

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT BASED INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING WRITING FOR SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MAKASSAR

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Abstract

The investigation was conducted with the purpose of determining whether or not the implementation of portfolio assessment-based instruction leads to an improvement in the writing abilities of the students. The experimental research design was utilized for this study. A total of thirty-six students from the tenth grade at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar were included in the sample for the academic year 2022/2023. The instruments that were used to collect the data were a writing test that was designed to evaluate the students' writing ability. The descriptive and inferential statistical methods were utilized in order to analyze the data regarding the pupils' writing abilities. According to the findings of the study, the utilization of portfolio assessment-based instruction in the teaching of writing resulted in an improvement in the writing skills of the students. When compared to the pre-test score of 1.6, the students' post-test mean score of 2.8 was higher, which indicates that they improved by 1.2 points. According to these criteria, there was an increase in the level of achievement that students achieved in writing as a result of the implementation of portfolio assessment in English Language Teaching, notably in the writing class that the students were enrolled in. It is possible to draw the conclusion that the utilization of portfolio-based evaluation is an effective method that can be implemented in order to improve the writing skills of the students.

Keywords: Portfolio Assessment Based Instruction, Writing Skill

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial technique of communication in the contemporary world, encompassing both traditional pen-and-paper methods and electronic correspondence. Writing constitutes an interactive engagement between the author and the audience. The requirement for writing is significantly more than that for verbal conversation, as written communication lacks instant feedback as a reference (Olshtain, 2001).

In the context of language instruction, writing holds a distinguished position. Writing is undoubtedly the most challenging ability for EFL learners to acquire. The education of writing has significantly evolved over the past twenty-five years due to numerous different perspectives regarding the subject. Onozawa (2010) stated that writing is a principal language talent, reflecting an individual's overall language proficiency. This talent is essential for EFL learners, serving as a fundamental communication ability and a distinctive advantage in acquiring a second language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Given the complexity of writing skills, students must focus on both higher-level abilities (macro skills) such as planning and organization, and lower-level skills (micro skills) like spelling, punctuation, and word choice. The processes of ideation, drafting, revising, and editing are essential components of writing, and these critical aspects are inadequately evaluated in a singular typical assessment format (Nezakatgoo, 2011). Articulating one's thoughts coherently and precisely in writing is a significant accomplishment that even native speakers often struggle to attain (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2005). Proficient writing necessitates an understanding of syntax, vocabulary, collocations, idioms, and expressions. Students may compose effectively and produce grammatically accurate phrases; yet, their writing is constrained and difficult to expand upon and develop.

Novariana, Sumardi, and Tarjana (2018) assert that the inadequate writing skills of Indonesian Senior High School students are attributable to both internal and external factors affecting the students. The internal issues arising from the students include: 1) low motivation for learning English, 2) Challenges in selecting appropriate vocabulary for writing, 3) insufficient vocabulary, 4) difficulties in arranging words in the correct order, 5) spelling challenges, 6) struggles with constructing grammatically correct sentences, and 7) a tendency towards passivity in classroom activities. The external issues faced by the students are: 1) insufficient practice, and 2) absence of feedback on their work.

One of the issues identified above is also occurring among the students of SMAN 5 Makassar. The English instructors at SMAN 5 Makassar inadequately fulfill their obligations in assessing students' writing skills; they merely provide scores and infrequently offer criticism necessary for improvement. Teachers bear the task of educating and evaluating student accomplishment in school; nevertheless, they often provide little feedback on student writing, which is crucial for both the writing process and assessment, instead merely assigning a grade. It renders students oblivious to their errors and impairs their writing proficiency. Furthermore, the majority of students disregard teacher input regarding their writing.

Based on the researcher's initial observations of these four skills in Class 1 of SMAN 5 Makassar, along with interviews with English teachers and students, it was determined that students' writing proficiency in English was notably deficient, with a score of only 80.59%. They struggled to initiate their ideas in writing and to articulate their thoughts, exhibited a limited vocabulary, and demonstrated a lack of coherence. Consequently, they faced challenges in developing their ideas, resulting in writing that frequently lacked detail.

Furthermore, when composing phrases in English, the majority exhibit confusion regarding the vocabulary employed. The majority of them consistently perform straight word-for-word translations from Indonesian to English using a dictionary. Upon discovering their meanings in English, they only transcribe whatever they locate in the dictionary, disregarding the application of words and textual structures.

A viable approach to address this issue is through deciding a proper and effective assessment tools. According to Darwis, Astuty, and Ilmi (2024), every teacher must reconsider his/her methods of student assessment in order to stay abreast of the evolving educational environment. Further, Chang, Tseng, Chou, and Chen (2011) assert that a portfolio encompasses the diverse aspects of the learning process, facilitating reflection on progress for both teachers and learners. Reflecting on work in portfolios enables students to recognize their progress over time, fostering a sense of achievement. Utilizing portfolios enables learners to set educational objectives and recognize their strengths and limitations (Chang, Chen & Chen, 2012).

Portfolio assessment has gained prominence in educational research as a student-centered, process-oriented method for evaluating learning outcomes. Unlike traditional assessment methods, portfolio assessment emphasizes continuous improvement, self-reflection, and the documentation of progress over time. Researchers highlight its potential to foster deep learning and critical thinking, particularly in language teaching and writing instruction.

According to Zhang (2009), portfolio assessment encourages students to take ownership of their learning by actively participating in goal-setting, self-assessment, and the selection of work that best represents their abilities. This method not only supports the development of academic skills but also enhances metacognitive awareness as students reflect on their progress. Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002) investigated the effects of portfolio assessment in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms and found that it significantly improved students' writing proficiency. Their findings suggest that portfolios provide opportunities for iterative feedback and revision, allowing students to refine their work and develop a deeper understanding of writing conventions and strategies. Similarly, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) argue that portfolio assessment promotes a more holistic evaluation of students' abilities by incorporating multiple drafts, peer feedback, and teacher commentary. This approach contrasts with one-off tests, which often fail to capture the complexity of writing as a recursive and context-dependent process.

In addition to its pedagogical benefits, portfolio assessment aligns with principles of constructivist learning theory, as noted by Biggs and Tang (2011). By emphasizing active engagement

and authentic tasks, portfolio assessment fosters meaningful learning experiences. Students are encouraged to apply knowledge in real-world contexts, which is particularly valuable in writing instruction, where the goal is to develop practical communication skills. However, the implementation of portfolio assessment is not without challenges. Lam (2016) points out that the process can be time-consuming for both teachers and students, particularly in large classes. Effective training and clear guidelines are essential to ensure its success. Furthermore, Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) caution that students may initially resist the approach due to its unfamiliarity, underscoring the need for gradual integration and consistent support.

Despite these challenges, the growing body of evidence underscores the effectiveness of portfolio assessment in enhancing writing skills, fostering self-regulation, and promoting learner autonomy. The current study builds on this foundation by exploring the impact of portfolio assessment on the writing proficiency of high school students in an EFL context.

Students derive greater benefits from feedback received throughout the writing process rather than after the paper has been evaluated. Optimal writing is achievable only when students, equipped with feedback from teachers and/or peers, possess mastery of the writing system, including the mechanics of writing (punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation, numbering, and spelling) and grammar, to address challenges in crafting excellent compositions. By documenting their learning and archiving resources, students can compile a portfolio of their work to observe their progress over time. This approach enables students to exert greater control and ownership over their learning, while allowing teachers to assess student achievement with ease. Consequently, employing portfolios as an alternate assessment method may assist students in addressing their writing challenges and may improve their learning over time.

METHOD

This study utilized an Experimental Research Design to achieve its objectives. Specifically, the researcher adopted a pre-experimental research approach, employing a one-group pre-test and post-test design. This design enabled the researcher to examine the effects of the intervention by comparing the students' performance before and after the treatment.

Data collection was conducted using a carefully developed instrument, namely a writing test aimed at assessing the students' writing skills. The writing test served as the primary tool for gathering quantitative data on the students' abilities. To ensure comprehensive analysis, the data collected on the students' writing skills were processed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics provided a summary of the data, including measures such as mean, standard deviation, and range, while inferential statistics allowed for hypothesis testing and drawing conclusions about the impact of the intervention.

The sample for the study comprised 36 students enrolled in Grade X at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar during the academic year 2022/2023. These students were selected as representatives to provide meaningful insights into the effects of the treatment on writing skills. The results of the study are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how instructional strategies can improve writing performance in secondary education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The researcher provides the frequency and percentage of students' scores on the writing test for both the pre-test and post-test. Prior to administering the treatment, the researcher administered a pre-test to assess the students' existing knowledge in writing. Following the administration of the intervention, the students undergo a post-test. The results of the pre-test and post-test are compared to assess the students' writing proficiency. In this context, portfolio assessment was implemented as the intervention, conducted by the students across multiple sessions in their English writing class.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the frequency and percentage of students' scores are initially tallied and categorized into five categorization levels: very poor, poor, fair, reasonably good, good, very good, and exceptional. The frequency and percentage of students' scores on the pre-test and post-test were computed based on the scoring results of both rates in the table below.

Table 1. The frequency and percentage of the students' achievement on pre- test and post-test

Category	Range of Score	Pre-test		Post-test	
		f	%	f	%
Excellent	9.0 to 10	0	0	0	0
Very good	8.6 to 9.5	0	0	5	13
Good	7.6 to 8.5	5	13	12	33
Fairly good	6.6 to 7.5	17	47	19	52
Fair	5.6 to 6.5	10	27	0	0
Poor	3.6 to 5.5	1	2.7	0	0
Very Poor	0.0 to 3.5	3	8.3	0	0
Total		36	100	36	100

Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the students' performance prior to the implementation of the portfolio assessment in their writing class. The pre-test results reveal that out of the thirty-six students who participated in the study, a small percentage, specifically 8.3% (3 students), received grades that were classified as very poor. This indicates significant room for improvement in their writing skills. Similarly, only 1 student, accounting for 2.7% of the sample, received a grade categorized as poor, further emphasizing the variability in the students' initial writing abilities.

A notable portion of the students, 10 individuals or 27%, achieved grades that fell into the fair classification. This group represented a significant proportion of the class, suggesting that many students possessed an average level of proficiency but still required additional support to enhance their skills. Furthermore, the largest group consisted of 17 students, or 47% of the sample, whose grades were classified as fairly good. This indicates that nearly half of the students demonstrated a level of competence that, while above average, still left room for significant progress.

Meanwhile, 5 students, representing 13% of the class, attained grades in the good classification, which was the highest category achieved during the pre-test. However, it is important to note that none of the students managed to achieve grades that would be classified as very good or exceptional, underscoring the absence of outstanding performance within the group at this initial stage.

These results highlight the overall distribution of writing proficiency levels among the students before the intervention, providing a baseline for measuring the impact of the portfolio assessment approach on their writing skills.

Conversely, the post-test results, conducted after the implementation of the portfolio assessment in the students' writing class, revealed a marked improvement in the students' writing performance. The data presented in the table above demonstrate significant progress in the distribution of student scores, showcasing the positive impact of the portfolio assessment on their writing proficiency.

In the post-test, a total of 5 students, accounting for 13% of the 36 participants, achieved grades that were classified as very good. This category, which was not represented in the pre-test, reflects the notable advancement of a subset of the class to a higher level of proficiency. Additionally, 12 students, or 33% of the sample, attained a good classification, signifying

further improvement in their writing skills. This increase in the number of students achieving good performance highlights the success of the portfolio assessment in elevating the overall competence of the group.

The majority of the students, 19 individuals or 52% of the total sample, fell into the fairly good classification. While this group represented a slightly lower proportion compared to the pre-test, their presence in this category indicates that a significant portion of the students sustained a consistent level of improvement while transitioning out of lower performance classifications.

The highest level reached by students in the post-test was the very good classification, represented by 5 students, underscoring the potential of portfolio assessment as an effective instructional strategy for fostering advanced writing skills. These results suggest that the implementation of portfolio assessment in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom, particularly in writing instruction, plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' English writing proficiency. It encourages reflection, iterative learning, and a more personalized approach to skill development, which collectively contribute to the students' academic growth and improved performance.

The mean score and standard deviation of students' pre-test and post-test

The implementation of portfolio assessment as a pedagogical strategy for English writing skills can enhance students' writing proficiency. Data analysis revealed a substantial difference between the mean scores of the students' pre-test and post-test in speaking, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 2. The mean score and standard deviation of students' pre-test and post-test

Variable	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Pre-test	1.6				.000
Post-test	2.8				

Table 2 above illustrates a significant improvement in the students' writing performance, as evidenced by the comparison of their pre-test and post-test mean scores. The data reveal that the mean score in the post-test, 2.8, surpassed that of the pre-test, which was 1.6, reflecting a substantial increase of 1.2 points. This improvement underscores the effectiveness of the intervention, specifically the implementation of portfolio assessment, in enhancing students' writing skills.

The increase in the mean score suggests that the portfolio assessment methodology provided students with the tools and opportunities necessary to improve their writing. This approach likely encouraged iterative learning, where students benefited from continuous feedback, opportunities to revise their work, and greater reflection on their writing process. The structured nature of portfolio assessment may also have contributed to better organization, coherence, and overall quality in students' written output.

Furthermore, the data support the premise that portfolio assessment fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. By shifting the focus from one-time evaluations to a process-oriented assessment, students were able to build their confidence and gradually refine their skills. This aligns with educational theories emphasizing active learning and continuous improvement.

These findings highlight the potential of portfolio assessment to act as a transformative tool in writing instruction. By documenting progress over time, the approach not only helps students achieve higher academic outcomes but also cultivates essential skills such as critical thinking, self-regulation, and a deeper understanding of the writing process. The observed enhancement in students' writing achievement further validates the implementation of portfolio assessment as an effective strategy in ELT classrooms, particularly for improving the writing proficiency of learners.

Additionally, Table 2 indicates a significance value of .000, which provides further statistical evidence of the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment intervention. This criterion signifies that the students' writing achievement values (.000) are substantially below the established significance level of .05. In statistical terms, this result confirms that the observed differences in students' performance between the pre-test and post-test are not due to chance. Rather, they reflect a meaningful and statistically significant improvement in writing achievement.

The substantial disparities in mean scores, coupled with the significant p-value, underscore the positive impact of the portfolio assessment approach on students' writing proficiency. These findings demonstrate that the portfolio assessment method not only facilitated academic progress but also enabled students to develop a deeper understanding of effective writing practices.

The results from the writing test reveal a considerable enhancement in the students' writing skills as a direct outcome of the portfolio assessment implementation. This approach likely provided students with structured opportunities to engage in self-reflection, iterative revisions, and feedback-driven learning, fostering improvements in organization, grammar, coherence, and overall expression.

This enhancement was particularly evident in the performance of grade X students at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar, where the intervention was applied in the context of an English writing class. By incorporating portfolio assessment, educators were able to shift the focus from traditional one-off evaluations to a more process-oriented and developmental approach. This not only improved students' technical writing abilities but also encouraged them to adopt a reflective and proactive attitude toward their learning.

Overall, these findings validate the use of portfolio assessment as a powerful pedagogical strategy in English Language Teaching (ELT). The statistically significant improvement in students' writing achievement highlights the potential of this method to enhance learning outcomes and equip students with skills essential for academic and professional success.

Discussion

The study focuses on the implementation of portfolio assessment for grade X students at SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. As previously explained, the portfolio assessment was carried out through two primary stages: the pre-test and the post-test. These assessments were designed to measure the students' writing performance before and after the intervention, providing valuable data on the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach.

The data collected at each step of the try-out process played a crucial role in assisting the researcher to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented portfolio assessment. By analyzing the outcomes of the pre-test and post-test, the researcher gained insights into specific areas where students excelled as well as those where they faced challenges. This continuous feedback allowed the researcher to revise and refine the

instructional materials and processes for portfolio assessment, ensuring that the intervention effectively met the students' learning needs.

Moreover, the process of testing and revising the instructional approach provided an additional benefit—it fostered professional growth among educators. The iterative nature of the instruction testing process encouraged teachers to critically evaluate and adapt their teaching methods. This experience not only enhanced their understanding of portfolio assessment but also nurtured their ability to design and implement effective instructional strategies. Such reflective practices are essential for promoting professionalism and competence in teaching, particularly in dynamic and student-centered approaches like portfolio assessment.

Ultimately, this phase of the study highlights the dual benefits of portfolio assessment: it serves as a tool for enhancing students' writing proficiency while simultaneously contributing to the professional development of teachers. By embracing this approach, educators can develop innovative teaching practices that support both academic achievement and instructional excellence.

The researcher conducted a theory before it is presented in a practical to test and also develop the instruction. In the theory which involves twenty one cadets. The implementation of the portfolio assessment for grade X students of SMA Negeri 5 Makassar. The findings show the implementation of portfolio assessment is effective for enhancing students' writing skill. It was proven by the mean score of post-test was higher than pretest ($2.8 > 1.6$) or increased 1.6 points and the students could gain a significant progress in developing their English writing skill. This is in line with Sulistyo (2020) who found that that the secondary level students had positive attitudes towards the application portfolio assessment and provide positive impacts on students' writing skill.

The significant improvement in students' achievements on posttests through portfolio assessment demonstrates the potential of this method to enhance learning outcomes. This finding supports the idea that portfolio assessment can be a highly effective instructional approach, especially in contexts like Indonesian higher education, where English language teaching (ELT) is increasingly required to be contextually meaningful and functionally oriented. In fact, research has shown that portfolio assessment encourages active student engagement and provides a reflective space for students to track their progress, set learning goals, and demonstrate their evolving language proficiency (Andrade, 2005). By emphasizing both the process and the product of learning, portfolio assessment aligns well with the expectations of modern ELT, which seeks to equip students with practical language skills that can be applied in real-world situations.

Furthermore, portfolio assessment fosters an environment where students can engage with English in authentic contexts, a crucial aspect of language acquisition in Indonesian higher education. As English is not only a subject but also a tool for professional and academic success, portfolio-based assessments help students integrate English language skills with their future careers. Research by O'Malley and Pierce (1996) has shown that portfolio assessments, by providing opportunities for self-assessment and revision, contribute significantly to the development of critical thinking and reflective learning. These are essential skills for students who need to adapt their language abilities to various functional contexts, whether academic, professional, or social.

Moreover, the use of portfolio assessment in Indonesian higher education helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. It emphasizes writing, speaking, and other communicative skills in contexts that reflect the complexities of real-world communication. This approach mirrors the growing demand in Indonesia for English language

education that prepares students for global engagement and professional competence. As Lamb and Johnson (2001) argue, the inclusion of both verbal and nonverbal communication in portfolio assessments reflects the multifaceted nature of communication in real-life situations, ensuring that students are well-equipped to thrive in a variety of contexts.

Thus, the positive impact of portfolio assessment on students' performance not only supports its value in improving language proficiency but also highlights its appropriateness in the context of Indonesian higher education, where the focus is shifting toward more meaningful, context-driven language learning experiences..

Portfolio assessment in English instruction offers students valuable opportunities to apply their writing skills in real-world contexts, enhancing their understanding of both the purposes and applications of writing. By engaging in this type of assessment, students can more easily recognize the different contexts in which writing occurs, such as professional, academic, and personal settings. Research supports the idea that portfolio assessment fosters deeper learning by encouraging students to reflect on their writing and its purpose (Andrade, 2005). This reflection helps students develop not only technical writing skills but also a more nuanced understanding of how writing functions in various professional and personal contexts.

Moreover, portfolio assessment enables students to adapt their knowledge to real-world circumstances, such as those they would encounter in job training programs or future career endeavors. Studies show that students who engage in portfolio-based assessments exhibit stronger critical thinking skills and become more adept at applying their learning to practical situations (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The process of revising and refining their work over time allows students to gain a better understanding of how to communicate effectively across a variety of platforms and for different purposes.

Additionally, portfolio assessments are not limited to written work alone but incorporate both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication. This approach mirrors real-life scenarios where communication is multi-faceted and involves a combination of written, spoken, and visual elements. According to Leu et al. (2004), the inclusion of multimodal components such as images, videos, and presentations in portfolios enhances students' ability to communicate complex ideas effectively in both academic and professional contexts. The ability to integrate both verbal and nonverbal communication in their portfolios reflects the growing need for multimedia literacy in many modern job markets, where professionals are expected to present information through a variety of formats (Lamb & Johnson, 2001). Overall, portfolio assessment offers a holistic approach that mirrors the multifaceted nature of communication in the real world, better preparing students for their future careers..

The writing also promotes the utilization of actual language in meaningful contexts, exemplified by the dialogue between students and the teacher, when students are expected to employ courteous and formal writing. Portfolio assessment emphasizes the intrinsic connection between writing and reading, wherein students perform paragraph writing.

Portfolio assessment provides students with additional opportunities to commence the writing process through paragraph composition, and many activities can be devised and incorporated. This is supported by Gearhart and Wolf (1997) who found that portfolio assessments allow students' chances to: (a) learn how to apply a variety of tools, procedures, and standards to improve the efficacy of their writing; (b) their chances to generate "hard copy" proof of their process usage; and (c) their abilities to evaluate their own writing processes. Portfolio assessments are essential for Indonesian higher education students to acquire proficiency in their respective fields, as mandated by the government's initiative. The Department of National Education has implemented numerous significant programs aimed at equipping Indonesian higher education graduates with the requisite skills and competencies for employment. Graduates must be adept, demonstrating not only intellectual capabilities but also

spiritual, emotional, social, and kinesthetic intelligence. Furthermore, they should be competitive, embodying a spirit of ambition and a commitment to being agents of change, enabling them to excel in both local and global markets.

CONCLUSION

In summary, students' responses to the integration of basic writing skills with daily life and the curriculum at school facilitate rapid, enjoyable, and engaging learning experiences that are more communicative and collaborative, enabling them to learn independently anytime and anywhere, both inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, portfolio assessment-based training must focus on real-world subjects, be authentic, participatory, and encompass both local and foreign perspectives. Furthermore, the advancement of portfolio assessment-based training aims to enhance writing elements, including literacy and comprehension.

In the pretest and post-test, students of the basic writing class were very enthusiastic in performing all the writing activities both inside and beyond the classroom tasks. The significant improvement of students' daily writing performances was also in line with their writing achievement. It showed in the assessment phase the great change of the percentage score of the pretest (65,78%) to the percentage score of the posttest (78,39%), which indicated that the portfolio assessment-based instruction helped students to improve English writing performances and their writing achievement. It was also proved by the t-test value that was higher than the t-table. Finally, both positive perceptions from students and writing teacher had shown that the portfolio assessment-based instruction genuinely provides many benefits of one step forward in integrating portfolio assessment-based instruction and Curriculum English learning and teaching.

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