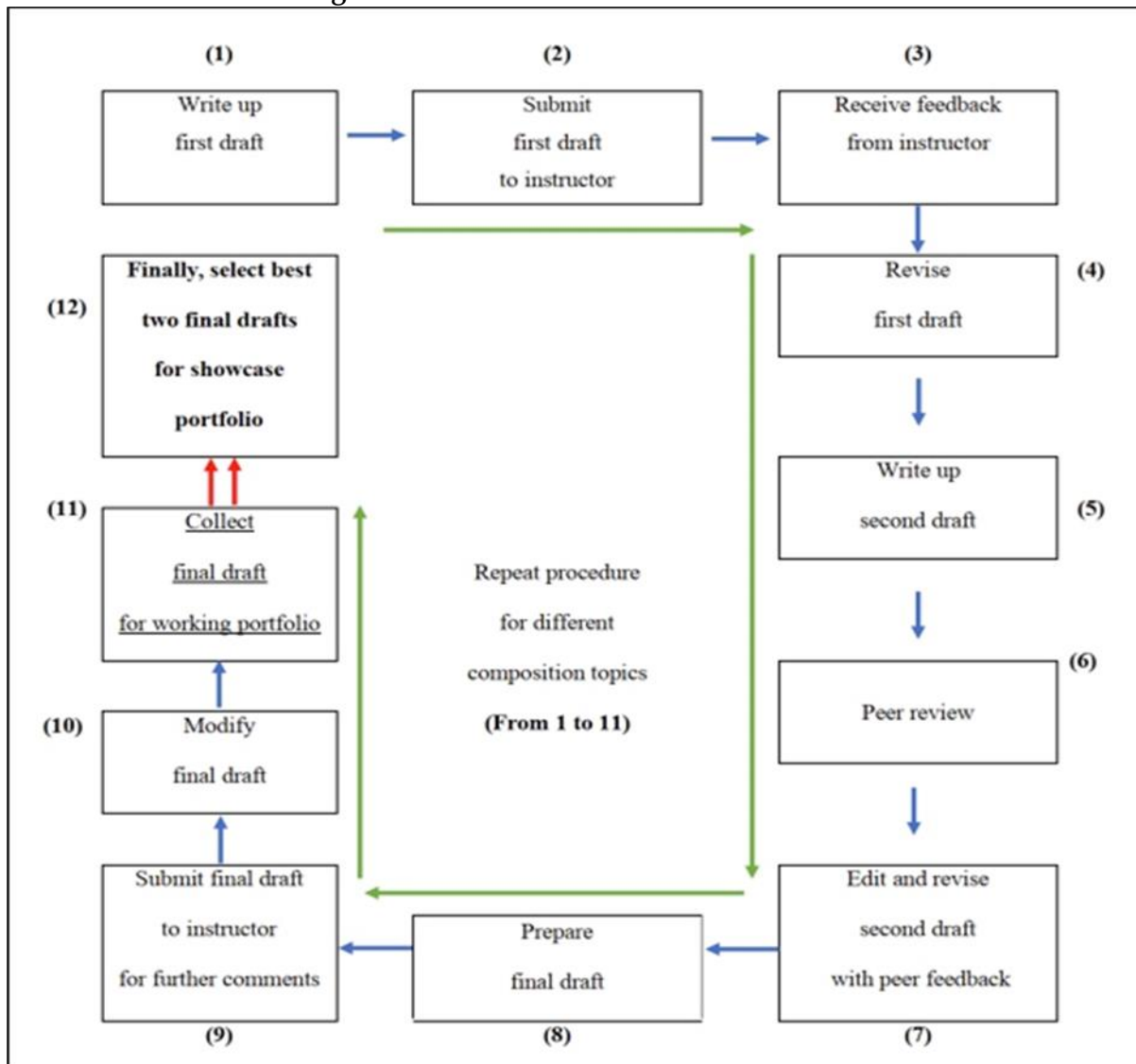
Adapted from Nguyen (2022).

According to Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), the portfolio procedures approach included collection, selection, and reflection. Students were required to produce numerous manuscripts (essays ranging from 150 to 200 words) on distinct topics related to sustainable tourism and tourism management, and then compile these drafts into a working portfolio. After receiving all manuscripts, students are required to write a reflection of what they learned. Finally, they were required to select their two finest finals for a showcase portfolio. At the conclusion of the course, they were also required to compose an evaluation essay detailing their accomplishments and deficiencies. Interim drafts were not graded but could demonstrate how much students' writing progress had improved. Students were also required to submit two categories of portfolios at the

conclusion of the course. The exhibit portfolio consisting of two final best pieces of writing must be graded, along with an evaluation essay. Self-evaluation, peer review, and teacher feedback were employed in the development of scoring techniques:

During the portfolio procedure, instructors provided students with regular feedback. Students were required to compose their manuscripts in class for each class. The instructor would then review these manuscripts and provide immediate comments. After completing their initial manuscripts, students sought additional feedback from their instructors.

Students provided feedback on their peers throughout the peer review sessions. Before discussing clarifications and suggestions with their colleagues, they provided written feedback. To foster a closer relationship between instruction and evaluation, the instructor made the assessment criteria, which centered on four areas (i.e., organization, content, language use, and mechanics), explicit and transparent to the students before they began compiling their portfolios.

3.4. Instrument

The Portfolio Attitudes (PA), Portfolio Problems (PP), and Portfolio Contribution Questionnaire (PCQ) were adapted from Aydin (2010). The PCQ, designed by Aydin (2010a), was comprised of statements analyzing the contributions of portfolios to EFL learning. The semi-structured student interview was conducted in Vietnamese at the conclusion of the portfolio course (see Appendix B for the interview guide). Based on the results of the post-test, six students of varying writing abilities were chosen for the interview. The information was classified and summarized. The responses from students were translated and transcribed. It was necessary to peruse and reread the transcription data in order to identify themes germane to the research questions.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

After the conclusion of the course, the questionnaire survey was sent to twenty-five students in the experimental group. The collected responses were imported into a file, and then SPSS version 26 was used to generate descriptive statistics (frequency for demographic data) and the mean scores of subscale items (attitudes, problems, and writing achievement).

Following the quantitative analysis, data from two open-ended queries were analyzed. The originally recorded data were initially transcribed and saved as text files. Following this, the researcher read all of the transcribed data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the interviewees' responses. The next stage is to code all of the data; at this point, the content analysis approach was implemented, in which pre-defined codes and codes arising from the data were utilized (Dawson, 2009). According to Cohen *et al.* (2018), a code is merely "a name" or "a label" assigned to a fragment of text. In the present investigation, coding refers to labeling the responses of students. Among the open protocols that govern the process are those from the analytic framework: (a) students' attitude, and (b) writing improvement.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Portfolios' Advantages and Disadvantages
4.1.1. Students' Attitudes toward Portfolios

With respect to students' attitudes toward portfolios, participants were required to give their opinion on a 5-point Linkert scale from 1 – 5 (completely disagree to completely agree). The higher the scores are, the more positive the attitudes are.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.908	13

Students' attitudes toward Portfolio were illustrated by a total of 13 items on a 5-point Likert scale in part 1 of the questionnaire – the higher the scores, the more positive attitudes toward Portfolio. According to the results (Appendix C), students overall had positive attitudes toward the concepts in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, there is a disparity in the mean scores, which illustrates the preference of students. Most students strongly agreed that "Portfolio can help me learn effectively" (M = 4.52, SD = .59). Moreover, they also had a positive perception of "Portfolio assessment can help me improve my writing skill." (M = 4.40, SD = .7).

When it came to "Portfolio keeping takes too much time" (M = 4.16, SD = .51), "It is boring to write every week." (M = 4.16, SD = .94), "Portfolio keeping takes too much time." (M = 3.98, SD = 1.05), and "Portfolio keeping makes me skeptical." (M = 4.08, SD = 1.04), the mean scores were a little bit high. This clearly indicates that even though students perceived that portfolio had a positive impact on their learning progress, they also felt that it would bring them a certain amount of trouble in terms of time, fatigue, and boredom.

4.1.2. Portfolio Problems

Concerning portfolios' problems, participants were required to give their opinion on a 5-point Linkert scale from 1 – 5 (always to never). The higher the scores are, the less problems are.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.883	12

Students appeared to have trouble most with "to study with peer" (M = 4.12, SD =.92) and "I have negative comments from my partner." (M = 4.20, SD =.76).

Generally speaking, students also found portfolios somehow challenging; the most common problem of relates to their peers. Still, they considered teachers extremely helpful with the role of facilitator since the statistics show they appeared to have no trouble when studying with teachers (M = 4.68, SD = .48).

4.1.3. Portfolio Contributions

With respect to portfolio contributions, participants were required to give their opinion on a 5-point Linkert scale from 1 – 5 (never to always). The higher the scores, the more improvement they got with Portfolio.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.930	30

However, according to the results presented briefly (see Appendix E for details), learners perceived Portfolio benefits their reading and research skills. Second, they believed Portfolios improve their writing ability, particularly in sub-skills, such as process, organization, content, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. It seems that they make progress in mechanics due to its simplicity. For statistical improvement, it appears that portfolios contribute to students writing ability in terms of the writing content and grammatical structures. While the former takes up the highest proportion, the latter is the smallest. Learners believe they could do best in putting the focus on the main ideas (M=4.44, SD= .87). For grammatical sections, students can use grammar in contexts (M= 4.56, SD= .50). Concerning the writing process, outlining (M=4.44, SD= .77) is one of the most significant achievement learners got. Regarding writing organization, learners appear to strongly believe that they could present ideas logically connected (M=4.44, SD= .87). Consequently, Portfolios have considerable positive benefits on students' writing skills.

4.2. Portfolios' Effectiveness

Table 2: Students' Survey

Question: Do you think that the implementation of portfolio assessment can help you improve your writing ability?		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Yes [a]	20	80.0%
No	5	20.0%
N = 25	25	100.0 %
a If 'yes", in what way does portfolio assessment improve your writing ability?		

Table 3: Categories Coded

Statement	Frequency
1. to enhance the written content	5
2. to enhance the structure of writing	4
3. to be intrinsically motivated to write more often.	3
4. to acquire the ability to self-evaluate written work.	3
5. to participate in collaborative learning	3
6. to have a better learning environment.	2
	Total = 20

All participants agreed that maintaining portfolios enhanced their writing ability and subskills in terms of learning motivation and writing achievement. According to the data from the interview, it is fair to claim that the benefit of portfolios is that they motivate students to write and learn the new language regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In terms of improvement, all interviewers found portfolios remarkably beneficial due to their gradual progress.

Scores, as can be seen, seem to be one of the most attention-catching when students learn. They are always longing for higher scores.

"And I think grades can serve as a performance indicator. If I usually get 5, and my friend gets 7, so I know I have to work harder." (S4)

One of the most special features of the portfolio is delayed evaluation Hamp-Lyons (2010). Therefore, giving a specific score on the writing process was not very proper when implementing a portfolio. Most participants show positive attitudes toward portfolios. The benefits students get from portfolios are seeing how much they improve over time since portfolios can document the whole process of their learning. One of my students share:

"From my point of view, portfolios are kind of time-consuming though I find them helpful." (S1)

Some stated that portfolios developed their motivation in terms of actively taking part in the course, exchanging learning experiences through feedback, and understanding more about the organization of essay structures. They say:

"Portfolios contribute to my writing skill, and the most satisfying for me is trying to understand how to structure an essay." (S1)

It seems that portfolios could lead to higher and higher motivation since they preferred this alternative assessment with positive attitudes. Also, they are likely to become independent since they are more responsible for their studying.

"I like this class since I can learn a new way of learning writing skills in terms of the written content which are far different from what I have known in my last class." (S3)

Portfolios have given students a sense of ownership due to the joys and fun they had when compiling portfolios. Hence, they appreciated their final product and considered it theirs only.

"I felt like studying harder because the portfolio is my own product." (S5)

"Creating a kind of booklet is fun, so I felt like working more actively." (S4)

All participants agreed that maintaining portfolios enhanced their writing ability and subskills. Despite this, there was no agreement among the participants regarding which skills they had improved the most, which can be attributed to their varying English language learning abilities.

First and foremost, participants (N = 25) reported that maintaining a written portfolio improved their writing skills in general. The content of their written work can be viewed as the most significant factor in their sense of accomplishment. The majority of students stated that portfolios aided them in refining their paragraph writing concepts. In other words, they can generate topic ideas for their writing. These opinions align with the interview responses of the students, who stated that maintaining portfolios helped them become better writers. This aligns with the responses of students to the questionnaire regarding portfolio contributions. Through reading and research, they were able to generate more and more concepts for their writing topics.

A student said,

"I view the portfolio process as a very beneficial learning opportunity, and I have learned a great deal during the writing process. I have made greater organizational progress in collaborative learning with peers." (S2)

In addition, students believe that maintaining a portfolio will help them develop their reading and research skills because they must study to generate writing ideas. In addition, because they must locate and examine particular English-language documents to obtain information on the topic, the need for knowledge about writing topics helps them develop their research skills. After summarizing the text, they began recognizing the main ideas and details in the passages. This viewpoint corresponded with the response to the questionnaire on portfolio contribution.

As a result, students believe maintaining a portfolio is a method to generate more writing ideas because they must read and conduct research to gather information about their writing topic. Reading and researching various information helps students enhance their writing regarding their ideas – the subject matter of their written work.

Most students reported that portfolios helped them organize their thoughts when writing paragraphs. In other terms, they understand paragraph structure. This is consistent with the student's responses in the interview, in which they stated that portfolios helped them better organize their writing pieces, but at the paragraph level, since they had already discovered how to scaffold the ideas through portfolio implementation in the writing course. This sharing aligns with student responses to the portfolio contribution questionnaire, highlighting one of their most significant accomplishments. This viewpoint coincides with the portfolio contribution questionnaire's sharing point. Other students also expressed their views.

"From my perspective, my greatest strength as a result of portfolio assessment learning is my ability to organize and connect ideas." (S4)

Participants believe that maintaining written portfolios improves their grammar knowledge, but they mean they are better at tenses than complex grammatical structures. They generally favor conjunctions (FANBOYS) because they can use them precisely when connecting two sentences. In addition, they were able to construct compound sentences and use linking or signal words to combine them.

"I learned to use conjunctions, for example, with the help of my peer and teacher's feedback." Additionally, tenses were no longer grammatical issues. In other words, I realized that proper grammar is required to combine sentences." (S1)

For grammatical progress, one states,

"I kept examining my errors and attempting to avoid them, which enabled me to write with fewer grammatical errors, such as incorrect tense usage." (S3)

Throughout the entire writing process, participants performed better at ideation and outlining. This perspective is consistent with the results of the portfolio problems questionnaire, which revealed that students did not view ideation and outlining as burdensome. As stated,

"I prefer writing pre-activities, particularly brainstorming, and clustering, but I am poor at narrowing topics before writing." (S5)

"Creating an outline is my favored aspect of pre-writing, as I do not pause to consider ideas while writing." (S4)

5. Recommendations

It is suggested that implementing portfolios in writing instruction carries significant implications for both students and educators. Firstly, the adoption of portfolios allows for delayed assessment, enabling students to receive feedback and revise their texts over time. This approach aligns with Hamp Lyons and Condon's (2000) characterization of delayed evaluation as one of the key features of effective writing assessment. By providing students with the opportunity to revise their work based on feedback, portfolios promote a deeper understanding of the writing process and encourage continuous improvement. Furthermore, the emphasis on revision within portfolio-based assessment cultivates valuable skills for L2 learners, such as drafting and revising, which are integral to the development of proficient writing abilities. Through repeated cycles of drafting and revising, students not only refine their writing but also gain a clearer awareness of their progress and areas for improvement. This heightened self-awareness enhances their overall learning experience and fosters a sense of ownership over their writing development. Moreover, the implementation of multi-draft portfolios underscores the social dimension of writing, emphasizing collaboration and interaction

among students and between students and teachers. By viewing writing as a recursive social practice, portfolios facilitate peer feedback, dialogue, and reflection, enriching the learning environment and promoting a deeper understanding of writing as a communicative process.

6. Conclusion

My study shows that portfolios contribute to students' writing quality in terms of depth, breadth, and growth. Regarding the first dimension, portfolios enable students to show quality work done without pressure and time constraints and with the help of resources, reference materials, and collaboration. Concerning the second dimension, portfolios are beneficial for students' enhanced writing performance since making progress in reading and research skills can assist idea generation when learners start to write. In the last dimension, portfolios document and show students' efforts for improvement and develop and demonstrate progress over time.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix A: A portfolio survey (Adapted from Aydin, 2010)

1. What is your attitude toward portfolios?

	1	2	3	4	5
1. I feel comfortable with portfolios to learn writing skills.					
2. Portfolios create a good learning environment.					
3. Portfolios change the way I write.					
4. Portfolios help me understand the process of writing.					
5. Portfolios help me understand the roles of the second, the third drafts.					
6. Portfolio keeping takes too much time.					
7. Using portfolios for writing stresses me out.					
8. Portfolios help me express my thinking better and in different ways.					
9. Portfolios help me learn effectively.					
10. It is boring to write every week.					
11. Portfolio keeping makes me skeptical.					
12. Portfolio keeping is tiring.					
13. Portfolio keeping prevents creative writing.					

Legend: 1- Completely Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neutral; 4- Agree; 5- Completely Agree.

2. How often did you face these problems you face when writing?

	1	2	3	4	5
The most difficult part of portfolio keeping is:					
1. To give feedback.					
2. To find all the mistakes in paragraphs and essays.					
3. To check the paper using a checklist.					
4. Pre-writing activities					
5. To brainstorm.					
6. To prepare an outline.					
7. To prepare a revision list.					
8. To write the second and third drafts.					
9. To find the appropriate words.					
10. To combine the sentences.					
11. To study with a peer.					
12. To study with a teacher.					
13. I hate negative comments from my partner.					

Legend: 1- Completely Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neutral; 4- Agree; 5- Completely Agree.

3. How did you improve these things?

	1	2	3	4	5
A. I improved my vocabulary and knowledge.					
1. I learned new vocabulary.					
2. I learned how to use a dictionary to find appropriate words.					
3. I learned to use words in context					
4. I learned to use a variety of words.					
B. I improved my grammar knowledge.					
5. I learned to produce complex and compound sentences.					
6. I learned to use signal words when I combine sentences.					
7. I learned to write more fluent sentences.					
8. I learned to use tenses correctly.					
C. I improved my reading skills.					
9. I gained information about the topics I wrote about.					
10. I learned to see the details in the passages.					
11. I learned to find the main ideas in the texts					
12. I learned to transfer the ideas in the texts to my paragraphs and essays.					
13. I improved my research skills.					
D. I learned how to organize a paragraph and composition.					
14. I learned clustering before starting to write.					
15. I learned brainstorming before starting to write.					
16. I learned to prepare an outline before starting to write.					
17. I learned how to use punctuation and capitalization.					
E. Peer and teacher feedback helped me.					
18. I learned to find the mistakes in paragraphs and essays.					
19. I learned to classify the mistakes in paragraphs and essays.					
20. I learned to revise my paragraphs and essay					
21. I learned how to give feedback					
22. To notice and correct my mistakes.					
23. I learned to use a checklist when I examine paragraphs and essays.					
F. I acquired information about paragraph and essay development methods and techniques.					
24. I learned how to present ideas creatively.					
25. I learned the parts of a paragraph and essay.					
26. I learned how to present ideas coherently in an essay.					
27. I learned how to present ideas logically connected in a paragraph.					
28. I learned to have more and more ideas when I write.					
29. I learned how to write with an awareness of the reader.					
30. I began to write in English without translating from Vietnamese					
30. I learned to reflect my ideas, feelings, and thoughts.					

Legend: 1- Completely Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neutral; 4- Agree; 5- Completely Agree.

4. Do you think that the implementation of portfolio assessment can help you improve your writing ability?

- o Yes
- o No

If you put a tick on Yes, please continue answering the following questions:

5. To what extent do you think portfolios can help you improve your writing ability?
………………………………………………………………………

6. In what way do you think portfolios can help you form autonomy in learning?
………………………………………………………………………

Appendix B: Interview

Student interview guide:
1) To what extent do you think portfolios can help improve your writing abilities?
2) To what extent do you think portfolios can help you form autonomy in learning?

Appendix C: Students' Attitudes

	Mean	Std Dev.
9. Portfolios help me learn effectively.	4.52	0.59
1. Portfolio assessment can help me improve my writing skills.	4.40	0.71
7. Using portfolios for writing stresses me out.	4.36	0.95
2. Portfolios create a good learning environment.	4.32	0.99
10. Portfolios help me express my thinking better and in different ways.	4.32	0.75
6. Portfolios help me understand the process of writing.	4.28	0.84
3. Portfolios change the way I write.	4.24	0.60
5. Portfolios help me understand the roles of the second, the third drafts.	4.24	1.13
13. Portfolio keeping prevents creative writing.	4.24	1.01
4. Portfolio keeping takes too much time.	4.16	0.51
8. It is boring to write every week.	4.16	0.94
12. Portfolio keeping is tiring.	4.12	0.73
11. Portfolio keeping makes me skeptical.	4.08	1.04

Appendix D: Portfolio Problems

	Mean	Std Dev
11. To study with a teacher	4.68	0.48
3. To check the paper using a checklist.	4.44	0.87
9. To combine the sentences.	4.44	0.71
13. I hate negative comments from my teacher.	4.40	0.81
7. To write the second and third drafts.	4.36	1.00
5. To prepare an outline.	4.32	0.95
4. To brainstorm.	4.28	0.68
8. To find the appropriate words.	4.24	0.83
2. To find all the mistakes in paragraphs and essays.	4.20	0.96
6. To prepare a revision list.	4.20	0.87
12. I hate negative comments from my partner.	4.20	0.76
10. To study with a peer.	4.12	0.92

Appendix E: Portfolio Contributions

	Mean	Std Dev
A. I improved my vocabulary and knowledge		
2. I learned how to use a dictionary to find appropriate words.	4.32	0.86
1. I learned new vocabulary.	4.28	0.68
4. I learned to use a variety of words.	4.20	1.04
3. I learned to use words in context	3.96	1.06
B. I improved my grammar knowledge.		
8. I learned to use tenses correctly.	4.56	0.50
5. I learned to produce complex and compound sentences.	4.32	0.85
6. I learned to use signal words when I combine sentences.	4.32	0.69
7. I learned to write more fluent sentences.	4.32	0.69
C. I improved my reading skills.		
10. I learned to see the details in the passages.	4.52	0.87
12. I learned to transfer the ideas in the texts to my paragraphs and essays.	4.36	0.81
11. I learned to find the main ideas in the texts	4.28	0.74
9. I gained information about the topics I wrote about.	4.20	0.87
13. I improved my research skills.	4.20	0.70
D. I learned how to organize a paragraph and composition.		
16. I learned to prepare an outline before starting to write.	4.44	0.77
14. I learned to cluster before starting to write.	4.32	0.95
15. I learned to brainstorm before starting to write.	4.32	0.90
17. I learned how to use punctuation and capitalization.	4.36	0.57
E. Peer and teacher feedback helped me.		
18. I learned to find the mistakes in paragraphs and essays.	4.40	0.87
20. I learned to revise my paragraphs and essay	4.40	0.91
19. I learned to classify the mistakes in paragraphs and essays.	4.36	0.49
22. I learned to use a checklist when I examine paragraphs and essays.	4.32	0.90
21. To notice and correct my mistakes.	4.28	0.68
F. I acquired information about paragraph and essay development methods and techniques.		
25. I learned to present ideas coherently in an essay.	4.44	0.71
26. I learned to present ideas logically connected in a paragraph.	4.44	0.87
27. I learned to have more and more ideas when I write.	4.44	0.58
30. I learned to reflect my ideas, feelings and thoughts.	4.44	0.50
28. I learned how to write with an awareness of the reader.	4.40	0.70
29. I began to write in English without translating from Vietnam.	4.40	0.86
24. I learned the parts of a paragraph and essay.	4.32	0.99
23. I learned how to present ideas creatively.	4.28	0.84