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Portfolio Assessment to Enhance LMD Students' Writing Skills. Case Study

A Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctorate Degree in Didactics of English

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Dedications

To my beloved parents, my brothers, and my nephews

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Abstract

The introduction of the LMD system in Algerian Universities required a departure from conventional practices and embracing alternative procedures in teaching and assessment. In the EFL context, while alternatives such as journal portfolios prove to be effective and lead to better performance, writing skill teachers still follow summative procedures when it comes to assessing learners' writing. Therefore, the aim behind such research is to elevate the veil on the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' paragraph writing, collaboration, and social skills. Besides that, it aims to signpost students' perceptions and attitudes toward implementing portfolio assessment. To accomplish this aim, the researcher used an experimental research design of a two-group pretest-posttest. Such a research design aims to understand the effect of the independent variable (portfolio assessment) on the dependent variables (students' writing, collaboration, attitudes, and perceptions One hundred and twelve students (112) were chosen as the participants of this research. They were divided into two groups: the experimental and the control group. , the current research used a two-group pre-test/post-test experimental design, three different questionnaires addressed to the experimental group, two interview procedures, and observations. The findings reveal that the use of a portfolio assessment had a positive impact on students' writing, encouraged students to write, make repairs through revision procedures and feedback, and elevated their writing to a considerable level. Additionally, the findings imparted that the use of the treatment promoted collaboration among the students since students' overall cooperative strategies and collaborative skills improved after experiencing writing with the portfolio assessment procedure**.** The finding also demonstrated that students perceived portfolio assessment as an important tool for writing improvement and had positive attitudes toward its procedures. In light of these results, this dissertation put forward a set of suggestions and recommendations to facilitate the implementation of portfolio assessment through technology, encourage learners' collaboration, and improve their social skills.

Keywords: Assessment, portfolio, writing skill, collaboration, EFL students.

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List of Acronyms

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

LMD License Master Doctorate

ELT   English Language teaching

ICTs Information Communication Technologies

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General Introduction

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General Introduction

With the new reforms adopted, language testing and assessment have witnessed crucial changes in the approaches used where assessment is linked to teaching and is based on both process and product procedures. It is believed that constructive support leads to better results and accomplishments as many researchers advocate that growing as writers is the result of practice and a pedagogy of praising that pays particular attention to weaknesses and efforts and provides genuine suggestions for improvement. According to Lynn (1984), teachers are not meant to be judges in the class, instead, they are supposed to help their students grow efficiently. In this regard, grades are considered defective methods of delivering information about and to the students, mainly, because they demotivate students and open up the doors for irrelevant comparison between them. Moreover, several studies have demonstrated the importance of new modes of assessments, namely, alternative ones and advocated a departure from conventional practices.

The use of alternative assessments such as portfolios, journals and diaries has remarkably changed the language testing and assessment situation and opened the door for a process pedagogy where students take responsibility for their learning, while teachers' roles change from providing knowledge to assisting learners/students to achieve their goals. It is well documented that the incorporation of alternative procedures such as portfolio assessment provides both teachers and students with a complete picture of strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities for reviewing and determining the extent of growth witnessed. In a general sense, portfolio assessment is defined as a determined gathering of students' work registered over a while that displays students' attempts, improvement, and achievement (Louis and Doug, 1994, p.64). Indeed, portfolio assessment is regarded as a tool that connects teaching to assessment, thus leading to a pedagogy that not only focuses on the written product and the followed but also on students' development as writers (Brian, 2002, p.73)

Presently, EFL teachers still follow the traditional method of approaching writing skills. They come to the class, present the lessons, and focus on theoretical knowledge of writing. Though they give homework to their students, there is no follow-up procedure, therefore, fewer opportunities for practice are presented to the students which prevents them from the opportunity to grow as writers. The implementation of a portfolio assessment procedure can provide students with a supportive learning environment where they can experience a load of writing opportunities, receive relevant feedback, and experience both peer review and self-assessment. Moreover, it can also raise students' awareness of the importance of improving their writing skills, thus encouraging them to make efforts that will lead to skill refinement.

General Introduction

In the EFL context, accurate writing is a significant limitation that EFL students struggle to achieve. This indicates that a load of effort is required to enhance their writing skills, at least conforming to the university level. Based on this, portfolio assessment is regarded as a relevant procedure of assessment that EFL teachers can use to elevate the quality of their students' writing. The current research project has addressed these areas and covered questions related to the impact of portfolio assessment on second-year EFL students' writing skills, collaboration, social skills, and perception. For that purpose, the following questions were asked.

Question one:

✓ What is the impact of portfolio assessment on Second-Year English students' paragraph writing?

Question two:

✓ To what extent does portfolio assessment application boost collaboration and improve social skills?

Question three:

✓ What are the student's perceptions and attitudes toward portfolio assessment after the experiment?

To this end, the following hypotheses are stated:

Hypothesis one:

The researcher anticipated that the use of portfolio assessment would encourage students to write, making repairs through revisions procedure and feedback, and as a result elevate their writing to a considerable level, at least conforming to the tertiary level.

Hypothesis two:

The researcher hypothesized that the inclusion of portfolio assessment procedures would lead to a sort of cooperation between the students since they will be subject to conferences, peer feedback, and revision. These procedures lead the researcher to anticipate that the use of portfolio assessment will positively impact students' overall collaborative skills and develop their social skills.

Hypothesis three:

The researcher hypothesized that students will have positive attitudes toward the treatment in the assessment of their writing. Moreover, they expect that their perception of writing assessment would change from a focus on getting better marks to working on elevating their mastery and accuracy. Moreover, the experimental work presented here contributes remarkably to this area and offers insight into portfolio assessment and how it can improve students' writing productivity and quality, collaboration, and perception.

General Introduction

The methodology followed in this thesis is a mixed-method procedure where the researcher used an experimental pre-test/post-test along with questionnaires, interviews, and observations to answer the research questions mentioned earlier. In this regard, the researcher used an experimental research design with a pre-test/post-test, questionnaire, and observation to have a deeper understanding of the impact of the treatment on learners' writing. Moreover, in the second research question, the research used a questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation. Furthermore, to answer the third research question, the researcher used a questionnaire and interview.

The present thesis attempts to outline answers to these questions and is made up of an abstract, general introduction, general conclusion, four chapters, a bibliography and four appendices. Chapters are organised in the following order. In Chapter One, the literature and the theoretical framework related to the current study are reviewed with an explicit description of the writing skill by considering, writing knowledge and its aspects, and the skills that are included within the writing skill. Thereafter, the key differences between the product and the process approach to writing are explained with the limitations of the product approach and the importance of the process approach to writing. Afterwards, the importance of a constructive method of learning where students are the centre is stressed. After that, the basic theories underpinning assessment and testing and the literature on portfolio assessment and its impact on language skills, namely writing skills are explained and reviewed.

In chapter two: Situation Analysis and Research Methodology, the educational environment and the methodological framework are highlighted. In the initial phase of the chapter, the setting where the study took place and the population selected for the study is described, whereas the second phase was concerned with the research design. It presents the various research tools used to collect data, as well as the logic behind inserting them. Indeed, this phase draws special attention to the methodological issue and introduces the various steps followed to examine the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on EFL students' writing, collaboration, social skills, and perception.

Chapter three: Results and Analysis, deals with findings obtained from the research tools used in the investigation. In this chapter, the results of each research instrument are introduced following the order of the provided questions using both statistics and descriptive procedures. Moreover, examples of students' writing are used to offer the reader genuine examples that manifest the extent of writing improvement after experiencing portfolio assessment.

The fourth and last chapter: Interpretation and Recommendations, is divided into two parts. The first part is related to the analysis of the data gathered from the various tools. In this part, the findings of each research instrument are discussed and provided with significant interpretations that are relevant to the EFL educational context. Moreover, the second part is dedicated to recommendations and suggestions that the researcher aimed to put forward for consideration in the hope of providing a relevant platform for the implementation of portfolio assessment, and thus, elevating the quality of EFL students' writing.

Chapter One
Literature Review

1. Introduction

According to Liz and William (2000), a Portfolio assessment requires gathering additional measurements of a student's performance. To Elana et.al (2017), portfolios refer mainly to collecting students' written work over time.   This chapter deals with books, articles, and studies related to the proposed research, beginning with the general terms of writing and a brief differentiation between assessment, testing, and evaluation. Then, it talks about the assessment of productive skills and provides an overview of the product and the process approach to language assessment. After that, it highlights the shift in assessment paradigms and discusses the rise of alternative means of assessment and focuses on portfolio assessment of writing skills. Finally, yet importantly, it synthesises the pros and cons of a portfolio assessment procedure. In the last stage, the chapter provides a literature review of collaboration, its impact and its importance.

1.2 The Nature of Writing Skill

Sara (2009, p.14) mentioned that it is highly required when conducting a test to provide a clear definition of the skill to be tested. She provided an explicit description of the nature of the writing ability, and provided three aspects of writing (social, cultural, and cognitive) as follows:

1.2.1 Social and Cultural Aspects of Writing

1.2.1.1 Social Aspect

Sara (2009) mentioned that viewing writing as a social and cultural activity is highly required rather than solely as the product of the individuals. She claimed that writing is an action that takes place within a defined context, serves a particular purpose, and is designed for predetermined audiences. In a similar vein, Hayes (1996, p.5) asserted that writing is a social product that happens purposefully in a social setting. He stated that the process we go through when conducting writing, that is, to say what to write, and to whom we write, is affected by social terms and the history of our interactions (Hayes, 1996, p.5).

The academic context exhibits the aspect of writing as learning to write necessitates more than just the acquisition of grammar and rhetoric. It may require an examination of the essential elements of the discipline, for instance, how the convention of the discipline shapes the text, individual representation in the text, and how texts are conceived and spread throughout the discipline. Moreover, Sara (2009, p.20) highlighted that it is important to be aware of the influence of the social context over the choice of genre and task in writing assessment.

1.2.1.2 Cultural Aspect

It has become clear to many researchers that writing is shaped not only by social perspectives alone but also by other facets such as culture where many aspects of writing are emphasised by culture. In this, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) provided a demonstration of the influence of culture on writing. They yielded a significant explanation and stated that the divergence in writing in different cultures was not inherited, but rather related to cultural choices. They mentioned that these variations were displayed clearly in the educational system either explicitly or implicitly. (Grabe and Kaplan, cited in Sara, 2009, p.184)

Sara (2009, p.21) in the same vein, pointed out that much recent research related to variation in writing has concluded that this variation can be fully or partially connected to cultural influences. She consolidated this principle by addressing concrete examples, for instance, the variation in prose between the Arabs and the English where the former uses more coordination and parallelism unlike the hierarchal organisation favoured by the English.

Another element that displays the impact of culture on writing is called cultural expectations and it has a direct bearing on the coherence of the text, which means the hierarchy of the text. This expectation comes from the writer's ability to anticipate what the readers will understand from the text. Due to this, writers have to ascertain the needs of readers accurately. When there is a much between the readers' and the writers' expectations, this will lead to a coherent interpretation. It is important to have a complete overview of the writing skill, that is to say, to admit the social and cultural influence over the writing skill which is characterized as a social and cultural activity, and that any abstraction from its context is regarded as invalid and cannot fully understand its nature (Sara, 2009, p.22).

1.2.2 The Cognitive Aspect

Much research in the field of education admits the fact that experienced writers engage a lot of time in planning, editing, making significant changes, considering their audiences regarding what can be shown and be hidden, and providing persuasive evidence (Sara, 2009, p.22). In this regard, researcher suggested the use of writing models to differentiate between expert and novice writers as well as outline the different impacts on the writing process. Indeed, these models are useful because they consider various factors that affect the entire writing process. Moreover, they tackle questions related to the mental and cognitive process included in writing, the origin of knowledge used by the writer, and the external factors influencing the writing procedure. Furthermore, careful consideration of these questions when developing a writing test is of paramount importance. First, it provides a thorough and accurate description of procedures based on current information to enhance understanding of abilities. Second, it

provides the basis for teachers to distinguish between qualified and unqualified writers by identifying areas of difference in ability. Finally, they assist teachers in identifying further factors that may affect writing, and which are unrelated to the skill being evaluated. (Sara, 2009, p.23).

1.3 Making Writing Meaningful

In pedagogical studies, making writing meaningful is given wider attention and considered a significant feature that teachers must emphasise. Writing is generally perceived as a social activity that involves producing something in the world. Indeed, making writing meaningful requires teachers to change students' views of themselves and their mindsets from students to writers who can accomplish tasks through written discourse. Undoubtedly, promoting this change may lead to greater writing outcomes and encourage students to enjoy while producing a written product (Williams, 2003, p.125).

According to Williams (2003) aiding students to view themselves as writers is regarded as satisfactory and does not require much effort to accomplish, but how can teachers accomplish this task? Dealing with this situation requires teachers to be certain the tasks provided for the students are actually relevant and connected to the world outside the classroom. For example, teachers may ask students to write a letter requesting admission to a foreign university. This type of task will create the habits of writing because students believe that they will encounter such a task in their real-life experience, thus significantly focusing on producing genuine writing (Williams, 2003, p.125).

Another significant factor relevant to making writing meaningful is simulation. Simulation is considered successful in producing the desired results, and it requires students to step up to a situation by taking roles and acting in character. It is believed that it enhances students' motivation to write by providing real reasons for departing from the role of a student to the role of a writer. Furthermore, it improves their learning experience. For example, when students take the role of a character in whatever field and write, they are going to research that field and character to successfully take on the role, which results in developing their learning experience. However, the size of the class may hinder teachers from using simulation as a means to make writing meaningful, especially, in classes where the size exceeds thirty (30) students, teachers cannot assign roles for each student. Nonetheless, it requires a greater time for planning and organizing which is not feasible in many cases (Williams, 2003, p.125).

1.4 Approaches to Writing

1.4.1 The Product Approach to Writing

Described as a product approach, the conventional approach to writing emphasized the finished written product where students would improve their writing by concentrating on grammar and discussing works of literature. Williams (2003, pp.100-101) reported that producing a readable paper is not the result of a specific recipe where students just put the necessary ingredients together. She argued that by adopting this approach, we were teaching students to edit and neglect revision which necessitates bearing on the content as a requirement and not only the form. This definition displays an important asset related to the basics of the product approach to writing where the focus is a well-elaborated finished product by stressing the whole and not emphasising separated elements of writing such as grammar or organisation. Indeed, the product approach evolved around the goal of producing consistent, error-free writing. (Sabrina, 2020)

1.4.2 The Process Approach to Writing

Shannon (1994) reported that the criticism that the product approach to teaching writing received was due to the absence of creativeness in learning, where students followed prototypes suggested by teachers. Despite this, he confirmed that students exhibited success in writing essays related to the prescribed patterns and explained that their behaviour in this approach was like a monkey-see-monkey-do where much of the work was like mimicking what teachers provided and ignoring the creative strategies for writing.

The process approach became popular in the late 1980s and was the alternative to product-oriented teaching. It emphasizes students' active involvement in the learning process, where students experience a variety of topics and write to diverse audiences. Moreover, advocates of this approach suggested that its attraction lies in the techniques employed to deliver a text or a composition, such as brainstorming, individual reflection, group discussion, reading, lectures, and outside research. Furthermore, under this approach, students can choose topics for writing. By doing this, they became more encouraged to write, lower their stress, and as a result, improve their writing accuracy. Nonetheless, since there is an agreement that accurate writing requires specific techniques to grow optimally, the expectations were maturity and familiarity with the writing processes. Similarly, Liz and William (2000) affirmed that process-oriented pedagogy aims to make students conscious of the procedures and assist them in reaching their predesigned goals.

Indeed, the process-oriented approach requires instructors to plan their teaching practices to spotlight the methods that get students to understand the basics of composing and

meaning. On the other hand, instruction in this approach is a top-down procedure where tutors accentuate the delivery of an entire paper and not only the engagement in editing techniques. More importantly, this approach seeks to redesign behaviour by emphasizing traits of future writers. As opposed to product-oriented pedagogy, students are subject to a load of writing and revision in class which characterizes this approach as student-centered instruction that implies making students the crux of the learning process rather than tutors. (Williams, 2003, pp.100-105)

According to Isabela (2011, p.27), a process pedagogy to writing aims at involving the students in active and social procedures that accomplish relevant communicative purposes. She indicated that a process pedagogy needs to encompass(1) a substantial amount of writing opportunities, (2) different writing genres and motivating tasks,(3) occasions for the provision of feedback and correction, and a finer example of tolerated and accepted texts. Furthermore, she argued that the arrangement of instructions requires the inclusion of all the steps of the writing process that is to say brainstorming, pre-writing, drafting, revising, peer feedback, and assessment rubrics. Christopher (1996, pp.35-39) provided a deeper understanding of the process approach and mentioned the term recurrence, which referred to the appearance of different stages in the process of writing more than once. He affirmed that the process approach is not a fixed line to follow step-by-step, but a complex sequence. He suggested the following Figure to describe the term recurrence and clarify how convoluted and complex the writing process is.
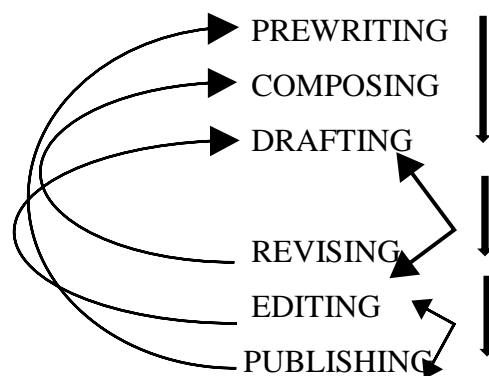
Figure 01.1: Description of the Process Approach to Writing

According to Christopher (1996, pp.39-41), Figure01, exhibits the basic elements of the process approach starting from the stage of prewriting, composing, drafting, revising, editing, and finally publishing. However, what appears from the figure is that when engaged in writing, writers are going to visit certain elements repeatedly and perhaps more than once to adapt their text to the purpose and best serve their audiences. In the same vein, Isabela (2011, p.27) evoked

that when composing, writers do not follow a logical order or sequence, rather it is like a pinball game (Campbell cited in Isabela, 2011, p.27) in which the ball moves back and forth. In this, Christopher (1996, p.43) mentioned that at any point in the preparation of a text, writers can loop backwards or forward to whichever of the activities involved in the text composition they may find useful. Similarly, Williams (2003) noted that the process approach presents students with a load of writing opportunities which require them to engage in editing strategies, thus offering the occasion to gain control of writing conventions.

1.5 Models of the Writing Process

Researchers in the field of education (Hayes and Flower) suggested various examples of the writing process. These models help teachers and assessors examine different features that may impact the process, like addressing questions related to the mental and cognitive approaches incorporated in the writing process, the source of knowledge the writer relied on when writing, and the alternative facets that may influence the writing process. (Sara, 2009, p.23)

For Sara (2009, p.23), It is important to consider these features when developing a test of writing because a clear explanation of the skill can provide an authentic description of the processes involved. Moreover, they offer the basis for a valid distinction between novice and talented writers by nominating areas of individual differences in skill. Furthermore, they display any alternative that may affect the process. Hayes and Flower Model (1980)
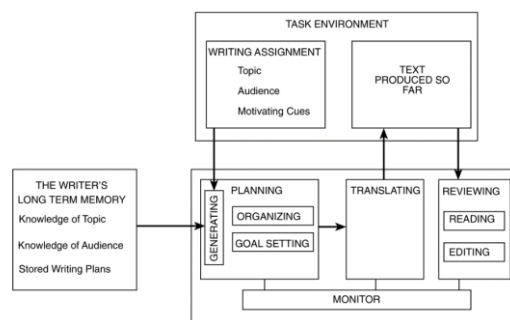
Figure 1.2: Hayes and Flower Model of the writing
process

1.6 Centeredness

William (2003) indicated that students-centred instruction refers to the rearrangement of the classroom practices and activities from the teachers to the students. Clearly, in such a context we mean student-centred instruction and it is the core element of the process pedagogy.

This term stands for the action of making students the centre of the learning environment. As stated by William (2003)

> The main tenet of the process approach is based on the realization that students should be involved in all the decisions made by the teacher. For example, the improvement of the student's writing skill consists of applying three factors: Asking students to write often, in meaningful contexts, providing frequent feedback on work in progress, and undertaking various sessions of revision based on the provided feedback.

Many teachers might see student-centred instruction as challenging. Its implementation is quite difficult because it necessitates them to shift the focus of classroom activities from the teacher to the students. According to Scot and Linda (1994, p.48), a process assessment needs to serve internal learning goals related to mastery, improvement, and success. In this, students need to be involved in the process to understand the test aims, layout, and content.

Moreover, assessment within such an approach needs to be linked to the classroom and part of an ongoing process that can lead to the development of students' productive strategies, increase their performance, and create positive motivation. Indeed, learners' engagement with the classroom evaluation procedure is necessary for optimal learning to happen. Learners have a greater drive to learn when they have a voice in the evaluation procedure. This seems to have something to do with the decision and the subsequent ownership. Undoubtedly, assessment provides learners with two important skills associated with meta-cognition: how to reflect on their learning and how to gauge themselves which leads learners to generate their conceptual frameworks. Furthermore, becoming autonomous, self-directed, lifelong learners, requires understanding how to assess themselves and subsequently integrate the findings and data gathered from those assessments to alter their learning and performance patterns (Mien et.al, 2003, p37).

1.6.1 Learner-Centered Principle of Assessment

Meaningful Learning

This principle indicates that the core aim of assessing students is not about delivering grades or marks that identify learners' performance. Rather the focus needs to address important areas and diagnose learners' areas of limitation as well as provide suggestions for improvement. James (2003) mentioned that an example of meaningful learning is the discussion that happens between teachers and learners about their writing. He indicated that demanding learners to produce more than one draft certainly leads to improvement. Moreover, James (2003) suggested writing workshops and considered them effective strategies that EFL and ESL teachers could

use to make learning meaningful. Additionally, he believed that these strategies equip learners with the necessary tools that urge them to take responsibility for their learning.

Accreditation and Credibility

Assessment should motivate students to work harder, be committed to completing the work at hand, and do their best to provide original work. Moreover, It should provide integrity and belonging for the learners so that they can achieve the learning targets successfully. Indeed, when learners feel involved and part of the learning process, they will design goals, inquire about the relevant mechanism for learning, and review their progress. Furthermore, assessment needs to address learners' needs by displaying areas of weakness and allowing learners to work on improving those areas. Nonetheless, Gleen (2010) argued that infusing a culture of success requires encouraging learners which can be done through relevant feedback related to specific limitations areas along with a recommendation on how to improve.

Ongoing Assessment

Continuous assessment is required in the classroom to keep records of learners' progress and development. This criterion is based on the belief that they need to be aware of their current level and the next stage of development they want to achieve. In this, the role of the teacher is not to provide feedback. Instead, the teacher acts as a mediator, which requires him to illuminate ambiguities and assist learners in successfully dealing with those issues. Glenn (2010) believed that a relevant intervention and interaction where learners continuously gauge their performance causes learning to take place, thus, they can improve learners' abilities. Equally, Mien et al. (2003) reported that the provision of relevant feedback helps learners identify their flaws, thus aiding them to make changes to meet the target goal.

Authentic and Meaningful Task

In a process pedagogy, the basis of assessment needs to be genuine and make use of reliable tasks that are relevant to the classroom instruction and the curriculum. Moreover, student-centred instruction requires teachers to incorporate a variety of tasks and learning frameworks. Indeed, James (2003) asserted that the use of a variety of activities supports learners' communication. For example, in the prewriting stage, asking learners to report the results obtained from brainstorming and discussing it with their peers creates the route for constructive discussion, thereby making the activity stimulating and meaningful (James, 2003).

Fairness

In the assessment process, the basis of any decision should be justice and equity regardless of prior achievement, gender, race, language, or cultural background. Moreover, fairness requires teachers to provide their learners with information on the examination subject

matter, question types, grading criteria, and minimum performance standards before taking the test (Jaap et.al, 2003). Furthermore, James (2003) indicated that some elements and circumstances contribute to fairness. First, the assessment needs to gauge what learners received and learned. Second, it must also generate valid conclusions about mastery of skill and knowledge. Additionally, the administration of the assessment must be relevant to ensure equal treatment between the learners. Besides that, the scoring procedure must be clear and well-articulated to guarantee that no learner is favoured over the others (James, 2003).

Remedial Work

Assessment should be complete where the facet of the student's ability is measured accurately. Moreover, it should provide learners with the required immediate feedback to improve their ability. Indeed, a periodic review and revision can successfully serve the aim. Furthermore, teachers can support their learners with diverse forms of feedback received from diverse audiences, that is to say, teachers' and peers' feedback. The provision of a rich feedback situation enhances the productivity of learners' writing and motivates them to practice more, therefore, developing their overall writing skills (James, 2003).

Shared Negotiation

The assessment should be the result of the participation of teachers, students, parents, and administrators. This can create a general agreement and sense of ownership, belonging, and commitment (Scot, 1994, p.50). Similarly, Weir (1993) gave particular importance to group activity and considered it an important factor for making assessments. He argued that organizing, creating, and implementing an effective assessment system can be quite challenging for an individual working alone. Due to this, teamwork can be a powerful alternative because it permits the teamwork to set goals at the planning stage as well as provides a pleasing experience and connected learning (Cited in Anthony, 2014).

1.7 Basic Terms

1.7.1 Assessment

According to Bachman (2004, p.7), assessment is a procedure that is grounded and systematically used to obtain data about a given object of interest. The provided definition highlights important features of assessment which are based and systematic tools that permit an explicit explanation of results. Brown (2003, p. 4) stated that assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. In a similar vein, Anthony et.al (2013, p.13) indicated that assessment is referred to as the process of collecting data for choices related to students, curriculum, programs, schools, and educational policy. For example, assessing a student's

competence implies gathering data to assist teachers in determining the level to which the student accomplished the learning objectives.

1.7.1.1 Guiding Principle for Educational Assessment

Anthony and Susan (2014, p.27) pointed out that five (5) principles for educational assessment are meaningful. They guide teachers, learners, and the educational enterprise. Moreover,

Be clear about the learning target you want to assess

This principle suggests that when the learning target is explicit and comprehensible, this will facilitate the selection of suitable techniques of assessment. By the learning target, we mean knowledge of the skill and performance we want to assess.

Ensuring the match between the assessment techniques and the learning target

This criterion advocates that the tools selected for assessment need to be useful for their designed aim and that they are efficient enough to serve the real purpose of assessment.

Be confident that the assessment techniques serve the needs of the learner

This principle indicates that the tools used for assessing students require them to be constructive; they need to exhibit what the students have achieved and what needs work to improve their performance. It is for this reason that the assessors or teachers are asked to be careful when choosing the assessment techniques so that students can receive significant feedback. Moreover, teachers or assessors need to inform their students about the learning target and how close they are to achieving it. In fact, this can enhance learners' awareness, and encourage them to make efforts to accomplish the course or learning goals.

Make use of multiple indicators of performance for each learning target

This criterion requires the assessors and/or teachers to provide a comprehensive knowledge of what the students have learned. This can be achieved by relying on a variety of tools that can lead to the attainment of a specific learning target. Anthony and Susan (2014, p.27) believed that relying on a single format of assessment may lead to an imperfect image of what the students acquired.

Be sure that the interpretation of assessments' results takes the limitation into consideration

This principle stands for the idea that despite the fact of using several tools to increase the validity of our assessment. Teachers need to bear in mind the fact that certain factors are out of the control of teachers or assessors. This may have a bearing on the accuracy of the results such as students' physical and emotional status. Due to this, teachers need to keep assessment's limitations in mind.

1.7.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of determining the significance of a student's performance or work. If a student's writing is really strong, therefore, you could consider it appropriate to his grade. For example, for the teacher to make an evaluation, he needs to gauge students' skills before he can make the assessment. Actually, teachers can collect information by looking at and following learners' journals, contrasting their output with that of other learners and according to accepted writing standards. Undoubtedly, this assessment provides sufficient information for the teacher to evaluate the likelihood, significance, and usefulness of students' output (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Moreover, the use of measurement and test results is neither required nor the only tools that can be used. Evaluation can be carried out, for instance by collecting items and utilizing checklists, or rating scales. This indicates that evaluation can be conducted even with the absence of tests, and other objective measurements. In this regard, for example, teachers can assess students' competence using other forms, namely informal procedures such as systematic observation and qualitative description. Furthermore, learners can be evaluated for formative as well as summative purposes. When we review learners' achievement in a formative procedure, we are carrying it out while they are in the process of learning. Formative assessments are brought up to ensure that teachers direct their learners' subsequent educational journey. For example, when reviewing learners' understanding of the provided material, asking questions can actually supply teachers with valuable information that would, therefore, aid in the formative evaluation of their learning. As a result, if the learners do not comprehend the material, teachers can modify and/or adapt the input to fit their learning needs. One can, of course, surmise that evaluation pertains to teachers alone and that is actually wrong. Indeed, students can play a role in their learning as well as their assessment (Popham, 2008 cited in Anthony and Susan, 2014, p.29). On the other hand, summatively communicating learners' performance entails assessing the quality of an individual's accomplishments after the conclusion of the learning process. Indeed, teachers can rely on letter or numerical grades to communicate the summative evaluation of their learners.

1.7.3 Tests

Tests are the tools that educators, researchers, and assessors rely on to gather relevant data or describe the characteristics of students. For Glenn (2010, p.4), Testing is based on creating opportunities to take action or make decisions. These decisions need to appear fair and grounded. This definition entails two important features related to tests' development which are fairness and fitness for the purpose. To understand this, we can turn to Dan (2014) who asserted

that the tests that we utilize need to be of high quality, relevant for their purposes, and that the interpretation of results is appropriate. Along the same lines, Dan (2014, p.2) stated that a test is an instrument for measuring language ability. We can think of it in terms of quantity: how much of a language does a person possess?

1.7.3.1 Tests Purpose

According to Carroll (1961, p.314), language testing aims to display evidence and gather relevant data to make wise decisions. She mentioned that decisions are diverse and that there is a need for a test classification that serves the intended use.

Dan (2014, p.1) mentioned the term mandates which was taken from a quote by Davidson and Lynch (2002, pp.76-78). This term describes where the test purpose comes from, and clarifies that mandates can be either internal or external. An internal mandate for test use is the product of teachers or the institution. Testing in such a context is generally made to address the needs of teachers and students. Most often to place students into a class, to check their level of achievement, signpost the difficulties, or motivate them to work better.

The key feature of the internal or local mandate is serving the local requirements of teachers and students. That is to say, when conducting a test, even if it is summative or serves formative purposes, the results of that test need to be interpreted against a defined learning target or environment. In the same vein, Dan (2014, p.2) mentioned that when testing within a local mandate addresses the needs of both teachers and students, then it is ecologically sensitive.

Moreover, they proposed several key features of an ecologically sensitive testing situation. First, testing needs to appear formative, which means that the focus is on the teaching and learning process; for example, teachers need to diagnose the extent of the learning target achievement and learners need to check where they need remedial work. Secondly, the results of testing will not have a direct bearing on the student's future. That is to say, testing in such an environment is not decisive like passing the next class or being fired from school. Finally, teachers may allow students to have a voice in the manner through which they can be assessed. Through this, learners may feel a sense of belonging and confidence. As a result, this will motivate them to work seriously to improve their skills and develop their abilities.

On the other hand, the external mandate suggests that the reason for testing generally comes from an environment that is out of the control of teachers and the institution. That is to say, the choice to test comes from strangers such as policymakers who do not have direct contact with the students and have no information or knowledge of the learning context. Moreover, external mandates are summative where students' proficiency is measured at the end of a period of study; for instance, a semester against particular criteria to check whether or not

they have fulfilled the requirement of those criteria. Such a type of test does not serve the learning process, rather it satisfies the accountability role. (Dan, 2014, p.3) These types of tests are referred to as high-stakes because they are used for certification or comparison of performance. Generally, they determine individual learners' future either success or failure in whatever position they are in.

1.8 The Nature of Language Assessment

Language assessment can take place in several settings and situations; for example, when used in the educational field, the results of the assessments are used to show the processes as well as the outcomes of learning for evaluation or making the decision about people or programs (Lyle and Adrian, 2003). Indeed, assessment ranges along a continuum from complete formal to complete informal (Layle and Adrian, 2003), and the aim of the assessment defines the types of assessment that can be used. A review of the literature identifies several types of assessment that are going to be discussed below:

1.8.1 Informal Assessment

H. Douglass (2003, p.5) said that informal assessments could take a variety of forms, with casual remarks and responses ahead with improvised feedback to the students. Good uses of informal assessments are in classroom tasks intended to draw out performance without ranking, grading, or making a final decision. Similarly, Haris and McCann (1994, cited in H. Douglas, 2003, p.5) indicated that informal assessment is a method used to gather information pertaining to our students' performance in regular educational environments, such as the classroom setting as they can be carried out without constructing test conditions. Indeed, informal assessment can take a variety of forms and they depend solely on the situation, the need and the purpose (Michael and Paul, 1994, p.26). For example, if the teachers intend to informally assess students' writing skills (H. Douglass, 2003).

1.8.2 Formal Assessment

Formal assessments are procedures and operations elaborated to elicit information to make fixed judgments and decisions about the student's competence. They are structured, organized, and planned tools devised to provide teachers and students with an evaluation of student achievement (H. Douglass, 2003, p.6). Indeed, formal assessments are worth investment tools and procedures when efficiently utilised. They provide teachers with a fair understanding of learners' competence. Moreover, the development of a formal assessment procedure requires a careful building of the assessment design as well as consistency with the learning target and with other forms of assessment such as self, peer and informal assessments that can be relevant to the desired aim. Furthermore, a closer look at the test development may seem straightforward

procedures, however, the situation proved much more complicated, with many aspects that require careful attention when designing the test. Certainly, the efficacy of the test is related to the adequate implementation of test administration, scoring and writing, which therefore leads to accurate information gathering. What is quite clear is that test creation and development will directly affect the decisions that we make about learners. That is why, teachers need to rely on effective and valid information when making decisions about learners (Michael and Paul, 1994).

1.8.3 Performance Assessment

Caroline (1994, p.98) noted that performance assessment is a term currently in wide use by those who wish to move away from traditional standardized multiple-choice testing. She argued that the aim is to replicate the *real* learning activities that we wish students to engage with, oral and written communication skills, and problem-solving activities, rather than to fragment them, as do multiple-choice tests; the aim is that the assessments do not distort teaching. This definition highlights important features of performance assessment which are creating a real-life situation and providing activities related to problem-solving. Similarly, Ibid defined performance assessment as a based opportunity that aims at estimating the success of students in retrieving previously acquired knowledge to solve new issues or complete a given task. In performance assessment, real-life or simulated assessment exercises are used to elicit original responses which are directly observed and rated by a qualified judge.

Anthony and Susan (2014, p.202) provided an explicit definition of performance assessment. They stated that performance assessment requires students to create a product or demonstrate a process, or both, and (b) uses clearly defined criteria to evaluate the qualities of student work. This definition demonstrates the building elements of this type of assessment where the roles of students are to exhibit creativity and ability. Also, it entails the development of clear grading criteria for students' work. These two components as mentioned by Anthony and Susan (2014, p.202) are essential for performance assessment. In this concern, they stated that performance assessment requires two components: the performance task itself and a clear rubric for scoring and the rubric should be based on stated learning targets. The performance task is an activity that entails displaying the achievements of the students by giving an additional written or spoken response, or through the construction of a distinct outcome. The use of the performance task necessitates displaying the achievement of the learning target. In contrast, the scoring rubrics stand for the tools used to assess the quality of learners' performance. Indeed, to select the assessment procedure, the learning target needs to be clearly articulated, and then match the technique that fits the learning target. According to Arter (1989

cited in Anthony and Susan, 2014, p.202) the basic learning target requires a basic assessment method, while complex learning entails complex assessment. Along the same line, Anthony and Susan (2014) argued that the scoring rubric is used to gauge exactly the learning targets. Actually, they are logical rules designed to evaluate the degree of students' performance. They assist teachers' judgement and ensure that they are consistent when providing decisions. Furthermore, many tasks are relevant to performance assessment that teachers can use when using performance assessment.

1.8.3.1 Types of Performance Assessment

Anthony and Susan (2014, p. 204) indicated that structured activities, on-demand tasks, require the teacher to identify the activity and provide information for the performance. They also necessitate outlining the results that students need to achieve, offering time for preparation, and informing the students that they are under assessment procedure. They are called on-demand tasks or controlled tasks (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Paper-and-pencil tasks are another variety of performance assessments. These types of activities encourage students' flexibility by providing opportunities for illustration, displaying their thinking capabilities, and communicating their strategies for problem-solving. For example, sometimes the teacher focuses on the process that the students went through. In other cases, the focus is on the product (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

A related, but rather different type of performance assessment is demonstration. It is an on-demand activity in which the students exhibit that they can use their knowledge, and prior experience to fulfil a clearly articulated, complex task. It emphasises the accurate use of skills, instead of accentuating the meticulous explanation of thinking. The use of demonstrations requires the teacher to rigorously indicate the relevant learning target and the use of a suitable scoring rubric (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Simulations are considered an on-demand task. They aim to imitate real-world events and situations and take place under structured circumstances. For example, when assessing the success of a student's communication with another person, teachers may create a situation and observe the interchange between the students and determine the level of success in achieving the target goal. In other situations, the teacher may rely on technology to provide genuine situations to the students. In these situations, it is the students' reactions that govern the type of presentation they are going to undertake (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

In contrast to on-demand, structured performance is naturally occurring performance or unstructured assessment. This type of performance assessment requires the teacher to evaluate and remark students' performance in a natural setting, that is to say, in the classroom, at home,

or school. The natural setting offers the possibility to perceive student's performance on the learning goal. In such a natural environment, assessing students' performance is related to the emergence of relevant opportunities in which a student accomplishes a specific task that the teacher wants to evaluate. Of course, this cannot be feasible always when observing the students. It seems, therefore, that in addressing the natural setting, teachers need to make sure that the situation appears normal, and at the same time, learners should not be aware that they are being evaluated (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Individual student projects are considered long-term activities that lead the student to produce an outcome, such as a thesis, a report, a practical object, or the gathering of data. Indeed, the development of a well-accomplished project entails the incorporation and implementation of a variety of skills and knowledge. They also pertain to innovative, original as well as attractive ideas. For example, writing a research paper engages the students in a variety of tasks, such as brainstorming, drafting, editing, correcting, and producing the final paper. A gaze at the project's features exhibits that it encourages students' active involvement with the project and has the potential to address all the areas of performance. Further, projects are related to the real world which characterises them as authentic. They emphasise creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, and highlight adequate communication and relevant skills and knowledge (Anthony and Susan, 2014, p.206).

1.8.3.2 Advantages of Performance Assessments

Performance assessment has been described as the easiest to effect and considered superior to other forms of assessment for several reasons that can be outlined as follows. First, they focus on the ability to do, not just from the provision of real-life situations, but also training the students to use their knowledge and skills to solve problems, thus being practical in their lives. Second, performance assessment agrees well with contemporary learning theory, namely the constructivist theory, which pays particular attention to the student's active involvement in the process of investigation and research. Moreover, approaching learning from that theory can be helpful, since students are going to make use of their past educational experience and knowledge to formulate new knowledge structure and meaning (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Thirdly, performance assessments are integrative by nature. This means that they require the students to use a variety of language skills, abilities, and knowledge to complete a specific task, more precisely, the tasks that necessitate a longer period, such as thesis writing and reports. Similarly, they provide the teacher with the opportunity to assess both the process as well as the product. Indeed, performance tasks supply teachers with the opportunity to stand on the techniques and methods the learners go through to solve problems and accomplish tasks.

Definitely, understanding the processes as well as the products necessitates a well-articulated scoring rubric that assists teachers throughout their journey with gathering data about students' performance (Anthony, Susan, 2014, p211). According to Lana et.al (2017, p.136), performance assessments encompass a great deal of the latest assessment techniques that are known as authentic or alternative assessments.

1.8.4 Formative Assessment

In this type of assessment, teachers, and assessors judge the quality of achievement, while the students are still in the process of learning. The aim of undertaking this type of assessment is to assist the students throughout the learning process; precisely, to guide students' next steps, make necessary changes to fit students' level of attainment, and integrate them into the assessment process through the criteria of self-assessment (Anthony and Susan, 2014, p.27).

Dan (2014, p.29) mentioned that teachers use formative assessment because they want to make a reform in their teaching practices such as revising lessons or learning materials or improving the quality of delivery for the students. Similarly, H. Douglass (2003, p.46) indicated that formative assessment is an evaluation intended to screen students' abilities and flaws that need immediate amelioration with the purpose of guiding their growth through teacher feedback. In this, formative assessment can be performed by the teacher either informally as part of the continuum of instruction or can be structured earlier to pinpoint aspects of learning formally.

Moreover, Glenn (2010, p.68) described performance assessment as an examination carried out during the learning process, rather than at the final stage of learning, and is merely designed to improve learning. Likewise, their purpose is to facilitate the determination of learners' requirements and needs. Additionally, formative evaluation formally forbids comparing students to one another because the norm of evaluation is criterion-referenced, that is to say, how well the learner achieved the desired goal (Anthony and Susan, 2014, p.27). Moreover, formative assessment practicality lies in the use of assessment to improve learning. In this regard, Glenn (2010, p.69) clarified that creating a culture of success is related to the type of feedback provided. Initially, teachers need to inform students of their learning and what they have acquired in a descriptive rather than evaluative manner. Secondly, students have to recognize the areas of their performance that require further improvement and, more importantly, how to do so. Of course, this necessitates a clear understanding of the learning target or goal, learners' position toward the goal, and how they can proceed to achieve that goal. Thirdly, teachers need to provide their learners with a wait time to assimilate the provided feedback and then react accordingly, thus enhancing their metacognitive awareness. Finally,

concerning educational goals, effective formative assessment allocates substantial consideration to both student self-evaluation and adequate teacher feedback.

Nevertheless, the prime reason for formative assessment is not providing grades because this goes in contrast with the principle that learners should be given the chance to gain knowledge before getting an evaluation related to their level of understanding. Indeed, Glenn (2010) argued that formative assessment is performed before instruction to determine learners' actual level and during the lesson to stand on the extent of development witnessed. In other words, the assessment provided is not prejudicial, rather it is factual and full of knowledge because learners' concerns are not attaining or getting marks. The aim is to get them to focus on assessing their performance and identifying areas that require remedial work (Anthony and Susan, 2014, p.27).

1.8.4.1 Principle of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment requires concentration on learning objectives and gives significant consideration to adequate guidance from teachers and student self-evaluation. Moreover, formative assessment is a cycle in which educators and students concentrate on an education goal, gauge current student work concerning that goal, proceed to get the work aligned with the goal, and then reiterate the process. Anthony and Susan (2014, p.94) indicated that even though this three-step methodology is oversimplified, teaching and assessment may reap advantages from maintaining this pattern in mind.

Furthermore, the distinctive feature of formative evaluation is that they are based on students, that is to say, student-centred; however, they need to pertain to the teacher's vision. In light of this, engagement in a formative evaluation entails first making the learning goals clear and simple. For example, when the teacher clearly articulates what it means to be a good writer, then he will be able to explain to the learners what they need to work on. The second thing to do is to clarify the goal to the class in a way that makes sense to them. Actually, sometimes a demonstration can yield better results on learners' understanding than writing your goal on the board, which might be insufficient or unclear (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Thirdly, following the successful communication of the goal, students will be subject to what is referred to as buy-in. This means that teachers need to assist their learners in figuring out the reason behind putting further effort into accomplishing the goal; for example, explaining to the students why they need to master academic writing, more precisely, article writing, will encourage the students to work harder to master academic writing, therefore achieving the learning goal (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Fourthly, an appropriate clarification of the target goal requires discussing the standards for good work. This will allow the teacher as well as the learners to decide how close they are to the target goal, such as displaying examples of high-quality writing. Furthermore, students need to rehearse about what is called self-assessment. This latter stands for offering occasions for learners to assess their learning. Of course, this is not an easy task for the students to undertake. However, teachers need to set occasions and opportunities for the learners to use standards to evaluate their work in progress, analyze it with their peers, and review it once finished (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

1.8.4.2 The Benefits of Formative Assessment

The benefits of formative assessment are acknowledged in a variety of ways. They have a positive impact on learners' achievement, motivation, and learning in general.

First, it has a role in elevating learners' achievement. In the course of evaluation, it assists teachers and learners in determining what learners can do on their own and with assistance. Moreover, formative assessment emphasizes active learning where learners remain engaged and concentrate on achieving their educational goals. Furthermore, self-evaluation and peer evaluation have an important role to play in the social formation of knowledge. Additionally, it enables learners to receive guidance regarding the areas where they need further improvement, as well as, inform them about the necessary follow-up procedure to ameliorate their levels (Anthony and Susan, 2014).

Second, formative assessment and self-evaluation have a role in raising learners' motivation. Of particular relevance here is their contribution in terms of motivation and achievement. Anthony and Susan (2014, p.96) mentioned that through self-assessment learners can determine how close they are to their goal, and make improvement plans, therefore learning takes place as they proceed. In fact, the practice of self-assessment leads to a sort of control and motivation, thus allowing the students to have what is labelled as self-regulation which has been proven to be a quality of inspired effective learners. Indeed, self-regulation can be either internal referring to development witnessed from using knowledge from self-evaluation. On the other hand, learning can be regulated externally when learners use their teachers' comments and feedback. It is important to note that both internal and external self-regulation support learning.

1.8.5 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment does not screen the method for further growth but rather focuses on how well learners achieve their objectives. This was highlighted by Heidi and Gregory (2010, cited in H. Douglass, 2003, p.3) who confirmed that assessments are summative if they meet the following two criteria: (1) it is administered at the end of some unit of instruction (e.g.,

unit, semester, school year); and (2) its purpose is primarily to categorise the performance of a student or system. According to Anthony and Susan (2014, p.29), summative assessment stands for the decision that is taken only after the completion of the instructional process. This indicates that the focus is not on the strengths or weaknesses of students, rather it reports whether the students succeeded in achieving the target goals. The results obtained from summative assessments are decisive since they communicate the significance of a particular educational product.

1.8.6 Alternatives to Assessment

In a revolt against the notion that the traditional test could measure all people and skills, an alternative to traditional practices was introduced. It consists of collecting additional measures of students' abilities such as portfolios, journals, observations, self-assessment, peer assessment, conferences, and the like. Alternative assessment is considered by researchers to be ethical and democratic as it can promote fairness when making decisions about students (H. Douglass, 2003, pp.251-252). In the same vein, Hargreaves et al. (2000, p.57) note that, unlike a standardized test, alternative assessment is designed to foster powerful, and productive learning for students themselves**.** Along the same line, Elana et.al (2017, p.140) conceptualized that the utilization of alternative assessment facilitated a more cooperative and dialogic exchange between the assessor and the assessed, which therefore, supplied opportunities for empowerment and individual appraisal. Furthermore, she explained that alternative assessment is illuminated by an assessment culture that incorporates a wide range of evidence and sources accumulated gradually to promote learning and decision-making. Further, and at the classroom level, Brown and Hudson (1998 cited in Elana et.al, 2017, p.137) asserted language instructors had always been assessed by any means, however, alternative assessment served as the latest revisions of that long tradition. Moreover, Lynch and Shaw (2005 cited in Elana et.al, 2017, p.140) suggested that alternative assessment was fundamentally in disagreement with conventional testing methods given that it prioritized and regarded the individual, the particular, the situated, and the unique. In contrast, traditional testing emphasized the group, the repeatable, and the transferable.

Elana et.al (2017, p.136) argued that the goal of alternative assessment is to produce powerful, beneficial learning for students themselves. She indicated that alternative assessment represented the shift to an alternative era. For this shift, Learning is considered to be effective when a student builds a personal knowledge base which they may employ to solve difficult

issues and comprehend the world. It further indicates that learners need to be encouraged to consistently implement and broaden their knowledge base, in addition to being self-reliant and autonomous and that they have to nurture effective learning attitudes. Indeed, the reformulation of the concept of learning led to the belief that learning and assessment had to be aligned (Mien et.al, 2003, p.2).

Moreover, recognizing that there are different types of language knowledge and mastering one type is no guarantee for mastering another. She insisted that different instruments are capable of seeing different things**,** whereas a single test cannot measure the complex phenomena of language as we currently understand it; therefore, there is a need for multiple assessment procedures**.** As noted by Elana et.al (2017) these many new tools can facilitate the assessment procedure and allow the assessor to capture the skill under study completely and that can happen only by relying on a variety of tools rather than a single test done in a determined frame of time.

1.8.7 Portfolio Assessment

Liz and William (2000, p.8) argued that assessments that ignore most of the whole to make limited judgment cannot prove, and have not proven very useful. Due to this, a portfolio assessment was devised. It consists of collecting additional evidence rather than making a decision based on a single performance. It aims to exhibit students' efforts, progress, and achievements (Genesee and Upshur, 1996 Cited in Brown, 2003). According to Elana et.al (2017, p.139) Portfolios, commonly referred to as writing folders, emerged in writing schools in the 1980s. It consisted of providing writing activities in the classroom that concentrated on the writing process, which included drafting, peer conferences, and iterative and recursive revision. In this regard, H. Douglass (2003) noted:

Teachers and students both need to take the role of assessment seriously as they evaluate

quality and development overtime…..a portfolio can serve as an important link between

students, teachers, parents, community, and peers; it is a tangible product, created with

pride, which identifies a student's uniqueness.

Along the same line, Louis and Doug (1994, p.64) defined portfolio assessment as an organized collection of learners' achievements, proven by outcomes that represent learners' work. They resolved that outcomes are linked with detailed comments aiding learners to quickly recognize, identify, and analyse their accomplishments.

According to Liz and William (2000), the portfolio was known in British education as the writing folder and became part of the school examination system in the 1970s. Its mass use started in the mid-1980s when many scholars, especially in the United States such as Elbow, Belanoff, and others, proved that using portfolios across programs was practical, beneficial, and useful to teachers, students, and curriculum. Later, in the twentieth century, portfolios spread like wildfire and had been used in many subject areas, at many levels, and for several purposes. According to Elana et.al (2017, p.4), portfolios corresponded to the shift from product-oriented pedagogies to process-oriented Ones.

Writing assessment, as Sara mentioned (2009) is a collection of written products that were produced for several functions over some time. This illustrates the potential of the portfolio that comprises critical aspects of learning where learning is student-centred and the goals are mainly preventing students' failure and sustaining their progress. Liz and William (2000, p.126) mentioned that portfolios allow readers to see more of what the writer can do and, therefore make a sounder judgment about the writer's need, level of accomplishment, and rate of progress.

1.8.7.1 Principles of Portfolio Assessment

Liz and William (2000, p.31) provided nine (9) characteristics that represent the building blocks of the procedure. Indeed, their presence in portfolio assessment design will produce richer and more useful information and less inclusion will lead to poor information. What follows is a description of these characteristics.

Collection

A portfolio is based on a collection of more than one performance or product completed naturally and under usual circumstances.

Range

Collection permits the writer to demonstrate a range of performances in a diversity of forms, for several purposes and a variety of audiences.

Context richness

portfolio comprises this trait where assessment and instruction are connected and exhibit the learning situation and manifest what has been achieved in that context.

Delayed evaluation

It is a crucial feature of the portfolio that many students find appealing. The timing of the evaluation allows students to review their work and motivates them to do so, while also encouraging them to take responsibility for their learning. In fact, the delayed procedure gives students a wait time to review, examine, and check the relevance of their product to the intended predesigned objectives.

Selection

It entails identifying what pieces of work to place in the portfolio to submit for judgment, usually done by the student but under teacher guidance. Equally, Louis and Doug (1996, p.65) indicated that portfolio assessment needs to incorporate a relevant range of accomplishments, but not all of them. Similarly, Barnet and Lee (Cited in Louis and Doug, 1994, p.65) stated that a portfolio assessment procedure needs to incorporate selective resources rather than all of the assignments and activities the student has completed. This, accordingly demonstrates that the collection procedure requires learners and teachers alike to be selective and incorporate resources that are relevant to the learning target.

Student-Centred Control

When the students can select, they develop a sense of control. In this, after receiving feedback, students will gain an opportunity to revise before submitting their work for grading. This is conceptually designed to increase the traits of self-assessment.

Reflection and Self-assessment

The design of portfolios requires reflection and self-assessment. These two terms are devised to consolidate students' awareness and raise their responsibility for their learning. It includes information about the design and process undertaken by the student when completing their tasks. Indeed, reflection is regarded as an essential element of the writing portfolio assessment because they are written papers that ask students to explain and evaluate the process and/or the product of their portfolio components. On the other hand, self-assessment is considered an important component of a successful evaluation.

Growth along Specific Parameters

A portfolio assessment can be designed to afford and track whether a kind of growth has occurred. By defining, in the criteria, the characteristic of powerful performance, the portfolio can be designed to permit students to demonstrate the degree of their improvement against the characteristic of strong performance.

Development over Time

The portfolio procedure permits the measurement of students' development over time. Given that portfolio assessment contains earlier and later work, the teacher can observe the improvement in their ability. This measurement is beneficial for students as they can observe their progress and for teachers who can understand the impact of their practices on students. These nine characteristics constitute the basis of portfolio assessment as they show how it works and acts. In this collection, reflection and selection are regarded as essential components of portfolio construction.
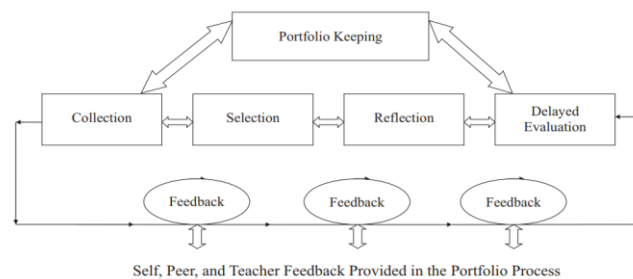
Figure 0.3: Logistics of portfolio process (Ricky, 2019, p.4)

Figure 1.3 shows the basic portfolio characteristics and the relationships among the nine characteristics that constitute the portfolio. These basic features are collection, selection, reflection, and delayed evaluation. A portfolio assessment procedure needs to incorporate these features for successful results. They are designed to adjust learning, create opportunities for improvement, and elevate students' overall skills. What appears from the figure is that feedback appears at every stage, which signals its importance as a significant element of portfolio development, mainly, because the nature of portfolio assessment stresses improvement, growth and formative evaluation, which is crucial for learners' development.

1.8.7.2 Structuring Portfolio Assessment

Structuring portfolio assessment involves establishing specific criteria and procedures that learners must follow to guarantee that students offer the precise kinds of evidence that are acknowledged as crucial markers of effectiveness and competency. Similarly, the arrangement of the portfolio assessment process and the product needs to be done in a way that guarantees improvement in the process by which users receive portfolio information. Moreover, Louis and Doug (1994, p.65) argued that portfolio assessment needs to incorporate essential achievements that were carefully selected by the learner, instead of gathering all the activities and tasks performed.

There are many reasons why portfolio assessment should be structured. The first aim behind structuring portfolio assessment is to clarify the procedure of information gathering,

meanwhile reducing learners' uncertainty; therefore, portfolio content will be made of appropriate materials. Moreover, structuring portfolio assessment aids in confirming that it encompasses an extensive variety of information relating to the fields that are identified as crucial to a specific goal for the development of the portfolio. Furthermore, maintaining a structured construction of portfolio assessment lowers issues related to manageability and elevates the significance of portfolio assessment for producers and users. Additionally, organising portfolio assessments based on significant accomplishment aspects guides learners towards crucial documentation tasks as well as provides them with a common objective that yields occasions for learners to collaborate on both their portfolios and their learning (Louis and Doug, 1994).

1.8.7.3 Functions of Portfolio Assessment

Even though the portfolio assessment procedure is characterized by flexibility, Jackson and Isaac outlined three fundamental functions that portfolio assessment can fulfil. Portfolios for self-assessment or reflections on personal growth, portfolios that enable progress assessment within an educational program, and portfolios that improve self-presentations to external sources. The power of portfolio assessment, indeed, lies in their ability to tackle one function or many functions simultaneously, thus providing relevant standards for the designation of materials. What follows is a description of the three (3) functions of portfolio assessment (Louis and Doug, 1994).

1.8.7.3.1 Portfolios for Self-Assessment

The creation of the portfolio assessment enables learners to consider their learning, professional development, and personal growth. Portfolio assessment can be a useful tool for self-evaluation, allowing students to reflect on their past work and assess how they have evolved as a result of specific learning experiences. Moreover, portfolios which are considered an organized and carefully chosen accumulation of materials that illustrate a learner's progress over time, can also provide insight into the strategies that can be used for building learners' knowledge and reshaping their learning over time. Nonetheless, when learners examine their portfolios, they are going to become more self-aware and recognize how various situations form their learning. Therefore, individuals can gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses by learning more about themselves (Louis and Doug, 1994)

1.8.7.3.2 Portfolios for Progress Assessment

When designing portfolios to evaluate students' course progress, it is essential to include specific examples of assignments that demonstrate their achievement of the course objectives. Indeed, portfolios perform both formative and summative progress assessments. First, as a

formative method, portfolio assessment should include evidence of learning related to program accomplishments, learner strengths and weaknesses, as well as potential educational goals. At the same time, portfolio assessment can used as a formative tool. This implies that portfolio assessment functions both as an informative tool, indicating conclusions, and as a demonstration of the learners' processes to arrive at these conclusions (Louis and Doug, 1994) Second, as a summative procedure, portfolio assessment is used at the end of the educational program and aims at evaluating how well students have met predetermined objectives and standards. Similarly, they may be utilised to aid learners in identifying their areas of quality as well as limitations. Moreover, they can also provide sufficient information about the relevance of educational programs and the extent to which they are serving their intended purposes (Louis and Doug, 1994).

1.8.7.3.3 Portfolio that Enhances Self-Presentation

Portfolios can serve as a platform for students to present themselves to others. Utilising portfolios in such a way is frequently related to pursuing a job or further education and training options. In this regard, learners determine the input that properly reflects their actual knowledge and expertise in a particular speciality. Following this, portfolio content is customized and involves relevant items and certifications that exhibit learners' ability concerning specific external standards. It seems, therefore that, in addressing this manner, portfolio assessment signifies an observable outcome, which permits learners to be identified for various categories as well as showcase their capacity for further training or education (Louis and Doug, 1994)

1.9 Portfolio Assessment and Qualities of Effective Assessment

An important consideration in designing and developing language tests is test usefulness which Lyle and Adrian (1996) define as encompassing six qualities: construct validity, reliability, authenticity, interactiveness, impact, and practicality. Sara (2009, p.200) stated that the use of a portfolio as a form of assessment must be grounded on the consideration of these qualities of usefulness, especially in comparison with the timed essay test. Sara (2009, pp.200-201) declared that it is helpful to look at a portfolio through the lens of those six qualities and provided the following:

1.9.1 Construct Validity

Validity is considered a building block of quality assessment. Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1996 cited in Anthony, 2014, p.75) indicated that validity stands for the justified conclusions obtained from research and empirical evidence of test outcomes conveyed by recommended test uses. This definition illustrates that validity pertains to the relevance of the conclusions that users make of evaluation outcomes.

Anthony (2014) indicated that if the results inferred from a given test were not explained adequately and did not serve the intended goals, this would impede the quality of the assessment. Moreover, validity can be best explained as a continuum of values ranging from invalid to completely valid. The validation procedure requires obtaining proof of the accuracy of conclusions drawn from the evaluation findings. Ultimately, a successful evaluation process requires the individual participating in drawing inferences of the assessment outcomes, being teachers or evaluators, to possess an awareness of the concept under scrutiny. Obtaining evidence for the validity of an assessment's content and its connection to criteria for evaluation can reinforce decisions about whether the assessment's findings are sufficient and appropriate to support the intended conclusion. Additionally, the collected evidence also aids in offering a broad evaluation of the degree to which learners' performance portrays their skills and capabilities.

It is clear from the literature that portfolio assessment possesses all the elements of construct validity and successfully reflects students' performance and ability. In this regard, Sara (2009) stated that the advantage of using portfolio assessment is its capacity to display the validity of inferences about a broader construct. First, the incorporation of diverse writing samples in different genres, written for several purposes and audiences permits the act of generalizing with confidence from the outcomes of the portfolio assessment. Moreover, providing learners the opportunity to revise, edit, and discuss their written product before handing it in for evaluation may give a valid image of how well students write for authentic situations. Lyle and Adrian (1996) defined it as the agreement of the characteristics of given test tasks to the features of the target language using the TLU task. In this, portfolios are relevant to the timed writing test, since they include writing samples written for authentic situations. This was illustrated by Sara (2009, p.203):

In many writing programs, where all that is written in class is included in the final portfolio, the test tasks (the portfolio content) and the TLU tasks (the classroom writing tasks) are virtually identical, which is, of course, the ultimate in authenticity.

This quotation indicates that the nature of the portfolio assessment procedure gives the impression that it is a relevant tool that best serves the validity of the results and portrays students' abilities. Anthony (2014) argued that if tests used create a strong correlation between the procedures followed by learners to get a high score and their practical life, then the evaluation method is considered valid. This validation of results is mainly because it reflects appropriate and important elements of the learners' competencies and abilities.

1.9.2 Interactiveness

Lyle and Adrian (1996) defined it as the degree and kind of involvement of test takers' characteristics in the completion of a test task. The individual characteristics that are adequate for language testing are metacognitive strategies, language ability, topical knowledge, and affective schemata. Sara (2009) argued that as portfolios require collection, selection, and reflection, they engage students' metacognitive strategies to a high degree that leads to a contribution and participation from the students, and therefore, promotes their motivation.

1.9.3 Impact

For impact, Sara (2009, p.204) mentioned that portfolios have a valuable impact on two levels: the micro level, in terms of the individuals who are affected (students and instructor), and the macro level, in terms of the educational system (programs). In terms of the impact on the students, portfolios offer students the chance for reflection, autonomy, and responsibility. Yang (2003) concluded in his study, 'the use of portfolio assessment as a tool for facilitating students' learning and developing learner autonomy', that using portfolio assessment enhanced students' self-directed learning awareness of learning strategies. Furthermore, portfolios contribute to students' feelings of responsibility and control for monitoring their progress.

In terms of the instructor, portfolios provide valuable information for teachers about their students' writing and allow an insight into the student's strengths and weaknesses through the various texts that are included within the portfolio. Sara (2009, p.206) concluded by stating that portfolios can have potential benefits on the program level which leads to discussion and talk between teachers and instructors about the grading criteria and how the portfolio will be labelled. Moreover, portfolios provide a platform for unified and integrated programs.

1.9.4 Reliability

Lyle and Adrian (1996) defined it as the consistency of the measurement. Anthony (2014) illustrated that teachers can incorporate various evaluation techniques to gauge the skills of learners and figure out scores. However, the interpretation of those scores may not always be the same, thus creating issues and intricacy for the users of results. Moreover, Anthony (2014) argued that reliability needs to be improved to arrive at a consistent measurement. Elevating the number of questions can be an important tool that test users can employ to increase the reliability of the tests. Furthermore, a more realistic alternative to increase reliability is to use measurement on different occasions. This requires test users to manage the conditions accordingly and successfully through cautious behaviour and understanding of students' needs and requirements. Of course, creating such conditions may lead to reliable results and trust in test scores. Additionally, individual characteristics or test taker

characteristics may be a factor that affects the reliability of the tests. Due to this, and for the creation of reliable outcomes, teachers need to form homogenous groups when conducting assessment procedures.

The reliability of the portfolio is questioned when the stakes are high and when portfolios are being read by people other than the classroom teacher making the reliability of scoring appear uncertain. However, classrooms are the setting for portfolios, reliability does not appear as an issue for teachers and stakeholders as long as they sustain regular criteria for grading and scoring (Sara, 2009). Furthermore, Anthony (2014) suggested ways to build reliability into assessment design. First, teachers need to make the task clear and precise. Second, teachers need to use multiple tasks to receive enough information about the learners. Third, they also need to narrow down the variety of the assessed items. It is believed that using one style will provide relevant information about learners' abilities. Then, standardising the conditions by creating the same conditions for all the learners. After that, teachers need to control the assessment criteria. Generally, complete and relevant answer keys can best serve the situation. In addition to this, adding more ratters when assessing learners' performance may lead to reliable and trusted results. Finally, learners need to be evaluated with an extensive diversity of skill degrees. This means that the assessment used accurately differentiates between high and low language ability.

1.9.5 Practicality

Lyle and Adrian (1996, p.35) stated that the quality of practicality is related primarily to how tests will be applied, to whether a test will be conducted and employed at all. This means that for the tests to be considered practical the requirements are a match between the needed and the available resources, otherwise it will be considered impractical. Similarly, Sara (2009, p.209) mentioned that if the resources required for developing a given test surpass the available resources, then the test would be regarded as impractical. Along the same lines, effectiveness is an important element of practicality. It refers to the degree to which the advantages of the assessment method exceed the charges involved when conducting an assessment procedure. This means that practicality requires a match and a kind of relevance and balance between the benefits and the costs. Equally, Weir (1993 cited in Anthony, 2014) mentioned that teachers need to make sure that the tests used are the most adequate procedure to gather the relevant required information. For this specific reason, test users need to ascertain that all the activities and tasks used to obtain information are accomplished effectively and successfully (Anthony, 2014).

Moreover, practicality is a significant element and a constraint in the development of portfolios because portfolios necessitate a lot of time, energy, and commitment. Sara (2009, p.210) testified that the most frequently mentioned limitation of portfolio assessments is the reality that they are time and labour-intensive for teachers and students alike. Due to this, establishing sound decisions requires using the expenses and the cost to improve, assist, and maintain those decisions (Anthony, 2014).

1.10 Rationale: Why Use Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment refers to the assistance and encouragement that learners receive from teachers, peers, and friends to develop their portfolios. However, why would teachers choose portfolio assessment to evaluate students' writing? Indeed, in contrast to traditional practices, portfolio assessment allows correspondence and a strong connection between evaluation and learning as well as helps teachers identify flaws in the teaching method used. Additionally, assessment is not distinct from the learning procedure, rather it is an integral part of it. Furthermore, portfolio assessment favours meaningful involvement of the learners in the learning experience. In practice, when learners develop their portfolios, they will be actively involved and accurately learn to reflect on their learning, therefore, boosting their ability to review and edit their work, elevating their confidence, growing their motivation, and stimulating their persistence in learning to achieve the desired aims (Barnhardt et.al, 1998).

Moreover, portfolio assessment provides teachers and learners alike with a comprehensive understanding of the student as a learner. This implies a tailored teaching procedure in which teachers personalise their instructions to fit the situation and the learners' needs. Clearly, with such a procedure, teachers can scrutinize learners' weaknesses and build on the areas of mastery, thus engaging learners in the endeavour of monitoring their learning and taking charge of their education. Furthermore, the use of portfolio assessment encourages learners to focus on developing and changing their attitudes toward assessment as well as their mindset from getting marks to improving their performance and meeting the target goal and audiences (Barnhardt et.al, 1998).

Nonetheless, the portfolio assessment procedure presents learners with a framework of evaluation that they may need to be acquainted with. As a result, they will learn the relevant techniques that assist them in achieving the desired outcomes. Equally, a key aspect of academic achievement is parental participation. Through the use of portfolio assessment, teachers could involve learners' parents in their language learning which creates a link between teachers, administration and parents, therefore, leading to a successful learning environment where learners' performances are recorded and known to all learning actors (Barnhardt et.al, 1998).

1.11 Portfolio Development

A successful Portfolio development necessitates explicit and obvious goals along with clear articulated instructions handed to the learners, and a load of opportunities for feedback and review. H. Douglass (2003, p.257) mentioned that developing a successful portfolio requires several steps and guidelines and provides the following guidelines:

Clearly state the objectives

The objectives should be clear for the learners and enable them to perceive their constructed portfolio comprises materials that are related to their learning goals. Moreover, teachers need to display to their learners that the designed objectives are coherent, related and aimed at consolidating previously stated goals. H.Douglass (2003) mentioned that making learners conscious of the determined objective, encourages learners to construct their portfolios and improve educational goals. Furthermore,

Guidelines on what materials to include

Once the teachers set and establish the objectives, then they need to decide the type of work that should be included. This stands for whether teachers should include the best work only, a range of work from a variety of genres, or both in and out-of-class work. Sara (2002) stated that there is a sort of tension over who selects the materials. What goes in the portfolio? Should it be the responsibility of the students, of teachers, or a combination of the two? Liz and Condon (2000) argued that giving students control over the construction of their portfolio content could have positive effects on their motivation as well as encourage them to revise, improve and take pride in their work.

Communicate Assessment Criteria to Students

It is the most substantial complex and convoluted aspect of portfolio development. Indeed, when setting the standards learners should not only be informed of these standards but also be able to debate and create them together (Shumai, 2009). Equally, two sources of paramount importance need to be inserted and incorporated when setting the criteria: self and peer assessment to maximise students' profits. Both sources of assessment play an important role in raising students' awareness and developing their agency, control, and learning in general.

1.11.1 Self-Assessment

The objective of self-assessment is often to encourage learners to take stock of their learning procedures, methods, and effects while simultaneously including them as active participants in their educational journey. Indeed, self-evaluation is regarded as an ongoing, recurrent activity that clarifies the route for learning development as well as stimulates and connects the learner's past knowledge. Additionally, self-assessment requires additional time

for completion and training for fruitful and accurate results. Moreover, it is an alternate framework for student involvement that is expected to encourage review and entails creative self-questioning, which is mentally challenging and persuading at the same time (Mien et.al 2003).

Moreover, self-assessment places a strong focus on learners' agency, authority, and control over their education, and it aims at boosting learners' drive and confidence as well as their feeling of personal responsibility and ownership. Besides that, self-assessment could initiate discussions especially, when learners argue for their assessment in front of their peers or tutors, and when considering assessment standards. Such a discussion can lead to an intentional involvement with the learning process as well as enable learners to integrate the received feedback and use it as a platform for improvement (Mien et.al 2003).

Furthermore, self-assessment is an essential component of the learning process for that it provides information that the usual evaluation done by the teacher cannot provide. Similarly, it enables students to reflect on and benefit from what they have done wrong. Nonetheless, through the learners' active involvement in the evaluation procedure, they may get insights that can be used to enhance their learning. Furthermore, self-assessment aids learners in reflecting on the challenges that prevent their development and enables them to find relevant solutions and routes that would lead to adjustment, transformation, and advancement. Besides that, self-evaluation should be completely separated from grades. It should focus on considering each person's achievements and growth individually. This was argued by Michael and Paul (1994)

If we rely totally on teacher-based assessment, we are only carrying out part of the job of assessment. We are diagnosing problems and we are measuring the progress that our students have made. This information can feed back into our teaching, but it does not necessarily feed back into the learning process. Students are often passive and wait for us to tell them if they have done well or badly. At no time do they need to think about what they have done, and why they have done well or badly. This can be seen clearly in writing. When students are given back corrected compositions, they often just look at the mark and do not learn from the feedback.

This quotation illustrates the importance of self-assessment and the benefits that it can yield to the learning process. Indeed, giving learners a voice and shifting their concentration from marks can lead to development. Moreover, it displays that it is important to integrate various tools

when assessing learners' performance and that self-assessment can cover angles that the teacher-based assessment cannot address. Furthermore, through self-assessment, teachers raise their learners' awareness of their mistakes, therefore creating relevant situations for the assimilation of the received feedback, thus directing learners to improvement.

1.11.2 Peer Assessment

It is believed that the constructive and careful provision of feedback may lower learners' inaccuracies as well as support their progress. In practice, feedback plays a crucial role in the evolution of learning qualities and in enhancing learners' self-control abilities. Moreover, Winne (1995) indicated that the provision of feedback aids learners in detecting and correcting mistakes, illuminating their cognitive skills, confirming already-existing knowledge, and helping in consolidating and rearranging learners' conceptual structures. Along the same line, offering insightful feedback is a challenging mental endeavour that involves an awareness of the objectives and standards of success as well as the willingness to assess how the result compares to those standards (Mien et.al 2003).

There are factors affecting the provision of accurate and relevant feedback. These factors involve feedback significance to the learner's objectives and perspective as well as its connection to the learners' false assumptions. Moreover, it should have an acceptable degree of clarity and effectiveness so that the receiver of that feedback can easily get the meaning and the aim across. Furthermore, the provided feedback needs to enable learners to make relevant decisions based on the assistance provided and facilitate their productive engagement (Mien et.al 2003).

Peer assessment can positively impact learners' intellectual and cognitive difficulties and growth by improving various factors for both assessors and assesses. Because formative peer assessment has the potential to include challenging queries, occasions for self-expression and comprehension review, it can easily help learners identify and analyse errors and misconceptions in advance. Indeed, this may result in discovering deficiencies in understanding and developing approaches for addressing them via discussion, synthesis, group explanations, simplicity and relevance of the information, and mental reorganisation. Similarly, the characteristic of peer feedback being rapid and with a customised format could, therefore, lead to an enhanced introspection and contextual generalisation, thus promoting the development of cognitive abilities, self-evaluation, and learners' awareness (Mien et.al 2003).

From a social perspective, peer assessment necessitates social and communication skills as well as arguing and persuasion through which learners gain the ability to offer and take criticism, defend their perspective, and turn down proposals. It is, therefore, to be expected that

this would improve learners' collaborative, interpersonal, and assertive abilities (Riley, 1995 cited in Mien et.al 2003). Besides that, the provision of peer assessment integrates learners into the learning process immediately and stimulates their enthusiasm, accountability, and the feeling of having control. Equally, providing positive feedback initially may help the assesse feel less anxious and better able to handle criticism as well as enhance their self-confidence, and understanding of other individuals, promote the association and connection between the assesse and assessor, stimulate positive communication along with diversity and devotion. In the same vein, Grace and Paul (2009) argued that learners tend to be more at ease and motivated in their writing classes when they take a reviewing position and make revisions to their peers' writings. Similarly, they indicated that peer correction could enable more resilient and voluntary choices where learners feel free to accept or reject their peers' recommendations. Therefore, authorises learners to have positive attitudes towards cooperative learning.

However, Falchikov (2001 cited in Mien et.al 2003, p.68), indicated that setting up a high-quality peer evaluation demands time for management, instruction, and systemic review, therefore it cannot be seen or considered as a task that could save teacher time and provide adequate learning opportunities. Indeed, Peer assessment can help the participants to review and elucidate the criteria of assessment, design the scoring methods, and identify the aims as well as the intentions of assessments (Mien et.al, 2003).

1.11.3 Conferences

Conferences are very useful tools as Scott and Linda (1994, p.85) stated that conferences enhance students' awareness of what they learned and what needs further work on; they supply metacognitive and motivational information. They suggested two kinds of conferences that are useful for portfolios, student-teacher conferences, and peer conferences.

During student-teacher conferences, students talk and reflect on the processes they go through and what they have attained. While doing this, the teacher listens and provides adequate feedback, and together they design aims for the immediate future. Teachers direct the student by focusing on the capability and range where the student has displayed development. Scott and Linda (1994, p.86) suggested that in conducting student-teacher conferences, the teachers may use a portfolio conference planning guide to manage their conferences and help learners diagnose their strengths and weaknesses.

Peer or student-student conferences are options that may work for several contexts as they present opportunities for students to react to each other's work and negotiate their responses in a non-evaluative way. Scott and Linda (1994, p.89) mentioned that students become better listeners and self-assessors when they negotiate their work. They stated that peer conferences could not be successful unless they were carefully designed and arranged by the teacher. Indeed, the aim is to assert that students know what their role is, they are equipped with valid directions and know what to expect from each other and from the conference itself. Furthermore, incorporating teacher conference opportunities should not be exposed to learners.

Designate Time within the Curriculum for Portfolio Development

It is important to assert that the learners have devoted adequate time to portfolio work. This will encourage learners to focus on learning and enhancing their target skills. Moreover, learners should not feel in a hurry in the process of collecting and reflecting. Instead, they need to follow a systematic procedure to achieve their predesigned goals (H. Douglass, 2003).

Set Periodic Schedules for Review and Conferencing

Successful portfolios do not just happen. Indeed, everything should be organized and planned. This can be done by setting time for review and conferences that will allow learners to be urged to follow the precise steps in creating their portfolio and elude them from doing the entire work at the end of the semester or course (H. Douglass, 2003).

Designate an Accessible Place to Keep Portfolios

Because a portfolio requires a collection of several materials, then it is best to have a convenient place where to keep the collected material such as a library or storage. This would supply a positive wash-back when giving the final assessment. Once the portfolio is completed and collected, the next step is evaluation. In this, the teacher may provide a summary of the noticed strengths and weaknesses of students along with a suggestion of the ways for further development (H. Douglass, 2003).

Overall, H. Douglass (2003, p.256) stated that the earlier-mentioned steps and directions above will increase the reliability, impact, authenticity, and face validity of the portfolio to a reasonable level. He indicated that for the success of portfolio assessment, it is important to be aware of the procedure included in its construction. Indeed, these steps assist teachers and work as a framework for both teachers and learners alike.

1.12 Scoring Portfolio Assessment

Liz and Condon (2000) mentioned that portfolio assessment can be scored on a holistic or analytic scale. For large-scale assessments, scoring portfolio is more time-consuming, for that, it is recommended to use a holistic scale. On the contrary, classroom assessment requires

analytic or multiple traits as it provides richer information about performance and yields an indication of specific strengths and weaknesses in various dimensions of students writing. Peter Elbow (2000, p.443) stated that when using a multiple traits scale, students with high levels will see features that they still require more work on, and failing students will see the basis of their failure. The result of portfolio assessment as mentioned by Sara (2002) from Herman et al. (1996) can be quantified numerically as scores, letter grades or verbal description (strong vs. weak). Indeed, researchers in the field of assessment suggest the use of verbal descriptions. In this regard, Peter (2000, p.413) indicated that discursive comments do more good in the long run than quantified evaluation. In the same line, he stated that when using criteria in a fuller way, our grades carry a precise meaning rather than standing obscure, and students can receive relevant feedback on specific areas of strengths and weaknesses in their writing, feedback that the traditional assessment cannot afford.

1.13 The Benefits of Portfolio Assessment

The use of portfolios provides many benefits to students, teachers, education and writing programs. Sunders and Pearl (1996, p.7) designated that portfolio assessment brought innovations to classroom practices that emphasized progress and active learning. Indeed, it fostered learners' motivation, reflection, responsibility, achievement, and ownership.

1.13.1 Benefits to Learners or Basic Writers

Portfolio assessment allows learners to see writing as a process that involves repetitive stages of reasoning, communication, reconsideration, and rewriting. Moreover, it permits learners to consider various aspects of their writing, such as generating ideas, drafting, taking into account criticisms from classmates and instructors, modifying, and correcting until the piece of work is accomplished. Furthermore, it provides learners with a chance to concentrate on how they learn, assess their abilities, and progressively showcase what they have learned. In essence, it enables learners to take responsibility for their learning by enabling them to decide, review, modify, and assemble a showcase of their best writing. In this regard, a study by Barootchi and Keshvarz (2002), 'the assessment of achievement through portfolio and teachers-made tests', concluded that portfolio assessment contributes to EFL learners' achievement, feelings of responsibility, and the monitoring of their progress (Saunders and Pearl, 1996).

Further, portfolio assessment motivates learners to review their writing more meticulously and regularly, leading to work that is of increased value. Nonetheless, it instructs learners to consider positive feedback from their peers and teachers with greater awareness as they may employ the received feedback to make changes to their writing. Additionally, the portfolio assessment nature allows learners to perceive themselves as real writers and

contributes to their feeling of having control over their writing, therefore they acquire creative and evaluative reasoning skills and become autonomous and confident writers. Yong (2003) in his study, exploration of the use of portfolios as a tool to facilitate student learning and develop learner autonomy, concluded that portfolios enhanced students' awareness of learning strategies and enhanced their self-directed learning. Along the same line, Ya-Fen Lo (2010) concluded that implementing reflective portfolio assessment for promoting autonomous learning among EFL College students in Taiwan, aided students' engagement of students in several learning domains as well as strengthened their awareness of autonomous learning.

Moreover, portfolio assessment provides learners the opportunity to revise their work multiple times based on feedback from both their teachers and peers. Besides that, it encourages learners to approach composition with a positive attitude and be open to revise their work. Similarly, Eridafithri (2015) indicated that the self-assessment procedure included in the portfolio assessment can be a route to autonomous learning. Merfat (2004 cited in Behrooz et.al, 2010) revealed that portfolio assessment enabled learners to strengthen their writing repertoire and made them feel positive and content.

Furthermore, portfolio assessment allows the integration of teaching, learning and assessment as it supports the interaction between teachers and learners. The study done by Nunan (2003), 'Portfolios in the EFL Classroom: Disclosing an Informed Practice', found that portfolios allow the adoption of a learner-centred practice, besides that, he also found that it eases the integration of assessment, learning, and teaching with the curriculum. In addition, portfolio assessment elevates students' motivation towards learning and being autonomous learners.

Further, portfolios provide a basic platform for the development of the student's overall performance. Song and August (2002), in their research, 'Using portfolios to assess the writing of ESL students: a powerful alternative', indicated that when being evaluated through portfolio assessment students are more likely to succeed. Similarly, Serpi Uçara, and Yeliz Yazıcıb (2016) in their study, 'The Impact of Portfolios on Enhancing Writing Skills in ESP Classes', noted that students who experienced instruction through portfolio assessment displayed a developed level of performance and their writing appeared much better than the control group.

1.13.2 Benefits to Teachers

Portfolio assessment as a method of assessment and instruction assists the English instructor and teachers in meeting the diverse needs of unprepared students. Indeed, portfolio assessment enables teachers to pay attention to their learners' development by delaying marks and utilising constructive suggestions, while providing them assistance on particular

adjustments before a paper is handed in for the portfolio in addition to determining what learners may choose to concentrate on for their subsequent writing. Moreover, it alters the teachers' function from a ratter; one who evaluates learners' writing, notes mistakes, discusses strengths and weaknesses, gives grades, and records grades, to a mediator, coach, and trainer (Saunders and Pearl, 1996). In this concern, Lynn mentioned that grades support passive superficial learning and devious behaviour. This is why teachers need to keep their students' attention away from getting grades and act as coaches instead. In this regard, Lynn indicated that writing students need coaches, not judges and argued that coaches are on the learners' side and are approachable while judges are distant. Judges do not care about your performance; coaches do. Judges give you lectures about what you should and should not be; coaches think you can succeed and demonstrate how. Judges provide judgement; coaches encourage learners to do better. Nonetheless, learners' portfolios can provide important support for teachers to grow significantly because they include information that may demonstrate their novel expertise and stimulate creative ideas. Additionally, portfolio assessment enables teachers to develop a genuine evaluation based on learners' needs and allows teachers to cooperate and negotiate when designing an assessment procedure (khattri et.al, 1998 cited in Eridafithri, 2015).

Moreover, portfolio assessment invites teachers to take a closer look at their educational methods and take greater responsibility for every aspect of learners' writing instead of just the finished product. Similarly, Eridafithri (2015) argued that portfolios yield important information for teachers about the relevance of their teaching method and enable them to reflect accordingly to serve learners' needs. Along the same line, portfolio assessment allows teachers to gauge and stand on learners' revision abilities by checking the extent of their engagement with revision and modification received from different sources. Furthermore, portfolio assessment assists teachers and provides them with the opportunity to supply relevant comments that address significant issues and cater to improved performance instead of talking about learners' writing (Saunders and Pearl, 1996).

1.13.3 Benefits to the Writing Program

Portfolio assessment is not only concerned with learners and teachers but also with programs. In this regard, it is believed that portfolio assessment has a positive impact on the writing program. The following is a synthesis of the benefits of a portfolio assessment procedure for writing programs.

When creating programs, portfolio assessment enables the program writers to consider and reflect logically on the conventional approaches to teaching and challenge the idea that a single test can provide relevant performance information. Moreover, portfolio assessment

enables lessons to be reorganised in accordance with the intended outcomes of the writing programme. Besides that, it contributes to creating opportunities for collaboration within the curriculum and in providing consistency to teaching objectives and techniques. Furthermore, it reinforces the procedure of teaching writing by providing clues and information regarding the usefulness of the program. Additionally, it remodels the writing program's basic framework and offers a better alternative to judge the writing of learners instead of the conventional scoring systems. Further, portfolio assessment offers a wide range of feedback tools, including features for evaluating students' thinking, prewriting activities, the amount and accuracy of changes undertaken by learners as well as the types of mistakes they are committing. Nonetheless, in writing programs, portfolio assessments strengthen the assessment criteria by illustrating that the incorporation of a variety of writing samples fosters validity and reliability. Similarly, it presents evidence for reviewing the writing programme and the relevance of teaching methods implemented by the teacher (Saunders and Pearl, 1996).

1.14 Criticism of Portfolio Assessment

Perhaps the well-acknowledged lifetime-consuming assessment is that it is time-consuming, and requires investment in teacher time. Moreover, the scoring of portfolios was also among the barriers portfolio that prevent many teachers from using portfolio assessment procedures. This was highlighted in the study done by Wolfe, Edward W.; Miller, Timothy R, (1997), 'Barriers to the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment in Secondary Education' who indicated that time and portfolio scoring were the basic issues that prevent many ESL and EFL teachers from going to portfolio evaluation. Moreover, portfolio assessment increases what is called the paper load because of the multiple writing opportunities and may also lead to grade inflation due to the number of occasions for revision. Furthermore, the feature of delayed evaluation included in portfolio assessment may result in the postponement of assignments, resentments, and anxiety. Additionally, portfolio assessment requires small groups and resources, which is not always feasible, especially in the EFL context.

1.15 Collaboration

Collaboration conforms to a social constructivist theory of education. According to Vygotsky, creating and inspecting a situation where learners collaborate to accomplish an assignment can lead to successful learning in which learners establish a cooperative learning atmosphere for each other. Similarly, from the social constructivist perspective, teachers need to assist and repeatedly support their learners' engagement in cooperative learning and shared building of knowledge (Storsh, 2005). Moreover, the cornerstone of cooperative learning is the interactional theory, which views learning as the result of the connections and interactions

between individuals. Vygotsky mentioned that there are two important phases in the interaction procedure: internalization and social engagement. He indicated that each participant in a social contact goes through an individual interpretation procedure, and these procedures affect each other throughout the interaction resulting in an understanding, which may be mutually understood (Agung et.al, 2022). Furthermore, collaboration is the process of improving social circles and connections through relevant and deliberate cooperation within a particular setting. This cooperation may update learners understanding, develop their sharing skills, and support group growth. Furthermore, many researchers stress the importance of working together during the writing process. They argued that the cooperative situation allows learners to have a shared responsibility for the written product as well as encourages them to make choices related to language structure and content, thus supporting the feeling of joint control.

Nonetheless, according to Laal and Ghodsi (2012 cited in Tiarma and Erny, 2018), collaborative learning enables learners to be highly proactive and involved, while simultaneously decreasing their stress levels. When learners cooperate to solve an issue on a specific subject, their critical thinking ability might be improved and boosted as well as allow them to get involved in constructive conversation, especially during the process of reviewing ideas with their peers.

1.15.1 Collaborative Writing

Collaborative writing refers to activities that involve pairs and/or groups of individuals cooperating to produce written output. Sukirman (2016 cited in Rezki, 2021) believed that the collaboration procedure allows learners to produce particular pieces of writing with peers more easily. Moreover, asking learners to complete writing assignments, process feedback, and reflect on them in pairs, puts them in a genuine social context and presents them with occasions for discussion and interaction with writing and feedback positively (Gillian and Neomy,2012). While accomplishing this, they become involved with the received comments and can debate and structure their contributions. Indeed, the involvement of learners in the conversation exercises with their colleagues may make them aware of linguistic nuances, which they were unconscious of and incorporate them in language-related debates that might expand their language proficiency. Such action could culminate in improved academic performance.

Moreover, Lyon and Heasly (1987 cited in Juliana, 2000) stated cooperative writing enriches the writing process because it provides each writer a reviewer and permits learners to be actively involved with the task, as well as adds authenticity and relevance. Furthermore, the communication that takes place between learners when they work together as pairs and/or groups enables them to discuss important features and aspects related to the content, which,

therefore allows them to determine their aim and how to articulate it (Gebhard, 1996 cited in Juliana, 2000). Equally, collaborative writing can be used to describe how individuals or pairs deliver comments to one another, request assistance from one another, and the procedures followed to identify, examine, and review writing issues (Supiani, 2017). Along the same line, writing collaboratively encourages learners to take an active role at all levels of the writing process including ideas generation, accumulation, organization, drafting, modification, and correction. Through this, learners acquire the necessary skills that allow them to utilise the writing process properly (Supiani, 2017).

According to Laal and Ghodsi (2012 cited in Tiarma and Erny, 2018), collaborative learning conceptually alleviates the fears of learners and inspires them to be more involved and energetic in class. Moreover, collaborative writing boosts confidence, fosters interactions among different genders and cultural backgrounds, and positively affects learning outcomes. Besides that, it is frequently believed that working together will appropriately challenge classroom designs that favour the supremacy of the teacher and the erroneous perspective of solitary writers (Irene, 1993). For collaboration to work successfully and provide numerous advantages, teachers need initially, to create favourable circumstances, foster learners' confidence, negotiate learners' roles, and assign authority within the group. A closer inspection of collaborative learning suggests that meaningful cooperation is the result of participants who belong to the same discourse community. For example, when colleagues in the class interact regularly, exchange drafts, provide references, and revise their writing style. This kind of collaboration is termed collegial. It aims to aid the writer in recognising different types of hurdles that are not easy to elude. In this, learning occurs when teachers minimise their influence on the content and the group conversation related to the content.

Two types of collaboration present themselves in collaborative learning: Illegitimate and legitimate collaboration. Illegitimate stands for the elimination and rejection of any addition made by the students to the written content. This type of collaboration does not improve learners' abilities nor encourage them to grow as independent writers. Likewise, this type of collaboration may put learners in a position to become the target of unintentional plagiarism. Alternately, the main objectives of the legitimate collaboration are to assist learners enhance their approaches to writing and increase their awareness of how texts function concerning their audience and the requirements of an acceptable discourse community. In this regard, and for educational reasons, teachers need to ensure that their suggestions and recommendations do not take over the learners and that learners' contribution to the creation of the text takes the centre of attention (Irene, 1993).

1.15.2 The benefits of Collaborative writing

Collaborative writing is a procedure that requires students to join their efforts to complete a written task. Regarded as an effective tool, it aims at supporting learners' active involvement with the task as well as motivating them to be more productive and successful. Indeed, collaborative learning strengthens learning outcomes, helps build connections between group members, and boosts confidence. Such an environment lowers learners' anxiety and stress, thus enabling them to concentrate on and decreasing the number of mistakes committed. In this regard, Sakhi (2021) indicated that collaborative writing helps learners lessen their anxiety and makes them take pleasure in writing collaboratively, therefore encouraging them to complete the task. Besides that, it changes learners' perception of mistakes, therefore assisting them to view mistakes as opportunities to progress toward cognitive and social development. Moreover, collaboration through shared assistance fosters learners' self-motivation, careful consideration in delivery, and devotion to objectives. Additionally, it provides a relevant platform for peer conversation and discussion that enhances their interpersonal as well as intellectual development (Freitas et.al, 1998).

Nonetheless, collaboration allows learners to share with their peers. During this procedure, learners may conduct modifications to enhance their work while considering comments from teachers and peers, therefore leading to progress through the review and adjustments opportunities. Similarly, Sakhi (2021) stated that collaboration allows learners to gather many ideas and discover new perceptions through the accumulation of their colleagues' ideas. Of course, this can enrich the learning situation and stimulate learners' cognitive skills through the generation of ideas and content relevant to their writing product as well as improve their writing quality (Storch, 2005). In the same vein, collaboration allows learners to improve their skill at writing by providing occasions for the reception of regular and supportive comments from their peers and by carefully considering both their own as well as other people's written products (Freitas et.al, 1998). Furthermore, working together on a written product stimulates learners' reflective thinking. In situations where learners try to clarify their choices and defend their ideas, they will be more with the written task, thus leading to improved reflection. Along the same lines, Sakhi (2021) asserted that learners become more involved when they join their efforts, which enhances and creates good teamwork strategies. Equally, Neomy (2005) confirmed that collaborative writing reinforces learners' understanding and careful thought of their audience (Leki, 1993) as a result, this collaboration elevates learners' critical writing skills (Nystrand and Brandt, 1989).

1.16 Conclusion

Described as an outstanding resource for learning, portfolio assessment provides teachers and learners alike the opportunity to associate assessment with learning as well as change learners' perceptions of learning from passive roles to active involvement, participation, and responsibility. Many researchers asserted the positive impact of portfolio assessment on learners' achievement in general and writing in particular (Liz and Condon, 1997; Freitas, ;). Recent studies indicate the supremacy of portfolio assessment over other methods of assessment and clearly articulate the positive effects on learners' writing, teachers' roles, and writing programs. Indeed, the use of portfolio assessment proved relevant in the ESL context as well as many EFL contexts. Although many EFL teachers may not be using it due to the cost and the time required, it may be the relevant procedure to help improve learners' writing skills. Thus, assessing EFL learners' writing through portfolio assessment can be an alternative, comprehensive tool to assess and improve learners' writing ability. Besides that, writing is a skill that requires opportunities for practice to acquire the necessary skills to grow learners as writers and this is the reason why teachers need to cope with EFL learners' needs through the medium of portfolio assessment.

Chapter Two
Research Methodology and Learning Context

2.1 Introduction

The current chapter addresses the structure of the research and presents the various steps followed by the researcher to capture the phenomena under study. Up to now, many studies highlighted the efficacy of portfolio assessment on language skills and, most importantly, writing. Liz and William (2000) reported that portfolio assessment improved students' writing and led to greater uptake. In the Algerian context, the use of portfolio assessment is still in its infancy and lacks a structured policy for its incorporation. Besides, writing skills received less interest and even value in comparison to speaking. Studies revealed that portfolio assessment appeared convenient with writing as many findings claimed that through portfolio assessment, students improved their skills and took more responsibility for their writing.

The tertiary level seems to be the best place for the introduction portfolio assessment not only as a means for assessment but also for teaching and learning. However, few studies investigated the impact of portfolio assessment on fresh First-year English students writing, collaboration, and perception. Accordingly, this chapter comprises two phases: The first phase of this chapter starts with a review of the educational environment, and the second phase deals with the research procedure and design that was set by the research to answer the research questions.

2.1 The Setting

Data for this research were collected at Mascara University over six months. The university is located in the northwest of Mascara City, more precisely next to the main road Oran-Saida. The research took place at the new site of Sidi Said (8000 pedagogical places) which was exploited at the entry of the University year 2016/2017. This latter includes two faculties: the Faculty of Languages and Letters, and the Social and Human Sciences. The Department of the English Language was the site where the study took place. This research site was selected because the researcher was a former student and a current teacher in this department. The nature of the study required working with fresh First-year students as the population of the study.

For this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on fresh First-year English students writing, collaboration, and perception. He chose Mascara University to be the place where to conduct the current research because the access was relatively easy and already negotiated. Moreover, the researcher was also a part-time teacher at the university and knew the teachers and the administrators. The study was experimental where two groups were selected from the First-year English population using a simple random sampling method. In other words, the study took place in a natural environment, mainly through

pre-test, post-test, observation, and interview, to understand the effects of the portfolio on the students. LMD

2.2 The Population

The population for the present study was first-year English license students. They were made up of Four hundred forty-five (445) students. They have just won their baccalaureate and are attending their first year. The students were already divided into eight groups. The administration made that division. Each group comprises an average of fifty-five (55) students. The reason for choosing the first-year LMD students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University was the fact they were fresh students, had no previous courses about writing, and were ready to acquire the skill of writing. That would allow the experiment to stand on the growth the students had witnessed and determine to what extent experiencing the treatment (Portfolio Assessment) was successful with the students on the level of writing, collaboration, and attitudes.

2.3 The Participants

Because the research is experimental, it demands two groups to stand on the real impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing and collaboration. The researcher used probability sampling, more precisely, a simple random sampling method where every student has an equal chance to be taken as a participant in the research. The selection process was by tossing a coin to select two groups from a total of eight (8) groups. The results of the sampling allow the researcher to assign groups two and three.

2.4 Students Profile

The subject students were divided into two groups. The experimental and the controlled group. The experimental one was the second group and was made up of 58 students with nineteen boys and thirty-nine girls aged 19 to 22 years old. They were both from rural and urban backgrounds. Whereas, the control one was the third group. It was composed of fifty-four (54) students with 20 boys and 34 girls aged 19 to 22 years old from rural and urban backgrounds in Mascara city.

2.5 Ratters Profile

Because the research is experimental, it requires pre and post-tests to reach the established goals. Following this aim, the researcher named two ratters to correct the pre and post-test. The first ratter was a professor who taught English for more than thirty years. Whereas, the second one was a magister and taught English for almost fifteen years. The criteria for the selection of the ratters were availability, convenience, and readability. Teachers' degrees and teaching experiences are displayed in the table below:

Teachers	Degrees	Experience
Teacher 1	Professor in English	Thirty (30) years
Teacher 2	Magister in English	Fifteen (15) Years

Table 0.1: Ratters' profile

2.6 Research Design

The researcher adopted qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the research questions and unravel the mystery of the phenomena under inquiry. This approach was chosen given that the purpose of the research was to investigate the impact of the portfolio on students' writing, and collaboration and describe their perceptions and attitudes toward the use of such a type of assessment. What follows is a thorough description of the study design, the instruments, the sample population, the research procedure, and the data analysis.

2.7 Significance of the Study

Given that the purpose of the research was to analyse and describe the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing, collaboration, and perceptions, the researcher adopted a mixed-method design based on an experimental method. He used different techniques and instruments to collect reliable data such as establishing accurate assumptions, results, and implications. In this regard, the researcher accumulated data over six (6) months (November 2021- April 2022). Therefore, the current study derived from three research questions:

- ✓ What is the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' paragraph writing?
- ✓ To what extent does portfolio assessment application boost collaboration and improve social skills?
- ✓ What are the student's perceptions and attitudes toward portfolio assessment after the experiment?

Moreover, this research aimed to pinpoint the impact of the treatment on students. Significantly, the experimental work presented here contributes remarkably to this area and offers insight into portfolio assessment and its effect on writing, collaboration, and perception.

2.8 Research Hypotheses

The researcher gave different hypotheses to the earlier mentioned research questions. Regarding the first research question: (a) what is the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' paragraph writing? The researcher anticipated that the use of portfolio assessment would encourage students to write, making repairs through revisions procedure and feedback, and as a result elevate their writing to a considerable level, at least conforming to the tertiary level. In the second research question, (b) to what extent does portfolio assessment

application boost collaboration and improve social skills? The researcher hypothesized that the inclusion of portfolio assessment procedures would lead to a sort of cooperation between the students since they will be subject to conferences, peer feedback, and revision. These procedures led the researcher to anticipate that the use of portfolio assessment would positively impact students' overall collaborative skills and develop their social skills. Concerning the last research question, (c) What are the student's perceptions and attitudes toward portfolio assessment after the experiment? Because of the numerous writing opportunities and the diverse genre students received from experiencing portfolio assessment, the researcher hypothesized that students would have positive attitudes toward the use of the treatment in the assessment of their writing. Moreover, he expected that their perception of writing assessment would change from a focus on getting better marks to working on elevating their mastery and accuracy in writing. The expected change in students' mindsets and paradigms might be related to the observed improvement in their overall writing and their awareness of the importance of the none judgmental procedure used that would probably lead to improvement in their writing skills.

2.9 Research Objectives

Many researchers have ascertained the positive influence of portfolio assessment within the educational field. The features of portfolio assessment that support a process rather than a product approach to learning, allow tutors to collect valuable data about students' strengths and weaknesses and also support the students with constructive feedback to track their progress. This prospective study is designed to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' writing in terms of paragraph writing. Besides, it aims to notice whether the usage of portfolio assessment aided in raising collaboration and improving social skills among students in the writing process. Finally, it seeks to signpost the student's perceptions and attitudes toward portfolio assessment.

2.10 Type of Research

Commencing research requires several steps to follow to obtain valuable and accurate information. In this regard, the design serves as a map for data collection. The research design is a conceptual framework that helps the researcher organize ideas and identify potential issues. An efficient research design takes into consideration different facets of the problem and delivers enough information Kothari (2004, pp.31-35). In this concern, the selection of the design depends mainly on the purpose of the research. In addition, it needs to enclose attributes of flexibility to examine different parts of the issue and accuracy to increase reliability and reduce

bias. Research design may be divided into three main classes: exploratory, descriptive, and experimental.

The current study is an experimental research which is explained by Alison and Susan (2016, p.148) as having some form of comparison between groups. The groups will differ in terms of some manipulation of the independent variable to examine the effect of manipulation on the dependent variable. The assignment will be random, or as random as possible, to avoid threats to internal validity caused by participant characteristics. This explanation provides a blueprint of the experimental design that requires the manipulation of variables, the comparison between groups, and random assignment.

A further definition of an experiment is given by Martyn (2010, p.65) who states that an experiment is an empirical investigation under controlled conditions designed to examine the properties of, and the relationship between, specific factors. It is the bedrock of research in the physical sciences and is regarded by many social researchers as a model of good practice. The idea of an experiment tends to be linked with white-coated scientists working in a laboratory, possibly using highly sophisticated equipment to measure things with extreme precision. The point of experimenting is to isolate individual factors and observe their effect in detail. The purpose is to discover new relationships or properties associated with the materials being investigated or to test existing theories.

This definition highlights the purpose of an experimental design which is to unveil causality or a relationship between variables. Moreover, it entails an in-depth examination of the aspects and control over the circumstances.

According to Kothari (2004, p.40), experimental research design can best be treated under three main principles. Firstly is the principle of replication, which stands for the repetition of the experiment to increase its usefulness by applying the treatment to numerous units rather than only one. Secondly is the principle of randomization, which is considered one of the hallmarks of experimental research (Alison and Susan, 2016, p.46). By having a random selection of the variables, we lower the effect of extraneous variables and set a platform of chance. Finally is the principle of local control, which means that the experiment must be planned in a way that the researcher can conduct a dual examination of variance. Through this, the researcher can gauge and eradicate variability caused by external factors from the experimental errors.

The experimental research design may fall into two different categories: a randomized experimental design and a quasi-experimental design. The main difference between these two designs is the extent of randomization. A truly randomized experiment exhibits a high level of

internal validity and tends to comprise a random assignment of groups, intervention, and control groups. On the contrary, when randomization is not attainable a quasi-experimental design is the alternative (Alison and Susan, 2016).

Kothari (2004, pp.41-42) points out the experimental design falls into two sub-groups: informal experimental design and formal experimental design. In the former, patterns of analysis are simple. Whereas, the latter provides high control and employs accurate patterns of analysis. The current study was experimental with a two-group pre-test-post-test experimental design. The researcher has nominated this type of research to help understand the effect of the independent variable (portfolio assessment) on the dependent variable (students' writing, collaboration, attitudes, and perceptions). What follows, is a detailed discussion of the various instruments used.

2.10 Research Instruments

To answer the first research question regarding the effect of portfolio assessment on students' writing ability, the researcher collected data by comparing two groups via pre-test, intervention, post-test, and questionnaire. Moreover, the exploration of the second research question was through the intervention, post-intervention questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation. Finally, the investigation process of the third question was through the intervention, post-test questionnaire, observation, and interview.

2.10.1 Test

Tests are a powerful means of evaluation because of their ability to generate useful information that can help the researcher make valid judgments about behaviour, individual, and ability. In this regard, Carrol (1968) stated:

 A language test is an instrument for measuring language ability. We can even think of it in terms of quantity: how much of a language does a person possess? But what does it mean to say that we want to measure the ability or quantity of language? In what sense can we measure a concept as abstract as language ability? (Glenn, 2010)

The significance of their work resides in the ability to help test users identify and interpret specific behavioural characteristics. According to Carrol (1968, p.46), the test is a procedure designed to elicit certain behaviours from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual. This definition suggests that tests are a type of measurement devised to extract a planned fragment for the goal of decision-making. The decision generally depends upon the objectives set by the test users (Cited in Glenn, 2010).

Lyle and Adrian (2003) classified language tests according to five essential elements: the objective, content, frame of reference, scoring procedures, and the method used. This system

of classification provides a basis for proper language test use. Commonly, a language test requires a clear objective that will define what content to include. In addition, it demands a detailed explanation of the scoring method used, the criteria of reference (norm or criterion-referenced), and an explicit explanation of the tools utilized. Equally, having a plan is a prerequisite for a successful language test. In part, it ensures that the test is serving its designed purpose, upsurges accountability: to justify and explain the reason for usage, and increases the amount of satisfaction experienced.

Conceptually test is organized into three stages: design, operationalization, and administration. Firstly, the design incorporates a description of test components that will guarantee the resemblance of the test tasks to the language use and increase the usefulness of test scores to their plotted objectives. Secondly, the operationalization comprises the type of test task to be included and an explanation of their organization. Finally, test administration requires giving, collecting, and analyzing information to evaluate test efficacy and make decisions(Glenn, 2010).

Accordingly, the type of decision determines the right kind of test. For example, we use selection, entrance, or readiness tests for admission purposes; placement tests to pick an adequate educational level; diagnostic tests to identify weaknesses in specific areas; and achievement tests to display the level of attainment of the language features taught. They are connected to a classroom lesson, units, or curriculum, and addressed in a specific period (Brian, 2002, p.47).

In research, the use of language tests provides a variety of information. Tests can be a means of collecting data about the nature of first or second-language acquisition. Also, as an instrument to gather data about the language ability itself, this includes information about test-takers characteristics on language test performance, the relationship between test task characteristics and performance, and tests of various facets of language ability. Since the present research is experimental, the researcher utilized two tests: a pre-test and a post-test. On the one hand, using the pre-test was to stand on the current level of the fresh first-year students' writing. It was diagnostic, designed to discern the difficulties the students are confronting when writing. Brian (2002, p.46) stated that diagnostic tests identify the areas where students need remedial work. They elicit information related to the difficulties that the students are facing to work on it in the future. On the other hand, the practicality of the post-test was to check the extent of development students have witnessed after receiving the treatment (Glenn, 2010).

2.10.1.1 Pre-Test: Design and Procedure

Since the current research follows an experimental design, that is to say, a randomized two-group pre-test/post-test design, the novice researcher started the process with a pre-test. This latter has various advantages. Firstly, it permits comparison between groups on different levels to determine that they are consistent. Secondly, it provides a source of information gathered at a selected point in time by the researcher that helps in deciding if a variance between the two groups at the end of the study is related to the treatment or not. Concerning the present study, the pre-test was a pre-intervention tool used to diagnose the level of first-year LMD students' writing skills; also stand on the encountered difficulties, and examine their proficiency level in several language areas. This test permitted the researcher to have an idea about the students' level before commencing the portfolio assessment.

As noted above, the study started with a pre-test launched on November 25, 2021. The researcher asked the students to write a paragraph in which they describe the accommodation where they live. This type of writing was a descriptive genre. The researcher prefers the pre-test to be a descriptive writing style because the description deals with students' perceptions. This genre of writing is mainly associated with elaborating what we see and visit into an appropriate writing design. The basis of this genre is describing things as they are without giving an impression, swaying, or arguing. In the pre-test, students took one hour to portray the accommodation where they live. The researcher provided the students with a stress-free atmosphere to feel at ease and exhibit their writing abilities. After collecting the students' writing, the researcher then gave the papers to the ratters to evaluate their performances and give them a mark without signalling where the mistakes were. Following the end of the correction process, the researcher collected students' papers to analyse them and provided comments on their writing. The types of notes provided were portfolio-related, that is to say, designed to display less judgment and more responsive and editorial feedback. In this regard, Brian (2002, p.73) points out that Ungraded. Still, responded-to writing in a portfolio directs the process toward the evolvement of the written product and gives students a formative evaluation where they enjoy the chance to experiment, explore, and compose. He continues by stating that a primary consideration for a portfolio practice is that they help us see assessment differently, a means by which we combine evaluation and instruction.

2.10.1.2 The Treatment (Portfolio Assessment)

Before starting the inquiry, the researcher requested agreement from the head of the department and the teacher of the writing module to carry out the study. The researcher used three steps to proceed: the pre-test, the portfolio assessment, and the post-test. The pre-test

aimed to examine students' needs and determine their current level in paragraph writing. On the other hand, the treatment started with an introduction to the portfolio assessment: the process, writing procedure, and submission deadlines. Furthermore, the researcher provided diverse lessons to consolidate students' writing and help them through the process. These lessons incorporated the process of writing, cohesion techniques, organization, and style. The researcher provided these lessons to get first-year EFL students to explore writing procedures and integrate these techniques into their writing.

The research started on November 25, 2021, with a pre-test where students wrote a paragraph describing the accommodation where they lived. Identically, along the same lines, the pre-test helped the researcher scrutinize students' writing abilities and obtain an idea about the challenges that hinder their abilities to write accurately. The researcher started the intervention (portfolio assessment) with four lessons. He provided these lessons after analyzing students' writing in the pre-test phase. These lessons were carefully discussed with the writing module teacher and designed to fit the aim of the research.

After the pre-test, the researcher noticed that students' writing luck cohesion trait in their paragraphs. Due to this, he started the first session with a lesson on cohesion techniques in writing: such as using linking words (FANBOYS), and how to be effective in communicating events, and ideas in paragraphs. Furthermore, in the second session, he provided the students with a lesson related to the process of writing in which students learned how to elaborate and deliver a successful paragraph. Typically, this lesson made students aware of the writing process and encouraged them to work on improving their writing. The third session dealt with compositional organization, in which the researcher provided the students with adequate methods of organizing and communicating the content. The last session was about the style, where the researcher gave prototypes of relevant ones to encourage students to be conscious of this feature when producing their drafts.

As far as portfolio assessment, the researcher requested students to write paragraphs of different genres. Before initiating the treatment, the researcher determined the genres of writing that students were subject to experience previously. These genres included descriptive, expository, and narrative. Significantly, students started the treatment with a narrative genre in which the researcher asked students to write a story about a young woman who married a man who was old and wealthier. Then, they turned to the expository genre, where they delivered their point of view regarding taking the coronavirus vaccine. Finally, they produced a descriptive genre indicating the appropriate city where they could live.

It is necessary to explain to readers that the researcher attempted to include as many paragraphs as possible. However, due to the nature of the teaching model during the coronavirus, which was through groups and time constraints, the researcher could not add further writing opportunities.

Additionally, during the process (the treatment), the researcher corrected students' paragraphs and provided positive feedback on the areas that required remedial work. This feedback was unique in the structure and provided to display students' errors that would, thereby, enable them to identify the mistakes they committed and how they could learn to correct them efficiently. Moreover, the researcher used an analytic style of assessment based on TEEP rating scales in which he considered six (6) aspects of students' writing. This latter included organization, cohesion, adequacy, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Nonetheless, when correcting the written products, the researcher communicated students' errors in each area of their writing using a simple code to ease the understanding and increase students' awareness of their mistakes. The coding was a sort of abbreviation for limitations in the aspects of writing already communicated. For instance, the code O.I. signalled difficulties with the organization of the paragraph. The following tables will exhibit the coding system and the rating scale used by the researcher during the treatment sessions. Before treatment, the researcher communicated this coding system to the students and explained the reason for selecting this method of error communication. Typically, the researcher devises this method to increase awareness among students, ease teacher feedback and provide a warm environment for improvement.

B. *Compositional organisation*
  0. No apparent organisation of content.
  1. Very little organisation of content. Underlying structure not sufficiently controlled.
  2. Some organisational skills in evidence, but not adequately controlled.
  3. Overall shape and internal pattern clear. Organisational skills adequately controlled.

C. *Cohesion*
  0. Cohesion almost totally absent. Writing so fragmentary that comprehension of the intended communication is virtually impossible.
  1. Unsatisfactory cohesion may cause difficulty in comprehension of most of the intended communication.
  2. For the most part satisfactory cohesion although occasional deficiencies may mean that certain parts of the communication are not always effective.
  3. Satisfactory use of cohesion resulting in effective communication.

D. *Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose*
  0. Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication.
  1. Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps frequent lexical inappropriacies and/or repetition.
  2. Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps some lexical inappropriacies and/or circumlocution.
  3. Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare inappropriacies and/or circumlocution.

E. *Grammar*
  0. Almost all grammatical patterns inaccurate.
  1. Frequent grammatical inaccuracies.
  2. Some grammatical inaccuracies.
  3. Almost no grammatical inaccuracies.

F. *Mechanical accuracy I (punctuation)*
  0. Ignorance of conventions of punctuation.
  1. Low standard of accuracy in punctuation.
  2. Some inaccuracies in punctuation.
  3. Almost no inaccuracies in punctuation.

G. *Mechanical accuracy II (spelling)*
  0. Almost all spelling inaccurate.
  1. Low standard of accuracy in spelling.
  2. Some inaccuracies in spelling.
  3. Almost no inaccuracies in spelling.

Figure 02.1: Scoring procedures: TEEP attribute writing scales (Sara, 2009, p.117)

Figure 2.1 represents the rating scale used by the researcher when considering students' writing. Indeed, the two ratters utilized the same rating scale employed by the researcher when evaluating the pre-test and the post-test of the research. The reason for relying on such a rating scale was the analytical features where the researcher could effortlessly indicate areas where the limitations appeared. Moreover, this rating scale provides detailed information about the performance in different aspects of writing. Identically, it diagnoses students' ability explicitly and presents a showcase of performance, offers consistent rates, and is easy to interpret (Sara, 2009, p.115).

The codes	meaning of the codes
O.I.E	Organization Errors
C.O.E	Cohesion Errors
A.V.E	Adequacy of Vocabulary Errors
G.R.E	Grammar Errors
P.E	Punctuation Errors
S.P.E	Spelling Errors

Table 0.2: Coding Students' Mistakes

Coding students' mistakes was a strategy used by the researcher to refer to the type of feedback he provided for the experimental group. This feedback is called indirect because the evaluator's role is not to correct but rather to indicate where the mistakes are and put a corrective sign that displays to the students the type of flaws they made and gets them to activate their cognitive skills to correct the mistakes. Much literature highlighted the benefits of non-corrective feedback as a strategy to boost students' writing and elevate their writing accuracy. In this concern, Gillian and Neomy (2012) mentioned the following advantages of indirect feedback:

- ✓ Increase students engagement
- ✓ Make students more enduring due to the cognitive efforts involved in sorting out the appropriate response.
- ✓ Increase students' sense of control over their writing
- ✓ Develop students' awareness and feeling of responsibility

2.10.1.3 Post-Test: Design and Procedure

At the end of the treatment, students were ready for another test named the post-test. This test aims to check the accuracy of the intervention and track students' writing accuracy after receiving the treatment (the experimental group). Moreover, it aims to gather relevant data that would enable the researcher to compare both groups' performance at the end of the semester.

Before the launching of the post-test, the researcher discussed the topic of the post-test with his supervisor and the ratters. This discussion aimed at inspecting the relevance of the suggested topic to the learning context and the overall aim of the study. After this discussion, they agreed on the suggested topic and the researcher got permission from the administration to start the post-test.

The fundamental aims of using the post-test here are:

- ✓ Assessing the experimental group's accuracy
- ✓ Comparing both groups(the experimental and the control group) performance
- ✓ Introspect the effect of portfolio assessment on writing
- ✓ Draw inferences about portfolio assessment usage

The post-test started on October 13, 2022, and the topic was how social media changed the world around us. Indeed, the researcher asked both groups to write a paragraph describing the impact of social media. The researcher granted both groups (the experimental and the control group) the needed time to write an effective paragraph. Moreover, the researcher provided a pleasing atmosphere for both groups because he wanted them to feel at ease and stress-free. Furthermore, he aimed to establish satisfying conditions for the students that would consolidate their writing and yield better performance.

2.11 The Questionnaire

According to a definition provided by Brown (2001, p.6)," Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing prompts." This definition describes the purposes as well as the evaluation procedures. In this way, they serve as tools for gathering several data about the respondents. Zoltan (2002) suggested different types of data: factual, behavioural, and attitudinal. Firstly, factual questions supply information about the respondents. For example, demographic attributes (age, gender, and race), location, socioeconomic status, level of education, religion, occupation, and other background information. Secondly, behavioural questions provide information related to peoples' actions, lifestyles, habits, and personal histories. Generally, they ask about what the respondents have done or did in the past. Finally, attitudinal questions relate to what people think, mainly their ingrained category in the human mind. They are concerned with attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests, and values

Since questionnaires are tools used for data collection, they are subject to merits and limitations. Zoltan (2002, pp.9-12) points out that questionnaires appear to be adequate tools in terms of research time, effort, and financial resources. One can gather an immense amount of data in a shorter time, and process it with less personal effort: using, for example, some modern computer software. Similarly, Zoltan (2002) argued that questionnaires could handle a variety of topics, situations, and audiences with success. Accordingly, many research projects in the educational context and social sciences use them as relevant means of data gathering**.**

Although questionnaires appear to be attractive tools for researchers to use in their research projects, this does not mean that they carry limitations and challenges. Zoltan (2002) attested, though he does not affirm, that some researchers consider questionnaire data as not reliable or valid. He carried on by suggesting four essential sources of the questionnaires' limitations. Firstly, the simplicity and superficiality of the answers. For example, the questionnaires given to the respondents need to be simple and clear; otherwise, it becomes an obstacle. As a result, this kind of delivery cannot be considered sufficient for an in-depth investigation. The second limitation of questionnaires is unreliable and unmotivated respondents. For instance, many respondents lack interest; either they do not see benefits from it, or they do not like it. The third listed limitation is the respondents' literacy problem. Since not all the respondents have better reading and writing skills, completing the questionnaire might appear a challenging task for them. The fourth limitation of questionnaires is the few opportunities to correct the respondents' mistakes. Especially, in situations where the respondents deviate intentionally from the context or have limited knowledge

2.11.1 Operationalizing the Questionnaire

This process instructs determining a group of objectives and converting these into inquiry-based detailed fields from which we can collect data. Indeed, planning a questionnaire requires a set of stages. First, the purpose of the questionnaire needs to be explicit and clear. The second stage dictates diagnosing and specifying the complementary topics that correlate with the fundamental objective of the questionnaire. The third stage recommends providing a detailed description of the elements incorporated. According to the researcher, this process is more forthright as it passes from what is more general as objectives to some precise characteristics. In contrast, Wilson and McLean propose a substitute approach that seems relevant to the research field. Their approach suggests the identification of the research niche, explaining the related concepts, and exposing characteristics of measurement that yield appropriate proof of the constructs. Together, these approaches support the belief that a questionnaire needs to display clarity on the level of objectives and the elements included. Nonetheless, it needs to deliver relevant questions that yield appropriate data (Cited in Louis et.al, 2005).

Kothari (2004) Stated that although there is a wide range of questionnaires, a simple rule governs the process: the smaller the sample, the less structured and opened the questionnaire, and the larger the sample, the more closed and structured the questionnaire. This simple rule made it clear that the basis of any selection is the size of the participants; and that questionnaires vary along a continuum from less structured to structured.

Structured questionnaires permit observation, comparison, and frequencies of responses. They indeed take time in the early stage, especially the first steps related to preparation, development, refinement, and piloting. However, once done with the early stage, analysing the gathered data becomes instantaneous. The writer mentioned the word trade-off to explain the essence of structured questionnaires. On the other hand, open semi-structured questionnaires enable respondents to answer, comment and share their points of view. They are unique as they can provide a vision that a structured one cannot attain. Researchers suggested that the attraction of this kind is that they provide clear objectives and a rich share of information. This makes semi-structured questionnaires particularly practical in generating non-leading responses (Louis et.al, 2005).

Generally, questionnaires possess a variety of questions and response styles. They range from closed to open questions. On the one hand, closed questions are simple and easy to complete, as they require the respondents to choose from a set of suggestions already provided by the researcher. Moreover, they do not authorize respondents to share their perceptions or convey comments and are easy to code. However, despite the many advantages of this type of question, Oppenheim (1992, p.115, cited in Louis et.al) claimed that some questions are misleading or are not extensive in their coverage. As a result, the data gathered from this type of question is sometimes biased. Opened questions, in contrast, are suitable for small-scale research and permit respondents to share, explain and add their value to the response. This free-response allows respondents to produce comprehensive answers. Despite this, their hurdle lies in the process of coding and classifying, especially when the sample is large. In either case, the selection depends on the research objectives, the population, and the category of research undertaken. According to Zoltan (2002), when private and well-supplied information is the aim, then the qualitative design is the most appropriate; when measurement and comparison are the aims, a quantitative approach is relevant.

2.11.2 The Layout of the Questionnaire

A critical feature of the questionnaire is the layout. Zoltan (2000) asserted that developing a highly organized and intimidating design is the key to obtaining valuable and reliable data. He claimed that the questionnaire format is paramount; it is the medium between the researcher and the respondents and can elevate motivation. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2006, p.258) mentioned that a questionnaire needs to be easy to complete, engaging in its appearance, and encouraging. Additionally, they proposed several key features that would enhance the general layout of the questionnaire. First, present the respondents with the aims of each part of the questionnaire and the reasons for the items' inclusion. As a result, they become familiar with

its components and can reply accurately. Second, a detailed design and simple language. It is important to provide respondents with explicit directions that will permit success in completing the questionnaire and finally, provide the respondents with guidance and direction for each section of the questionnaire to keep them concentrated and abide by the overall purpose of the questionnaire (Louis et. al, 2005).

2.11.3 Piloting the Questionnaire

According to Louis et.al (2005, p.21), piloting the questionnaire is a necessary step for improving the quality of the questionnaire in terms of reliability, validity, and practicality. Going through the try-out helps the researcher attain valuable feedback on the level of question types and format, the appropriateness of the questions, the attractiveness, the appearance of the questionnaire, and the validity of the items. Nonetheless, piloting provides information about the time taken to complete the questionnaire, the level of difficulty the questionnaire is displaying, and the explicitness of items, instructions, and layout.

In the present study, four teachers were part of the piloting phase. They received copies of the questionnaire to review its items and layout. Then, they equipped the researcher with feedback, and insightful information regarding elaboration, organization, and convenience. Moreover, they suggested changing some items and omitting others that were unnecessary, ambiguous, and irrelevant to the study. Furthermore, they informed the researcher to simplify the general language of the questionnaire to conform to the audience and recommended changing the rating scale of the questionnaire by providing a variety within the questionnaire. Indeed, the researcher took the feedback and the insights received into consideration and started correcting and adjusting the questionnaire (Louis et.al, 2005).

In the current study, the researcher utilized three different questionnaires: all of them were post-intervention questionnaires delivered to the trainees after their experiment with the portfolio assessment for two semesters.

2.11.4 First Post-Intervention Questionnaire

At the end of the treatment, the experimental group received a questionnaire related to their experience with portfolio assessment. In this arena, the use of the questionnaire was to consolidate the data obtained from the experiment and provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on students' writing. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-seven (37) EFL students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University. The reason for using this research tool is to:

- ✓ Obtain data about students' writing abilities
- ✓ Exploring students' perception of assessment in general and portfolio assessment

✓ checking the efficacy of the treatment on their writing

✓ Checking the research hypothesis

The questionnaire consisted of fifteen (15) questions designed to elicit responses related to the impact of portfolio assessment usage on students' overall writing, have a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study, and strengthen the data gathered from the experiment and the post-test. The questionnaire incorporated four (4) parts distributed as follows:

The introductory question used in the questionnaire was related to gender. The aim of including gender in this questionnaire was to check if there were differences between genders regarding the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on students writing.

Part One: Students' writing abilities

The initial part of the questionnaire sought to obtain data about students' writing and how they perceived their writing before undertaking the experiment. It consisted of three (3) questions designed mainly to inspect insightful information related to writing satisfaction, interest in improvement, and perception of their writing abilities.

Part Two: Perception of assessment in general and portfolio assessment

The second part of the questionnaire aimed at investigating students' perception of assessment in general and portfolio assessment, and clarifying the difference in perceptions between the practised assessment and the experienced one through the treatment. It comprised four (4) questions devised to investigate students' content with the used assessment, the usefulness and their awareness of the assessment provided by the researcher, and if they were subject to such assessment before.

Part Three: The impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing

The third part of the question tried to inspect the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing by checking the extent of its efficacy on their overall writing. Moreover, the researcher in this part wanted to explore if the treatment yielded positive effects on students' writing, made students aware of these effects, and embraced the benefits of using portfolio assessment in evaluating their writing.

2.11.5 Second Post-Intervention Questionnaire

After ending the intervention, students received the first questionnaire related to collaboration. The questionnaire was administered to the First-year LMD students' experimental group at Mustapha Stambouli University in Mascara on May 12 after finishing the post-test. Because the experimental group was concerned with the intervention, they received the questionnaire. The questionnaire intended to explore the outcome of using

portfolio assessment on students' collaboration. To avoid misunderstanding problems, the researcher provided the students with an overview of the questionnaire, explaining the items, the aim, and how to fill in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire embodied four parts: Discussing ideas for the paragraph, producing rough drafts, sharing and editing the paragraph, and redrafting the paragraph (see appendices)

Part One: Discussing Ideas for the Paragraph

The first part of the questionnaire was the introductory part and aimed at eliciting information related to the discussion of ideas for the paragraph. It comprised five (5) questions designed to obtain data concerning the treatment's role in encouraging the exchange and the expression of ideas between students, supporting the generation of ideas in groups, suppressing writer's block, and permitting cooperative work.

Part Two: Producing Rough Drafts

The second part of the questionnaire was related to producing rough drafts. This part involved four (4) questions devised to check the procedures students undertake to produce the rough drafts such as consideration of note-taking and feedback acceptance, prioritizing group work, and relating to peers when facing an issue in writing.

Part Three: Sharing and Editing the Paragraph

The third Part of the questionnaire was dedicated to sharing and editing procedures of the paragraph. It included four (4) questions developed to explore the extent of sharing between students after finishing the first draft. In this area, students were asked about sharing after finishing the first draft, whether or not they received constructive suggestions on their writing, the usability of sharing for writing improvement, and if the treatment encouraged writing revision.

Part Four: Redrafting the paragraph

The last part of the questionnaire enclosed four questions directed at reviewing the strategies students go through when redrafting their paragraphs. This part took account of students' readiness to accept and take notes of the suggestions provided by peers, whether or not students made the necessary changes before handing their paragraph to an evaluator, and whether the treatment taught them how to use collaboration to elevate their writing accuracy.

2.11.6 Third Post-Intervention Questionnaire

After receiving the first questionnaire related to the effect of the portfolio on students' collaboration, students were subject to a second questionnaire. It was mainly concerned with the intervention they received. This questionnaire addressed students' attitudes toward the use of portfolio assessment. It was a self-administered one. The researcher chose this type of

administration to build rapport with the respondents, clarify the purpose of the research, and encourage the students to cooperate (Zoltan, 2002, p.81).

The attitudes questionnaire is an adapted questionnaire taken from two different studies (Yeliz and Serpil, 2021; Teguh et.al, 2020). It aims to investigate students' attitudes toward the use of portfolios in the assessment of students writing at Mascara University. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-seven (37) EFL students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University. The questionnaire started with a brief opening that demonstrated the purpose of the study, the types of the rating scale, and how to fill it in. The questionnaire (Yeliz and Serpil, 2021; Teguh et.al, 2020) encompasses four parts:

- ✓ The merits of portfolio assessment,
- ✓ Portfolio assessment and awareness,
- ✓ The impact of portfolio assessment,
- ✓ The procedure of portfolio assessment.

Section One: The merits of portfolio assessment

The initial part of the questionnaire was related to the merits of the treatment (portfolio assessment). It comprised three (3) questions related to introduction writing and the role of portfolio assessment in developing students' organizational skills.

Section Two: Portfolio assessment, and awareness

The second part of the questionnaire was related to the portfolio assessment and awareness, and aimed at inspecting students' perception of the impact of portfolio assessment on their perception. It consisted of five (5) questions devised to investigate the extent of awareness witnessed after students' experience with the treatment in terms of strengths, weaknesses, efforts, mistake spotting, and revision techniques.

Section Three: The impact of portfolio assessment

The third part of the questionnaire tackled students' attitudes and perceptions toward the impact of portfolio assessment on their writing. It comprised six (6) questions designed to explore whether the implementation of portfolio assessment supported students' writing and contributed to elevating their grammatical mastery, keeping the habits of writing, enriching vocabulary, and willingness to write actively.

Section Four: The procedure of portfolio assessment

The last part of the questionnaire addressed students' perceptions and attitudes toward the content of the portfolio assessment. Through the content, the researcher addressed students' perceptions and attitudes toward the procedures of portfolio assessment, that is to say, selection,

reflection, feedback (teacher and peers), revision, delayed evaluation, and collection. It comprised five (5) questions.

2.12 The Interview

According to a definition provided by Louis et.al (2005), knowledge should be seen as constructed between participants, generating data rather than capta (Laing, 1967, p.53 cited in Louis et.al, 2005, p.265). This definition portrays that utilizing interviews indicates a shift from what is abstract to a humanized view of how to collect and generate knowledge. They defined the interview as the exchange between people on a specific topic of interest that requires considering interaction as the prime source of knowledge within a social embedding. Moreover, interviews allow the participant to discuss interpretations and express their point of view on specific situations. Nonetheless, Cannell and Kahn (1968, p.527 cited in Louis et.al, 2005, p.256) stated that the research interview is the interviewer's initiation of a two-person conversation to obtain research-relevant information and the focus on content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. This definition explains how to carry out a research interview by stressing the relevance of the provided information and the adequacy of the research objectives.

Kitwood identified three main conceptions of interviews. First, they are efficient tools for supplying and gathering accurate information. Second, they hold biased attributes due to the link to human behaviour like emotions and interpersonal influences that need awareness and control to minimize their adverse effects. Third, since they are meetings that carry much of everyday life traits; they need a specific theory that provides suitable characteristics for interviews. (Cited in Martyn, 2010, p.265)

Moreover, according to Louis et.al (2005, p.268-269), an interview may serve different objectives; and participants (the interviewer and interviewee) may vary too according to the case and the reasons for taking part. In this, the uses of an interview might be evaluating or assessing a person, testing or developing hypotheses, and collecting information for experiments or surveys. In the same vein, Louis et.al (2005) pinpointed three purposes for the research interview. Firstly, the collection of practical information linked to the research goals. Secondly, the development of new hypotheses or the testing of existing ones; is an informative tool for understanding and clarifying relationships between variables. Finally, the use of the interview along with other research devices to provide a deeper understanding, or pursue results.

2.12.1 Types of Interviews as Research Tools

Much literature spoke about several types of interviews in research. However, none of the proposals provide an exact count of the varieties. Indeed, Kvale (1996, p.126-127, cited in Martyn, 2010) indicated that types of interviews lay in a continuous sequence and noted that the differences reside in the clarity of their purpose, their focus (emotion, cognitive), the degree of structure in the interview (structured, unstructured), and whether they aim for description or make an interpretation. Similarly, Morisson (1993) puts the types of interviews along continuums with two ends. One end represents highly structured features; the other end displays less structured characteristics.

Quantitative Approach	Qualitative approach
Numbers	Words
predetermined, given open-ended, responsive	capturing uniqueness
measuring	long-term,
short-term,	continuous
intermittent	capturing particularity
comparing	valuing quality
correlating	individuality
frequencies	informality
formality	looking for uniqueness
looking at regularities	explanation
description	subjective facts
objective facts	interpreting
describing	looking from the inside
looking in from the outside	unstructured
structured	ethnographic,
statistical	illuminative

Table 0.3: Types of interviews (Louis et.al, 2005, p.272)

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.269, cited in Martyn, 2010) mentioned that interviews fall into two categories (structured and unstructured). They pointed out that when the researcher is familiar with the phenomena and understands what he ignores about the topic or the issues, the structured interview can serve best because the researcher can alter the questions to meet the needed information. On the contrary, the unstructured interview is most profitable when the researcher depends solely on the respondents and does not clearly understand the issue under study. This definition explains that the golden rule of selection is "relevance"; if the aim is to

obtain identical information, the requirements are structured, standardized, and quantitative interviews. Whereas, if the purpose is personalized non-standardized data, the qualitative unstructured interview is the alternative.

Louis et.al (2005, p.273), in their review, identified four basic types of research interviews: (a) structured interview; (b) unstructured interview; (c) non-directive interview; (d) focused interview. The structured interview, on the one hand, requires strict organization for both the content and the process. What characterizes this kind is that it follows a pre-determined plan and does not allow the interviewer to undertake any adaptation or refine the interview. The unstructured interview, on the other hand, enables the interviewer to modify the content and the process whenever he thinks it fits the objectives planned.

The non-directive interview permits the interviewee greater freedom and control throughout the interview, where he can convey emotions and feelings according to their own pace and will. However, the role of the interviewer is quite restricted and given limited control over the interview where he can, for instance, clear up ambiguities, rephrase, and analyze responses. In contrast, the focused one was devised based on a call for control over the interview. It concentrates on a pre-analysis from the interviewer's side of the respondents' subjective responses. Through this, the interviewer can use the information gathered from the interview to change or refute the hypothesis (Louis et.al, 2005).

2.12.2 Interview Procedures and Planning

Planning an interview requires steps and procedures to attain the designed objectives. Kvale (1996, cited in Louis et.al, 2005) suggested seven steps to complete an interview: first, thematizing consists of specifying the purpose and clarifying the concept under investigation. Secondly, the design instructs the development of a suitable plan for the study. Third, interviewing involves using a schedule when interviewing and a reflective approach to the information collected. Fourth, transcribing indicates starting the data interpretation and analysis process, generally from oral speech to written text. Fifth, analysing implies selecting a suitable method of analysis that best fits the objective, the topic, and the nature of the interview. Sixth, verifying the finding requires confirming the reliability, validity, and generalizability. Finally, reporting demands announcing the results in a manner that conforms to the scientific criteria.

In their review, Louis et.al (2005, p.292) argued that there are three important ethical issues to consider when conducting an interview: informed consent, confidentiality, and interview consequences. Informed consent stands for the participant's right to free approval and self-determination as to whether he wants to participate in the research interview. Diener and Grandall (1978, cited in Louis et.al, 2005) support this view and provide a straightforward

definition of informed consent. They stated that it is a process where the subject decides to be in research after the apprehension of the impacts that may apply to the participant. Louis et.al (2005, p.51) stated that this definition highlights four tenets of informed consent (competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension). Firstly, competence suggests that a dedicated participant is conscious enough to provide accurate decisions based on reliable facts. Secondly, voluntarism recommends that the participant is aware enough and willingly decides to partake in research. Third, full information instructs the reception of extensive data related to research. Finally, comprehension implies that the consent keenly recognizes the nature of the investigation and its complexities. On the other hand, Confidentiality recommends the anonymity of the respondent's identity in which the researcher guarantees the non-identification and non-traceability of the participant's information. Finally, the consequences of the interview imply that the research environment is appropriate and does not exhibit a harmful state or a stressful situation that would impact the future physical or psychological state of the participant.

2.12.3 Collaboration Interview Procedure

As described earlier, the interview in the current investigation aimed to shed light on the effects of the portfolio on students' perception, and collaboration in writing. Because the nature of writing is cooperative and attempts to get students involved in their learning, it requires students to work together to complete a piece of paper. Indeed, Speck (2002, p.7 cited in Louis et.al, 2005) argued that denying the collaborative feature of the writing skill would lead to incorrect, perhaps incompetent teaching. This definition highlights the aspect of writing that needs to be aware of when tutoring to achieve a well-constructed written product and enhance accuracy.

In this arena, the researcher used interview procedures to analyse the impact of portfolio assessment on collaboration and social skills improvement. Identically, the students experienced the treatment for two semesters. At the end of the second semester, the experimental group received a questionnaire and an interview related to the impact of the independent variable (portfolio assessment) on the dependent one (students' collaboration). Moreover, the selection of students for the interview followed a simple random sampling procedure in which the researcher used coin tossing to assign those who would be part of the interview. The experimental group was made up of thirty-seven students and they were fresh First-Year students. The researcher wanted to select six (6) students to take part in the interview. Four (4) females and two (2) males were the results of the sampling procedure after using coin tossing by the researcher.

The researcher relies on the interview as a tool to accumulate relevant data related to the impact of the portfolio assessment on students' collaboration regarding discussing ideas development, cooperative strategies, sharing, editing, responsibility, self-regulation, and social skills. The interview included fourteen questions (14) related to:

- ✓ Treatment procedure(3)
- ✓ The impact of the portfolio assessment on collaboration(6)
- ✓ The effects of portfolio assessment on social skills(5)

Because the interview aimed to elicit valuable information regarding the impact of the treatment on students' collaboration and social skills, the researcher followed a simple design that teemed with straightforward questions determined to serve the purpose of the research area. It is important to note that the selection procedure of the participants for this interview followed the same approach as the previous one, where the researcher used coin-tossing to select six members. The interview participants were four (4) and made up of two (2) males and two (2) females. On May 16, 2022, at 11.00 A.M at Mascara University, the researcher started the interview process regarding the impact of the portfolio on collaboration and social skills. Moreover, the researcher used a paper and a recording device to document the participants' replies. Nonetheless, the interview incorporated three parts linked directly to the questionnaire and concerned with the treatment procedure, the impact of portfolio assessment on collaboration, and the effects on social skills. Because the researcher believed that relying on a single tool cannot be sufficient, he used the interview along with the questionnaire and observation to create a triangulation and permit a greater depth of understanding and also a more valid finding.

Part One: Treatment Procedure (questions 1-3)

It comprised three statements that aimed at exploring students' views about portfolio assessment procedures in EFL classes and collaboration in writing.

Part Two: The impact of portfolio assessment on collaboration (questions 4-9)

It included five (5) questions dedicated to analysing and understanding the impact of the portfolio assessment procedure on student collaboration in writing. In this part, the researcher attempted to generate responses related to the role of the portfolio in elevating skills such as cooperative strategies, sharing, the exchange of ideas, responsibility, and self-regulation.

Part Three: The effects of portfolio assessment on social skills (10-14)

The third part inquired about students' social skills after receiving the treatment. As the aim was to understand the impact of portfolio assessment on students' social skills in writing

and whether there was an improvement in the essential traits related to social skills, the researcher relied on five questions to stimulate responses.

2.12.4 Perception Interview Procedure

After ending the intervention, students were interviewed about their perceptions of portfolio assessment. The researcher inserts a semi-structured interview because he has limited knowledge to confirm and similarly relies on the respondents to tell more about the investigation. Indeed, the researcher used a formal style to deliver the interview and relied on a well-planned procedure and a recorder to memorize the responses. Moreover, the interview guide was adapted from a study done by Behrooz et.al (2010) and altered to fit the EFL Algerian context. The researcher took what was necessary and built a context that best fits the purpose of the study.

Because students have experienced portfolio assessment, they received the student interview guide, which comprises (15) fifteen precise questions about:

- ✓ Assessment in general
- ✓ Writing assessment
- ✓ The experience of portfolio assessment
- ✓ The impact of portfolio assessment on writing improvement (Behrooz et.al, 2010)

Statements of the interview are questions that require students to give their perception of the portfolio assessment. The researcher selected six (6) students to be part of the interview. They were randomly selected using a simple random method in which the researcher used coin tossing to assign those who would be part of the interview. They were randomly selected using a simple random method in which the researcher used coin tossing to assign those who would be part of the interview. The interview participants were six (6) and made up of three (3) males and three (females). On June 01, 2022, at 10.00 A.M at Mascara University, the researcher interviewed the students about their perception of portfolio assessment and used a recording device to record the participants' responses. Moreover, he gave prompts for the participants to ease the generation of answers and help students feel confident and secure.

The interview comprised four parts related to participants' perception of assessment in general, the assessment of writing, the experience of portfolio assessment, and the extent of writing improvement under portfolio assessment. The interview was much more related to the questionnaire of attitudes and aimed at validating the data gathered from the participants. As mentioned earlier, it tackled four main axes (see appendix)

Part One: Assessment (questions 1-4)

It included three questions that aimed to investigate the participants' knowledge and how they perceive assessment in general.

Part Two: Writing assessment (questions 4-7)

It comprised three questions that were designed to elicit the interviewees' general perceptions and feelings about how writing is taught and assessed at the university. It included questions about how writing assessment is conducted in the current state, and if they were satisfied with what was presented to them as scoring criteria and teaching method.

Part Three: The experience of portfolio assessment (questions 8-11)

The third part aimed at generating responses regarding students' experience with portfolio assessment. Because students have experienced portfolios for two semesters, the interview attempted to recount this experience and get them to reflect upon what was appealing and grabbed their attention and what was not.

Part Four: The impact of the portfolio on writing improvement (11-15)

The fourth part dealt with the impact of portfolio assessment on writing improvement. The researcher asked four questions to elicit the students' views about the extent of progress in writing performance after receiving the treatment (portfolio). In addition, the interview inquired about the type of feedback students found more valuable and helpful. Finally, it asked about their participation in the portfolio experience and how far they would grow and become better EFL writers.

2.13 Observation

According to Geoffrey et al. (2005, pp.6-7), observation implies two different approaches. Awareness of the surroundings through questions that may lead to ideas and inquiries for investigation. Make meticulous and authentic measurements by employing adequate devices, being vigilant to get rid of biased features, and ensuring the accuracy of the research. As a tool, observation is an effective instrument that helps in gathering valuable data. Similarly, Alison and Susan (2016, pp.239-240-241) stated that when the researcher relies on observation to collect data, he recounts the actual state of the learners without interfering. Likewise, Louis et.al (2005, p.305) pointed out that observational data are attractive as they give the researcher opportunities to collect "live" data from "live" situations. These definitions highlight the distinctive features of observation which, unlike other tools, allow the researcher to be part of the investigation, interact with the environment, view from different angles, and have a connection to private information.

According to Morrison (1993, p.80 cited in Louis et.al, 2005, p.305), observation allows the researcher to collect data on four levels:

The physical setting (e.g. the physical environment and its organization);

The human setting (e.g. the organization of people, the characteristics and make-up of the groups or individuals being observed, for instance, gender, class);

The interactional setting (e.g. the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, non-verbal, etc.);

The program setting (e.g. the resources and their organization, pedagogic styles, curricula, and their organization).

This definition depicts the richness of observation as a tool for data collection as it allows the researcher to have an in-depth sight that will allow the whole coverage of the phenomena under investigation, and even generate a new perception for investigation.

The classification of observation depends on the extent of structure, generally from structured to unstructured. Correspondingly, Louis et.al (2000, p.305-6) explained its types by stating that it lies on a continuum from structured to unstructured, responsive to pre-ordinate.

First, structured observation has a clear objective in which data collection is systematic as the observer predetermines the whole situation because he comprehends his target. Furthermore, it seeks to acknowledge or reject already existing hypotheses. Moreover, the researcher relies on rating scales and checklists to record information and behaviour that will permit a systematic comparison. Secondly, Semi-structured observation has a plan for managing the phenomena, but data gathering is not precise; usually, the researcher relies on less organized devices to gather data, for instance: he can use field notes or transcripts. Finally, unstructured observation does not have determined objectives. The distinctive feature of this type is that the role of the researcher is not testing already existing hypotheses but developing new ones. Typically, the researcher needs to step into a situation, observe the environment and then decide the relevance of the information collected to the research (Louis et.al, 2005).

2.13.1 The Role of the Observer

It is inconceivable for the researcher to conduct observation without being part of the environment he is observing. In this regard, Louis et.al (2005, p.305-6) mentioned that most of the research has a kind of participant observation as there is a general agreement that we cannot investigate any phenomena without inclusion (Alder & Alder, 1994, cited in Cohen and

Manion, 2000). The role of the researcher can vary from full participation in the process to complete disconnection. Likewise, Louis et.al (2005, p.306) explained that the researcher moves from complete participant to complete observer. The role of the latter tends to manifest as a non-interventionist, in which the researcher is not making provocation or delivering questions to the participants and relies solely on recording devices to capture the events. On the contrary, the role of the former (complete participant) requires the researcher to be part of the observed environment where he appears as a member within that segment. On the other hand, the participant as an observer requires the researcher to identify himself openly with the group observed to get approval from the observee. Doing that can enable a friendly, original, and authentic data recording. Finally, the observer as a participant necessitates keeping the researcher's profile unseen to the whole group. Observation, in this manner, means the researcher wants to give a wide berth to the observee, meanwhile preserving the naturalness of the setting (Martyn, 2010, p.207)

In quantitative research, the observer concentrates on a specific area, analyses it using a schedule like checklists and note fields, and then reports, for instance, the frequency of occurrence of an event without interference. On the other hand, in qualitative research, the observer is captured by the situation. I.e. he is there, which permits a thorough observation of the events and behaviours as they occur. Here the researcher is playing an ordinary person who belongs to the group observed (Martyn, 2010, p.199).

2.13.2 Disadvantages of Observation

2.13.2.1 Disadvantages of Systematic Observation

Martyn (2010, pp.199-204-2055) suggested it is true that variation occurs across different observers recording the same facts or events. He related this inconsistency of results to personal conditions, preoccupation, and enthusiasm during observation for each researcher. In addition, systematic observation focuses on the description of external behaviour and denies the reason for the existence of certain behaviours. Moreover, it oversimplifies the behaviour by considering it as a simple entity that can be accurately measured using systematic procedures and disregarding important hidden details of behaviour. Furthermore, systematic observation denies the information related to the circumstances of the existence of the behaviour. Nonetheless, it is an analytical approach to data recording and denies the holistic nature of behaviour or events. Typically, by adopting a systematic observation, the researcher can affect the naturalness of the setting where he cannot capture the whole package of the event or behaviour. Finally, the danger of the "Hawthorne effect" where learners act better when they

know they are under observation. This state will influence the linguistic behaviour of the observed and lead to biased findings.

2.13.2.2 Disadvantages of Participant Observation

Martyn (2010, p.214) mentioned that the researcher in participant observation might face limitations regarding the setting to adhere to and the role to endorse. Nevertheless, there is a general agreement that taking a participant observation is a tough job that requires resources and commitment. Nonetheless, issues related to reliability might appear risky for the research because the researcher relies on himself to perform the observation. Under that circumstance, research data may lack verification, and the possibility of replication may appear challenging. As a result, results obtained from participant observation are not representative enough to be generalized. Moreover, there is a risk of ethical issues, especially when the researcher takes a position within a group and hides his identity and purpose. Alison and Susan (2016, p.228) argued that performing more than one activity may create an unstable state of data recording where the researcher will maximize one role over the other or vice-versa. As a result, it may lead to biased data.

2.13.3 Advantages of Observation

2.13.3.1 Advantages of Systematic Observation

Observation is usually subject to inconsistencies, but when the researcher relies on observation schedules, he is likely to lower variation effects that occur due to subjective perception of the events or behaviour. Moreover, it equips the researcher with an objective, systematic design that not only allows different observers to focus on the same things but also provides an organized framework and helps decrease the inconsistencies arising from having more than one researcher observing the same behaviour or event. Furthermore, it enables gathering direct data that bear on the actual state of the observed, not their intentions or sayings. Additionally, through systematic observation, the research can collect data that appear to be massive, objective, and immediate. These data are quantitative as they are pre-coded and can be rapidly analysed. This type of observation displays a high level of reliability, especially inter-rater reliability. Because using the observation schedule made different observers produce almost identical data (Martyn, 2010, p.204).

2.13.3.2 Advantages of Participant Observation

As the process of participant observation requires the researcher to operate within a group as a member, he becomes the agency of data which will, as a result, limit the requirements of resources such as technical and statistical support. Moreover, participant observation enriches the research environment by equipping the researcher with comprehensive insight

related to social processes. Nonetheless, the data derived from participant observation are context-related as the researcher induces the data from the natural occurrence of the event. Furthermore, in participant observation, the researcher adopts an integrative technique of interpreting the collected data that considers relationships between different factors. Nevertheless, such conditions authorize the researcher to maintain the naturalness of the setting and grasp the subjects' points of view and meaning as produced (Louis et.al, 2005).

2.13.4 Observation Design and Procedure

Utilizing observation in the current research consolidated the data gathered from the intervention, post-intervention, and questionnaire. In this regard, it permits an extension of the amount of data, explores classroom practices, and gets in-depth insight into the phenomena. Moreover, there is a general agreement that observation is best when it is related to other research tools (Alison and Susan, 2016, p.228). Since the current research is about the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing, collaboration, and perceptions, the researcher includes this tool to capture data from different angles that might be of paramount importance to the research arena. Questions might arise about the usefulness of using classroom observation as a tool for the current research:

- ✓ What are the aspects to consider when undertaking classroom observation?
- ✓ What type of observation method should we rely on to record data?
- ✓ Why do we need to include observation in our assessment of students writing, collaboration, and perceptions?

The researcher used observation to stand on how the portfolio is impacting students writing skills in terms of revising, editing, and feedback throughout the process of paragraph writing. The data collected from observation, along with the treatment (portfolio) and the post-test, will provide the researcher with reliable data about the extent of writing improvement and illuminate other aspects of portfolio assessment. Nevertheless, data gathered from observation in connection with the questionnaire will enrich the research repertoire by explaining the level of social skills and collaboration development. Furthermore, adding this instrument to the students' questionnaire and interview will thoroughly describe how students perceive portfolio assessment, its use, and attitudes.

Typically, Depending on a single tool cannot enhance the research unless the researcher inserts other sources that aid the conclusions. Alison and Susan (2016, p.233) emphasize the importance of using multiple sources of data collection. They stated that by gathering data through a mixture of tools, the researcher helps address many of the concerns with the different methods. This statement stresses the concept of triangulation as a critical element in research.

The role of triangulation can aid in the credibility, transferability, and dependability of qualitative research. Similarly, Johnson (1992, p.146) mentioned that the significance of triangulation lies in the ability to decrease bias and ameliorate the validity and reliability of the information (Alison and Susan, 2016, p.233).

There are different types of triangulation in the literature: theoretical, investigator, and methodical. Methodical triangulation was the focus of the current research because the researcher combines observation with different research tools to investigate the present study (portfolio assessment). It encompasses achieving relevant findings to a study by combining multiple data-gathering methods (Alison and Susan, 2016, p.233).

2.13.5 Description of the Classroom Observation

Because the current study deals with the effect of portfolio assessment on First-year English student students' writing and collaboration, the researcher selected two groups out of eight. An experimental group, a group with which the researcher taught writing through portfolio assessment. The other group (the control group) received the lessons through conventional teaching. It is important to mention that the experimental group took the treatment (portfolio assessment) for two semesters. Therefore, the researcher used this tool (classroom observation) to collect data from the experimental group alone. The researcher was interested in observing the effect of the portfolio on students' paragraph writing and the extent of development in both writing accuracy and collaboration. The finding of the classroom observation in connection with the other tools will clarify the real impact of the portfolio on First-year English student writing and collaboration.

The current study falls on the semi-structured type due to the appropriateness of this kind to the present study case. The researcher conducted a participant observation to permit a deeper analysis and a detailed exploration of the impacts of the portfolio on students. During observation, the researcher used field notes to record relevant data related to the aim of the research tool.

Classroom observation seeks to obtain data to address these research gaps. It works on shedding light on students' responses to the treatment (portfolio assessment) by displaying and analysing the extent of growth regarding writing accuracy also their success in achieving the predetermined goals. Moreover, the findings from this tool will demonstrate the aspects of portfolio usage and describe students' behaviour after receiving the treatment. Nonetheless, it aims at inquiring about the impact of the portfolio on students' collaboration and confirms the data gathered from the questionnaire and the interview regarding improvement in cooperative strategies and social skills.

2.14 Situation Analysis

2.14.1 History of English Language Teaching

The introduction of English language teaching comes from a well-established policy that aimed to make English the dominant language around the globe. Robert (1992) reported that this policy comes from the belief that language pedagogy which was referred to as the scientific study of language learning and teaching, was isolated from the social sciences and that English language teaching (ELT) required a situation in the macro-societal theoretical perspective. Moreover, Robert (1992) mentioned that the teaching of English was a policy developed by the core-speaking countries (Britain, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) to have control over their colonies and to wipe out the indigenous identity through the development of educational systems. This latter was seen as a successful key for monolingualism (making the English language superior) through which they could rule over the world.

However, many reasons supported the dominance and the spread of English alongside language pedagogy. Among these was the British colonization, where the British Empire ruled a quarter of the world, which supported the spread of English by force of colonization. The second reason was the Industrial Revolution, which happened to emerge in the Kingdom of Great Britain in the mid-18th century and made English the language of science, as a result, this supported the dominance of the English language. The third reason was American domination (Robert, 1992).

Furthermore, English was introduced for third-world countries following two procedures. The initial one was the propaganda made by the core-speaking Countries especially the United Kingdom and the USA which was to civilize those countries and help their economies. This was an explicit procedure and required the building of schools and institutions, providing training for local teachers, and developing curriculum activities. The second one was the transmission of the culture by making English the medium of teaching. Robert (1992) pointed out that teaching English to the indigenous meant the acquisition of some of the favour of the core-speaking culture, which as a result led to the dominance of the English language. Along the same line, he mentioned that they had the belief that multilingualism was seen as a source of distraction and would create unstable expansion for their dominance. One example of the promotion of the English language was the founding of the British Council, an institution developed to promote the dominance of the English language through the variety of programs that it offers to the colonized countries like scholarships to brilliant students and cultural-educational exchange programs.

2.14.2 ELT and Linguistic Imperialism

English Linguistic imperialism was sustained through the inauguration of cultural and structural differences between the English spoken by the core-speaking countries and the colonized languages (the peripheries). Robert in this concern (1992) talked about "Linguicism" and explained that it is a set of ideologies, structures, and norms used for creating unbalanced divisions of power and resources. He asserted that the legitimation of English Language Teaching (ELT) followed three main strategies. The first strategy was the use of Anglo-centricity. This means judging others' cultures according to their principles. The second strategy was professionalism. This later refers to reviewing the practicality of the methods of teaching and learning followed in English language teaching to examine the influence of ELT in the educational systems on culture. The last strategy was modernization, which referred to observing the internal factors of the colonized or third-world countries and assuming that the core English-speaking countries can provide sufficient assistance to would lead to development in those countries (Robert, 1992).

Robert (1992) believed that linguistic imperialism permeated all types of imperialism because it was based on using language instead of force and because language is a basic component of culture, it serves as an important tool for removing the indigenous people's culture and replacing it with new ideologies. Moreover, he reported that the spread of English in the peripheries necessitated having control over science, media, and education. Nonetheless, the promotion of the English language was a requirement for the core English-speaking countries to mark their presence in the third-world countries, and change peoples' ideas and perceptions of different matters. In the same vein, Philipson referred to the concept of "Hegemony". According to Gramsci's theory, it was the transmission of cultural values and norms to the dominated countries in an invisible manner that guaranteed control and English hegemonic position. (Robert, 1992, p.95)

The spread of the English language was through the medium of education. Robert (1992) pointed out that though the rule of the British Empire in Africa was short; the English language was the dominant language in much of Africa. He reported that the British educational systems were unique and tackled almost all fields of life. The primary schools were for all Africans and the indigenous were allowed to use their mother tongue, however in the secondary school, English was the medium for teaching all the subjects, and the mother tongue was not allowed. Following this policy through the medium of education, liberal political and social ideas were prevalent in the colonized people's ideas where there was a drastic influence on their behaviour, dress, life, and even the manner of eating and relating to others. This according to

Philipson was not by chance, rather it was a based policy that aimed at replacing and displacing the position of English in the world by raising its status as a dominant language.

2.14.3 Language Policy in Algeria

Language policy is the guided procedure that aims to undertake an intervention to change the facets of a language and its use within a community (Benrabah, 2014, p.409). Planning the change requires the selection of one variety of languages an organizational body to assume responsibility for the procedure.

According to Benrabah (2014, p.410), four dimensions were identified in the literature on language planning. The first one stands for status planning, it describes the legal procedure followed by the government to make the language official and /or national (Kloss, 1967, 1969). The second one implies corpus planning, which represents the efforts directed to change or repair the linguistic features (internal structure) of a language. The third dimension deals with acquisition planning, this latter guarantees the promotion and proliferation of language through educational systems (Kloss, 1967, 1969). The last dimension represents prestige planning, which necessitates the device of an adequate psychological platform to ensure the future success of language planning activities (Haarman, 1990, cited in Benrabah, 2014). The dimensions mentioned by Benrabah (2014) are considered essential requirements for successfully implementing any language policy including the language policy in Algeria.

Language policy in Algeria was historically subject to three phases: The French colonization phase, the Arabization phase, and the globalized pedagogy (Benrabah, 1999; Rezig, 2011). At the colonial stage, the French language was the official language of Algeria and the educational system or the language policy favoured the use of the French language as the only medium for instruction and education at that time. The aim was to change the position of the Algerian Arab and Berber mother tongue and place it as a second or even a foreign language. Accordingly, in 1938 the colonial government redefined Arabic as a foreign language, while the other dialects were not taught at the schools. The colonial language policy used in Algeria had a drastic impact and marked the linguistic structure of the Algerian language. As a result, the presence of the colonial language became part of the daily speaking and basic component of the majority.

The second phase was Arabization which witnessed two policies: a bilingual policy and the total Arabization policy. The bilingual policy started from 1962 till 1969 (Benrabah, 1999) and resulted from the High Commission for Educational Reform which was held on 15 December 1962. This Educational Reform suggested a gradual Algerianisation of the teaching staff, gradual Arabization, the unity of the educational system, embracing science and

technology, and democratization of public instruction (Bennoune, 2000, p.225, cited in Benrabah, 2014, p.441).

The policy of Arabization in general implies the replacement of the colonial language with the Arabic language as the instrument of teaching in all the cycles of the educational system (Benrabah, 2014, p.410). However, for the Algerian situation, Arabization meant the replacement of the French colonial language with the Arabic one in all the fields of the Algerian people. The inherited educational system appeared inadequate mainly for two reasons: the first one was the drastic decrease in the number of educators, which declined from 27000 educators before independence to 2000 educators after independence. The second reason was the increase in the number of pupils registered in primary schools from 14 per cent to 37.6 per cent, which made the situation difficult to handle with a limited number of educators.

Moreover, Arabization signifies using Arabic as the national language, a symbol of unity, and a certification of an Arab affiliation and identity. The language policy followed in Algeria served two main purposes: Linguistic and cultural and ideological. The linguistic aim was to rely on the colonial language as a prototype for planners and use direct translation as a medium for understanding and clarification and mainly for the revival of the language in society. On the other hand, the cultural/ideological purpose was to replace all that is related to the colonial culture with the Arabic one. The planners aimed to establish what Grandguillaume called" Arabisation-conversion". This latter implies inaugurating an absolute Arab-Islamic mentality and brushing aside all that is related to the Western colonial culture. In this regard, Taleb Ibrahimi (1981, p.66, cited in Benrabah, 2014, p. 411)indicated that culture requires careful attention and suggested that it is like a tree a man cannot build it but he can plant it, and look after it until it is a real tree (Benrabah, 2014, p. 411).

The third phase in the Algerian language policy started in late 1999, especially with the coming of President Bouteflika. The distinctive feature of this phase was the move toward the free market economy and a globalized pedagogy. This transition as stated by President Bouteflika signified the incompetency of the Arabization policy to some extent, especially with science and technology, and an eagerness to be up to date with technology. It also signified intentions to get back to bilingualism as a policy to push the wheel forward for the prosperity and development of the country (Benrabah, 1999).

2.14.4 Major Reforms in the Algerian Educational System

The application of a monolingual educational system in the 1970s required major reforms to facilitate the process of total Arabization and lower reliance on the colonial educational system prototype. The reforms started in 1976 with a move toward what was called

"Ecole Fundamental". This latter referred to the Fundamental schooling system which was based on total Arabization where all the subjects were taught using the Arabic language, and with the association of both primary and middle school together. It is important to mention that until 1970, the educational system at that time incorporated three stages: primary school with five (5) years, middle school with four (4) years, and secondary school with three (3) years (Benrabah, 2014). Through this reform, the English status was still marginalized as the introduction of the English language was in middle school and at the age of (13) years old which made the acquisition of that foreign language harder and did not favour the learning of that language since theories suggested that before the age of puberty, learners can acquire the language effortlessly and successfully.

The second reform was launched in 1993, this reform aimed at incorporating foreign languages at an early stage and gave the learners the ability to choose the foreign language they wanted to learn. Learners were allowed to pick French or English as a mandatory foreign language to learn, however, the majority of the parents preferred the French language over English which as a result, led to break-off and the end of this program or reform.

The third reform was related to higher education and aimed at changing to renovating the university system. At first, the Algerian universities resembled the colonial model and the faculties were using the French language as the language of instruction. Moreover, the majority of the students who won their baccalaureate faced serious issues related to a language handicap where they were taught in Arabic, and at the tertiary level they become subject to a language which they do not have control over. This led to a kind of disappointment, especially for the scientific stream baccalaureate holders who found themselves unable to cope with the university courses as the medium of teaching was the French language. `

The Fourth reform came in September 2003. In this reform, the government regarded the Fundamental schooling system as a failure and substituted it with the former schooling system. It was composed of three stages: the primary school, which is made of five (5) years of schooling, then the middle school with four (4) years, and lastly the secondary school with three (3) years. Along the same line, there was a real intention and envisage to adopt a bilingual policy (Arabic and French) as a means of instruction. Moreover, this change led to a significant change in foreign language status where the introduction of English started one year earlier than before that is to say in the first year of middle school. The expectation from this change was to give students the ability to master foreign languages accurately by being subject to them at an early stage. The introduction of English was necessary because its status became popular as the majority of research, technology, and information were all published in English.

The last phase referred to the recent reform that came after the election of President Tebboune. This reform appeared to be a political response to the French government and those who favoured the French language over Arabic. Moreover, this reform meant that the Algerian government wanted to depart from the French language being the language of colonial times. Furthermore, this reform corresponds to the multilingual policy that aimed to open the doors for open and tolerant pedagogy. Starting in September 2022, President Tebboune ordered the teaching of English in primary school after an in-depth study by experts and specialists (Algeria Press News, 2022), and the learners will start learning the English language from the third grade. Though the introduction of the English language at the primary level seemed challenging for the government, it appears that everything was going just right. For the Algerians, the introduction of English at the early stage of education was necessary and was needed to be up to date with the world of today. What follows are comments on the introduction of English at the primary school:

> It's a good thing - God willing - that our children can speak foreign languages. We're happy and we hope that our Algerian children will learn more, especially English because we're sick of French, the language of colonialism, we want to move forward", said retired primary school teacher, El Hadi. https://www.africanews.com/2022/10/07)

> This will be our first step away from the French language, which is characterized by administrative complications and has brought nothing. Well-off French people are starting to teach their children English. If you, a French person, are teaching your child English, then I should also have the choice to change the language I teach my son. I want to drop the language of the colonizer and adopt the language used worldwide", said Hacene, father of a primary pupil in the capital, Algiers . (https://www.africanews.com/2022/10/07)

From the earlier comments, it is apparent that the Algerian people favour the English language despite their familiarity with the French language and even the culture. This change of direction might be related to factors such as the experience with the French language did not bring the expected results such as development and prosperity, secondly, the historical issues related to colonialism still impact the Algerian memory, especially with the continuous refusal of the French government to admit genocide and war crime in Algeria. Finally, the development

witnessed by the countries that followed the English model made the Algerian people and government enthusiastic about making the future of the country through the lenses of the English model.

2.14.5 English Language Teaching and LMD System

The introduction of the LMD system reform in Algeria referred to the higher education reform in 2004/2005. It is a system called B.M.D issued in the executive decree 04-371 of November, 21st 2004. The idea of embracing such a reform in the Algerian university was because of the spreading of that system all over the globe and, to get ahead with the changing world and permit students' mobility and recognition of their degree all over the world. The implementation of the LMD system was to consolidate the technical and scientific branches. The LMD stands for the license degree, which is granted after three years of studying, the master's degree accorded after two years of study, and the doctorate granted after publishing a research article and defending a thesis. This reform aimed to allow conformity of the Algerian educational system and research to the international ones by mimicking the international norms of research and teaching (Feratha, 2013).

2.14.5.1 The Objectives of the LMD System

The following points are general objectives that higher education aims to achieve from the adoption of the LMD system.

- ✓ Integrating, as appropriate, multidisciplinary approaches and facilitating the improvement of educational quality, information, guidance, and support of the students;
- ✓ Improvement of professional higher education, satisfying the requirement of diploma training and promoting the authenticity of experience in correspondence to the economic and social sectors;
- ✓ Support mobility, expanding training opportunities at national and international levels;
- ✓ Encouraging innovation and supporting the integration of technology in the teaching process, and working on assisting distance education; (Feratha, 2013)

This reform was also designed to give students a hand in learning by encouraging their integration into the teaching and learning processes. The previous model of teaching did not concentrate on the students as being the core of the learning process, but the focus was on the teacher being the source of knowledge. The introduction of the LMD system supported an innovative paradigm based on the integration of students at all levels. What follows are examples of the benefits that students received from the implementation of the LMD system at the tertiary level:

- ✓ Relevant training that would facilitate students' access to professional life

✓ The consolidation of the basic social skills required for a successful professional life through the empowerment of linguistics and communications skills

✓ The implementation of a regular assessment system

✓ The introduction of alternative means of assessment such as" Continuous control"

✓ Rehearse students' abilities to facilitate systematic integration in society and the market.

✓ The transmission of cultural values. (Feratha, 2013)

The LMD system brought new features into the teaching and learning enterprise in terms of the courses, the syllabi content, evaluation procedures, and time allocated for learning, and gave special attention to the amount of work students need to accomplish by the end of semesters. Moreover, the new reform centre of attention was the students' active involvement in the learning process via a load of personal work. Furthermore, it permits the teachers to adapt their programs according to their student's needs, which means favouring the progress of the students at the expense of the syllabi, or the program's general objectives.

Indeed, the introduction of the LMD system at the tertiary level was based on improving students' autonomy, self-reliance, motivation, and responsibility for their learning. Feratha in this regard reported that:

"The implementation of the new reform would grant students a strong desire to be self-reliant rather than spoon-fed learners".

This statement summarises the building blocks of the LMD system, which is to empower and encourage students' responsibility for their learning. Moreover, it gives hints about the importance of making students at the heart of the learning by engaging them in research and activities rather than taking the passive role of watchers or waiters. Nonetheless, it stresses the importance of creating learning and stimulating learners to take a step forward by having control over their learning rather than referring to their teachers to obtain knowledge.

2.14.6 LMD System and English Language Assessment

The introduction of the new reforms in the university required a departure from the conventional methods of assessment to contemporary ones to be framed with the purposes of the reform, fit the needs of the students, and conform to the educational goals. So far, so good, but what does this mean within the LMD reform? Within this reform, alternative means of assessment were the major theme that this reform addressed. This would suggest that reliance on tests alone was no longer sufficient and the call for other means was necessary to support learning, signpost the weaknesses of the students, and create relevant opportunities for learning and improvement. (Hadi, 2022, p.630)

Moreover, greater importance was given to what is labelled as "Control continue"/ Continuous evaluation. This latter stands for consideration of the student's mobility in the classroom in terms of homework, participation, attendance, written and oral tests, and T.D. examination. Furthermore, the new reform gave special attention to the formative evaluation being an important feature that would consolidate learning and empower students' confidence to a significant extent where they could exhibit what they can do. Nonetheless, students' contribution was highly valued through which students can develop agency for their learning, which will result in the development of students' self-reliance skills and becoming autonomous learners. (Hadi, 2022, p.631)

Next, the evaluation procedures within this reform were learner-centred which stands for the action of making students the centre of the learning environment (G. Ayres, 1994, p.48). In other words, students need to be part of the learning and assessment process at all stages which would motivate them to take responsibility and be motivated. Through this, the evaluation procedure would focus on everyday classroom activities and students' production rather than on rote learning and reproduction. (Hadi, 2022, p.631)

2.14.7 Writing Objectives in the University Syllabus

The First-Year LMD students' writing syllabus is the mechanism for ensuring the successful implementation of the language policy stated by the Ministry of Higher Education. A syllabus plays an important role in guiding learning and ensuring the successful implementation of educational materials and units. Its strategic role lies in the ability to cope with students' learning needs and difficulties to conform to the general predesigned purposes. Each syllabus contains a set of goals and objectives that aim to be achieved throughout the units and the lessons. What follows, is Mascara University First-Year LMD students' writing syllabus objective:

- ✓ to learn about the different parts of speech that form a sentence
- ✓ to learn and practice the different basic patterns of the English sentence
- ✓ to learn about the different types of English sentence
- ✓ to learn about the different parts of the paragraph
- ✓ to write a paragraph (narrating-describing-arguing-enumerating)

These earlier-mentioned objectives are important for both teachers; to evaluate whether the teaching procedure was efficient and developed students' writing and for students; to check if they have acquired the prerequisite that will allow them to write accurately. Moreover, writing objectives are procedures that aim to promote the development of students' writing by creating relevant learning material designed to tackle important features of students' needs at this level.

Through this, objectives support the implementation of the programs or the syllabus and promote the progress of students' writing. (Mascara University Syllabus)

2.15 Conclusion

Because the current study investigated the impact of portfolio assessment on fresh First-year English students' writing, collaboration, and perception, the present chapter was dedicated to the structure of the research and the procedures followed by the researcher to carry out the study. This chapter presented the different steps followed by the researcher to begin his research and involved two phases.

The initial phase discussed the aim behind undertaking this research along with the research questions and the hypotheses suggested by the researcher. Moreover, It included the research design and the different procedures and steps selected that would fit the research context. Furthermore, it presented an overview of the study setting, population, sampling procedure, the experiment, and a thorough explanation of the research tools that were used to answer the research questions.

On the other hand, the second phase was related to the educational environment. It started with a brief history of English language dominance and the relationship between English language teaching and linguistic imperialism. Then, it highlighted the language policy followed in Algeria and the major reforms undertaken since the independence of the country. Afterwards, it tackled the introduction of the LMD system at the tertiary level and English language teaching and assessment. Finally, it concluded with the objectives of the writing syllabus as stated by the University of Mascara.

Chapter Three
Results and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

In the language learning context, the fundamental aim of undertaking any experimental research design is to unveil causality or a relationship between variables and provide an in-depth examination. The current research seeks to determine the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' writing concerning paragraph writing. The researcher used an experimental two-group research design based on the pre-test, treatment, and post-test to gain data and insights into the effects of portfolio assessment on students writing. Furthermore, the experimental work presented here contributes remarkably to this area and offers insight into the portfolio assessment effects on writing, collaboration, perception, and attitudes.

The current chapter analyses the data gathered from the experiment, observation, interviews, and questionnaires undertaken in the research. Moreover, the variety of data collection tools adopted by the researcher here aims to provide a thorough idea of the impact of portfolios on the development of students writing, collaboration, and perception development. The results of each research instrument will be displayed using both statistical (quantitative data) and descriptive (qualitative data) forms. The researcher will opt for a mixed-method approach to stress as much data as possible about the impact of portfolio assessment.

3.2 Pre-Intervention Phase

At the experiment's inception, the researcher used a pre-test related to writing to stand on students' current levels. Both groups (the experimental and the control) received the same test because the researcher aimed to identify students' level of writing.

3.2.1 Pre-test Results

The first tool used in this study was the pre-test. This instrument is a required tool in the experimental research design because it is the researcher's source of information and permits deciding if variance at the end of the study is related to the treatment. This tool aimed to diagnose the students' current competence in writing and highlight the difficulties encountered when writing a paragraph.

Trained and experienced teachers corrected the pre-test, and the researcher received the results and highlighted the main areas where students were having difficulties. The researcher used a rating scale based on the TEEP attribute rating scale (Sara, 2001, p.117) when considering students' writing to scrutinize the errors committed by the fresh writers. In this phase, the researcher and the raters worked on displaying students' errors when writing their first paragraph in the pre-test. The focus was on the six levels of writing: organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The results from the pre-test allowed the

researcher to have an idea about the current levels of students' writing and to prepare the required lessons, especially in the areas of limitation.

The results obtained from the pre-test exhibited that both groups (the control and the experimental group) lacked innovative ideas such as thinking out of the box and using imagination. This can be apparent in the similarity of style and the limited types of sentences where only simple sentences appeared and approximately no complex or compound sentences. Furthermore, the paragraphs looked short and lacked the basics of paragraph organization namely the topic sentence, the developing sentences, and mostly the concluding sentences, and the deficiency of paragraph coordination was apparent. Whether the paragraph is descriptive, narrative, or expository, students' writing appeared defective.

The written task provided the researcher with relevant insights about students' current abilities in writing. The information gathered allowed the researcher to understand students' productivity which appeared under the anticipated level. The anticipated level was a successful description using adjectives that conform to the target topic, which was not the case according to the received papers. Nonetheless, their mastery level was far below the average as most of the students' writing was not accurate, and appeared full of mistakes, and the errors were much more related to punctuation and spelling.

When reviewing students' writing, the researcher classified the mistakes produced during the pre-test phase. He found that the top three errors were related to punctuation, spelling, and grammar. This categorization allowed the researcher to understand and stand on the actual writing level of both groups (the control and the experimental group) and provided insight for the researcher on the successful implementation of portfolio assessment to gauge students' writing.
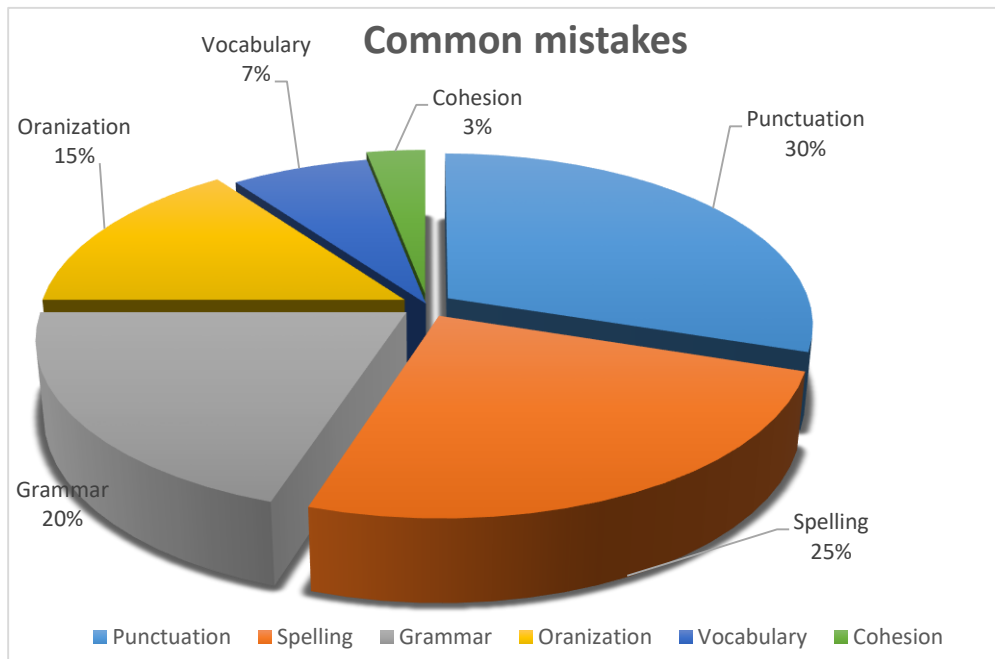
Figure 03.1: Errors Classification

According to the results obtained from the ratters and the researcher document analysis, students' writing levels appeared below average. The ratters indicated that their overall levels ranged from 8 to 8.5 out of 20. Similarly, the researcher affirmed the ratters' results and announced that the average was about 44 per cent. The researcher used the hundred (100) per cent rating scale because he relied on the application 'Grammarly' to check the two groups' writing and to give them rates. The following three examples display students' paragraphs along with the mark as given by the application 'Grammarly'. The researcher used these examples to support his conclusions with proof and to exhibit seriousness when dealing with students' writing. Example 01:

Example 02:

Example 03:

The above examples display students' writing along with the mark given by the application 'Grammarly' to their writing. Moreover, the application helped the researcher analyze their writing, classify the mistakes made, and support a fair judgment of their writing. Furthermore, these examples affirmed the voice of the raters over the limitation of students writing. Based on the earlier mentioned examples and the errors displayed, it was apparent that students lacked the basic writing skills and the ability to deliver a successful written product.

The researcher assumed that this limitation might be related to the lack of previous writing opportunities, lack of practice, and a neglect of the importance of writing skills.
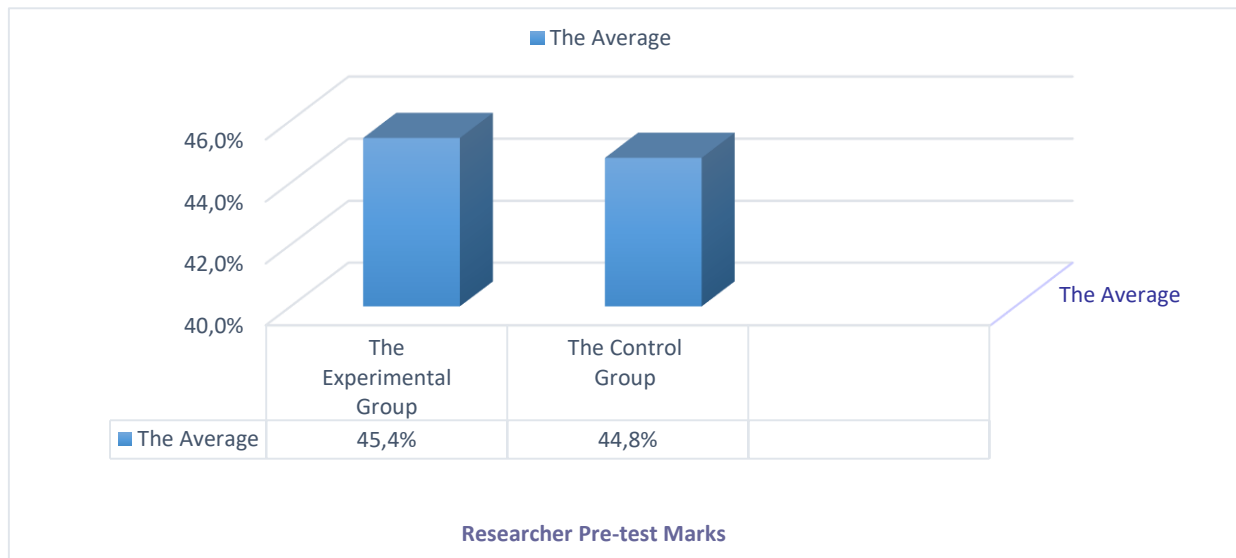
Figure 03.2: Pre-test average

The following table displays both groups' (the experimental and control group) pre-test writing marks along with the average obtained by each group. These received marks provided the basis for checking the extent of development and whether the improvement was related to the treatment received or to some extraneous factors that were out of the researcher's control. Moreover, they were used for comparison purposes where the researcher would compare both tests' results (the pre-test and post-test) and provide a conclusion about the effect of the independent variable (portfolio assessment) over the dependent one (paragraph writing).

Experimental Group (GR01)	Marks	Control Group (GR03)	Marks
Student 01	35,00%	Student 01	40,00%
Student 02	41,00%	Student 02	35,00%
Student 03	45,00%	Student 03	39,00%
Student 04	47,00%	Student 04	42,00%
Student 05	42,00%	Student 05	53,00%
Student 06	40,00%	Student 06	52,00%
Student 07	53,00%	Student 07	50,00%
Student 08	51,00%	Student 08	48,00%
Student 09	50,00%	Student 09	41,00%
Student 10	38,00%	Student 10	45,00%
Student 11	40,00%	Student 11	45,00%
Student 12	53,00%	Student 12	54,00%
Student 13	51,00%	Student 13	42,00%
Student 14	48,00%	Student 14	40,00%
Student 15	45,00%	Student 15	37,00%
Student 16	44,00%	Student 16	34,00%
Student 17	42,00%	Student 17	36,00%
Student 18	46,00%	Student 18	39,00%
Student 19	40,00%	Student 19	44,00%
Student 20	41,00%	Student 20	46,00%
Student 21	42,00%	Student 21	47,00%
Student 22	51,00%	Student 22	51,00%
Student 23	49,00%	Student 23	49,00%
Student 24	51,00%	Student 24	40,00%
Student 25	52,00%	Student 25	47,00%
Student 26	47,00%	Student 26	44,00%
Student 27	43,00%	Student 27	42,00%
		Student 28	43,00%
		Student 29	49,00%
		Student 30	55,00%
		Student 31	50,00%
Average	45,44%	Average	44,48%

Table 0.1:Pre-test Marks as given by the application 'Grammarly'

The researcher used an Excel spreadsheet model to communicate the results of both groups, make the data apparent, construct a realistic understanding of the expectation, and draw inferences from the results. Moreover, the aim behind presenting the average of both groups was to clarify their level and display the percentage of their writing efficacy. Eventually, the researcher introduced the average of both groups' marks using a column chart to highlight their approximate ability regarding writing skills.

3.3 Post-Intervention Phase

The post-intervention phase is the stage that follows the treatment phase. In the treatment stage, the researcher instructed portfolio assessment to the experimental group, namely group one (01), for two semesters to evaluate their writing and check whether its usage had a bearing on their writing ability. After finishing the treatment phase, the researcher used another test. This post-test is different from the pre-test as the aim is not to diagnose students' levels, but to check their accuracy after receiving the treatment (the experimental group). Moreover, it aims to gather relevant data that would enable the researcher to compare both groups' performance at the end of the semester. The fundamental aims of using the post-test here are:

- ✓ Assessing the experimental group's accuracy
- ✓ Comparing both groups(the experimental and the control group) performance
- ✓ Introspect the effect of portfolio assessment on writing
- ✓ Draw inferences about portfolio assessment usage

3.3.1 Post-test result

In the post-test, the researcher asked students to write a descriptive paragraph. The researcher opted for this genre because he wanted both tests to appear identical and to establish a logical and based comparison between both tests (the pre-test and post-test).

Before the post-test, the researcher discussed the possible topics with the ratters and his supervisor. The topic appointed for the post-test addressed how social media is changing the world around us. The discussion aimed at exploring the effectiveness of the topic and its adequacy to the learning context and students' level. After that, the ratters and the supervisor agreed on the topic and the researcher delivered the post-test to both groups (the experimental and control group). The post-test started on October 13, 2022, and both groups' students took one hour and a half to write a paragraph about the impact of social media. The fact that time is an important player in tests, the researcher wanted to give students enough time to write effectively and accurately. Furthermore, both groups received the same conditions as the pre-test, where the atmosphere was adequate, and students felt at ease and stress-free. The following

tables present the results obtained by both groups during the post-tests. Both groups' results exhibition aimed to simplify the comparison for the researcher, display their average and clarify the level of improvement that the students have witnessed, especially after the treatment phase. Firstly, the researcher gave both groups writing performance rates obtained by the application 'Grammarly' because he started the evaluation process before the ratters. Then, he presented the results of the ratters because the aim was to have a based evaluation that is typical and illustrative of both groups' performance. The hierarchy followed by the researcher in the presentation of results aimed at consolidating the research results and allowing valid and reliable data collection. The tables that follow depict the results given by the researcher and the raters for both groups (the experimental and the control group).

	Pre-Test	Post-Test
■ Experimental group	45,44	55,13
■ Control	44,48	46,74

■ Experimental group   ■ Control
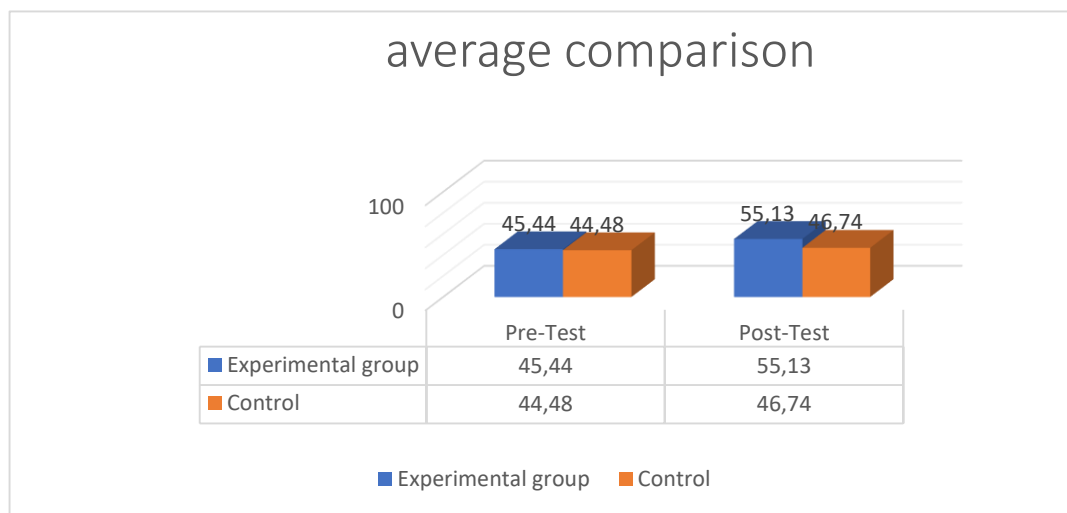
Figure 0.3: Post-test average comparison

Experimental Group (GR01)	Marks	Control Group (GR03)	Marks
Student 01	50,00%	Student 01	43,00%
Student 02	59,00%	Student 02	40,00%
Student 03	55,00%	Student 03	42,00%
Student 04	65,00%	Student 04	44,00%
Student 05	55,00%	Student 05	55,00%
Student 06	55,00%	Student 06	52,00%
Student 07	53,00%	Student 07	50,00%
Student 08	66,00%	Student 08	52,00%
Student 09	58,00%	Student 09	45,00%
Student 10	44,00%	Student 10	47,00%
Student 11	50,00%	Student 11	52,00%
Student 12	62,00%	Student 12	54,00%
Student 13	51,00%	Student 13	42,00%
Student 14	62,00%	Student 14	48,00%
Student 15	58,00%	Student 15	41,00%
Student 16	55,00%	Student 16	34,00%
Student 17	55,00%	Student 17	40,00%
Student 18	56,00%	Student 18	44,00%
Student 19	46,00%	Student 19	44,00%
Student 20	48,00%	Student 20	46,00%
Student 21	65,00%	Student 21	48,00%
Student 22	55,00%	Student 22	51,00%
Student 23	53,00%	Student 23	49,00%
Student 24	51,00%	Student 24	43,00%
Student 25	67,00%	Student 25	48,00%
Student 26	47,00%	Student 26	47,00%
Student 27	47,00%	Student 27	45,00%
		Student 28	45,00%
		Student 29	49,00%
		Student 30	56,00%
		Student 31	52,00%
Average	55,11%	Average	46,71%

Table 3.2: Post-test marks as given by Grammarly

To justify both groups' results, the researcher called for examples from their writing performances to make the comparison explicit and support the conclusions with vivid illustrations. What follows are examples of both experimental and control group post-test performance.

Example 01: Experimental Group Post-Test Writing Performance

Example 02: Experimental Group Post-Test Writing Performance

Example 03: Control Group Post-Test Writing Performance

Example 04: Control Group Post-Test Writing Performance

3.4 Post-Intervention Questionnaire

It is widely known that questionnaires are relevant research tools as they handle various topics and situations with success. In this research, the use of the questionnaire was to consolidate the data obtained from the experiment and provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on students' writing. At the end of the treatment, the experimental group received a questionnaire related to their experience with portfolio assessment. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-seven (37) EFL students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University. The reason for using this research tool is to:

  ✓ Obtain data about students' writing abilities

  ✓ Exploring students' perception of assessment in general and portfolio assessment

  ✓ checking the efficacy of the treatment on their writing

  ✓ Checking the research hypothesis

3.4.1 Post-Intervention Questionnaire Results

Q1- The first question one dedicated to gender: male/ female

The researcher included gender in the questionnaire to explore if the treatment had the same impact on gender. To this end, there were twenty-five (25) girls and twelve (12) boys.

Q2- to what extent you were satisfied with your writing performance? (Very satisfied/ satisfied/ ok/ dissatisfied/very dissatisfied)

The question seeks to understand the extent to which students were satisfied with their writing before receiving the treatment. Figure 3.1 below shows the answers

were you satisfied with your writing performance
37 réponses

Very satisfied
Satisfied
Ok
disatisfied
very disatisfied

18,9%
13,5%
67,6%
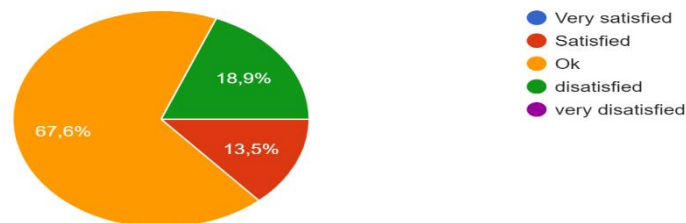
Figure 0.4 Students' Satisfaction with their Writing

Q3- Were you interested in improving your writing skills? (Yes/ No/ Maybe)

This question aims to check if EFL first-year students are interested in improving their writing. In this vein, 56.8 per cent of the respondents said they were interested, 35.1 per cent of the students declared that they were unsure, and 8.1 per cent said no.

were you interested to improve your writing skill?
37 réponses

Yes   21 (56,8 %)
No   3 (8,1 %)
Maybe   13 (35,1 %)
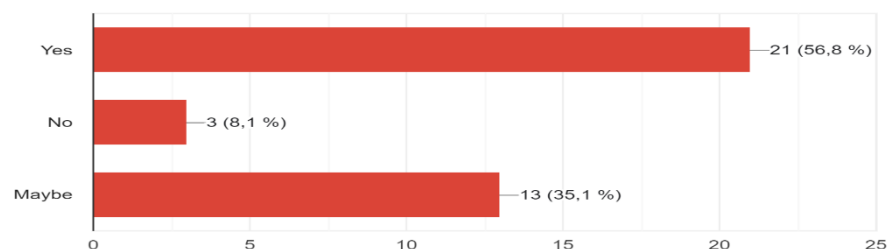
Figure 03.5: Students' Interest in Improving their Writing Skill

Q4- How do you perceive your writing abilities? (Bad/ Moderate/Good)

This question sought to explore how students perceive their writing abilities. Most of the respondents 62.2 per cent considered their writing moderate while 35.1 per cent viewed their writing as bad and only 5.4 per cent thought their writing was good.

How do you percieve your writing abilities?
37 réponses

Bad ────────────────────────13 (35,1 %)

Moderate ───────────────────────────────────23 (62,2 %)

Good ──2 (5,4 %)

0   5   10   15   20   25
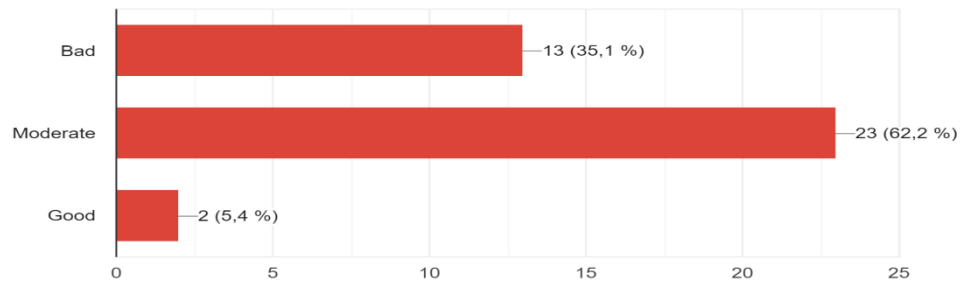
Figure 0.6: Learners' Perception of Their Writing Ability

Q5- Were you pleased with the writing assessment used by your teacher? (Yes/No/ If No, explain why)

This question addressed the assessment practices and meant to know students' satisfaction with these practices. The results displayed that the majority of students 83.8 per cent liked the traditional assessment provided by their teacher, whereas 16.2 per cent of respondents were not pleased with the assessment practices offered.

Were you pleased with the writing assessment used by your teacher?
37 réponses

● Yes
● No
● If No, explain why

13,5%

83,8%
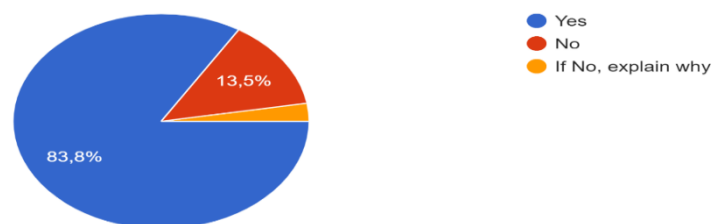
Figure 0.7: learners' Satisfaction with Teacher's Assessment

Q6- To what extent was the assessment used by the researcher during the treatment useful? (Very useful/useful/ undecided/ useless/ very useless)

This question attempted to explore if the treatment used (portfolio assessment) was beneficial to students writing. The results indicated that the majority of students 83.8 percent viewed the treatment as useful and 13.5 per cent of students considered it very useful. In contrast, 2.7 per cent consider it useless.

to what extent was the assessment used by the researcher during the treatment useful?
37 réponses
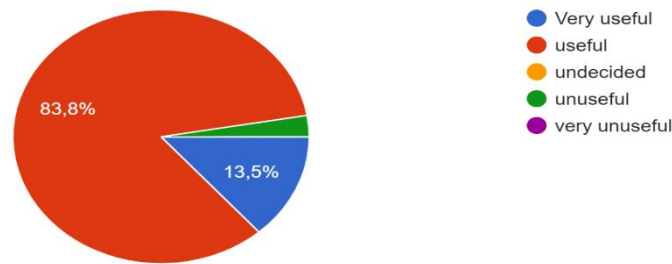
Figure 03.8: The Efficacy of Portfolio Assessment on Learners' Writing

Q7- Were you aware of this writing assessment technique? (Yes /No)

This question sought to understand whether or not the students were aware of the portfolio assessment technique. 62.2 per cent of the students mentioned this technique, whereas 37.8 per cent said they were unaware.

were you aware of this writing assessment technique?
37 réponses
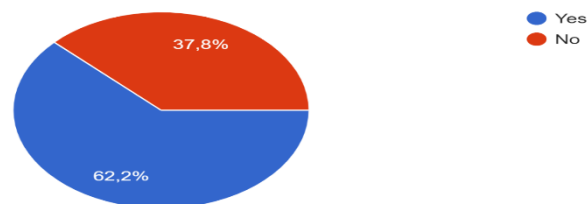
Figure 03.9: Learners' Awareness of Assessment Techniques

Q8- Have you received guidelines from your teacher on the use of portfolio assessment? (Yes/No)

The rationale behind this question was to find out if the students had previously experienced portfolio assessment or had any assistance with its usage. The results revealed that 89.2 per cent of students 89.2 per cent were not accustomed to these techniques and never received any kind of guidelines. At the same time, 10.8 per cent of the students said that they received guidelines.

Have you recieved guidelines from your teacher on the use of portfolio assessment?
37 réponses

Figure 03.10: Reception of Guidelines on Portfolio Assessment

Q9- Did portfolio assessment help you reflect on your writing? (Yes/No)

For this question, all the students agreed that portfolios helped them reflect on their writing. This agreement might be related to the fact that learners were not correcting their mistakes until they had experienced portfolio assessment. This suggested that portfolio procedure influenced learners' reflection skills. Of course, this was through the assistance of their teachers.

Does the use of portfolio assessment helped you reflect on your writing
37 réponses
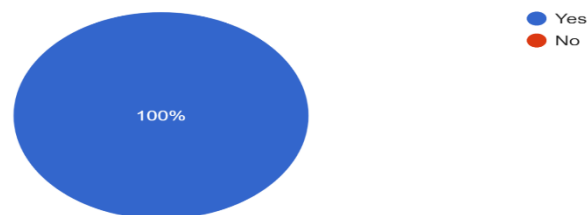
Figure 03.11: Learners' Reflection on their Writing

Q-10 what feature of portfolio assessment helped you improve your writing? (Peer/Teacher/ Self-assessment/ All of them)

Teacher assessment was highly recommended and helpful for the students as indicated in the graph. 38 per cent of the students confirmed this claim; however, 36 per cent of them viewed all types of portfolio assessments as beneficial and 26 per cent considered self-assessment valuable. On the contrary, peer assessment was not considered by the students.

What feature of portfolio assessment helped you improved your writing?
37 réponses

- Peer Assessment
- Teacher Assessment
- self Assessment
- All of them

36%

26%

38%

Figure 3.12: Features of Portfolio Assessment that Improved Learners' Writing

Q-11 To what extent do you agree that portfolio assessment is useful for writing improvement? (Strongly agree/Agree/ Undecided/Disagree/Strongly disagree)

The question aimed to check the extent of students' agreement over the use of portfolio assessment on their writing improvement. As the graph denoted, 59.5 per cent of the students agreed that portfolio assessment was useful, while 35.1 per cent strongly agreed and only 5.4 per cent were not sure and opted for the option undecided.

To what extent do you agree that portfolio assessment is useful for writing improvement
37 réponses

Strongly agree — 13 (35,1 %)
Agree — 22 (59,5 %)
Undecided — 2 (5,4 %)
Disagree — 0 (0 %)
Strongly disagree — 0 (0 %)
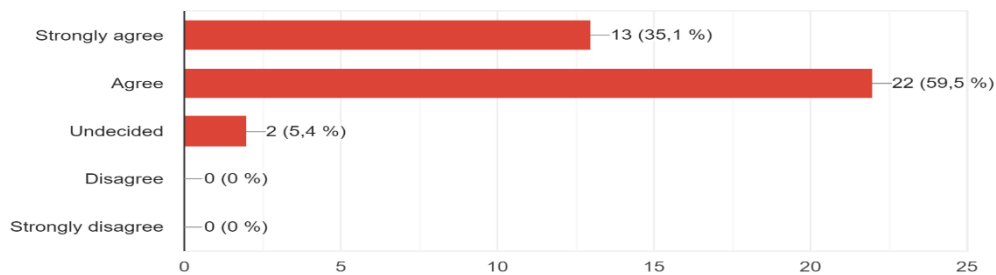
Figure 0.13: The Usefulness of Portfolio Assessment for Writing Improvement

Q-12 What sort of impact does the use of portfolio assessment have on your writing? (Positive/Negative/Other)

This question sought to explore the impact of portfolio assessment on students writing. From the results, it is clear that all students agree that portfolio assessment had positive effects on their writing.

What sort of impact does the use of portfolio assessment have on your writing?
37 réponses
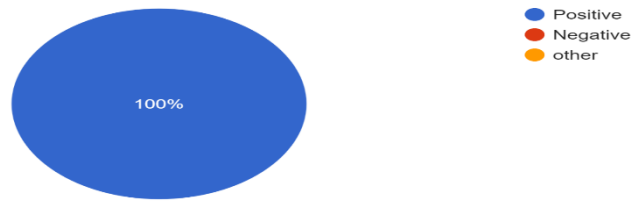
Figure 03.14: Impacts of Portfolio Assessment

Q13- if positive, where does the positivity lie?

This question was a follow-up question to the previous one and aimed to understand the reason for seeing portfolio assessment as positive. Learners received five options to select from. They are comprehensible inputs that designate possible areas for positivity.

If positive, where does this positivity lie?
37 réponses

Figure 03.15: Portfolio Assessment Positivity Areas

Q14: According to your previous experience, which assessment was better? (Traditional/Portfolio)

This question aimed at understanding the types of assessment that they preferred. It was clear from the results that the majority 78.4 per cent favoured portfolio assessment over conventional assessment 21.6 per cent.

According to your last experience, which assessment is better ?
37 réponses
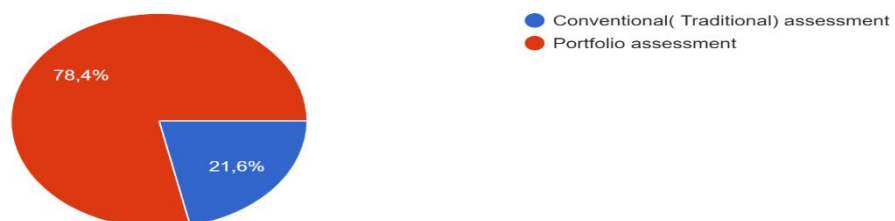
Figure 03.16: Traditional Versus Portfolio Assessment

Q15: Were you satisfied with your writing after receiving the treatment? (Yes/No)

This question sought to explore if students were satisfied with their writing after experiencing portfolio assessment. As the graph shows, almost all the students 97.3 per cent were satisfied with their writing after experiencing portfolio assessment, while 2.7 per cent said they were not.

Were you satisfied with your writing after recieving the treatment?
37 réponses
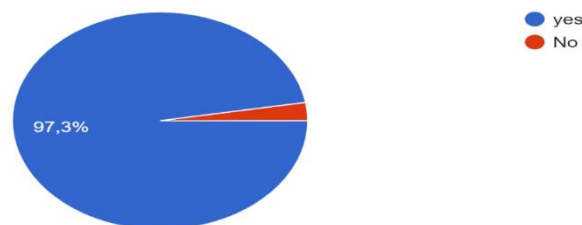
Figure 03.17: Learners' Satisfaction after Receiving the Treatment

3.5 Observation

In the current research, the researcher used observation as a tool to bring richness, obtain an in-depth sight, and support the data gathered from the already mentioned tools namely the pre-test, post-test, and questionnaire. Because the researcher wanted to capture events and behaviour as they occurred, the researcher's role during the phase of observation was a participant observer to permit a deeper analysis and a detailed exploration of the impacts of the treatment on students' writing accuracy and collaboration. (Denscombe, 2010, p.207). In this regard, Classroom observation sought to explore students' responses to the treatment (portfolio assessment) by displaying and analysing the extent of growth regarding writing accuracy and collaboration. It is important to mention that during the observation the researcher used field notes to record relevant data related to the aim of the research.

3.5.1 Writing Observation Results

Because the main objective behind carrying out observation in the current research was writing accuracy, the researcher focused mainly on the extent of development in the basic features such as organization, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and cohesion. Throughout the treatment phase, the researcher tried to inspect how the treatment impacted students' writing by checking their writing, behaviour, and reactions to the portfolio assessment.

The observer noticed that students felt at ease whenever they were asked to write. Moreover, the feedback provided by the teacher was seen by most students positively, and it was clear to them the importance of this feedback because they perceived it as an opportunity for learning and improving the quality of their writing. Furthermore, when requested to share their writing with peers to provide an assessment, they expressed a kind of fear and resentment.

Such a reaction was seen by the researcher as normal because it was their first experience. However, with the different writing opportunities, this behaviour began to fade as students considered this procedure as an important step for writing improvement.

Another important aspect was captured during this phase related to the coding procedure used by the researcher. Here students appeared to welcome this procedure and the researcher assumed that it was sufficient, especially regarding scrutinizing mistakes. Additionally, the researcher remarked that students at first were not following the steps of the treatment. Certainly, they were not interested because the goal was always getting marks and ignoring values related to improving the efficacy and accuracy of their writing. But, later on, and after several weeks of writing, students began to change their behaviours and mindsets by committing themselves to improving their paragraph accuracy.

In addition, the data reported from the observation revealed that the students trusted the assessment used by the teacher especially, after giving their papers back for the adjustment procedure. It is important to mention the researcher relied on technology namely "Grammarly" as a reliable and valid tool for assessment that would encourage students to focus when writing and accurately display their errors and achievements. The use of this application when writing was considered efficient for most students as they exhibited enthusiasm and favour toward the use of this tool when correcting their writing. Moreover, over time, the researcher observed that the writing mistakes that were repeatedly made by the students decreased to some extent, especially the ones related to organization and punctuation, and to some extent style. Furthermore, there was a kind of unprecedented interest displayed by the students for the quality of their writing as they kept asking the researcher about how well their writing became compared to the previous writing. Perhaps, this was a sign of departure from conventional thinking to a rational one.

3.6 Second Post-Intervention Questionnaire (Collaboration Questionnaire)

After the end of the treatment phase in which students received portfolio assessment, students were subject to another questionnaire. This latter was related to the impact of the treatment on students' collaboration. The questionnaire aimed at exploring the outcome of using portfolio assessment on students' collaboration and social skills. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-seven (37) EFL students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University.

3.6.1 Results

The first part of the questionnaire was related to the discussion of ideas for the paragraphs. It comprised five (05) questions.

Q1- did you agree that portfolio assessment fostered the exchange of knowledge, information, experience, and ideas (Yes/No)

The first question aimed at checking if the use of the treatment encouraged a trade-off of ideas and knowledge at the first stage of the process of writing. As the graph shows, it is apparent that the majority (78.4 per cent) agreed that through portfolio assessment, students could share, exchange, and talk about their ideas in groups. Conversely, more than one quarter (21.6 per cent) stated the treatment did not foster exchange.

do you agree that portfolio assessment fostered the exchange of knowledge, information, experience, and ideas
37 réponses
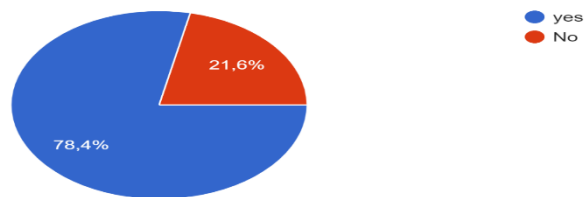
Figure 3.18: Portfolio and Exchange

Q2- Working through portfolio assessment made me spend more time generating ideas in groups (Yes /No)

Working through portfolio made me spend more time generating ideas in groups
37 réponses
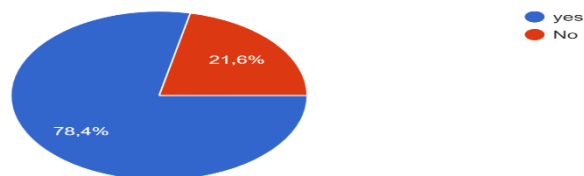
Figure 03.19: Portfolio Assessment and Ideas Generations

As Figure 3.19 above indicated, more than three-quarters admitted that the experience of portfolio assessment prompted them to spend more time working together to generate ideas whereas 21.6 per cent declared that the treatment did not permit the generation of ideas in groups.

Q-3 - Working through portfolio assessment permitted to work cooperatively (Yes/No)

Working through portfolio permitted to work cooperatively
37 réponses
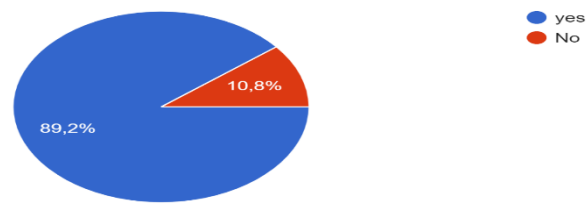
Figure 03.20: Portfolio Assessment and Cooperation

Figure 3.20 revealed that approximately all the respondents 89.2 percent agreed on the fact that their experience with portfolio assessment created a sense of cooperation and cooperative learning in class when collecting ideas for the paragraph. On the other hand, a small proportion 10.8 per cent of the respondents stated that their experience with treatment did not support cooperative work.

Q4- Peer assessment (group work) helped overcome writer's block (Yes/No)

peer assessment (group work) helped overcome the writers' block
37 réponses
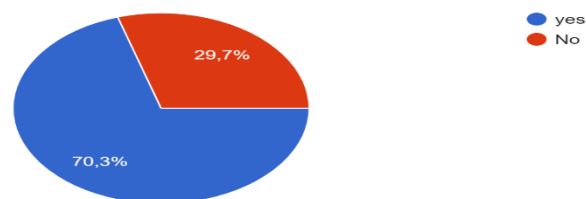
Figure 0.21: Peer Assessment and the Writer's Block

The rationale behind this question was to know if the use of peer assessment as a building criterion of portfolio assessment helped the students, especially when they could not put their ideas into words. The results clearly showed that more than two-quarters 70.3 per cent found that peer assessment helped them overcome what was labelled writer's block. Yet, 29.7 per cent of the students declared that portfolio assessment did not assist them when they faced writer's block.

Q5- did you agree that portfolio assessment gave you the chance to express ideas with friends (Yes/No)
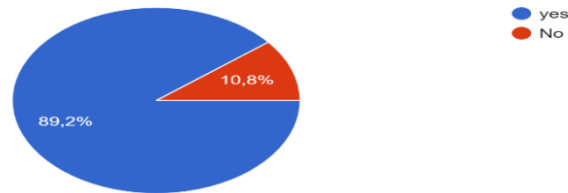
Figure 03.22: Expressing Ideas with Friends

Based on Figure 3.22 results, most students 89.2 per cent claimed that portfolio assessment established a good platform for expressing and sharing ideas between friends. On the other hand, a small portion 10.8 per cent mentioned that the treatment did not set chances for sharing ideas with friends.

Part Two: The second section of the questionnaire stressed students' production of the rough drafts and aimed at introspecting the impact of portfolio assessment at the first stage of draft production.

Q6- did portfolio assessment allow you to consider note-taking? (True/False)

The first question in the second part sought to explore if students' experience with portfolio assessment taught them how to consider note-taking. According to the provided data, three-quarters of the students stated that the treatment truly taught them this skill. Whereas, 24.3 per cent of the students disagreed and indicated that the portfolio did not allow them to consider note-taking.
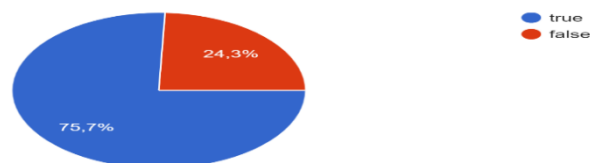
Figure 03.23: Portfolio Assessment and Note-Taking

Q7- Did portfolio assessment help you receive useful feedback when having an issue?

      The second question in part two aimed at checking whether the treatment provided the students with valuable feedback when they made mistakes. Based on the results from Figure 3.23, 21.6 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they had always received, while almost half of the respondents (48.6 per cent) stated that they often received insightful feedback. Along the same line, 27 per cent of them indicated sometimes, and 2.8 per cent answered rarely.

does Portfolio assessment helped you receive useful feedback when having an issue
37 réponses

- Never
- rarely
- sometimes
- often
- always

48,6%   21,6%   27%
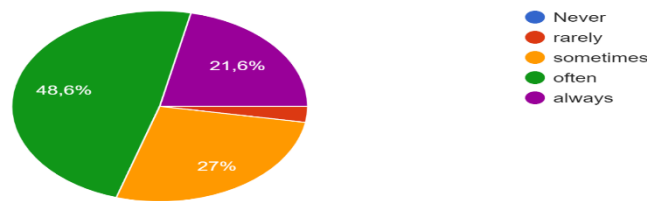
Figure 3.204: Portfolio Assessment and Feedback Frequency

Q8- If the received feedback was helpful, from whom did you consider it? (Teacher, peer, self)

      This question was a follow-up to the previous one. Students were asked what type of feedback they considered the most. The results clearly showed that teacher feedback was still considered superior as the majority (78.4 per cent) voted for it, followed by peer feedback with almost two halves of 59.5 per cent. Conversely, no students considered self-assessment as an important element for progress.

If it helps, from whom did you consider it?
37 réponses

Peer feedback	22 (59,5 %)
Teacher feedback	29 (78,4 %)
Self-assessment	0 (0 %)
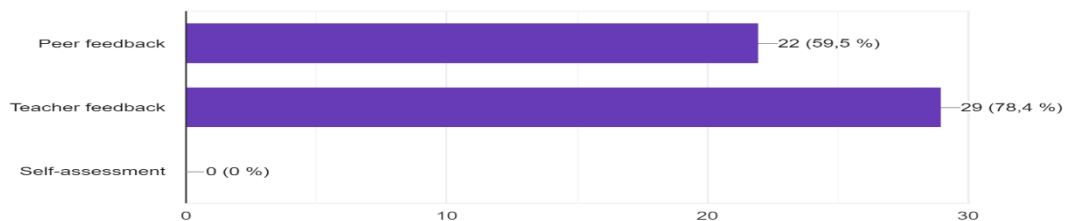
Figure 0.25: Feedback Consideration

Q9- Did portfolio assessment allow you to focus on collective rather than individual efforts? (True/False)

The present question aimed to determine if the treatment allowed the students to work more together, especially at the stage of writing the first draft. The answers showed that the majority (89.2 per cent) agreed and stated that the treatment helped them work collectively when producing their first drafts. While 10.8 per cent of the students negated the idea that portfolio assessment helped them focus on collective work.
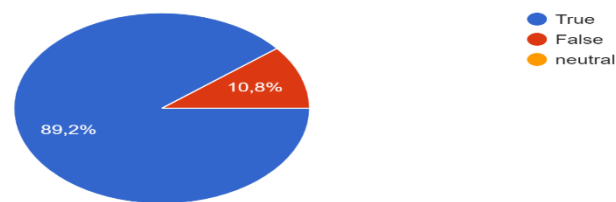
Figure 03.26: Portfolio Assessment and Collective Scaffolding

Q10- Did you share and express ideas with peers when facing an issue? (Yes/No)

This question aimed to examine if there was sharing and collaboration between students at this stage. The Figure below indicates that almost all the students (94.6 per cent) mentioned that they shared and expressed ideas with their mates, while a small portion of the students (5.4 per cent) mentioned that they did not share with peers.
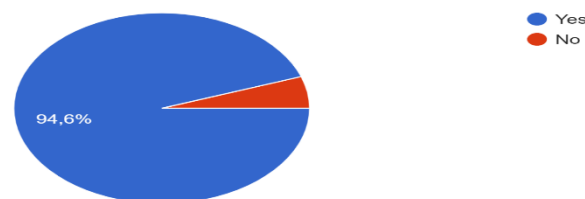
Figure 03.27: Sharing and Collaboration

Part Three: The third part of the questionnaire examined the sharing and editing of students' paragraphs. It comprised Five (5) Questions dedicated to extracting responses related to sharing and revision.

Q11- After finishing the first draft, did you share it with peers? (Yes/No)

       The first question of the third part tends to inspect the sharing between the students. The obtained data demonstrated that almost all the respondents 91.9 per cent stated that they shared their drafts with peers, while 8.1 per cent denied that and said they did not share with their peers.
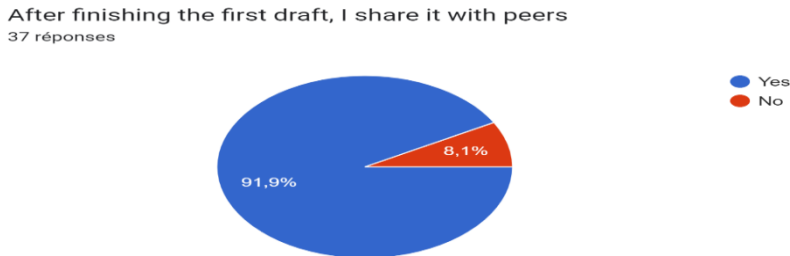
Figure 03.28: Sharing and Collaboration

Q12- Did peer assessment provide constructive suggestions for improving writing? (Yes/No).

       This question tried to explore whether students received useful feedback after sharing their drafts with peers. The majority of the respondents 81.1 per cent declared that they received constructive feedback from their peers when writing, while the remaining students 18.9 per cent stated that they did not receive valuable feedback from their mates.
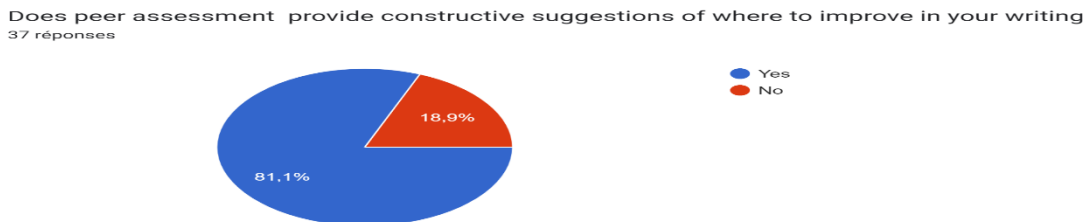
Figure 03.29 : Peer Assessment and Feedback

Q13- If peer assessment provided relevant suggestions, which category was addressed? (Meaning, Spelling, Punctuation, Cohesion, Style)
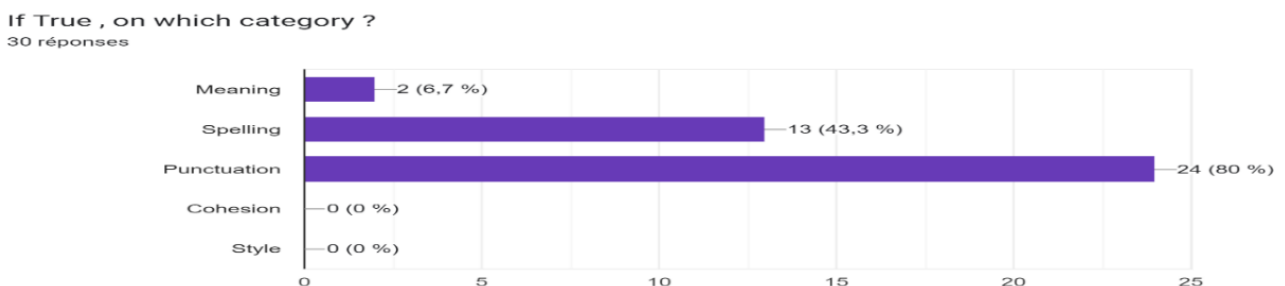
Figure 3.30 : Areas of Received Feedback

This question was seen as a sequel to the previous one. It concerned the respondents who thought that peer assessment provided constructive suggestions. From the bar chart above punctuation appear to be the top category (24) 80 per cent where students received suggestions followed by spelling (13) 43.3 per cent and finally meaning (2) 6.7 percent.

Q14- To what extent do you agree that sharing allows you to learn new ways to plan your paragraph from peers? (Great, to Some, Little extent)

to what extent do you agree that sharing allow you to learn new ways to plan your paragraph from peers
37 réponses

- To a great or large extent
- To some extent
- To little or no extent

54,1%   13,5%   32,4%

Figure 3.31: Sharing and Paragraph Planning

This question examined the extent of the impact of sharing on paragraph writing improvement. As the pie chart above shows, more than half of the students (54.1 per cent) agreed to some extent that sharing with peers allowed them to acquire new skills on how to plan their paragraphs, 32.4 per cent agreed to a great or large extent with this idea, and 13.5 per cent expressed little or no extent.

Q15- Did portfolio assessment allow you to spend more time revising than when you write by alone?

While working through portfolio, we spent more time revising than I do when I write alone
37 réponses

- Yes
- No

97,3%
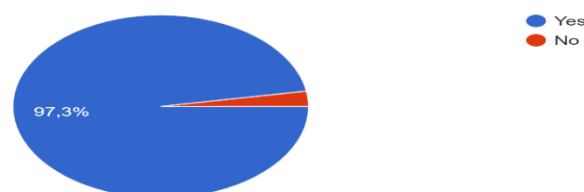
Figure 3.32: Portfolio Assessment and Revision

This question tried to explore whether students' experience with portfolio assessment created many occasions and opportunities for review and revision. As the graph above denotes, 97.3 per cent of the students agreed that working with the treatment allowed them to revise more and to a greater extent than writing alone. Furthermore, 2.7 per cent said that portfolio assessment does not create opportunities for revision.

Part Four: This section of the questionnaire inspected the impact of the treatment on students' writing at the stage of redrafting and producing the paragraph. It comprised five (05) questions.

Q16- How often did you note the suggestions peers offer? (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always)

How often do you take note of the suggestions offered by peers
37 réponses
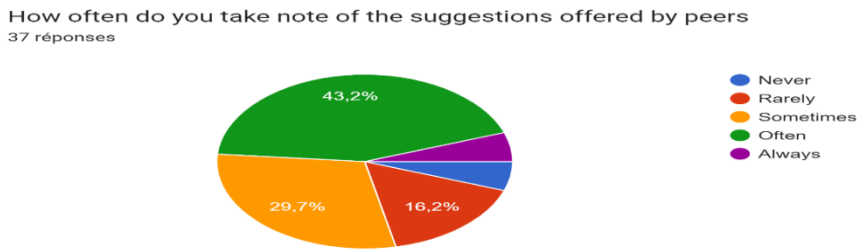
Figure 3.3: Frequency of Peer Suggestions Taking

The first question in the fourth part sought to find out whether the students were taking notes of the feedback and suggestions provided by their peers. A closer inspection of the graph above indicated that almost half of the respondents 43.2 per cent were often taking notes while 29.7 per cent of them mentioned 'sometimes'. Whereas 16.2 per cent mentioned that they 'rarely do', 5.4 per cent opted for both 'never and sometimes'.

Q17- Did you accept the suggestions provided by peers? (Yes/No)

Do you accept the suggestions provided by peers
37 réponses
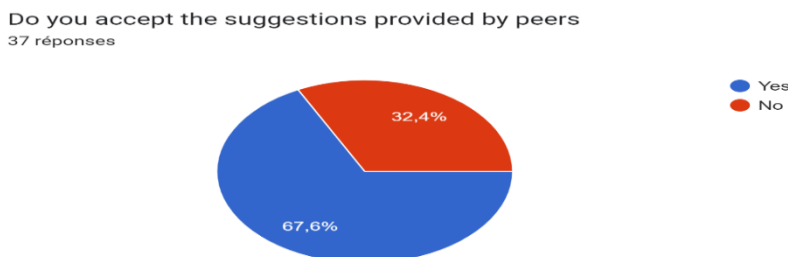
Figure 3.34: Peer Suggestions Rate of Acceptance

Through this question, the researcher aimed to explore students' acceptance of peer feedback and suggestions. In action, 67.6 per cent of the students selected 'yes', while 32.4 per cent of them stated that they 'did not accept' the suggestion provided by peers.

Q18- If no, why? (Did not fit the context, not constructive, other)

If No, why?
12 réponses
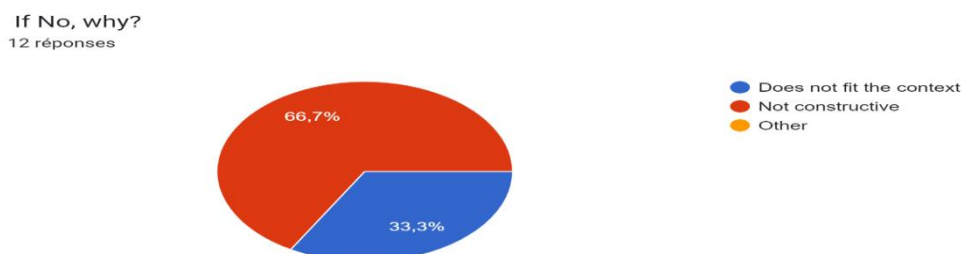
Figure 3.35: Reason for Peer Suggestions Refusal

This question is a follow-up to the previous one and related to the respondents who refused to accept the suggestion provided by their peers. This question sought to understand the reasons behind students' denial. According to the yielded data below, the majority of the respondents 66.7 per cent replied that the reason behind their refusal was the fact that their feedback was not constructive, while the rest 33.3 per cent stated that the provided feedback did not fit the context.

Q19- Did you make the necessary changes before handing the paragraph to an evaluator? (Yes/No)

I make the necessary changes before the paragraph is handed to an evaluator
37 réponses
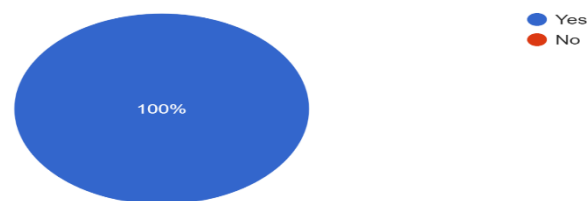
Figure 3.36 : Revision and Paragraph Submission

This question attempted to explore whether students conducted changes after receiving different types of feedback (teacher, students' feedback). As the Figure displays, all students 100 per cent reported that they made the necessary changes before giving the paper back to the evaluator.

Q20- Did you agree that portfolio assessment helped you learn how to use collaboration to elevate your writing performance?

The last question in the fourth section tried to explore if the student agree that through the treatment they learned how to use collaboration to improve their writing performance. The reported findings show 21.6 per cent strongly agreed, and 67.6 per cent of the students agreed that that the experience of portfolio assessment allowed them to acquire collaboration skills that benefited their writing ability. 10.8% of the students were neutral.

Do you agree that Working through portfolio assessment helped you learn how to use collaboration to increase your writing performance
37 réponses
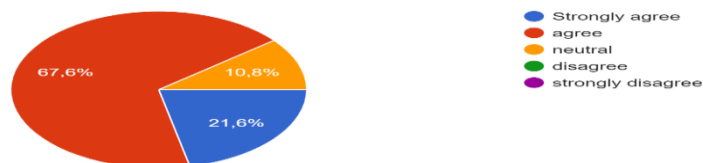
Figure 3.37 : Portfolio, Collaboration, and Writing Development

3.7 Collaboration Interview

The second tool introduced in this second research question aimed to explore the impact of portfolio assessment on students' collaboration was the interview. The interview aimed to analyze the impact of portfolio assessment on collaboration and social skills improvement. Identically, the students experienced the treatment for two semesters. At the end of the second semester, the experimental group received an interview related to the impact of portfolio assessment on students' collaboration. Moreover, the selection of students for the interview followed a simple random sampling procedure in which the researcher used coin tossing to assign those who would be part of the interview. Furthermore, the interview participants were six (6) and made up of three (3) males and three (females).

3.7.1 Collaboration Interview Results

Part One: The first part was related to the treatment procedure and it comprised three questions given to all six (6) participating students.

In the first question, the researcher asked the students about their experience with portfolio assessment and how they perceived it. The obtained data revealed that almost all the respondents mentioned that it was a good experience for them and that they felt supported when writing. Moreover, they mentioned that they were lucky to experience portfolio assessment because not only did their writing improve, but they also became aware of their mistake and their limitation in writing. As Sara said:

"We were thinking that writing is a set of rules to follow but when we experienced the

treatment (portfolio assessment) we realized that writing is like a matrix that requires

practice, feedback, collaboration, and assistance"

The second question was asked to know about their satisfaction with the portfolio assessment procedure. The researcher supplied their answers with hints (satisfied, very satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied). According to the received answers, five (5) out of six (6) mentioned that they were very satisfied with their experience with portfolio assessment, while one (1) respondent stated that he was satisfied. When articulating the reasons for students' satisfaction, they replied that it was the improvement that we witnessed and the supportive atmosphere of the procedure that we experienced.

Question three intended to check students' points of view on incorporating portfolio assessment in EFL classes at Mascara University. Students' responses were as follows: Four (4) respondents mentioned that it was a good idea, and they argued that this procedure was not judgmental rather it was corrective and helped them improve their writing. Two respondents

declared it was not good and they stated that this procedure was stressful and displayed a preference for the conventional method of teaching/learning writing.

Part Two: In the second part, the researcher interviewed the students to check the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on collaboration. The interview at this stage comprised six (6) questions delivered to all six (6) participating members.

The use of portfolio assessment in EFL classes provided a wide range of corrective and non-corrective feedback. According to the data obtained, five out of the six respondents reported that through the treatment they received fruitful feedback mainly from their teacher, while only one respondent expressed his objection to the fact that portfolio assessment helped him receive useful feedback. Whilst many students made positive comments, some were critical, referring to a clear objection to innovative assessment techniques. Nassim in this concern stated:

"I don't think I learned much from portfolio assessment, and I do not consider the

corrective techniques helpful for me to improve, I can rely only on myself to improve"

Similarly, Sara mentioned:

"After experiencing portfolio assessment, I feel that the feedback provided by the teacher

was relaxing and supportive, and I was not nervous about his comments"

The second question sought to explore whether portfolio assessment made the student focus on collective work. Four respondents exhibited their agreement and claimed that this was true, while one respondent indicated that this was not true. The other respondent was neutral. Question three asked students if portfolio assessment made them feel more cooperative and why. 66.67 per cent (4) stated yes and argued that portfolio assessment procedures encouraged us to accept the corrective feedback yielded by peers and teachers and to value it, while 33.33 per cent (2) respondents indicated that the procedure did not make them feel cooperative. They stated that the received feedback was not up to the level and that sometimes it was offensive. Lyna stated :

"It is really good to cooperate with friends and teachers to produce a piece of writing however

when your friend judges you it is not going to be an encouraging judgment"

Question four queried if portfolio assessment taught the students how to exchange ideas. 83.33 per cent (5) of the respondents reported that working through portfolio assessment taught them to share. On the contrary, 16.67 per cent (1) stated it did not teach them to share and exchange.

The next question asked students whether portfolio assessment positively promoted class members' exchange. The answers revealed that all the respondents (6) 100 per cent to this question agreed that working through portfolio assessment promoted teacher-student exchange and students-students exchange. The respondents showed their preference for the teacher-student exchange and claimed that this latter is more valuable and trusted in comparison to the students-student exchange where students felt hostile and refused to accept what their peers were suggesting due to the lack of peer assessment skills. Similarly, the next question asked students if they were suggesting and accepting ideas from peers. 83.33 per cent (5) respondents indicated that they suggested and accepted what their peers provided. On the other hand, one respondent stated that he was not suggesting nor accepting peers' suggestions.

Part Three: Part three intended to shed light on the effect of portfolio assessment on students' social skills. It comprises five (5) questions designed to stimulate responses related to social skills.

Through the first question, students were asked if their experience with portfolio assessment made problem-solving easier, especially in groups. The majority of the respondents responded yes, while one respondent replied 'no'. In this vein, Bouchra said:

"When I was writing, the difficult part was the starting. After working with portfolio

assessment we learned that we can overcome this kind of block through the exchange of

ideas and group brainstorming"

The second question was designed to ascertain whether the experience of portfolio assessment stimulated students' critical thinking. The obtained responses showed that most (83.33 per cent) respondents mentioned that the treatment stimulated their critical thinking, while one interviewee stated 'no'. The next question sought to explore the extent to which portfolio assessment made the students take responsibility for their learning. It was discovered from the finding that all interviewees expressed their agreement. In this, Mohamed stated:

"At first I was writing just because I was asked to do so, but after receiving the treatment

I began to become conscious and concerned about my writing. I am willing to take full

responsibility to improve my writing"

Through the fourth question, the researcher aimed to check if the procedure of peer assessment included in the treatment encouraged active listening and positive dialogue. The results yielded that 83.33 per cent (5) of the interviewees asserted the positive impact of peer assessment on their listening and dialogue, while 16.67 per cent (1) refuted the idea and

mentioned that there was no witnessed improvement in the skills mentioned earlier. Fatima mentioned:

"Through peer assessment, we learned to check peers writing, give suggestions, and argue about our choices and even peers' choices mainly choices related to ideas and vocabulary"

The last question in the interview asked the respondents if portfolio assessment taught them how to actively participate in tasks. The yielded data showed that all the respondents 100% (6) agreed that the procedure of portfolio assessment permited active involvement with the given written tasks and even with their peers. In this vein, Amel mentioned:

"Working through portfolio assessment creates a supportive atmosphere where you can concentrate on the task at hand, relate to your friends when you face an issue, and learn from what the teacher provides as feedback in your paper".

3.8 Collaboration Observation

There is a general agreement that observation is best when it is related to other research tools (Mackey and Susan, 2016, p.228). Calling for observation was to support the data gathered from the intervention, post-intervention interview, and questionnaire. In this regard, it permits an extension of the amount of data, explores classroom practices, and gets in-depth insight into the phenomena. The researcher includes this tool to gather relevant data through a triangulation that would help encompass all the angles that may be of paramount importance to the research area. In this, the researcher believed that the use of observation alongside the questionnaire and the interview would probably yield rich data and enrich the research repertoire by explaining the level of social skills and collaboration development.

3.8.1 Collaboration Observation Results

As described earlier, classroom observation aimed to support data gathered from other tools and present evidence that would consolidate what was obtained. This research aims to understand the impact of the treatment on students' collaboration and social skills.

Based on the observation that was conducted during the intervention phase, the observer perceived evidence of greater engagement with the treatment procedure and remarked that students felt motivated to participate, make use of the writing opportunities the treatment offered, and exchange with their peers. When writing, the researcher remarked that students were concentrating on the task at hand, discussing possible ideas with their friends, and arguing certain choices related to the content of their paragraphs.

Moreover, at the early stage of writing, namely ideas discussion, students exchanged their ideas regarding the given topic and tried to elucidate their choices. At this level, there was a kind of collective work where students collaborated, even without the permission of their teacher, to obtain relevant data that would help them throughout their paragraphs. This cooperative work allowed the students to face what is referred to as writer's block in which students were taking advantage of the suggestions, the dialogue that was happening, and the arguments used in their favour to cope successfully with the topic at hand.

Additionally, when writing their paragraphs and at the stage of drafting, the observer noticed that students were approving the feedback of their teacher in comparison to their peers. This is probably related to students' mindsets that considered the teacher to be the source of knowledge. However, over time, students began to welcome the suggestions provided by their peers. There was evidence of collective scaffolding, especially in certain areas related to grammar and punctuation. Still, generally, the processing of peer feedback was limited because students were not confident of their peers' ability to suggest constructive suggestions that would thereby lead to accurate writing. Moreover, the observer noticed a decrease in students' mistakes, more specifically the ones related to punctuation, spelling, and some extent, organization. This might be linked to the rich feedback they received from both their teacher and peers.

Equally, at the final stage of their writing, namely the final draft, collected evidence suggested that students were taking into consideration the notes provided by their peers and were reflecting, to some extent, successfully on their peers' writing. Thus, it was perhaps not surprising that students displayed greater capability and accuracy in punctuation and spelling areas. Also, the observer affirmed that the rate of dialogue between students was higher at this stage, which encouraged them to make decisive repairs and revisions to their writing, which, therefore, helped in elevating the quality of their writing to an average extent.

Furthermore, it was found from the observation that students when facing difficulties in writing, were discussing possible suggestions in groups related to the issue at hand before referring to their teacher to confirm what was suggested and apply specific repairs to their writing. This would probably mean that the treatment (portfolio assessment) supported students' problem-solving in groups, and therefore, allowed them to cope with the presented difficulties. It was apparent from the early stages of the treatment that students were not used to solving problems in groups. However, with time, students began to acquire this skill and put it into practice through the writing opportunities that the treatment had provided.

Nevertheless, observation results revealed that portfolio assessment supported students' talk, communication, and discussion at all stages of writing. The observer noticed that students were engaged in dialogues, and relating to each other from time to time. At the stage of brainstorming, the talk between students was limited and superficial because the aim was to find ideas relevant to the topic. Later on, and more precisely, at the stage of peer feedback, the intensity of talk was higher and students were actively listening to what was suggested, responding, and reflecting on the justification and arguments that were presented by their peers. Perhaps, the collaborative nature of the treatment improved students' involvement with their peers- and encouraged active listening and positive dialogue.

In further exploration of the impact of portfolio assessment, the observer reported that the different writing opportunities that were presented to students enabled them to focus on the task at hand and on improving their writing accuracy in general. The observer indicated that students through the different writing tasks given concentrated more on elevating their performance and making their paragraphs organized and conforming to the needed level. As a result, this led to active participation in the tasks given in which students were reading, revising, making repairs, consulting their peers and teacher's views, and making recommendations to cope successfully with the tasks and improve the quality of their writing to a considerable level.

3.9 Third Post-Intervention Questionnaire

The third questionnaire in the current research was related to students' attitudes and perceptions of portfolio assessment. After responding to two different types of questionnaires which were related to the impact of portfolio assessment on writing and collaboration, students were subject to another questionnaire that addressed students' attitudes toward the use of portfolio assessment. The attitudes questionnaire is an adapted questionnaire taken from two different studies. It aims to investigate students' attitudes toward the use of portfolios in the assessment of students writing at Mascara University. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-seven (37) EFL students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University. The questionnaire aimed at obtaining data about students' perceptions of the following:

- ✓ 1. Portfolio assessment and awareness
- ✓ 2. The impact of portfolio assessment
- ✓ 3. Portfolio assessment and awareness
- ✓ 4. The procedure of portfolio assessment

3.9.1 Questionnaire Results

The initial part of the questionnaire was related to the merits of the treatment (portfolio assessment). It comprised three (3) questions.

Q1: Did portfolio assessment help you make a good introduction covering information about who, when, and where at the beginning of text writing?

Does portfolio assessment help you make a good introduction covering information about who, when, and where in the beginning of text writing?
37 réponses

- Yes
- No

89,2%

10,8%
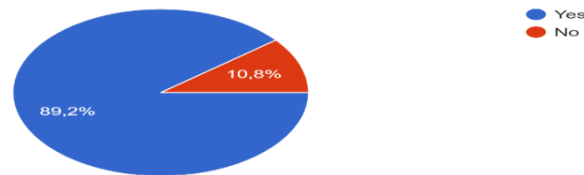
Figure 3.38: Portfolio Assessment and Introduction Writing

The first question in part one intended to find out whether the use of the treatment helped students make good introductions covering the required information. The majority of the respondents 33 (89.2 per cent) declared that the treatment allowed them to make good introductions when writing. Whereas, the remaining six respondents (10.8 per cent) stated that portfolio assessment did not help them in making successful introductions.

Q2: Did you agree that through portfolio assessment you could organise your writing appropriately?

Do you agree that through portfolio assessment you could organize your writing appropriately?
37 réponses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

83,8%

13,5%
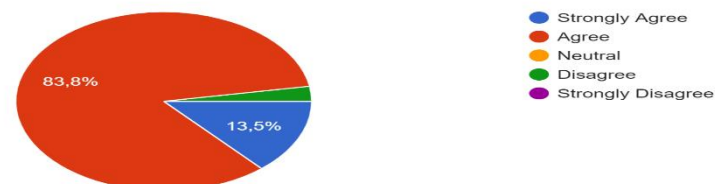
Figure 03.39: Portfolio Assessment and Writing Organisation

The second question tried to explore whether the treatment helped the students organize their writing significantly. The result obtained revealed that almost 96 per cent of the respondents, ranging between 'agree' and 'strongly agree' confirmed that portfolio assessment helped them properly organize their writing. On the other hand, one respondent (2.7 per cent) expressed disagreement with the idea of appropriate organization.

Q3: Did Portfolio Assessment teach me how to organize events in my writing by using some chronological order.

Portfolio Assessment taught me how to organize events in my writing by using some chronological orders
37 réponses

- True
- False

48,6%

51,4%
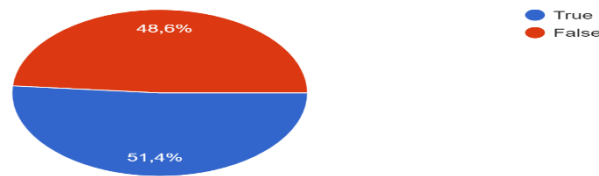
Figure 0.40: Portfolio Assessment and Events Organisation

This question sought to elicit students' perceptions regarding the organization of events using chronological order. The responses were balanced between those who saw the treatment as beneficial and taught them how to organize and those who denied it. As the graph above shows 19 (51.4 per cent) reported that they learned through portfolio assessment, while 18 (48.6 per cent) stated they did not learn how to organize events in their writing using chronological order.

Part Two: The second part of the questionnaire was related to the portfolio assessment and awareness, and aimed at inspecting students' perception of the impact of portfolio assessment on their perception.

Q4: To what extent did working with portfolio assessment make you aware of your progress in writing?

To what extent working with portfolio assessment made you aware of your progress in writing
37 réponses

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- To little or no extent

75,7%

24,3%
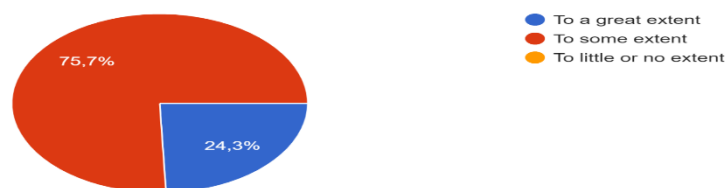
Figure 0.41: Portfolio Assessment and Writing Improvement

The first question in part two aimed to check if the treatment made the students aware of their progress. The obtained results revealed that all the students confirmed that the treatment raised their awareness of their progress, where 28 (75.7 per cent) expressed that the treatment elevated their awareness 'to some extent', and 9 (24.3 per cent) indicated 'to a great extent'.

Q5: Did you agree that portfolio assessment could show your efforts in learning writing?
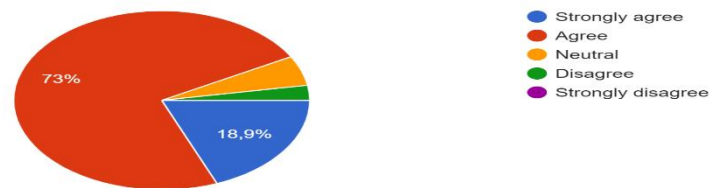
Figure 03.42: Portfolio Assessment and Learners' Efforts

The second question in part two tried to explore if portfolio assessment could display students' efforts in writing. The majority of the respondents 91.9 per cent, ranging between 'agree' and 'strongly agree', agreed that the treatment could show their efforts in writing, while two respondents 5.4 per cent were neutral, and one respondent 2.7 per cent expressed disagreement.

Q6: Did portfolio assessment make you realize that you can write anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom?
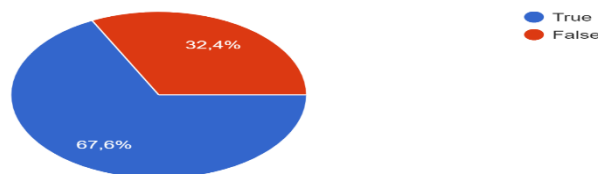
Figure 03.43: Portfolio Assessment and Writing Opportunities

The third question sought to explore if portfolio assessment raised students' awareness toward writing in any setting. The obtained data disclosed that more than two-thirds of the respondents believed that the treatment made them comprehend that writing was a class activity, whereas 32.4 per cent of them negated that the portfolio assessment made them realize that they could write anytime and anywhere.

Q7: Did portfolio assessment allow you to find writing mistakes after receiving feedback from the teacher and peers?

does portfolio assessment allow you to find out writing mistakes after receiving feedback from the teacher and peers.
37 réponses

- Yes
- No

100%
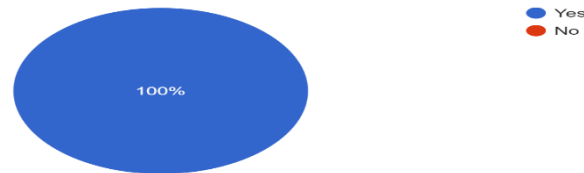
Figure 3.44: Portfolio Assessment and Mistakes Identification

The rationale behind this question was to explore whether portfolio assessment raised students' awareness of their mistakes through peer and teacher feedback. As shown in the figure above, all of the respondents 37 (100 per cent) agreed that portfolio assessment made them identify their mistakes after receiving feedback.

Q8: To what extent did portfolio assessment help you understand your strengths and weaknesses in writing?

to what extent does portfolio asssessment help you understand your strenghts and weaknesses in writing?
37 réponses

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- To little or no extent

54,1%

45,9%
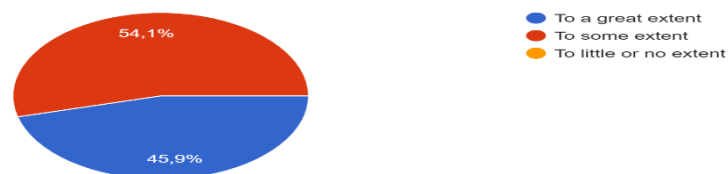
Figure 03.45: Portfolio Assessment and Learners' Strengths and Weaknesses

For the fifth question in the second part, over half of the respondents, 54.1 per cent stated ' to some extent' and mentioned that portfolio assessment helped them recognize their strengths and weaknesses, whereas 45.9 per cent indicated that the treatment them 'to a greater extent'. It was clear from these results that all respondents agreed that the treatment raised awareness of their strengths and weaknesses.

Part Three: The third part of the questionnaire tackled students' attitudes and perceptions toward the impact of portfolio assessment on their writing. It comprised six (6) questions.

Q9: Did you feel that portfolio assessment could present your writing results?

Figure 03.46: Portfolio Assessment and Writing Results

The first question in part three sought to know if students felt that portfolio assessment was suitable for their writing and could present their writing results accurately. According to the obtained data, the majority of the respondents 33 (89.2 per cent) felt that the treatment could present their writing results, while 6 (10.8 per cent) did not validate that portfolio assessment could present their writing results.

Q10: Did you agree that portfolio assessment helped you to keep the habit of writing English regularly?
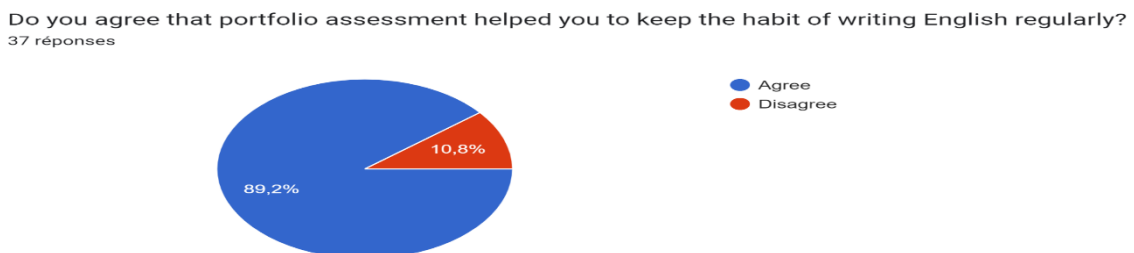
Figure 03.47: Portfolio Assessment and Writing Habits

The second question in part three tried to inspect if portfolio assessment helped students keep their habits of writing. It was clear from the graph that almost all the students 33 (89.2 per cent) agreed, whereas 6 (10.8 per cent) expressed their disagreement with the idea of keeping the habit of writing.

Q11: Did portfolio assessment increase your grammatical mastery?

Through portfolio assessment my grammatical mastery increased
37 réponses

● True
● False

100%

Figure 03.48: Portfolio Assessment and Grammatical Mastery

This question aimed to check the students' perception of their grammatical mastery after experiencing portfolio assessment. As figure 3.48 above showed, all the respondents stated "true" and confirmed that there was improvement in their grammatical mastery.

Q12: Did portfolio assessment allow you to acquire many new vocabulary items?

portfolio assessment allowed me to acquire many new vocabulary items
37 réponses

● Yes
● No

43,2%

56,8%
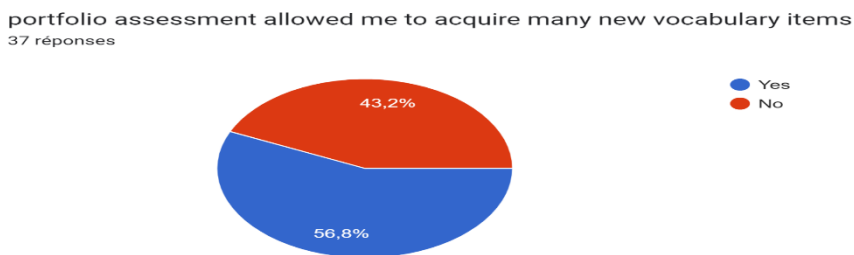
Figure 03.49: Portfolio Assessment and Vocabulary Enrichment

Through this question, the researcher aimed to explore how students perceived their vocabulary repertoire after experiencing portfolio assessment. The received results displayed that more than two halves 56.8 per cent stated 'yes' and asserted that their experience with portfolio assessment allowed them to enrich their vocabulary. On the contrary, 43.2 per cent of the respondents expressed that their experience with the treatment did not increase mastery nor enrich vocabulary.

Q13: Did the portfolio assessment increase your willingness to write actively?
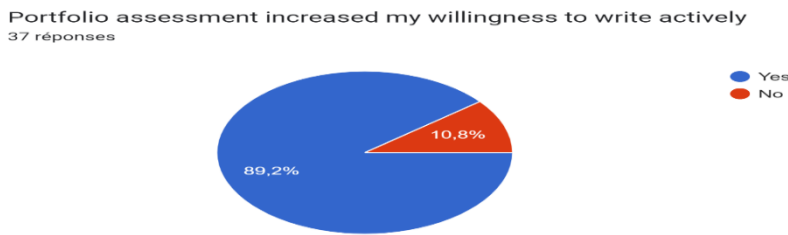
Figure 03.50: Portfolio Assessment and Active Writing

This question aimed to inquire if portfolio assessment encouraged the students and raised their willingness to write actively. The obtained data revealed that almost all the respondents 33(89.2 per cent) affirmed that the treatment promoted their willingness to write actively. Whereas, four respondents (10.8 per cent) announced their denial and declined that the portfolio assessment raised their willingness to write actively.

Q14: Did you agree that portfolio assessment allowed you to choose how to plan and write according to your writing style?
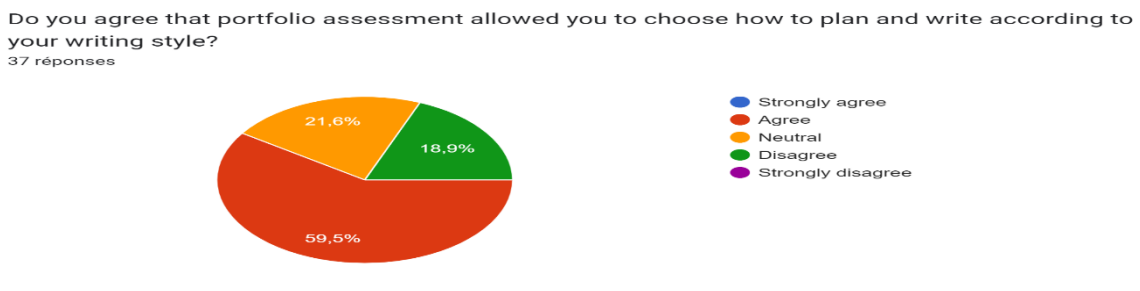
Figure 03.51: Portfolio Assessment and Writing Style

This question aimed to investigate if the treatment permitted students to select their plans and write according to their styles. The received responses displayed that well over half the respondents agreed with 59.5 per cent, while 21.6 per cent of the informants were neutral regarding this point. On the other hand, 18.9 per cent of them manifested a disagreement and refuted that the treatment allowed them to choose and write according to their styles.

Part Four: The last part of the questionnaire addressed students' perceptions and attitudes toward the content of the portfolio assessment. It comprised five (5) questions.

Q15: Was the content of the portfolio assessment important and helpful for your writing?

The content of the portfolio assessment is important and helpfull for my writing
37 réponses

- Yes
- No

97,3%
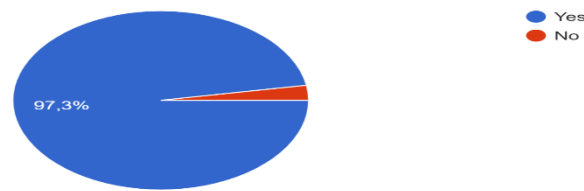
Figure 03.52: Portfolio Assessment Relevance to Writing

By this question, the researcher wanted to inquire about students' perceptions of the treatment, and whether it was helpful for their writing. The data gathered indicated that almost all the respondents 36 (97.3 per cent) found the treatment (portfolio assessment) important and declared that it was beneficial for their writing, while one respondent (2.78 per cent) stated it was not important and helpful.

Q16: Did you consider Reflection and self-evaluation the most important part of portfolio assessment?

Reflection and self evaluation are the most important part of portfolio assessment
37 réponses

- True
- False

21,6%

78,4%
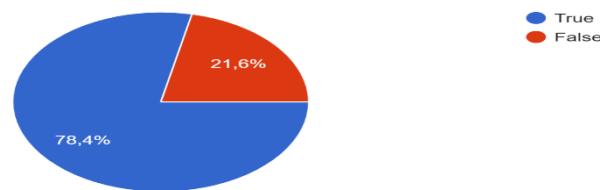
Figure 03.53: Considerations of Reflection and Self-Evaluation

The second question in part four sought to examine if students considered reflection procedure and self-assessment as the most significant strategies of portfolio assessment. The yielded data exhibited that more than three halves of the respondents 29 (78.4 per cent) indicated that this was true, whereas eight (8) (21.6 per cent) respondents did not consider reflection and self-evaluation as the most important part of portfolio assessment.

Q17: Did you consider peer feedback as the most valuable feature for writing improvement?

peer feedback is the most valuable feature for writing improvemnt
37 réponses

- True
- False

67,6%

32,4%
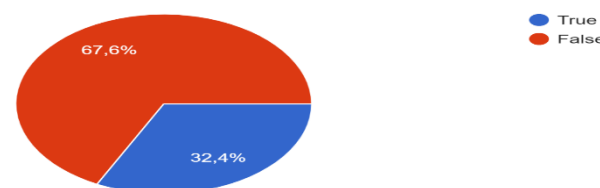
Figure 03.54: Peer Feedback and Writing Improvement

This question sought to understand if the students found peer feedback a valuable feature for writing improvement. Many studies suggested the effectiveness of peer feedback on students' writing. However, the received data disclosed surprising results where almost three halves (67.6 per cent) of the respondents did not consider peer feedback a valuable feature for writing improvement. On the other hand, 32.4 per cent claimed that it was valuable and relevant to their writing.

Q18: Were revision procedures important for your writing?

Revision is important for writing improvement
37 réponses

● Yes
● No

100%
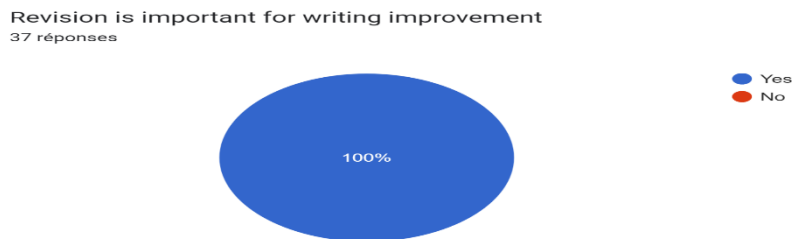
Figure 3.55: Revision and Writing

Through this question, the respondents were asked if the revision procedures were important for their writing. The data gathered from this question revealed that all the respondents valued revision procedures and believed that it was important for their writing improvement.

Q19: To what extent did portfolio assessment procedure help you grow as an independent EFL writer?

to what extent portfolio assessment procedure will help you grow as an independent EFL writer
37 réponses

● To great extent
● To some extent
● To little or no extent

32,4%

64,9%
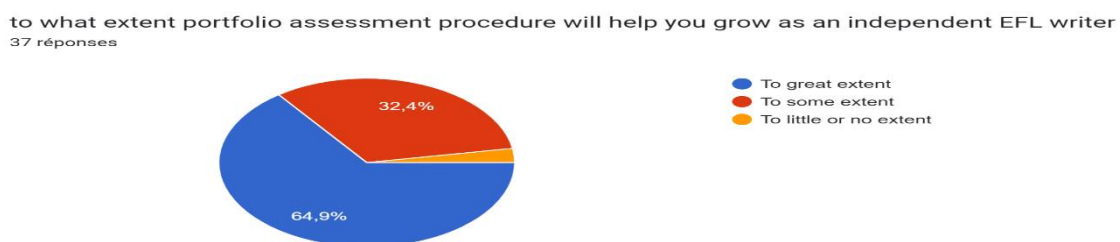
Figure 03.56: Portfolio Assessment and Growing as Writers

The last question in part four aimed to check the extent of help that the treatment would offer for students' growth. The data obtained exhibited that three halves of the respondents 24 (64.9 per cent) indicated to a great extent, and 12 (32.4 per cent) reported to some extent, while one respondent claimed to little or no extent.

3.10 Perception Interview

The second tool introduced to answer the third research question was an interview. The researcher relied on this tool to have an in-depth analysis and gather as much as possible data to support the results of the questionnaire and have an inspection from different angles. He

inserted a semi-structured interview because he had limited knowledge to confirm and, similarly relied on the respondents to tell more about the investigation. Indeed, the researcher used a formal style to deliver the interview and relied on a well-planned procedure and a recorder to memorize the responses. The researcher selected six (6) students to be part of the interview. They were randomly selected using a simple random method in which the researcher used coin tossing to assign those who would be part of the interview. The interview participants were six (6) and made up of three (3) males and three (3) (females).

3.10.1 Perception Interview Results

Part One: the first part contained three questions and was related to assessment in general.

In the first question, the researcher asked the interviewees about their perception of assessment in general. The responses obtained revealed that all the respondents thought that the assessment was about exams and getting a good mark in the subject of examination. Almost all the students expressed positive attitudes toward the assessment and felt at ease with what was presented by their teachers. Mohamed in this regard mentioned:

"Assessment is the correction of my writing that is done by the teacher to give me marks"

In the second question, the researcher tried to know whether students knew the difference between assessment, evaluation, and examination. Though the researcher knew students' inability to differentiate between these three interrelated terms, he wanted to check their level of awareness. The received responses confirmed the researcher's expectations and revealed that the interviewees were unable to make a difference between the three terms. In this vein, Bouchra stated:

"I think that these terms are the same, and they serve the same function as they related to grades and marks"

The last question in part one asked about their feeling toward the assessment methods used by their teachers. The obtained results revealed a recognition of the conventional (traditional) methods of assessment from the students. They frequently stated that they felt at ease with the assessment techniques. Some responses were quoted as follows:

"Well I think the assessment methods used by our teachers were convenient and we were familiar with them"

"Why change a method that I felt good about and was sure that it was helpful"

"I don't know about this but having the exams at the end of a semester is the best method

to test our ability in the subject"

Part Two: It comprised three questions and aimed to elicit the interviewees' general perceptions and feelings about how writing is taught and assessed at Mascara University.

The first question in part two asked the interviewees about their perception of writing assessment in general. There were several comments, both positive and negative, on students' perception of writing assessment. However, the majority of the interviewees showed mixed feelings and resentment towards the writing assessment presented by their teacher. In this regard, two answers to that issue were quoted as follows:

"I believe we were learning the rules of writing in class effectively, and our teacher was

just right, but what was unfortunate was the fact that we did not have opportunities to

write and be followed"

"I think we were being assessed for giving correct answers to questions and not for trying

those rules in writing an essay or paragraph"

The second question in the interview asked the students about their feelings of writing assessments. Following the prompts suggested by the researcher, the majority of the respondents mentioned that they found writing assessments nervous, stressful, and did not teach them how to write repeatedly and successfully. Some responses were quoted as follows: "Writing assessment is just an examination that we take at the end of a semester, usually to test how accurate our answers are"

Three interviewees emphasized the impractical impact of the used writing assessment and claimed the following:

"I think the assessment practice by our teacher was not serving the aim of building the

habits of writing or growing us as academic writers"

"I do not see writing in the module of writing because we did not write frequently, and

our teacher did not provide periodic feedback or revision when we wrote"

"Honestly, I am afraid of tests and exams. Can you consider the fact that you are limited

in writing and have a limited time to produce something that you were rarely trained to

do"

Some respondents felt happy about the assessment used by their teacher and recognized an increase in their writing levels. They claimed that the provided assessment was enjoyable.

Question three intended to inquire into how writing skill is taught and assessed by their teacher. According to the received responses, the majority explained that their teacher was giving them texts with explanations, they extracted the rules from the given text, and later on, they practiced through activities. The researcher noticed from the responses provided that students were not practising writing at home through homework. Regarding the writing assessment, they claimed unawareness of what writing assessment was, and the only procedure of assessment they knew was the examination that was done at the end of the semester which was not related, according to them, to writing or producing a paragraph. Some of their answers are quoted as follows:

"Well, in general, our teacher was giving us the texts where we conduct a silent reading

and analyse its content. Later on, she engaged us in rule extractions. After that, she gave

us some activities to complete"

"We were taught writing through a repeated cycle where the teacher provided a text, then

a deductive explanation from which we could infer the rules through the help of the

teacher. As far as assessment was concerned, I did not know what assessment meant in

class. Maybe you mean the examination that is done at the end"

Part Three: The third part digs deeply into the procedure of portfolio assessment, and aims at generating responses regarding students' experience with portfolio assessment. Because students have experienced portfolios for two semesters, the interview attempted to recount this experience and get them to reflect upon what was appealing and valuable.

In the first question of part three, students were asked if they had heard about portfolio assessments before. All the interviewees' responses were negative, they claimed that this collocation was new to them and they had never been subject to it before. Regarding the second question, the researcher tried to highlight students' experience with the treatment by asking them to recount their portfolio experience in two semesters. According to the interview results,

there seemed to be a high level of satisfaction with the treatment (portfolio assessment), almost all the respondents considered their experience positive and felt happy about the opportunities of writing they received, and the fruitful feedback that was provided by both teachers and students. Moreover, dissatisfaction was minimal as only one interviewee felt disappointed with the experience. Some of their ideas are quoted as follows:

"In fact, through this assessment technique, I felt daring, not as worried as before, and more excited to write, revise, and correct the committed mistakes. I think this experience made me aware of my writing level, encouraged me to write whenever possible, and provided writing occasions. It made me conscious of the organization, linking words, and spelling errors. I did not care before, but now I can say that writing is attractive when well-produced".

"For me, it was a good experience because we did not feel under pressure, the atmosphere was just right. We knew that we could make mistakes and that was okay because the teacher provided us with the necessary support. I think this brushes aside the usual stress of exams".

"Honestly, we were comfortable and learned that writing is not just one piece of writing or genre, rather it is writing repeatedly and on many occasions. We wrote many paragraphs, and our teacher made us aware of our mistakes using the codes he provided and encouraged us to correct them and learn from our mistakes. It is a good experience".

The third question required the respondents to outline what they liked the most and least about the portfolio assessment. The interviewees reported that the most attractive feature of this type of assessment was the non-judgmental features; this latter means not giving grades to their writing. Moreover, they liked the delayed evaluation, which made them feel safe. Furthermore, they appreciated the feedback provided by the teacher, especially through the codes, and considered it as the best backstone that they could rely on. Nonetheless, they mentioned that the treatment raised awareness of their mistakes and encouraged them to mind when writing. Finally, they stressed the importance of the process of writing which was relevant, and helpful for them. Examples of interviewee explanations are presented as follows:

"I think the use of portfolio assessment encouraged me to write because I did not feel that my writing was subject to crucial assessment. Moreover, I had no psychological barriers unlike when I wrote for the exam where it felt heavy and a lot of pressure".

The last question in part three asked the interviewees about how portfolio assessment may promote the learning of writing. The majority claimed that portfolio assessment provided real writing opportunities; this was through the different occasions that the teacher provided and the variety of genres that allowed them to practice what they learned in real situations. The richness of the provided feedback, which according to the respondents was unique and fruitful as it was indirect and analytic. Moreover, the revision procedure allowed them to work on their mistakes, correct them and enhance the overall accuracy of their writing. Finally, they reported that they were not aware of the process of writing until they were subject to portfolio assessment. As a result, this later increased their awareness, and how they could write accurately and effectively and encouraged them to work on improving their overall writing. Some responses were quoted as follows:

"I think portfolio assessment provided us with different writing opportunities, for revising our writing. I admit I did not care about how my writing appeared before experiencing portfolio assessment. Now I can say I am more conscious when I write because I believe good writing attracts readers' attention".

"I am pretty sure that portfolio assessment promotes the learning of writing through rich feedback which was a building block of this assessment technique. Through this procedure, you will receive multiple comments from both teacher and friends on how you can improve your writing, and this is how I believe we can improve our writing skills".

"I assume that portfolio assessment promotes the learning of writing through its process that gives the students the ability to work on their writing by following the steps of pre-writing, drafting, redrafting, and finally producing the final paper. I presume through this procedure we can put into practice the learned rules and grow as good writers".

Part Four: The Impact of the Portfolio Assessment on Writing Improvement

The fourth part dealt with the impact of portfolio assessment on writing improvement. The researcher asked four questions to elicit the students' views about the extent of progress in

writing performance after receiving the treatment (portfolio assessment). The interview results would disclose the impact of the experience, feedback, and students' improvement.

The first question sought to explore the aspects of students' writing that improved after experiencing portfolio assessment. According to the yielded data, almost all the students reported that the aspects of writing that improved to a higher extent after experiencing the treatment were grammar and punctuation. They claimed that through the revision sessions and feedback, they became more conscious of the frequent mistakes they made, which as a result, led them to be aware of these mistakes and work on overcoming them when redrafting and more importantly when producing the final drafts. Moreover, other interviewees to a lesser extent outlined that style and organization were the aspects of writing that portfolio assessment helped them to improve. Some of their responses were quoted as follows:

"At first my writing was full of punctuation, and organization mistakes, but after experiencing portfolio assessment, there was a decrease in punctuation mistakes and I can write a paragraph that is well organized".

"Before experiencing portfolio assessment, my writing was awful and full of mistakes, especially the one related to punctuation and grammar. Now I can say that the number of mistakes has decreased because I can write and then read and correct which made me much better than ever before".

"My paragraph used to appear unorganized. However, after this short experience, I admit that my writing is different and appears more organized".

The next question emphasized the relationship between revision and writing improvement. It might seem surprising in discussing revision that at first students did not like to perform revision and corrections acts; probably they were afraid to see their mistakes because for them mistakes are lost points in their overall grading mark. However, after experiencing the procedure of portfolio assessment, students started to embrace revision and to consider it a possibility for growth. The interviewees' responses confirmed that revision was crucial and a key to their improvement, and most importantly to their overall accuracy.

"Actually, revision allowed me to be aware of my errors, taught me to face those mistakes and undertake correction rather than being afraid, and most importantly it encouraged me to learn from the committed errors and improve my accuracy".

"Revision is essential for improving writing skills. We cannot grow accurately if we do not acknowledge that we are making mistakes, and it is only through revision that we can develop this skill".

"Only through revision, we can learn how to write in a better manner".

In the third question, students were asked about the kinds of feedback they considered constructive in improving their writing after experiencing portfolio assessment. In their responses, almost all of them talked about teacher feedback and considered it valuable and useful feedback through which they could identify their flaws and learn from the provided suggestions and comments. Frequently students perceived the comments and feedback provided by their teacher as helpful and right to the point, unlike their peers' comments and feedback which was not considered as valuable and interesting as their teachers' comments. On the other hand, one student found peer assessment constructive and reported that he learned better from his friends than from the teacher. Typical explanations were presented as follows:

"Well, the only person I can rely on for correction is my teacher, because I was quite sure that he had the necessary knowledge to put things just right for me. Moreover, I sought my teacher's feedback because it allowed me to improve"

"I felt comfortable with my teacher's correction as it motivated me to make my writing better, it stressed important aspects that only the teacher can recognize, unlike peer or friend comments which made me reluctant and I did not take them into consideration".

"I think teacher feedback was beneficial, but I am into peer feedback because it does not put pressure on me and allows me to discuss freely with my friend about the mistake which you cannot do with your teacher. I feel frustrated with the feedback that is given by my teacher".

Furthermore, when asked about the type of feedback they favoured, the interviewee replied that indirect feedback was more typical since it provided hints about mistakes and permitted them to work on correcting their errors which may result in the improvement of self-assessment skills and train students to learn from those errors. Some responses were quoted as follows:

"The method used by the teacher was beneficial, on the one hand, it permitted me to recognize where my mistakes were and the category they belonged to since the teacher coded the mistakes. On the other hand, when working on these mistakes I started recalling and avoiding making such mistakes in future writing".

"I believe indirect feedback is better because it motivated and made me curious about the mistake that I made which as a result improved my writing skill in general and helped me identify my weaknesses and focus on reducing those mistakes".

The last question in part four asked students about the extent to which their participation in the portfolio experience developed their writing and made them better EFL writers. Almost all the students interviewed in our study talked about the effectiveness of the treatment on their writing progress and suggested that their participation in this experience raised their writing awareness and made them view writing as an important skill that they needed to work on to become better EFL writers. Moreover, they reported that portfolio assessment was useful, and made them recognize their flaws in a non-evaluative manner, giving them opportunities to view their mistakes, revise them, and produce a polished final paragraph. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of delayed evaluation, which according to them had a positive impact on their overall writing. Nonetheless, the interviewees claimed that portfolio assessment appeared convenient to the assessment of writing, especially the positive atmosphere and that their experience with portfolio assessment facilitated their writing, encouraged them, and made them more interested in writing than ever before, which was not the case with the traditional assessment and allowed them to see the treatment (portfolio assessment) as a learning procedure. On the contrary, a related but rather different conviction was expressed by two interviewees who reported their dissatisfaction and claimed their preference for their teacher's method of assessment, which put less pressure on students. Some of their justifications were quoted as follows:

"According to this experience, I believe portfolio assessment helped me out with my writing, empowered my ability, and encouraged me to be conscious when writing so that my piece of writing would appear accurate and up the expectations"

"I have always doubted my writing skills, but my portfolio allowed me to reveal my ability, which stimulated me to work harder through it processes that create a link between theory and practice. Just awesome"

"Delayed evaluation made me feel safer and not worried about making mistakes. It gave me a chance to reconsider my writing"

"I think this type of assessment is convenient to the writing skill, unlike other skills, portfolio assessment allowed me to practice and do my best to learn and write accurately"

When asked about the extent of their improvement, the interviewees reported a high level of satisfaction with the treatment and communicated that their level of improvement was about 65 per cent. The communicated average was the mean of the percentage that was given by the interviewee during the interview.

3.11 Conclusion

It is suggested that, perhaps, a well-structured research design might help the researcher in his inquiry by providing the relevant procedure for testing the suggested hypotheses and disclosing any relationship that could exist between variables within the research context. In this regard, the purpose of the current study was to examine the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' writing, collaboration, perception, and attitudes. Data were gathered from Thirty-seven students enrolled in the English Department at Mascara University. Moreover, the researcher relied on an experimental two-group research design to answer the research questions that were related to writing improvement, collaboration, and perception.

This chapter reported the data gathered from diverse research tools such as experiments, observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Thus, as described in detail in this chapter, the researcher used multiple tools to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study and create a sort of triangulation to capture the requirements and yield valid and reliable data. Furthermore, the results of each research tool were displayed in sequence following the order of the research questions.

Chapter Four
Interpretation and Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter analyses the research tools used in the current study such as the experiment, observation, interview, and questionnaires. Because various studies exhibited the effectiveness of portfolio assessment on ESL/EFL students, and in response to the issue of effective writing pedagogy, the analysis seeks to understand how portfolio assessment in the EFL context affected students' writing, collaboration, and perception. The finding derived from the analysis determines the effectiveness of a portfolio assessment pedagogy in raising EFL students' writing skills. Moreover, the chapter also covers some suggestions and recommendations that the researcher aims to put forward for consideration in the hope of providing a relevant platform for the implementation of portfolio assessment, and thus, elevating the quality of EFL students' writing

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

4.2.1 Pre-Test/Post-Test Experiment Results

The pre-test results clarified to the researcher the current level of students, which the raters described as below the average. The pre-test sought to diagnose students' writing abilities and was used as a reference to rely on when undertaking the comparison process. Moreover, the pre-test results were disappointing as the average of both groups (Experimental and Control groups) was 45 per cent and 48.8 per cent. These results signified limitations in writing and made the researcher aware of the difficulties that they were facing. Furthermore, the researcher hypothesised that this limitation was because students were not practising enough writing as they were fresh first-year students and were still more related to speaking skills than writing.

On the contrary, the post-test aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the treatment (portfolio assessment) and drawing reasonable inferences. Moreover, the data obtained revealed significant facts about students' writing levels. Indeed, as the average column chart shows, there is a remarkable difference between the mean of the experimental and the control groups: 60 per cent and 52 per cent. Furthermore, the results of both groups' performance in the pre and post-test are not identical as the results show the experimental group got an average of forty-five (45 per cent) on the pre-test and sixty (60 per cent) on the post-test. On the other hand, the control group got 44.8 per cent on the pre-test and 52 per cent on the post-test. The information above indicates an improvement of twelve (12) points in the experimental group's writing performance compared to the control group with five (5) points. This indicates significant progress in the experimental group results compared to the pre-test and empowerment of students' writing abilities.

Nonetheless, the researcher claimed that the experimental group displayed control over their writing, which was apparent in the ideas' richness, organisation, and delivery. Moreover, he mentioned that the errors made by the experimental group decreased to a low average, mainly those related to punctuation and spelling. This feature indicated a kind of awareness that was not present in their writing before. Furthermore, the researcher noticed another crucial point related to the fact that the students started applying the steps of successful writing, namely the process of writing that led them to score higher results in the post-test. Additionally, it is important to note that the experimental group's writing performance on the post-test appeared homogenous in length, manifested greater correctness and fewer mistakes, and met educational expectations.

The researcher related the above inconsistency in both groups (the experimental and the control group) writing post-test results to the treatment the experimental group received since portfolio assessment necessitated careful attention, following, and continuous feedback. Accordingly, the obtained result signified a positive correlation between the usage of the treatment (portfolio assessment) and students' writing performance (the experimental group).

As mentioned in the table above (ratters' post-test evaluation), ratters confirmed the results obtained by the researcher and revealed that the experimental group witnessed an improvement in their writing. They pointed out that there was a decrease in mistakes and an improvement in style and organization. This was relevant to the fact that a high portion of the experimental group students scored above the average (10). Along the same line, there was an improvement in the marks where the number of students who scored above the average changed from nine (9) in the pre-test to eighteen (18) in the post-test. This result confirmed the experimental groups' statement about the effectiveness of the treatment, as they declared that assessment through portfolio allowed them to be aware and conscious when writing, taught them reflective strategies, and how they could produce an accurate paragraph.

Moreover, the examples of both groups' performance mentioned earlier suggested the superiority of the experimental over the control group. First, the experimental group's scores appeared higher than the control group. The two examples mentioned earlier showed that they got 78 per cent and 79 per cent compared to the control ones where they got 24 per cent and 25 per cent. Second, the number of errors appeared limited in the examples of the experimental group whereas the control group paragraphs looked full of mistakes and with limited vocabulary. These features indicate that the experimental group conceived the lessons and started reflecting on writing. This resulted in a greater decrease in punctuation mistakes, among the common mistakes in their writing in the pre-test. And third, there was a great difference

between the two groups in paragraph length. The experimental group paragraph seemed lengthier, well organized and had rich content. On the contrary, the control group paragraph appeared limited in length where the answer to the topic was direct and did not respect the paragraph organization, lacking content richness which denotes a lack of practice and self-reflect or assessment.

4.2.2 Interpretation of Results

Concerning the first research question, the researcher used the questionnaire to empower the results obtained from the experiment and to elicit as much data as possible about the effectiveness of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on students' writing. The first question revealed that the majority of the students were female which is apparent in all the domains nowadays. The second question in the study sought to determine if students were interested in developing their writing. The obtained results made it clear that the majority 56.8 per cent desired to improve their writing whereas, 35.1 per cent were not sure and opted for the second option (maybe). In contrast, 8.1 per cent (3) did not want to improve their writing skills. This reluctance that exists in students' responses might be related to the fact that they were accustomed to conventional assessments where every completed work is subject to marks which is not the case with portfolio assessments.

The third question aimed at checking the extent of students' satisfaction with their writing, especially after experiencing different genres of writing, a load of opportunities, and receiving a variety of feedback on different stages of their writing. It seems obvious that students did not feel bad about their writing; the majority, 67.6 per cent, mentioned that their writing was okay, while 13.5 per cent stated they were satisfied. However, 18.9 per cent said that they were dissatisfied. Moreover, question four seeks to examine students' perceptions of their writing abilities. The data gathered displayed that 62.2 per cent of students perceived their writing as moderate (average), 35.1 per cent considered their writing as bad, and 5.4 per cent viewed it as better. A possible explanation for these results was that students did not know what good and satisfactory writing meant. This appeared later when students started to see their mistakes and reflect on them through the opportunities that portfolio assessment offered for its users.

The next question revealed that most students were pleased with the conventional assessment provided by their teacher. This was communicated in the results where 83.8 per cent said they were pleased whereas 16.2 per cent said they were not. These results may be explained by the fact that students since middle school followed a rigid type of assessment, namely a product approach where the aim was passing and not learning.

Assessing writing through portfolio assessments was beneficial for the students. This was prevalent in students' answers where 83.8 percent of students stated that this technique was advantageous for their writing. Furthermore, regarding students' awareness of this type of assessment, almost two-thirds 62.2 per cent stated that they were conscious of this assessment, while 37.8 per cent expressed their unawareness. Even though the majority clearly expressed their awareness, they did not realize the procedure included in the portfolio assessment. This information was confirmed in the next question (Q8) where the majority 89.2 per cent pointed out that they had never received guidelines on how to use portfolio assessment while 10.8 per cent answered that they received guidelines.

The ninth question was raised to check the impact of portfolio assessment on students' reflections when writing. Their responses were positive as all the students agreed and declared that the use of portfolio assessment taught them how to reflect on their writing. The next question was developed to inspect the features of portfolio assessment that strengthened their writing and helped them reflect. The obtained results demonstrate that teacher feedback was paramount as 38 per cent of the students stated it was helpful. This seems logical since students are accustomed to this feedback and consider their tutors a trusted source for improvement compared to other features such as peer assessment. Along the same line, 36 per cent reported that all the features of portfolio assessment were valuable, while 26 per cent of the students announced that self-assessment helped them improve.

The use of portfolio assessment is useful for students' writing since it emphasizes the process features that lead to improvement. The results obtained showed a general agreement over the effectiveness of portfolio assessment; over half of the students, 59.9 per cent, reported that they agreed, and 35.1 per cent stated that they strongly agreed. On the other hand, only 5.4 per cent selected undecided. The prevalent agreement in the results was much more related to the fact that students witnessed improvement in their writing, especially during the process where they started to notice and acknowledge their mistakes and to work on correcting them through the opportunities that this assessment provided notably the diverse feedback and the delayed evaluation.

As far as the types of impact that portfolio assessment had on students' writing, the finding revealed that all the respondents 100 per cent claimed a positive impact on their writing. This positive impact might be related to the environment that the portfolio yielded where students felt that the aim is to grow as writers. Furthermore, students gave a variety of answers when asked where their positivity comes from. 35.1 per cent mentioned that this type of assessment responded to the needs of students, and 32.4 per cent said that it developed their

writing performances. While 18.9 per cent reported that it increased students' awareness; likewise, 13.5 per cent stated that portfolio assessment helped them build the habits of writing. What can be inferred from what was stated above is that the diverse answers provided by students are related to the impact that this assessment had on students. Indeed, the intensity of the impact was not the same, which is why the results appeared diverse.

For the type of assessment they preferred, the findings revealed the majority of students 78.4 per cent reported that they preferred portfolio assessment over the conventional one (Traditional assessment). In comparison, 21.6 per cent declared that they still preferred the traditional assessment. It seems possible that these results were due to the nature of portfolio assessment where marks and grades were not the focus along with the delayed evaluation. Furthermore, this preference might be related to the growth that students witnessed throughout the experiment, and to the feedback they received, which was unique and constructive.

Regarding the last question, the aim was to check the experimental group's satisfaction with their writing after receiving the treatment (portfolio assessment). The results indicated a general agreement over the benefits of portfolio assessment, where 97.3 per cent of the students replied that they were satisfied with their writing after being assessed through portfolio assessment. On the other hand, 2.7 per cent reported that they were not. This agreement was not the result of coincidence. On the contrary, it was related to the assessment atmosphere where students noticed that the aim was to develop their writing. Second, the feedback provided created a sort of awareness and a desire to work on elevating their writing skill. And thirdly, the seriousness displayed by the researcher when dealing with their writing motivated the students to improve their writing.

4.2.3 Collaboration Questionnaire Analysis and Interpretation

The present study was designed to determine the effect of portfolio assessment on students' collaboration. It was hypothesized that the building blocks of portfolio assessment supported the idea of collaboration between students. The principle of collaboration advocated that language was socially constructed and learning was best seen as the increased involvement of individuals in the learning process through cooperation and exchange. (Greeno,1997 cited in)

Due to this, the researcher wanted to examine the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on students' collaboration. The researcher used a questionnaire, observation, and interview to answer the research question. The questionnaire was handed out to first-year EFL students at Mascara University. It comprised four (4) sections. The first section dealt with the discussion of ideas for the paragraph. The second one stressed students' production of the rough

drafts and aimed at inspecting the impact of portfolio assessment on writing collaboration at the first stage of draft production. The third part sought to examine whether students were sharing and editing their paragraphs. The last part intended to shed light on the impact of the treatment on students' writing at the stage of redrafting and producing the paragraphs.

Starting with the first section, the results obtained revealed that the majority of the students 78.4 per cent agreed that the treatment promoted the exchange of ideas, experience, information, and knowledge. Moreover, more than three halves 78.4 percent expressed their agreement over the fact that the treatment enabled them to generate ideas in groups. Nonetheless, 89.2 per cent of the students declared that they learned to work cooperatively through their experience with portfolio assessment. A possible explanation for this was that portfolio assessment created authentic collaboration opportunities for discussing ideas for the paragraph. Moreover, it seemed clear from the general agreement of the students that the treatment supported positive interaction between the students and encouraged students' collaboration at the early stage of writing. Furthermore, through question four, it seemed clear that students found portfolio assessment techniques useful when they faced writer's block.

The observed agreement of students might be related to several issues. First, it is generally believed that portfolio assessments impede the pressure of the timed examination on students. Secondly, incorporating peer feedback gave students the ability to talk and exchange information in a safe atmosphere and to surpass any difficulty. Additionally, almost all students 89.2 per cent reported that portfolio assessment provided them with opportunities to express their ideas with friends. This result suggests that the treatment (portfolio assessment) created opportunities for group work, especially at the early stage namely brainstorming. This might be related to the portfolio assessment procedure where students felt less frightened and expressed themselves with their peers, also the non-evaluative features enabled the teacher to perform as a guide rather than as a judge, and as a result, encouraged students to do their best and to share with friends.

To sum up, the obtained results from section one suggested that at the stage of discussing ideas for the paragraph, portfolio assessment allowed the sharing and the expression of ideas in groups between students, and also permitted them to work together to generate ideas for the paragraph and to get over writer's block. What can be inferred from what was stated above is that the treatment affected positively students' collaboration at this stage.

Section two has been designed in an attempt to understand the impact of portfolio assessment on the students' collaboration at the stage of rough draft production. The first question was raised to understand whether the treatment allowed students to consider note-

taking. The results indicated that the majority said yes and confirmed that the treatment permitted note-taking. Yet, some students objected to this and mentioned that this was false. A possible explanation for this approval was that portfolio assessment presented diverse feedback from the teacher, peers, and reflection, allowing students to take notes from all these categories.

According to Lam and Ricky, 2014, portfolio assessment enables students to revise their early and provisional drafts using internal feedback such as self-assessment and external one such as teacher and peer feedback. Thus, the second question was raised to investigate if portfolio assessment provided relevant feedback when students faced issues. 21.6 per cent of students stated 'always'. While almost half of them reported they often received feedback, and 27 per cent mentioned 'sometimes'. This result demonstrates that the treatment was beneficial and helped the students throughout the production of their rough drafts. In this context, Lam, 2014 mentioned low-stakes environments (feedback-rich classrooms) to denote the benefits of portfolio assessment on students' writing. Furthermore, the third question aimed to inspect the type of feedback considered more valuable for the students. According to the received results, Teacher feedback was considered of high status for the students. A possible explanation for this was that students considered their teacher as a trusted source of information; that is why, they favoured teacher feedback over peer or self-reflection. Wigglesworth, Gillian, Storch, and Neomy, 2012 stated that collaborative writing should be considered by language teachers as an efficient approach to improving students' writing.

Nonetheless, in the fourth question, the researcher asked the students if their experience with portfolio assessment made them focus on collective rather than individual work. The majority of the students 89.2 per cent responded positively and said yes. This result designated that the treatment supported students' cooperative work over the individual. In this arena, Wigglesworth, Gillian, Storch, and Neomy, 2012, suggested that collaborative writing provided students with relevant practice in giving and receiving feedback and rewriting. The last question in this section aimed at inspecting if students collaborated with their peers when they faced an issue. It was revealed that most of the students agreed that the treatment enabled them to share and express ideas with their peers when they faced issues. This result was consistent with previous research findings that showed that when learners process feedback in pairs or groups, they would be engaged in deliberations about language form and lexical choices, supplying suggestions and questioning each other's suggestions. (Wigglesworth, Gillian, Storch, and Neomy, 2012)

In general, the obtained results from section two designated that at the stage of producing rough drafts, the treatment encouraged students to take notes, work together (pair/

group), and yielded useful feedback which was mostly accepted by their teachers. These results determine that portfolio assessment promoted students' collaboration at the stage of producing a rough draft.

The third section provided interesting findings regarding students' sharing and editing. According to the results, it was revealed that almost all the students 91.9 per cent shared their first draft with their peers. This means that students followed the treatment steps and collaborated with their peers to improve their paragraph accuracy. The second question was raised to check if peer assessment or feedback provided the students with constructive suggestions. The results indicated that 81.1 per cent of the students found peer feedback constructive whereas 18.9 per cent said it was not. The prevalent agreement in the results was much more related to the fact that peer feedback did not impose stress on the students nor it is considered risky for them because it creates friendly and secure circumstances for language learners.

Moreover, Rollinson, 2005, mentioned that peer feedback, which comprised interaction and communication, provided real opportunities for improvement through dialogue two-way feedback, and negotiation. The third question was related to the previous one and was intended to explore the areas where the peers provided suggestions for their friends. The data gathered indicated that punctuation was the major area of suggestion with 24 (80 per cent) followed by spelling 13(43.3 per cent) and meaning 2(6.7 per cent). From this result, it is apparent that peer suggestions focused mainly on punctuation and spelling. This might be related to the students' limited level, which prevented them from analyzing beyond what was apparent. Another explanation for this might be the students' lack of corrective feedback strategies and lack of training.

Moreover, the fourth question aimed to check if sharing skills allowed them to learn new ways to plan their paragraphs. The finding revealed that more than half the students 54.4 per cent reported to 'some extent', while 32.4 per cent claimed to 'a large extent', and 13.5 per cent claimed to 'little or no extent'. The variety of answers provided by the students might be related to their behaviour I.e. if they were sharing their drafts with friends or not. It is clear from the results that when students were sharing and collaborating with their friends they were able to locate their mistakes and work on correcting them, which resulted in an accuracy improvement. The last question in section three sought to explore if the treatment enabled the students to revise more than when they wrote alone. The data gathered displayed that students' responses were positive as almost all the students 97.3 per cent stated 'yes'. This prevalent agreement might be related to the rich feedback classroom and the diverse revision

opportunities yielded by this type of assessment such as the teacher conferences, the student conferences, and classroom checks.

Overall, from the analysis of the third section of the questionnaire, most participants found that portfolio assessment allowed them to share with peers. They allegedly confirmed that they received constructive suggestions on diverse categories, especially punctuation and spelling. Moreover, they indicated that they learned new planning and revision strategies.

The last section of the questionnaire was devoted to redrafting the paragraph. From the analysis of the first question which was related to the frequency of note-taking from the suggestion provided by peers, 43.2 per cent reported that they often take notes, while 29.7 per cent claimed that they sometimes take notes, and 16.9 per cent pointed out that they rarely take notes. 5.1 per cent reported that they never took notes, and the rest 5.1 stated that they always took notes. The obtained results clearly show that students were taking note of the suggestions provided and that there was a realistic consideration of peer feedback. In this regard, Yahiaoui (2020, p.34) indicated that the feedback provided by peers was a vehicle for ameliorating writers' drafts and enhancing readers' mastery of good writing. As far as the acceptance of the suggestion provided by peers, 67.6 per cent of the respondents replied that they were accepting, while 32.4 per cent expressed their refusal to accept peer suggestions. A possible explanation for this result was that students had positive attitudes toward their peer suggestions, maybe they felt safe and under less pressure.

The second question was a follow-up to the previous one and associated with the students who refused the suggestion provided by their peers 32.4 per cent. According to the data obtained, 66.7 per cent of the students replied that the suggestion provided by peers was not constructive, while 33.3 per cent of the students stated that these suggestions did not fit the context. What can be inferred from this result was that students did not trust their peers' assistance and still preferred their teacher as the prime source of both knowledge and feedback. This result is consistent with Storch (2005) who stated that we had noticed students' reluctance when asking them to produce an output that required them to work in pair/group work. Along the same line, he mentioned that according to our observation, it appeared that students preferred to complete their tasks individually.

The fourth question in this section asked the students if they had undertaken changes before giving their paragraphs to the evaluator. The result shows that all the students 100 per cent were correcting their mistakes before handing their papers to the evaluator. This agreement was generally related to the fact that students tried to polish their papers and made them appear as accurate as possible when they knew that their papers were going to be corrected. Finally,

the last question in this section is aimed at inspecting student agreement over the effectiveness of portfolio assessment in developing students' collaboration and writing skills in general. From the analysis of the collected data, 67.6 per cent stated that they agreed with the fact that treatment developed their collaboration and writing, and 21.6 per cent expressed their strong agreement. At the same time, 10.8 per cent of the students took a neutral position. What was interesting in this result is that there was no disagreement over the usefulness of the treatment and that the obtained agreement might be related to the fact that students witnessed writing improvement and experienced a kind of collaboration that made them realize that this latter was the result of being assessed through portfolio assessment. The obtained result endorsed the one stated by Tiwari and Tang (2003), from process to outcome: the effect of portfolio assessment on student learning, that portfolio assessment led to a form of spontaneous collaboration and noticeable interest in learning during the process of preparing the portfolio.

Taken together, the analysis of the fourth section of the questionnaire revealed that there was a realistic consideration of peer feedback where students started taking note of the suggestions provided. Moreover, the findings disclosed that they displayed positive attitudes toward their peer suggestions and were correcting their mistakes before the evaluation process. These results determined that at the stage of redrafting, students exhibited cooperative strategies which indicated that the treatment successfully impacted students' collaboration.

To Sum up, what can be inferred from the earlier discussed results of the questionnaire, was that portfolio assessment positively supported students' collaboration and enabled them to learn to work jointly to produce accurate writing. Moreover, through this procedure, students learned to deliver and receive feedback from their mates especially when they were subject to blocks or when making mistakes. Furthermore, the treatment gave students the ability to provide constructive suggestions on diverse categories, especially punctuation and spelling, and learn new planning and revision strategies.

4.1.4 Collaboration Interview Analysis

In an attempt to support the data collected from the first research tool respectively collaboration questionnaire, the researcher aimed to consolidate these data by calling for another research tool such as an interview. The respondents for this interview were six students selected randomly using simple random sampling. The interview was composed of three parts. The first part was devoted to the treatment procedure and it comprised three questions. The second part attempted to check the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on collaboration. The third part intended to shed light on the effect of portfolio assessment on students' social skills.

The first part finding revealed that there is general satisfaction with the impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) procedures on students' overall writing and collaboration. The first question disclosed that recognition of writing improvement and awareness that comes from experiencing portfolio assessment was the advantage most frequently stated by all the interviewees. Therefore, students' perception was positive as they clearly expressed this in their responses. Moreover, the second question asked students if they were satisfied with portfolio assessment procedures. Indeed, students communicated their satisfaction with this assessment procedure as the majority referred to improvement in terms of writing accuracy and valued the support provided by all class members mainly teachers and peers. Nonetheless, all the interviewees saw writing conditions to be better than they had been before. Furthermore, the third question in this part aimed at inspecting students' points of view on incorporating portfolio assessment in EFL classes. Even though most of our respondents reported an increase in writing accuracy, their comments on incorporating this assessment technique did not appear assertive. Whilst over half of the respondents were quite open about the preference given to portfolio assessment and had positive attitudes, some were unfavourable, referring to conventional assessment preference and hostility.

The second part of the interview was related to the impact of the treatment on collaboration. Question one revealed that the majority of the interviewees found the wide range of corrective and non-corrective feedback that the portfolio assessment provided useful. The interviewees claimed that teacher feedback was the most valuable in comparison to peer feedback. In this regard, the results obtained were consistent with the study done by Grace, Paul (2009), 'An Investigation into the Effectiveness of Peer Feedback', which reported that although peer feedback would improve students, teacher correction could not be replaced by peer correction. This result showed that the respondents still favoured the teacher over their peers and considered them a trusted learning source. Moreover, in the second question, although some students refuted that the treatment (portfolio assessment) made them work cooperatively, we found that over half of the students agreed that the treatment allowed them to work collectively. Furthermore, the third question aimed at exploring if students' experience with the treatment made them feel more cooperative. The indications here are that the treatment had a very positive impact on students' emotions and cooperation. Almost three halves of the interviewees reported their agreement that portfolio assessment made them feel more cooperative than before. From the results, the experimental group appeared to have engaged very well with the whole portfolio assessment process and considered it an important opportunity for writing collectively and collaboratively. Nonetheless, the evidence concluded

in the fourth question indicated that the responses obtained confirmed that portfolio assessment supported, and taught students sharing. Students believed that through the treatment procedure, they were able to share their drafts, provide suggestions for their peers, and sometimes judge the relevance of the content to the overall aim of the writing topic. It would seem from the results obtained that portfolio assessment supports students' sharing skills, and therefore, consolidates their writing collaborative strategies. The fifth question in the interview inspected the constructive exchange between the class members during the writing process. According to the yielded data, all the students, 100 per cent, approved that the treatment (portfolio assessment) encouraged student-student and student-teacher exchange when writing. In this vein, some students reported that portfolio assessment provided rich feedback for writing improvement but their preferences were mostly if not always focusing on teacher feedback.

What can be inferred from these results, is that the treatment created a link between all class actors and initiated a based platform for a constructive exchange, especially when this exchange is a student-teacher one. There appears to be a preference of the interviewee for teacher feedback and that might be related to the high benefits gained from this feedback. In contrast, the benefits obtained from peer feedback were of less quality, or students had less vested interest in their peer opinion compared to what the teacher supplied and suggested. The last question in part two was a follow-up to the previous one and asked the interviewee if the treatment created opportunities for scaffolding, suggesting, and accepting ideas from peers. 83.33 per cent of the respondents indicated that the treatment provided authentic occasions for reflection where they were able to suggest, correct, and even follow their peer's writing. On the contrary, one respondent 16.67 per cent mentioned that this was false that the treatment did not support this, and that he was not accepting his friends' ideas, nor was he suggesting for his friends too. From these results, it is clear that portfolio assessment helped students cooperate, and this was done through the treatment sub-procedures that require students to give suggestions, provide relevant feedback, and accept ideas to improve the overall quality of their paragraphs. Though this was apparent from their responses, there was some evidence of resentment toward the act of students' cooperation to enhance the quality of their paragraphs. This might be related to the lack of trust between students, or to the overall mental state of the students, which showed consistently students mock or make fun of their peers' writing.

The last part of the interview intended to shed light on the effect of portfolio assessment on students' social skills. In the first question, respondents were asked if the treatment (portfolio assessment) impacted problem-solving and made it easier for them. The majority of the interviewees expressed that the treatment had a positive effect, and made them feel more able

to solve problems in groups than ever before. It seemed clear from this result that students benefited from the treatment as they were able to look carefully and thoughtfully at their writing and face any issues that might prevent successful writing, allowing them to resolve potential difficulties in starting their writing, and practice problem-solving in groups. This result is consistent with the study of Wong (2006), 'Students' perceptions of portfolio assessment in one suburban secondary school', who concluded that the use of portfolio assessment allowed students to become more confident in producing text with rich ideas and reduced start-up time for writing. Nonetheless, Diane Berkus and Susan Santoli (2004), 'in Writing is Power: Critical Thinking, Creative Writing, and Portfolio Assessment', pointed out that portfolio assessment reduces the boundaries in students' lives and creates comfort and confidence in their minds. Moreover, the second question aimed at exploring whether the use of the treatment stimulated students' critical thinking. Much data highlighted the importance of critical thinking as an essential social skill that helped students analyse, reflect and act accordingly. The interviewees' responses exhibited that the majority agreed that portfolio assessment stimulated their critical thinking. The obtained result appeared in accordance with the research result of Imene and Chelli (2021) who reported in their study, 'An Investigation of Portfolio Impact on both EFL Learners' Critical Thinking and Speaking Skills', that students had higher critical thinking after experiencing portfolio assessment. Along the same lines, Diane and Susan mentioned in their research paper, 'Writing is Power: Critical Thinking, Creative Writing, and Portfolio Assessment', that portfolio assessment creates endless opportunities for growth, creativity (critical thinking), and improvement. The next question asked students if their experience with portfolio assessment allowed them to take responsibility for their learning. The received responses revealed that all the students 100 per cent confirmed that the treatment allowed them to be aware and to take full responsibility for their learning. Significantly, a gaze at this result confirmed that the use of portfolio assessment made the students aware of their limitations and supported them through its procedure to take the necessary actions and responsibility to enhance and elevate the accuracy of their paragraphs. This result was in agreement with those obtained by Armstrong (2011), Barootchi, and Keshavarz (2002), and Akan (2012), who repeatedly reported that portfolio assessment allowed students' feeling of responsibility, self-monitoring, and enhanced their self-directed learning (Cited in Tony, 2014). The fourth question sought to determine if the treatment supported active listening and positive dialogue between the students. The obtained responses indicated that the interviewee expressed greater levels of satisfaction and recognition of the positive impact that the portfolio assessment had on these two skills as the majority 83.33 per cent asserted this fact, while 16.67 per cent refuted this and expressed

that no evidence supported the claim that the treatment developed their active listening and improve dialogue between students. Students' active participation in tasks was the last question in part three. It aimed to inspect whether the treatment supported and encouraged students' active involvement and participation in tasks. From the results, it is clear that all the students 100 per cent considered portfolio assessment a powerful procedure that encouraged active participation in tasks. It would seem from this result that portfolio assessment stimulates students' involvement with the task at hand, helps them learn from the opportunities provided, and therefore develops their wiring skills.

Overall, what can be concluded is that the use of portfolio assessment promoted in some ways students' collaborative strategies such as sharing, exchanging, suggesting, and focusing on collecting and cooperative skills when writing. Moreover, it participated to some extent in the improvement of the essential social skills that would develop their ability in writing and get them to grow successfully as efficient writers.

4.1.5 Attitudes Questionnaire Analysis and Interpretation

Because of the learners' experience with portfolio assessment, they were subject to another questionnaire namely, the attitudes questionnaire. This latter aimed at determining learners' attitudes toward the use of portfolio assessment. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-seven (37) EFL students at Mascara Mustapha Stambouli University. It comprised (4) four sections: The first section addressed the merits of portfolio assessment. The second dealt with the impact of portfolio assessment on learners' writing. The third part sought to examine portfolio assessment and awareness. The last section intended to understand learners' attitudes toward the procedure of portfolio assessment.

The first section's results revealed that the majority of learners 89.2 per cent agreed that their experience with portfolio assessment taught them how to make relevant introductions covering various required elements. This might be related to the treatment procedure that addresses all the necessary steps for accurate writing. Due to this, learners indicated that portfolio assessment taught them to make appropriate introductions. Moreover, the results indicated that the portfolio assessment procedure allowed learners to organise their writing properly. This was apparent in their responses where almost 96 per cent reported that they learned to organise their writing accurately. However, regarding the usage of chronological order, over half of the respondents 51.4 per cent indicated they learned to use chronological order when organising their paragraphs. While 48.6 per cent reported that, they did not learn to order from their experience with portfolio assessment. A possible explanation for this was that learners' experience with the portfolio assessment did not focus on organisation features, rather

it focused on general writing. This was the apparent reason that led learners to consider that the experience with the portfolio did not teach them the chronological order.

Section two was related to portfolio assessment and awareness and has been designed in an attempt to understand learners' perception of the impact of portfolio assessment. The results of the first question revealed that almost three-quarters of the respondents indicated that the portfolio assessment made them aware of their writing progress. A possible explanation for this was that the different steps incorporated in the procedure allowed learners to see their mistakes and flaws in writing and encouraged them to take action and make repairs to enhance the overall quality of their writing. Moreover, the second question explored if portfolio assessment could display learners' efforts in writing. The results showed that almost all the respondents admitted that their experience with portfolio assessment made them recognise their efforts and weaknesses. This result designated that the treatment allowed learners to see their weaknesses through the rich feedback that was received from various sources. Due to this, learners acquired relevant procedures that permitted them to work on their writing, and thus, enhance their writing quality. The following question inspected portfolio assessment and learners' writing opportunities. According to the results, learners believed that portfolio assessment yielded rich opportunities, encouraged them to write anywhere and at any time, and made them realise that writing was not a classroom-related activity. This realization might be related to the fact that following a portfolio assessment procedure provided learners with writing opportunities in and outside the classroom through homework and writing corrections that were designed to elevate their writing quality. Furthermore, the fourth question explored learners' awareness of their mistakes after receiving teacher and peer feedback. The results disclosed that all learners confirmed that they became conscious of their mistakes after receiving comments from both teachers and peers. A possible explanation for this confirmation was that the writing opportunities presented in the portfolio assessment procedure stimulated learners' involvement with the tasks, which, therefore, enhanced their awareness of mistakes. The last question in part two aimed to understand if the portfolio assessment procedure helped learners understand their strengths and weaknesses. The obtained results revealed that the responses ranged between some and great extents. This agreement might be the result of writing practice that learners witnessed during the portfolio assessment procedure, which made them realise what was good in their writing and what needed further reconsideration.

Section three examined attitudes and perceptions toward the impact of portfolio assessment on their writing. The results revealed that learners viewed the portfolio assessment procedure as a relevant tool that could present their writing. Indeed, this consideration might be

related to the treatment that allowed learners to practice through the range of activities and feedback designed to enhance writing quality and skills. Moreover, the received data indicated that learners agreed that the procedure, namely portfolio assessment helped learners keep the habits of writing. This could be related to the nature of portfolio assessment, which emphasises a load of writing opportunities, thus enabling learning to practice writing both in the classroom and back at home through follow-up procedures, such as homework, therefore, building the writing habits. Furthermore, the outcomes also disclosed that learners' grammatical mastery and vocabulary knowledge increased because of the portfolio assessment procedure. A possible interpretation of these improvements in skills might be the results of practice and feedback received from teachers, peers, and self-assessment. Indeed, the treatment allowed learners to spot their mistakes, acknowledge their types, and acquire relevant techniques that would prevent the repetition of the same mistakes in future occasions. In addition, the data displayed that learners positively proclaimed and acknowledged that their experience with portfolio assessment increased their desire and eagerness to write. Learners with the traditional assessment methods were mark-related, however, with the portfolio assessment procedure they shifted their thinking and focus towards improving the quality of their writing. This was because the treatment raised their awareness of their mistakes and made them believe they could become better writers through practice. Finally, the obtained results communicated that learners believed that the treatment taught them how to plan according to their learning style. Of course, the procedure requires learners to follow the steps included in the writing process. This would encourage learners to write according to their pace and style, therefore they learned to plan according to their directions and desires.

The final part of the attitudes questionnaire addressed learners' perceptions and attitudes toward the content of the portfolio assessment. The results indicated that learners found the treatment beneficial and relevant to their writing. Indeed, this relevance resulted from practice opportunities and learners' awareness of their mistakes. Moreover, the outcomes exhibited that the vast majority of learners found both reflection and self-assessment crucial portfolio assessment tools. This is related directly to the practice of both self-assessments and reflections. Learners with the traditional procedure did not receive time and sessions for reflections and self-assessments, thus little interest was directed in learners' writing and professional improvement. However, with the portfolio assessment procedure, they were provided with occasions to reflect on their writing, make corrections, and identify their mistakes, thus evaluating the quality of their writing. Due to this, learners acknowledged that both skills are important tools for portfolio assessment. Furthermore, the results also revealed that over three-

halves of the respondents agreed that peer feedback was a valuable feature for writing improvement. Though it was believed among learners that teachers represent the appropriate and relevant source of guidance and direction, the treatment allowed learners to experience an important situation of feedback, which can be provided in a supportive, casual, and positive atmosphere. In such a situation, and through peer review, learners could receive significant instruction on both levels, global issues and local issues. Indeed, this feedback permitted writing improvement and to some extent awareness of their mistakes. Further, the results indicated also that learners acknowledged that revision was an important tool for writing improvement. This mainly related to the treatment that allowed them to spot their mistakes and have opportunities for review and corrections. Eventually, the practice of revision techniques within the treatment led learners to appreciate the relevance and adequacy of revision procedures for writing improvement. Lastly, the outcomes revealed that learners firmly believed in the efficacy of portfolio assessment on their writing and indicated that it could improve their writing ability to a considerable level. This belief might be the results that they witnessed in the post-test where the majority scored higher and their paragraphs appeared homogenous, well-constructed, and with few if no mistakes. Probably, these led learners to admit that the treatment could help learners grow as writers.

4.1.6 Perception Interview Analysis

In an attempt to support the data collected from the first research tool respectively perception questionnaire, the researcher aimed to support these data by using another research tool such as an interview. The respondents for this interview were six students selected randomly using simple random sampling. The interview was composed of five (5) parts. The first part was related to assessment in general and the second inquired about the writing assessment. The third part aimed to explore students' experience with portfolio assessment. Part four sought to explore the impact of portfolio assessment on writing improvement.

The first part of the interview intended to inquire about students' perceptions of assessment in general. It is clear from what the introductory part of the interview reported that students had a positive attitude toward the conventional or the used assessment and that students felt at ease with the procedure of assessment that was presented by their teacher. Similarly, the provided responses displayed that the majority of the students interviewed expressed general satisfaction with their teacher and the method of assessment he used. The informant frequently stated the advantages of their teacher's assessment and revealed that they found it convenient for their learning.

These results led the researcher to claim that this satisfaction with the conventional assessment might be related to students' familiarity with the product approach to assessment where students' competence is subject to the test at the end. Moreover, the reason for the appraisal of the used assessment was because students' main objective was not to develop their skills but rather to get correct answers and score better marks.

The second part of the interview aimed to elicit interviewees' perceptions and feelings about writing assessments. Writing assessment in general was often illustrated and exemplified as a situation that does not consider the circumstances under which students write. The initial question in the second part of the interview revealed mixed feelings and reluctance from the students as to whether the current writing assessment was beneficial. The lack of writing opportunities was repeatedly mentioned by some students when interviewed as the interviewees reported that they were learning the rule sufficiently with their teacher, however, the practice was limited and even when given, occasions to follow up were limited, which accordingly, led to poor writing opportunities. Moreover, the resentment perceived in the informant responses might be related to the fact that they experienced portfolio assessment and witnessed its positive procedure; accordingly, this led them to be resentful of the used writing assessment.

In the second question, the interviewees stressed the impractical method of learning and assessment. They commented that they were learning about writing and not writing because according to their responses, they were assessed about the extent of the correct answers they could provide in the writing examination, and this probably led them to perceive the used writing assessment in general impractical. Moreover, the interviewee claimed that the current writing assessment is stressful and demotivating. They supported their claim with the insufficient time allotted for writing in class, the absence of written homework, and even when given homework they were not corrected. Furthermore, the interviewees pointed out that they felt unable and afraid of writing because they were not trained to write effectively, which was related to the absence of frequent writing.

The third question inspected the teaching and the assessment of writing. According to the informant, there was a rigid method of teaching because there was a repeated cycle followed by the teacher when presenting lessons, but generally serving the learning goals. Their teacher frequently followed a simple procedure to teaching where they started the lesson with a text or a handout, then they provided an explanation accompanied by rules extracted from the received texts. This process of writing teaching is bottom-up and was valued by the majority of the students for it encouraged them to learn the rules inductively, resulting in better remembrance of the acquired rules. On the other hand, the writing assessment was unclear to the informants

since they mentioned that their teacher used no assessment in the class. Others reported that the only assessment they knew was the examination they took at the end of the semester. Students' ignorance of the assessment procedure might signal a lack of relationship between teaching and assessing in class. Moreover, it may seem from the responses of the interviewees that there was a probability of inappropriate assessment occurring. Furthermore, the writing teacher showed little interest in reflection and students' writing development. Assumptions made that internal or formative assessment leads to high-quality learning and develops students' overall writing skills (Brousseau and Christine, 2004). In this regard, the assessment of writing needed to incorporate formative features to improve students' overall writing, and without frequent writing and training, students' writing remained limited. Nonetheless, under the LMD system, which was adopted by the Algerian Universities, teachers were required to complete the curriculum lessons, which led most teachers to neglect assessments and focus more on providing lessons. This resulted in an incomplete practice that did not serve the learning goal of growing students as writers instead of assessing their ability to answer questions.

The third part examined the portfolio assessment procedure and sought to generate responses regarding students' experience with portfolio assessment. The initial question in part three asked students if they heard about portfolio assessment before. According to the received responses, all students stated that they had not received an idea about this concept before. They mentioned that the only assessments they were familiar with were the traditional ones because it was the procedure they had adapted to since they were in middle and secondary school. The researcher expected students' answers and justified these responses to the fact that students were fresh first-year students, and had not yet experienced the tertiary new mode of assessments. Moreover, the assessment procedures used in Algerian schools focused mainly on paper and pen tests and did not support creativity. Furthermore, Teachers and even students regarded writing skills as less valuable in comparison to speaking skills, which led teachers to lower their interest in developing writing skills, and this is why there were no real intentions to work on improving their writing skills and to incorporate new assessment procedures such as portfolio, journal, and peer assessment.

The second question demanded that the interviewees recount their experience with portfolio assessment. The interviewees pointed out that they were satisfied with the received experience, and mentioned that they felt comfortable with writing that was never done before, highlighted that it was fruitful, made them learn inductively, put the learned lessons into practice, and took responsibility to improve their writing. Moreover, the interviewees reported that the treatment provided a load of writing opportunities, and made them write for different

genres which empowered their vocabulary and raised their awareness of the writing genres. These procedures impacted students positively and allowed them to spend more time on writing to improve the accuracy of their writing. Furthermore, they reported that the treatment freed them from the pressure of the timed examination and gave them a supportive atmosphere where they could write, make mistakes, redraft, revise and produce better-written products. Nonetheless, the interviewees revealed that their experience with portfolio assessment increased their writing awareness, especially when utilizing the application "Grammarly". Students in this regard mentioned that using technology to assess their writing made them aware of their mistakes and encouraged them to put more effort into learning from their mistakes. They declared that they did not care about how good their writing was but through the experience, they became more worried about their writing and desired to elevate their overall writing skills appear more accurate, and more importantly, grow as writers. This finding agrees well with the study done by Yang (2003) found that portfolio assessment raised students' awareness and enhanced their self-directed learning. Overall, students' general satisfaction with the treatment might signal the positivity of the treatment on their behaviour and their writing skills. Equally, it indicated that using portfolio assessment to assess and even to teach could have powerful impacts in enhancing students' writing skills and shifting or balancing their interest in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) so that writing could receive the position that it deserves in students minds.

In the fourth question, the interviewees explained what they liked most and least about portfolio assessment. The informants revealed that the most attractive feature of portfolio assessment was the non-judgmental atmosphere. This selection might be related to the fact that students were always subject to the pressure of time and the task whenever they had an examination, but through portfolio assessment, they learned that writing was a whole process that they needed to undertake to improve their overall writing. The second feature that had a significant impact was the rich feedback students received. A possible explanation for this might be the fact that the treatment as a procedure supplied a variety of feedback (teacher, peer, and Grammarly) that could raise awareness, and make the received feedback a platform of learning that could yield better results and improve writing qualities. Another possibility might be that students received a kind of e-feedback provided through the application "Grammarly" which stimulated students' interest and encouraged them to write in a safe and sound environment. Moreover, the interviewees communicated that they liked the process which taught them the basics of writing and how to provide accurate writing. The appraisal of this feature of portfolio assessment was perhaps related to the students' unfamiliarity with this kind

of assessment or might be the reality that portfolio assessment made them polish their piece of writing before submitting it for evaluation.

The last question in part three intended to check whether portfolio assessment promoted the learning of writing. In an attempt to structure the responses, four main factors had been identified and would be examined in turn. The data gathered from the interviewees disclosed that the treatment promoted the learning of writing and this was through multiple occasions for writing. Students in this regard, indicated that having many writing opportunities was essential for improvement. The interviewees' responses were consistent with the one provided by Baturay and Daloglu (2010) who stated that students exhibited important gains when writing for different occasions and in different drafts.

In addition, the rich feedback environment supplied by the treatment for the students made them approve of the positive effect on learning writing. This approval might be related to their writing appearing much better through the feedback they received from all the actors. Another explanation for this might be related to the nature of the constructive feedback that served students' progress and growth rather than criticizing the inability to write a coherent and error-free paragraph. Moreover, the students interviewed in our study suggested that portfolio assessment provided a load of opportunities for revision such as teacher comments, peer revision, self-revision, and electronic revision that was provided through the application "Grammarly".

According to their responses, all these revision features permitted the learning of writing. Looking at the importance given by the interviewees to revision for the learning of writing seems to arise from a clear understanding of the importance of revision in enhancing the accuracy of their writing and the positive impact gained from experiencing the different feedback provided by the treatment (portfolio assessment) that encouraged them to undertake several adjustments to their writing. Thus, students expressed preferences for the teachers' feedback and mentioned that through this they would undertake more revisions to revise and make their paragraphs appear consistent and accurate. The received results were consistent with previous research displaying that revision consolidated the learning of the writing skill. Sebbane and Bouderballa (2019) concluded in their research with first-year economic students, 'the replacement process in drafts used by economics students when rewriting an explanatory text', that despite the limitation in the process of revision, the students witnessed ameliorations in the surface part of their text. Along the same line, Benammar Farah and Metatha Mohamed El Kamel (2016) in their research, 'Rôle des processus de planification et de révision dans l'amélioration de la production d'un texte argumentatif en FLE', revealed the important role of

cognitive planification and revision and stressed the efficacy of revision in enhancing the overall quality of students' writing. On the other hand, though peer revision appeared underestimated by EFL first-year students, many studies reported the benefits of peer revision in improving students' writing skills. In this regard, Kwangsu Cho, and Charles MacArthur (2010), in their research, 'Student Revision with Peer and Expert Review', claimed that multiple peer reviews led to greater quality improvement than expert, or teacher reviews. Similarly, Olga and Maria in their study (1998), Assessing the Impact of Peer Revision on L2 Writing, reported that peer revision needed to be regarded as supportive feedback in ESL classrooms. It seems clear from what was suggested by previous studies that peer revision if well-structured and provided could play a vital role in supporting students writing and elevating the quality of writing.

Finally, the interviewees pointed out that portfolio assessment could encourage the learning of writing by giving students responsibility for their learning. In this concern, the views expressed centred on what they perceived to be "*the control over learning*" and reported that the learning of writing could not be carried out with the central involvement of students in the process where they could play a vital role in improving their writing and achieving accuracy. The interviewees' responses show that portfolio assessment taught student agency, defined as taking responsibility for their learning. Moreover, the treatment (portfolio assessment) made them recognize the benefits of working on their writing, which led them to stress the point of responsibility for their learning. This is supportive of the results of Hung (2008), 'Promoting self-assessment strategies: An electronic portfolio approach', who concluded that portfolio assessment permitted students to reflect on their writing, evaluate the efficacy of their writing and become aware, more responsible, and autonomous. Similarly, Armstrong (2011) in his research, 'Understanding and Improving the Use of Writing Portfolios in One French Immersion Classroom', reported that portfolio assessment contributed to the empowerment of learners' sense of responsibility.

The final part of the interview dealt with the impact of portfolio assessment on writing improvement. The researcher asked four questions to elicit the students' views about the extent of progress in writing performance after receiving the treatment (portfolio assessment). The initial question in part four intended to inquire about the aspect of writing improved after experiencing the treatment (portfolio assessment). The data reported by the interviewees indicated that almost all the informants talked about grammar and punctuation as the major aspects of writing improved after receiving the treatment. However, the aspects related to organization and style were less emphasized compared to those mentioned earlier. A possible

explanation for this result could be that students' major errors were related to these two aspects (Grammar and punctuation), which is why they witnessed improvement. Another possible explanation might be that students were fresh first-year students and did not know about style, organization, and cohesion, so they did not concentrate on developing these aspects. Another possibility might be the lack of frequent writing that made the students' writing appear direct, of a conventional, limited organization, and with the lack of any emphasis on style and cohesion. Data reported in the first question of part four agreed well with previous studies conducted (Behrooz Ghoorchaei, Mansoor Tavakoli, Dariush Nejad Ansari,2010) which found that portfolio assessment developed students' learning of English writing, and permitted the experimental group to outperform in the sub-skills of focus, elaboration, organisation, and vocabulary (Cited in Tony, 2014).

The second question stressed the relationship between revision and writing. Naturally, the researcher in this interview discovered that all the respondents felt content about the revision process and strongly agreed on the positive role of revision in developing their overall writing. The interviewee mentioned that the revision process was crucial for their writing development and emphasized the potential aspect of revision and its impact on improving students' accuracy. Students' satisfaction with the revision process might be related to the lack of previous revision opportunities which led after the practice to acknowledge its benefits and role in elevating their overall writing skills and even collaboration skills since students were receiving feedback from multiple sources such as teacher, electronic, and peer feedback. Existing evidence (Storch and Wigglesworth, 2012) suggests that the provision of multiple-source feedback could actually do better in the long run than the provision of teachers', or peer feedback alone. Due to this, it was important to set an atmosphere where students could receive multiple sources of feedback.

Since students experienced different types of feedback, the third question was related to the second question and aimed at inquiring about the type of feedback students favoured and found most valuable and constructive. The obtained data from the informants revealed to the researcher that students favoured the feedback given by the teacher over the one received from peers, however, some students displayed a preference for the feedback provided by their peers. A possible explanation for this might be the fact that students had faith and trust in their teacher's correction more than their peers who were seen as untrained and uncertified to provide corrective suggestions. This result agreed well with the study of Julia H. Kaufman and Christian D. Schunn (2011) who revealed that students sometimes considered peer assessment as unfair and that peers do not have the necessary knowledge to provide constructive suggestions for their peers. Moreover, Adisca and Mardijono (2011)concluded in their study, 'Written

Corrective Feedback and Its Effects on English Department Students' Writing Drafts', that teacher feedback could help students do good writing, raise awareness of their mistakes, and that students needed to pay attention to their teacher's feedback. Furthermore, existing evidence suggested the inability of peer feedback to consolidate students' writing. Identically, Ha Thi Nguyen (2016) in his study, 'Peer Feedback Practice in EFL Tertiary Writing Classes', reported that peer feedback provided fewer opportunities for improvement. Nevertheless, Chrenka, Lynn; Balkema, Sandra; Kuzma, Faye; Vasicek, Brenda (1996) confirmed in their paper, Revision Blocked: Assessing a Writer's Development, the superiority of teacher feedback and stated that when the teacher led the revision process, students were able to move beyond the sentence level to a limited extent. Similarly, Grace and Paul (2009), in An Investigation into Effectiveness of Peer Feedback, concluded that students had positive attitudes toward peer feedback and reported that they felt more relaxed and inspired by the experience of peer feedback. Yet, students claimed they did not trust that their peer feedback would enhance their writing. They advocated teacher feedback and stated that peer feedback could not replace this latter.

On the other hand, many studies stressed the importance of peer revision and claimed the effectiveness of peer revision on students' writing. In this vein, Grace and Paul (2009) in their research, 'An Investigation into Effectiveness of Peer Feedback', talked about the importance of peer feedback and stated that when students are allowed to play a central role in their peer' paper to carry out the correction, students seemed to be more confident and motivated. Moreover, they concluded that peer feedback positively assisted their learning of English writing. Furthermore, Storch and Wigglesworth (2012) reported the effectiveness of small-group feedback. They highlighted that the process of pair feedback permitted the students to participate in several discussions about language form and lexical selection, and supplied them with a relevant platform for suggestions and counter suggestions through questioning each other and explaining preferences by referring to their comprehension of linguistic conventions and limitations.

The fourth question was a follow-up to the previous one and inquired about the nature of feedback that students favoured receiving. It is important to mention that the researcher provided the informants with hints (direct and indirect feedback) regarding the nature of feedback they found constructive. Data reported from this question revealed that the majority of the students found indirect feedback as positive and effective in improving their writing. Nevertheless, the informants indicated that the coding system used by the research raised their awareness of their mistakes and enhanced their self-reflection. Previous studies (Storch and

Wigglesworth, 2008, 2012) go well with this finding and revealed that indirect feedback resulted in a greater engagement with the task at hand and led to more enduring language learning. On the other hand, direct feedback, which required students to notice the correct form of the answer, was found encouraging and more effective in students writing. More importantly, Storch and Wigglesworth (2012) argued in their research paper, the role of collaboration in writing and writing feedback, that both types of feedback (Direct and Indirect) were important, and clarified that direct feedback might be favourable when the goal was acquiring more complex grammatical structures which students are struggling with in. On the other hand, indirect feedback might be an effective technique to improve students' control over non-grammatical errors. The finding of Storch and Wigglesworth (2012) revealed to the researcher the reasons for favouriting indirect feedback over direct, mainly because their focus was on errors related to spelling, punctuation, and to some extent organization. However, this does not mean that they were perfect in terms of complex grammatical structure, but rather they were fresh first-year students and did have enough expertise to scrutinize these types of errors in their writing.

The last question in part four inquired about the extent of writing development and whether the experience of portfolio assessment made them better EFL writers. Evidence from the informants suggested that the majority of the students felt positive. They communicated that this experience made their writing much better than before. Moreover, they asserted that the various steps included in the treatment empowered their writing to a greater extent and led them to view writing assessment as an opportunity for improvement and perfection. Nonetheless, almost all the students emphasized the convenience of portfolio assessment for writing skills and argued that this procedure made theories into practice consolidated writing through relevant opportunities, and genuinely served the fundamental target, which was to help students grow as writers. Looking at the data yielded by the informants, it was clear that the treatment (portfolio assessment) served students writing properly, even if it was to a lesser extent due to the circumstance of the experience, but it was to some extent sufficient for their writing and strengthen their overall writing skills. This was supportive of the results of Zina and Martin (2011), 'Teaching and assessing academic writing via the portfolio: Benefits for learners of English as an additional language', who found that portfolio assessment develops students' awareness of their writing improvement in the academic literacies and the process writing strategies. Moreover, they reported that the experience of portfolio assessment led students to practice a basic form of critical thinking.

The results also revealed that the informants were satisfied and stated that the extent of their writing improvement was about 65 per cent. It seems clear from this result that portfolio assessment served students' writing effectively, and this was explicitly communicated in the results obtained in the post-test where the majority scored higher than the pre-test. Another possible explanation for this development might be related to the awareness that the treatment created in students' mindsets where students started to act consciously when trying to produce a piece of writing.

4.2 Discussion of the Main Findings

In the current research, the researcher relied on a variety of tools to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study. These tools were selected to help answer the research questions and aimed to yield rich data regarding the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing, collaboration, and perception. In this concern, it is important to note that the research was based on three questions related to the earlier-mentioned areas (writing, collaboration, and perception) and the researcher gave three hypotheses to these questions.

Regarding the first research question, the researcher hypothesized that the use of portfolio assessment would encourage students to write, making repairs through revisions procedure and feedback, and as a result, elevate their writing to a considerable level. This has been affirmed and validated through the results obtained from the post-test and the questionnaire results where the majority of the students' writing improved after the treatment and students started to manifest skills in their writing. Similarly, the questionnaire results showcased that the majority of the participants confirmed the usefulness of portfolio assessment on their writing and expressed their satisfaction after the experience. Moreover, they ascertained that the treatment had a positive impact on their writing and noted that this led them to favour this form of assessment, namely portfolio assessment over the traditionally used methods of assessment. These results were communicated from the research findings of the questionnaires in questions: Q11, Q15, Q12, and Q14. (See Appendix)

The data above do seem to grant credence and validity to the conclusions by Liz and William (2000.) that portfolio assessment supports students' writing improves the overall quality and provides students with multiple writing opportunities. Moreover, the obtained results revealed that the relative improvement witnessed in students' writing was mainly related to organization and punctuation. This result appeared in accordance with Teguh et al. (2020), 'Portfolio Assessment: Learning Outcomes and Students' Attitudes', who found that the implementation of portfolio assessment improved students' writing ability and that what was

labelled as global issues such as organization and content were areas that received significant improvement.

Nevertheless, regarding the impact of portfolio assessment on collaboration and social skills, it was anticipated that the inclusion of portfolio assessment procedures would lead to a sort of cooperation between the students, positively impact students' overall collaborative skills, and develop their social skills. The obtained results partially confirmed the hypothesis. As communicated in the results section, students in the experimental group cooperated at all the stages of paragraph writing, shared their writing with their peers, took notes from the provided suggestions, and learned how to collaborate when writing. However, the observation results revealed that collaboration was limited to the level of ideas exchange. This might be due to the circumstances of teaching in which students trusted their teachers more than their peers and where the philosophy of peer feedback was not yet constructed. This was apparent in the result of question eight (8) in which students expressed their preference for teacher feedback. Beach and Frederick (2006 cited in Cho & Macarthur, 2010, p.335) mentioned that preference for teacher directive feedback might be due to the relevant provided suggestions for improvement. The results also revealed that portfolio assessment helped them focus on collaborative writing through which they received constructive suggestions in the main global areas: punctuation and spelling.

Moreover, the results also revealed that the impact of the treatment on social skills was positive. Portfolio assessment helped the students learn to solve problems in groups, especially when faced with what was referred to as writer's block. In this area, the treatment provided relevant collaborative opportunities that aided students in generating ideas in groups and starting the process of writing. Furthermore, it stimulated their critical thinking which helped them analyze, reflect, and act consistently. Diane and Susan mentioned in their research paper, Writing is Power: Critical Thinking, Creative Writing, and Portfolio Assessment, that portfolio assessment creates endless opportunities for growth, creativity (critical thinking), and improvement. Also, the treatment allowed the students to write, often make repairs and undertake self, peer, and teacher feedback. All these procedures assisted the students and encouraged them to take responsibility for their learning and improve the accuracy of their writing. Nevertheless, the results reported demonstrated that the treatment supported students' active listening and positive dialogue when composing and helped students to actively participate in tasks. The results of the second research question are basically in line with Agnes and Catherine (2003), 'From Process to Outcome: The Effect of Portfolio Assessment on Student Learning', which indicated that portfolio assessment led to a form of spontaneous

collaboration. This was demonstrated in the least under the circumstances of the current study, where students were able to collaborate with their peers and teachers, and learned to reflect and provide constructive suggestions for revision.

Regarding the last research question related to the student's perceptions and attitudes toward portfolio assessment, it was expected that students would have positive attitudes towards the treatment, also their perception of writing assessment would change as their focus would be on improving their mastery and accuracy in writing. Moreover, the researcher expected a change in students' mindsets and paradigms due to an expected improvement in their overall writing. These hypotheses were confirmed. Indeed, the use of portfolio assessment created a feeling of satisfaction and comfort in students' behaviour. This was portrayed in their responses where they reported that the treatment raised their awareness and provided significant writing opportunities. Furthermore, the obtained results suggested that there was a positive association between portfolio assessment procedures and students. Additionally, students confirmed that portfolio assessment could promote the learning of writing through writing opportunities, revision procedures, and a feedback-rich environment. Further, the participant reported that their writing improved in two major areas: punctuation and grammar. The findings indicated that revision procedures along with teacher feedback were of paramount importance for students' writing improvement. Along the same lines, the results suggested that the majority of the participants believed that the treatment could help them improve their writing. The findings appear to be in line with Teguh et al. (2020), 'Portfolio Assessment: Learning Outcomes and Students' Attitudes', who found that students had positive attitudes toward the implementation of portfolio assessment in the writing class. Similarly, Melek and Hatice (2014) in their research paper, 'The Use of Portfolio in English Language Teaching and its Effects on Achievement and Attitude', claimed that students exhibited positive attitudes toward the implementation of portfolio assessment and reported that they found it interesting for writing and English in general.

Overall, the findings of this research question proved that students perceived portfolio assessment as an important tool for writing improvement and they had positive attitudes toward its procedures. Incorporating portfolio assessment in the First-Year LMD students' writing module may help them improve their writing, raise their awareness, and encourage them to shift their main focus for improvement instead of getting better marks.

4.3 Issues with the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment

The present research looked at the impact of using portfolio assessment on First-Year English students' writing, and collaboration, but it did not review the challenges that hindered the practice, and the implementation of portfolio assessment. Theoretically, it may appear easier to talk about incorporating portfolio assessment in writing classes, however, a closer look at the circumstances and the field of work may reveal real obstacles and issues that were not addressed and under which most teachers worked. These issues may prevent the integration of formative processes, namely portfolio assessment. Lam (2019, p.5) in this concern, pointed out that when portfolio assessment was put into practice in the EFL context, teachers might face a variety of issues that would prevent its incorporation. He claimed that teachers faced individual, institutional, and broader contextual issues.

4.3.1 Individual Issues

The individual issues refer to the teacher's knowledge and skills and whether they affect students' active participation in the portfolio development processes. In this regard, Ayadin (2010 cited in Lam, 2019) mentioned that EFL teachers needed to be trained to use portfolio assessment competently and be conscious of motivational issues. Lam (2019) reported that when teachers wanted to incorporate portfolio assessment in classrooms, they needed first to be aware of motivational techniques and how to engage students with portfolio processes. Second, they were required to raise students' awareness of the importance of self-reflection in writing and provide relevant and valuable feedback for effective text revision. Moreover, successful implementation of portfolio assessment required teachers to clarify portfolio processes for the students, demonstrate the advantages of analysing and rewriting, and strengthen their motivation to do so. While teachers' feedback appeared to be useful in students' writing, it might not be sufficient even if teachers undertook specific assessment training on feedback provision. Lam (2019) in this vein stated that including self, peer, and teacher feedback would help students uptake feedback automatically.

Another point was emphasized by Lam (2019) on the implementation of portfolio assessment related to metacognitive skills. He stressed the importance of providing students with metacognitive training in carrying out self-reflection. Metacognition refers to students' ability to solve problems and make decisions through consciousness and understanding of one's thoughts. Lam advised teachers to provide such training and pointed out that this latter increases students' learning and facilitates the implementation of portfolio assessment in the EFL context.

4.3.2 Institutional Issue

The institutional issue is related to the environment of teaching and learning and it tackles the circumstances of the school or the university that either allow or prevent the application of portfolio assessment. Lam (2019) stated that institutional issues had an impact on the implementation of portfolio assessment and indicated that it could be classified into two parts: curriculum design and school support. Along the same line, he recommended an association between curriculum design and assessment practices for the successful use of portfolio assessment. School support represents the authority through which any attempt for change cannot be done without its approval. It is supposed to guide the change and be a vehicle for redesigning the curriculum and responding to the expectations and needs through trust, dialogue, and regular on-the-job training that would, therefore, strengthen teachers' assessment abilities and support the use of portfolio assessment. Furthermore, such a procedure might be seen as both more important and hard to achieve, but professional support through workshops, online courses, and block release training; and financial one through funding for school-based research projects could aid teachers in acquiring assessment knowledge and skills and enable the use of portfolio assessment.

4.3.3 Systemic Issue

The reforms adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education aimed at getting ahead with the changing world and facilitating the improvement of educational quality, information, guidance, and support of the students. These reforms seek also to change the paradigms of assessment from a product-based psychology to a process one. These reforms are highly valued, but they are subject to concerns namely, systemic issues. The systematic issue stands for the exchange or the trade-off between educational policy and cultural concerns. Within a society, such as the Algerian one, the implementation of a portfolio assessment policy seems unfeasible because of the cultural aspect that contrasts the progressive assessment practices. It is probably fair to say that, the emphasis within this society is on performance, ability, and rote learning rather than efforts and higher-order thinking. Accordingly, this prevalent culture prevents autonomous learning which is considered an important skill that we need to equip our students with to get ahead with their future learning; Students' agency through which they can evaluate their language learning independently, and critical thinking skills would enable them to analyze and reflect on their learning; and metacognitive strategies that would empower their decision-making skills and problem-solving. In this regard, Lam (2019) mentioned that these cultural concerns influenced the assessment reform policy because of the exam-oriented culture and hierarchical relationship, which stood for teacher-centred instruction. These practices are

actually in opposition to the new culture of assessment namely, neo neo-liberalistic approach to assessment which emphasizes autonomy, equity, reflexivity, and self-regulation. At this point, portfolio assessment seems adequate for the new assessment reform policy and can bridge the gap by supporting the earlier-mentioned tenets and improving writing.

In the Algerian context, advocating such a change requires brushing aside the cultural issues that focus on the writing products namely grades, and embracing the writing process culture that supports learning development. Approaching the systemic issue in such a manner can be helpful for teachers to raise awareness and change the paradigms from teacher to student-centred assessment practices.

Overall, Lam (2019) pointed out that teachers and administrators were required to work jointly to support a culture of portfolio assessment by strengthening teachers' assessment knowledge and skills, adopting curriculums and classroom environments that supported a neo-liberalistic approach to assessment, and establishing a policy that would advance the teaching and the learning of writing through sustainable writing portfolio assessment programs. In a portfolio-based classroom, teachers were required to renovate their practices and to promote the metacognitive skills related to composing such as planning, drafting, revising, reflecting, and reorganizing.

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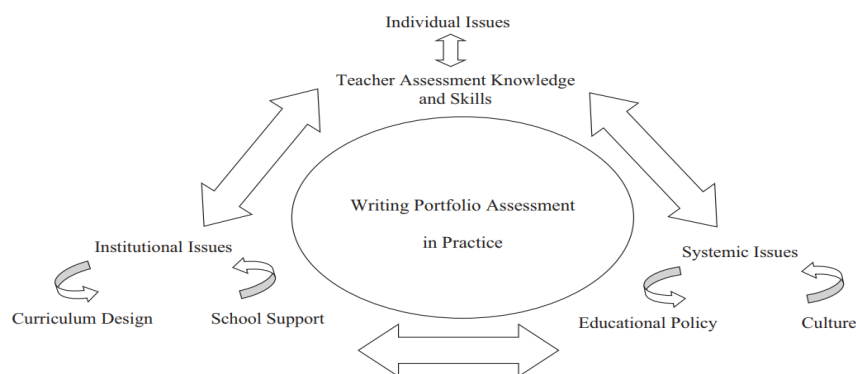
Figure 4.1: Multi-Level Issues in Writing Portfolio Assessment.

Figure 4.1 indicates the issues that EFL teachers may face when incorporating and putting writing portfolio assessments into practice. It includes individual, systemic, and institutional issues. The first issue is related to teacher knowledge of assessment and skills. In this concern, teachers need to be aware of motivational techniques, increase students' knowledge of self-reflection and clarify the portfolio process for the students. Second, it deals with the circumstances of the university that either allow or prevent the application of portfolio

assessment. Lastly, the systemic issues addressed the fitness between educational policy and cultural concerns.

4.4 Portfolio Assessment and Reflection

There is a growing body of literature on reflection and its importance in enhancing the teaching and learning processes. When implementing portfolio assessment, most teachers would probably incorporate reflection as a component of their application, however, what is perceived is that they are not following the guidelines for successful reflection that would enhance students' agency and further their autonomy. Reflections are considered an essential element of the writing portfolio assessment. They are written papers that ask students to explain and evaluate the process and/or the product of their portfolio components. Moreover, they provide information about students learning, examine their products, support both teachers and students with significant information about strengths and weaknesses, and supply students with key strategies that would elevate their performances. Paulson et al. (cited in Linda and Jeffrey, 2005) stated that through assistance and the creation of a relevant space for examining and recording students' work, participants would competently learn to examine strengths and shortages and review strategies that would develop their overall skills. Moreover, Linda and Jeffery (2005) argued that it was the teacher's role to provide a relevant atmosphere through which critical reflection was promoted and denoted for the students its importance and vital role in enhancing their attainment and learning.

Because the implementation of portfolio assessment requires incorporating reflection as a significant component that leads to skills development and performance accuracy, we would suggest the following as general guidelines that aid in making the reflective process more productive for both teachers and students alike.

First, the creation of a safe and supportive environment that would promote confidence and improvement. Thus, teachers are required to willingly listen to some reflections and responses that may contradict their conception of productive work. For example, when the behaviour of the students is in opposition to the desired one, teachers should not punish their students by giving them lower grades or preventing them from certain privileges. On the contrary, they need to focus their attention on the extent to which the written product meets the criteria of success. The role of teachers is to make the reflection process an instrument to approach the strategies that help the students with the process and/or the product. Indeed, it is through the writing of reflection that we can unravel how we know and what we know. Moreover, reflections need to be carried out in an honest and useful manner. These direct reflections are going to encourage healthy discussions about learning models, styles, and time

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management and therefore, encourage students' self-actualization, and increase students' control of the difficulties that they may face when teaching and/or learning.

Another significant aspect that is essential for successful reflection to take place is the development and design of relevant and deliberate prompts. Setting a time for a concentrated reflective activity would provide teachers and instructors with the appropriate information they desired from students. For teachers to create constructive prompts, the aims need to be explicit and direct. For example, if the teacher is concerned about cohesion within students writing, he needs to ascertain that the provided lessons include samples and manuals of effective text cohesion strategies. Linda and Jeffrey (2005) pointed out that there were two types of prompts: Process, and product prompts. They claimed that it was important for teachers to understand the difference between the two concepts because they differed in goals, which might be ambiguous for students. Process reflections, on the one hand, refer to the load of questions that the teachers ask about the extent to which a project met the needed criteria and, generally, inquire about the final work. Process reflections, on the other hand, ask questions and focus on the procedure rather than the final product, for example, asking about the strategies students used to approach an assignment, their effectiveness, and their reactions when they faced issues. Linda and Jeffrey (2005) stated that these varieties of prompts necessitated special thinking, leading to metacognition.

Moreover, discussing expectations for each reflection and what to consider as proof in the written piece can be fruitful. These discussions need to include clear details and incorporate minor aspects as well as more major issues. Linda and Jeffrey (2005) disclosed that when engaging in such a procedure, it was important to be aware of misleading responses provided to have the teacher's approval. Instead, teachers needed to encourage analysis and clarify that these reflections would be taken into consideration and be part of their overall grade. Indeed, these explicit explanations and discussions would alter students' perceptions and make them realize the importance of portfolio assessment and reflection as significant tools for improvement.

A third aspect of a productive reflection involves a mutual understanding of a shared discourse. Linda and Jeffrey (2005) stressed the importance of shared discourse and mentioned that this latter developed students' metacognitive skills. They pointed out that teachers and instructors were required to provide explanations for any new or unknown vocabulary and clarify the theoretical ground of portfolio assessment. Thus, elaborating reflections from common understanding and vocabulary regarding required tasks can be beneficial for both teachers and students alike. Moreover, writing more focused reflections requires teachers to

fine-tune their prompts, provide practical and impractical models, and clarify the educational discourse, and therefore, permit teachers to professionally evaluate their teaching strategies. Furthermore, the creation of a common vocabulary fosters a healthy environment of learning through which students honestly share their reflections with their teachers, changes students' mindset of learning from trying to please teachers to critically examine the tasks, and increases their awareness of learning.

Indeed, Linda and Jeffrey (2005) designated that clear directions and instructions administered to the students would make the process of portfolio reflection run effortlessly. This can be done by providing details related to the requirements, explanations of the expectations, and crucial information for the reflections. In this regard, Little (1999, cited in Linda and Jeffrey, 2005) reported that providing students with the required knowledge, skills, and motivation would support students' control of the learning task. In the writing portfolio, for example, providing information about the requirements such as the required organization, the drafts to be included, and the type of assessment to be included, and explaining the expectation by specifying the focus was important and would help the students conform the efforts to the expectations. Linda and Jeffrey (2005, p.307) stated that when we could clarify what we were evaluating, students would have the opportunity to match their efforts to the indicated expectations.

Overall, writing portfolio reflections are designed to showcase what was accomplished, what was practical, and what needed further reconsideration. Through this organized and well-constructed approach, we can foster awareness and regulate students learning. In fact in the EFL context, teachers perceive the importance of reflection as both more important and more demanding to achieve than the traditional methods of teaching that focus on the teacher and neglect the active involvement of the students in the learning enterprise and in setting goals. The researcher highlighted reflection as a typical learning procedure in the writing portfolio assessment and suggested that successful incorporation entailed a fine discussion and readiness by all the members and that this procedure allowed teachers to look at their teaching, and whether it was sufficient to take students' requirements.

4.5 Portfolio Construction and Learners' Levels of Reflection

According to MacIsaac and Jackson (1994, p.69), portfolio assessment was best regarded as an ongoing formative plan, given that its procedure, especially collection, analysis, documentation of growth, and reflection, encouraged students to take control over their learning, enhance their performance, raised their awareness, and therefore, became autonomous

learners. They mentioned that portfolio assessment drove students toward active reflection at three different levels in which they changed their beliefs, behaviours, and values, and started acquiring the habits of analysing, interrelating, and even synthesizing.

At the primary level, portfolio assessment selectively describes students' performance which entails events, activities, and products completed by the students. At this level, the nature of reflection is descriptive and offered in the form of labels, definitions, and explanations of attainments and experiences. That is, based on recalling when, how, and what was completed.

In the next level of reflection, students are required to transcend descriptive explanations and move toward analysing, interrelating, and combining their achievements concerning their learning. While at the elementary level, the presentation of evidence is around "here is what I have done", at this level students are supposed to provide explanations regarding the learning function that is to say "Here is what all this means". This type of move will equip the students with reflective occasions on the meaning of certain modifications in behaviours, beliefs, and values; set up the importance of these modifications; and review and integrate the conclusion of these modifications into their current activities and practices. Indeed, MacIsaac and Jackson (1994, p.70) noted that it was quite clear this type of reflection supported a genuine and multi-textured view of the current learning experiences, as well as an understanding of students' thinking processes through the actual learning experience.

In the final level of reflection, students are supposed to exercise greater control over their learning and take responsibility for their learning. Moreover, reflection at this stage requires students' active involvement in the preparation, application, and examination of the requisite moves for improvement. In this regard, portfolio assessment offers a platform for growth and future learning through which students can review and evaluate their performance to make relevant associations between finished work and proposed personal futures.

To conclude, portfolio assessment construction requires the incorporation of reflections to move the students from dependent and descriptive comments about performance to agency, control, and autonomy. MacIsaac and Jackson (1994, p.70) mentioned that portfolio assessment, as a component of reflective and process pedagogy, served as a guide for students learning by providing affirmation of individual and professional growth that transcended the physical setting of the classroom to life span learning. Though the inclusion of reflection when implementing portfolio assessment was compulsory for its success, in the EFL Algerian context awareness of its importance and crucial role was not well understood. This lack of awareness may be because teachers in this context are not exercising relevant assessment techniques and strategies. Perhaps they are not equipped with adequate training related to assessment in general

and portfolio assessment in particular. Another possibility may be the fact that teachers are constrained by the syllabus and opportunities for creativity and enhancement are limited, if not absent.

4.6 Portfolio Assessment Model for EFL Teachers

4.6.1 Characteristics of a Model Portfolio Procedure

The portfolio procedure is an alternative assessment tool that is used to supply evidence about students' abilities in a variety of domains. They are best described as practical for noting students' performance and displaying the aggregated knowledge and skills. (Barnett, 1992 cited in MacIssac, Jackson, 1994, p.63)

The implementation of the portfolio model requires the teachers to take into account five essential features which have implications for both EFL and ESL classrooms. These features guide and represent a portfolio model that can be used for assessment and instructional goals. First, comprehensiveness is regarded as a fundamental element of good portfolio procedure. In a course of a comprehensive approach, teachers use both formal and informal assessment strategies, concentrate on the processes as well as products of learning, attempt to comprehend students' language development in significant domains, and include both teacher and student objectives. Moreover, it is important to mention that teachers need to follow selective procedures where only desired and high-priority pieces of information are included in the portfolios. Furthermore, the degree of comprehensiveness entails taking into consideration the constraints of the evaluation context and regulating realistic goals for portfolio assessment (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Second, predetermined and systematic, this feature requires earlier planning of the portfolio procedure and a clear communication of the purpose of the portfolio assessment. The planning includes the aims, the content, the data collection plan, and the criteria for students' performance.

Third, Informative, the information included in the portfolio needs to serve first, the needs of the students through which teachers can alter and adapt their practices to match these needs. Second, the information needs to be explicit and significant to teachers, students, and even the administration. A model of portfolio procedure incorporates characteristics such as an approach for the assessment of appropriateness and the feasibility of the collected data, and channels for convenient feedback to teachers and students alike (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Fourth, Tailored, this feature stands for the requirement of adapting portfolio procedure to the aim of implementation that includes goals and objectives, and to the students' learning demands. In this, the assessment tools and method used are adjusted to correspond to students'

linguistic and developmental proficiency, required data, and to review students' characteristics (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Finally, the authenticity, this feature entails the inclusion of authentic activities during classroom instruction. The evaluation can take a formal procedure through classroom tasks and/or informal through self and peer assessment. Indeed, a successful portfolio procedure incorporates the assessment of activities and drills that students experience in the natural setting of the classroom and which are part of the instruction. Highlighting authentic language proficiency reveals the interconnected nature of language development and centres the interest on communicative and functional language abilities instead of disconnected and separated skills (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

4.6.2 Portfolio Assessment Model

Based on the study results gathered from the experiment and questionnaire, the researcher recommended and suggested a model that can serve as the springboard for effective portfolio assessment development, especially in the EFL context, using relevant strategies that aid in meeting the learning expectations and elevate the productivity of both teachers and students. Moreover, this model is supposed to assist teachers when implementing portfolio assessments, encourage collaboration between all educational actors including the administration, and centre students' attention toward learning and improvement. Furthermore, the suggested model represents a fine-tuned simplification of the portfolio assessment procedures that illuminate the required steps and showcase its potential for growth and development (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Also, the propound model is an inspiration taken from an ESL design suggested by …) and adapted by the researcher to fit the EFL context needs and prospects. Indeed, this model incorporates six (6) levels of assessment activities that are connected and related: (1) the identification of the purpose of portfolio assessment; (2) the arrangement of portfolio content; (3) the outline of portfolio analysis; (4) the preparation for instructional operationalization; (5) the selection of strategies to check the validity of the information; (6) the implementation and application (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

At the early stage, identification of the purpose of portfolio assessment, users are required to decide the aim for which portfolio assessment will be used, for instance, tracking students' growth and development, signposting their limitations, giving them grades, and analysis of the teaching methods. After the specification of the primary objectives for which portfolio assessment will be used, the next move involves describing the teaching goals that necessitate being linked and associated with the portfolio assessment objectives. This means

that the portfolio body and the assessment conventions are directed by the purposes selected at each grade level for portfolio assessment. mentioned that for portfolio assessment, to be consistent and valid, it must emphasize educational goals rather than objectives. Certainly, the reasons for such recommendations are that educational goals are clearly defined and display the combined and interconnected nature of language proficiency development. A further reason is that educational goals are typical of domains of learning which is why data gathered from numerous measures must be explained based on domains of learning (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Moreover, consideration of the educational goals requires four types: skills, strategies, concepts, and application. What is evident is that the focus of the portfolio assessment needs to be on skill development, mainly on the procedure of language when writing is evaluated for grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. Although, in theory, the presence of the primary mechanical skills for writing is important, however, it does not assert successful writing. Due to this, the existence of other competencies is required for students to grow as effective writers. For example, students' ability to create thoughts and ideas that are relevant to the suggested topic is a salient skill that students need to possess (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Furthermore, the generation of ideas necessitates strategies that students are required to use to construct meaning. For example, when writing, a successful strategy for ideas generation, especially in the EFL context, could be free-writing or fast-writing mainly at the early stages. The main feature of this technique is to write rapidly without checking or reviewing. It focuses on helping students generate ideas, break hesitance, and overcome writer's block. Furthermore, it aims to develop and make a connection between the ideas that were obtained during the brainstorming phase. Therefore, the procedure is to emphasize an idea, disregard the mechanicals of language, write as fast as possible, and never stop for the correction process or backtracking. (Yahiaoui, 2020, p.37)

Additionally, understanding the basic concepts and theories of a discipline is of paramount importance. Indeed, successful writing requires an understanding of the principles and the concepts underpinning the process of writing. Among the principles that need to be made clear for the students is that writing is a procedure that necessitates students to compose and redraft ideas. Second, students need to write in different genres and for a variety of audiences. Third, clarify for them that the process of writing follows a progressive course moving from one stage to another in a series of steps. Lastly, students need to comprehend that writing and speaking are connected skills, mainly as productive skills, however, they are

controlled by well-defined rules. These concepts may represent possible educational goals for writing development that students need to perceive (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Finally, the academic success of students is resolved by their ability to incorporate writing skills in functional situations. Here teachers are advised to make use of academic tasks and activities to keep track of students' development in skills acquisition and implementation. Following a reflective process, in which several questions are raised to inquire about the activities completed by the students, offers the basis for the development of goals that are connected to the implementation of writing skills (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

The second stage is related to the planning of portfolio content. This stage includes three steps, selection of the assessment procedure, specification of the portfolio content, and a description of the assessment frequency. The selection of assessment procedures aims at deciding the relevant method of data collection that is related to students' progress. In this regard, while traditional assessment emphasizes formal techniques as means for data collection, portfolio assessment on the other hand, requires the use of both formal (tests) and informal approaches when gathering data about students' progress. Relying on these two techniques can help in the generation of detailed information about students' progress. Formal approaches are objective means of data collection, they can take the form of tests, standardized tests, and diagnostic tests to yield scores. Informal techniques are subjective tools mainly because the judgment can be diverse and vary according to ratters. This means that they may incorporate teacher ratings, checklists, observation, writing samples, and interviews. Along the same line, having a balance between objective and informal techniques, and providing evidence from a variety of sources may ensure the validity of the assessment inferences. However, a failure to support conclusions may signal a lack of validity for gauging the language construct, or reliability of the sources of the information (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

The second step is the specification of portfolio content. It aims at describing students' development in the portfolio in a relevant manner. When collecting data, certain information can be gathered directly and placed in the portfolio, for instance, students' writing samples. While others require the teacher to devise tools that can be used both for accumulating evidence about students' progress and describing the evidence in the portfolio (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

The last step in this phase is describing the assessment occurrence rate over a particular period. In this regard, the requirement is a balance between the need for complete evidence about students' progress and the necessity for an empirical approach to assessment. Of course, attaining this balance can be achieved by taking the procedure of everyday classroom

instruction, such as writing samples, close passages, and homework as a method for students' assessment. However, when following such a procedure, its aim in portfolio assessment needs to be thoroughly indicated and reflect a complete description of students' growth over a specific period.

Stage three is concerned with the portfolio analysis design. In this phase, two steps are of particular consideration. First, is setting standards and criteria for interpretation, and second, determining the procedure for integrating portfolio information. Certainly, standards and criteria are essential elements for attaining instructional and educational goals. Their significance lies in their ability to assist when interpreting students' portfolios and in the planning of portfolio assessments. Moreover, when addressing setting standards for evaluation, it is important to have a clear understanding that the four skills incorporate complex processes which seems therefore impossible for a list of educational objectives to describe the distinctive features of language development. For this obvious reason, and as an alternative to specific objectives, standards need to be based on anticipated patterns of behaviour that can be representative of successful language development. For instance, a practical indication of students' average control over writing mechanics will be that they display mastery of conventions with limited spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing errors (Sharon and J. Micheal, 1994).

Furthermore, the interpretation of the information and evidence included in the portfolio requires deciding the criteria or the frame of reference. In addressing the interpretation of the gathered information, it seems evident that three points of reference are repeatedly utilized in the literature: individual performance across time, mastery skills, and relative group standing. What is quite requisite is that, for Portfolio assessment to serve educational goals and effective learning and evaluation, must address the mastery of skills and performance across time. This does not mean that relative group standing is of no value, rather the nature of the writing skills requires the teacher to compare students' actual performance to previous ones and to check the extent of their growth in the selected areas (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

When teachers use the mastery of skills or the criterion-referenced interpretation, they aim to evaluate the extent of students' achievement of educational purposes and goals. This procedure necessitates the establishment of the criteria for evaluation for each domain of learning. The estimation of students' improvement is done by comparing students' positions concerning each criterion. In this regard, students can master the criteria only when they accomplish the requirements of the educational goals. For example, if the teacher is taking narrative texts as an educational goal. Then, the objectives for this latter might be improving

students' ability to tell a sequence of written events, reporting adequate content, and writing biographies. Thus, it aims at displaying control over these objectives, which signals that students have well accomplished the designed tasks (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

On the other hand, interpretation based on individual performance entails accumulating information that can be used as a starting point for comparison purposes and through which teachers can assess the extent of students' improvement. Indeed, following this method of analysis involves discussion over the expected level of progress in each domain of learning and the construction of practical anticipation for individual improvement. Further, it is important to mention that every inspection of students' portfolios delineates a new base of reference to evaluate progress (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

In the EFL context, and when implementing portfolio assessment procedures, approaches to interpretation need to be related to aims and goals. Whilst, the criterion reference approach to interpretation may appear relevant and can bring satisfactory results, some might prefer individual performance, referring to its role in catching evidence about students' progress. In other words, the indications here are that teachers need to seek a balance between these two approaches to interpretation and take into consideration education goals and students' needs (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Next is determining the procedure for integrating portfolio information. It is important to note that portfolio assessments include a variety of information gathered from multiple sources used by the teacher in and out of the physical setting of the class. Thus, the requirements are a procedure for incorporating and clarifying these varieties of information so that a general assessment of students' language improvement becomes feasible. Spardley (1980, cited in Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994) suggested a domain analysis procedure for the incorporation of portfolio information. What follows is an example of the domain analysis procedure suggested by Spardley (1980):

Student Name: _____ Classroom: _____		
Teacher: _____ Date Analyzed: _____		
Educational Goal: _____		
Objective	Examples Illustrating Student Progress Related to Objective	Reference

Figure 04.2: Sample Portfolio Analysis Form

An example of the domain analysis procedure is represented in Figure 4.2. As the figure shows, the domain analysis sheet includes information related to students' affiliation and educational goals. The domain analysis sheet requires setting the objective, the reference, and examples that demonstrate growth and improvement. Thus, for EFL teachers to make use of this procedure, especially with writing skills, they need to emphasize a goal, for example, improving students' syntactic and structural knowledge, namely basic patterns and parts of speech. Then, for this specific goal, a set of objectives needs to be determined and incorporated in the left box of the objective in the sheet. For instance, correct use of the topic sentence, accurate link between sentences, and relevant concluding sentence. After indicating the objectives, evidence of growth and improvement needs to be inserted in the middle box of examples illustrating students' progress. This box represents the evidence gathered from a variety of sources and documents the extent of progress and development. In other words, the middlebox comprises illustrative examples that display for instance a student's success in using concluding sentences. The third column of the domain analysis sheet is the reference, where each perceived example is recorded in this column through letters or numbers. Indeed, these domain analysis sheets related to a specific aim serve as a practical sign of improvement.

At this point, it is reasonable to claim that the implementation of such a procedure in the EFL context might appear challenging for teachers, but in reality, following such a strategy can serve students' needs to a considerable amount, create a strong link between assessment and teaching, provide a good platform for approaching portfolio assessment from a grounded and strategic perspective when dealing the writing skills, and expand the likelihood of the method used in determining students' development. Approaching the issue of integrating portfolio information from the perspective of Spradley (1980), namely the adapted analysis procedure, can be beneficial for EFL teachers since it displays a simplified procedure and a feasible method that teachers with limited sources can rely on when implementing portfolio assessment (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Stage four referred to the preparation for instructional use. At this stage, two steps present themselves as necessary. First is planning for instructional use, and second is planning feedback to students. These steps are important procedures that teachers need to be conscious of so that the evidence gathered from various tools can be sound and be used for their designed purposes.

Throughout the portfolio assessment procedure, diverse data and information are included to display and provide evidence of learning and ensure that the assessment is capturing the desired patterns of behaviour. The recorded information can be utilized for multiple aims in

EFL instruction, for example, to keep track of students' improvement, adapt teaching instructions, and give grades (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

This information constitutes a piece of evidence that exhibits students' improvement and achievement. At this phase, to avoid the probability of excessive, even inappropriate information, it is advised to separate the portfolio into two distinct parts. First, the required portfolio content refers to the requisite content to sustain basic information that is connected and relevant to the educational and instructional goals. In this regard, the information recorded can be used as a springboard to yield an adequate understanding of language and content skills. The second part of the portfolio, on the other hand, is the required information which comprises test scores, history of performance, and work samples. This load of data is of interest to both teachers and administration alike and serves as a powerful indicator of growth and improvement (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

Because portfolio assessment refers to the process of accumulating information used to communicate relevant evidence about achievement, progress, and limitations, planning feedback to students emphasizes the active involvement of the students in the portfolio procedure. Indeed, this active participation appears practical for several reasons. Firstly, it supports students' cognitive and metacognitive awareness of the learning process. For example, when students learn to assess themselves through the self-assessment procedure included in the portfolio process, they learn to scrutinize and identify the types of mistakes committed and the intensity of their occurrence. Therefore, allowing them to acquire relevant skills that will probably enhance the overall quality of their writing (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994). Storch and Wigglesworth (2012, p.368) pointed out that constructive feedback requires learners to notice the feedback and act upon it and this cannot be possible unless students are actively enrolled in the assessment process. Along the same line, Kwangsu and MacArthur (2010, p.335) noted that peer feedback provides opportunities for writing reshaping and improves students' audience awareness. Second, students' collaboration and engagement in the assessment process boost students' control over their learning. Indeed, Storch and Wigglesworth (2012, p.372) concluded that collaborative processing of feedback leads to greater engagement and dedication to finding relevant resolutions. Finally, when students are involved in the portfolio assessment procedure, they are more likely self-determined to take responsibility for their learning.

At this point, it is important to note that approaching the planning of feedback from the lenses of active participation in the assessment will help students enhance their learning intakes, focus their attention, and elevate their learning awareness. It seems therefore that, following procedures such as asking questions that require students to reflect on the processes followed

to complete particular written tasks, to list the traits that portray successful writing, or to arrange their writing in terms of effective pieces can increase the probability of students' active participation in the portfolio assessment (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994). In this regard, Louis and Doug (1994, p.67) argued that reflective explanations empower students' learning abilities and increase their metacognitive strategies through which they can evaluate and monitor their learning.

The fifth stage refers to the identification of the procedures to verify the accuracy of the information. Particularly, portfolio assessment encompasses a variety of data gathered from multiple methods of measurement, such as standardised tests, homework, and checklists. Due to this variety of information, and for a consistent interpretation and scoring, teachers need to set up a system to check the reliability of the collected information to guarantee judgment about students' performance. This system entails the inauguration of well-defined criteria for judgment to certify typical interpretation. Moreover, a system for the validation of decisions is required. Indeed, three proposed methods can be utilized by EFL teachers to validate their decisions when using portfolio procedures. Firstly, compare inferences obtained from portfolio data and conclusions taken from standardized tests. Secondly, review the correspondence between conclusions taken from portfolio information and the teacher's judgment. Thirdly, a longitudinal investigation of the association between portfolio information conclusions and expected performance (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994). In the EFL context, and among the three suggested options for the validation of decisions, the longitudinal investigation might be relevant. In theory, this technique appears to be time-consuming and requires dedication and continuity, but in reality, it fosters students' academic achievement in classrooms, emphasizes growth over time, and enables skills development. For example, comparing a student's writing performance with the expected one by the end of the semester will motivate the student to focus on attaining the expected performance, and therefore, achieve success academically in the classroom. Furthermore, relying on the longitudinal approach for the validation of decisions can focus students' attention on what needs to be done to improve, and thus, enhance the quality of learning (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

The last stage is the implementation of the model. The implementation requires teachers to follow the earlier-mentioned steps so that the application of the portfolio assessment procedure can be typical and serve the educational goals. Moreover, this model can assist EFL teachers, especially writing skill teachers to make use of this procedure to aid students to grow as writers, create the habits of writing, and elevate the overall quality of their writing. Flexibility is a key that teachers need to make use of to cope with students' needs and educational goals.

For this specific reason, it is advised that teachers and users of this portfolio assessment devise relevant techniques that support students' active involvement and collaborative learning (Sharon and J.Micheal, 1994).

4.7 ICT-Based Assessment and the Writing Skill

From the experiment, questionnaires, and results of the impact of portfolio assessment on students writing, it has been revealed that a combination of alternative assessment, namely portfolio assessment along with technology can bring the best experience and lead to performance improvement, thus achieving the pre-designed pedagogical goals. Moreover, because students nowadays are digital, they are aroused and taken by technological features. For this specific reason, EFL Teachers need to adapt their practices to fit the needs of their students and keep them interested in what will be presented to them which can be done through the incorporation of technology as a teaching and assessment tool. As demonstrated in the study, the incorporation of technology in writing such as the application "Grammarly" helped students improve the quality of their writing to some extent. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the incorporation of technology could accelerate the scoring procedure, lead to refinement in reliability and correctness in scoring, and remove written mistakes. (Caroline, 2005, p.172)

There are multiple reasons for the introduction of ICT-based assessment in the educational field and specifically the EFL context. First, to keep a relevant correspondence between the teaching and assessment modes. In other words, to keep this association, teachers need to depart from the traditional approaches to teaching and assessment that might appear inappropriate and respond to the digital needs of the students mainly because computers and cell phones are basic parts of the students' lives. It is probably fair to say that the emphasis nowadays has been so far focused on the introduction of technology as an important supplement for improving the quality of teaching, but the assessment was not considered when incorporating technology in teaching. Due to this, assessment needs to take the same emphasis and the same route typically to make certain that there is a harmony between the teaching mode and assessment mode, and thus, raises the validity of both teaching and assessment. (Russel & Haney, 2000 Cited in Caroline, 2006, p.174)

Second, to permit formative feedback for the students. The provision of feedback whether it is evaluative or descriptive is of great significance for learning and is a relevant pedagogical tool that enables students' growth and development. In this vein, Caroline (2006) reported that if the provision of electronic feedback could support quality in assessment, then unquestionably could be an influential learning procedure. However, it is important to point out that the introduction of technology in teaching and assessment such as "Grammarly" which

includes automated marking needs to emphasize formative aims and information to empower learning and improve students' motivation. This means that the requirements are formative features of feedback and not grades or marks where students can receive relevant suggestions and comments about their performance, generally what went well, what needs further changes, and the requirements for improvement. It is this type of feedback that can elevate students writing and not a summative evaluation. Using the application "Grammarly" permits the incorporation of qualitative feedback into the online assessment, thus allowing the provision of automated diagnostic comments supplying the students with practical suggestions regarding correct answers and reasoning, and approaching similar issues that may arise when writing. In this vein, Ahmed and Pollitt (2002) disclosed that the use of technology needs to provide genuine assistance to teaching and learning:

> Through technology, we may be able to estimate the extent of assistance that students need to complete tasks… this type of tailored assistance will give students a consistent experience of assessment, and a learning experience while allowing teachers to differentiate them by ability. The use of technical procedures such as computers and applications can proffer students with a wide range of help with questions, hints on meaning, and examples of success. (Ahmed & Pollit, 2002, p.2 cited in Caroline, 2006, p.176)

It seems likely from the earlier mentioned quotation that technology needs to emphasize the improvement of learning and not only address summative purposes and achievement data because the fundamental aim is to support active learning, improve students' metacognition, and encourage reflection. It is considered content-rich material that allows automatic scoring and response. Indeed, the inclusion of technology facilitates heavy loads on teachers, provides writing opportunities and rehearse, and increases students' writing performance. (Buckley, 2002, cited in Caroline, 2006, p.177)

More importantly, the use of ICT in the Algerian EFL context can help students experience more writing opportunities. It can encourage learners' revision through the multiple sources of feedback provided. Besides that, ICTs help free up teachers' time for other activities, and thus, support an iterative writing process. (Warchauer & Grimes, 2014, p.22)

Despite students' positive attitudes toward ICTs in general, their usage in the Algerian context still faces serious challenges and issues that hinder their application. The situation

appears to be intricate, with the lack of relevant training and the absence of the required resources. Because of this, it is reasonable to adopt a mixed model of use that consists of both traditional methods of assessment and ICT-based procedures to arrive at a complement between teaching and assessment. What follows is a suggestion that EFL teachers can adapt when teaching and assessing their students' writing. This suggestion consists of utilizing an electronic portfolio through homework as a follow-up activity to provide students with frequent writing opportunities and the writing application "Grammarly" as an instructional tool that can assist students while they are writing by providing hints about mistakes and analyzing the number of errors in their writing.

In this suggestion, and at the early stage, EFL writing teachers need to inform their students about the procedure of electronic portfolios. An electronic portfolio refers to the structured accumulation of works chosen and reflected on by the students to serve a particular aim which is created and distributed electronically through ICTs (Heat, 2004 cited in Baronak, 2011, p.1). Through the information supplied by teachers, students can understand the requirements that are an indication of the purpose or the goal to be addressed, identification of the audience, determination of the sources available to create a portfolio, and where to submit their completed writing, and clarification of the form of writing (Barrett 2001 cited in Baronak, 2011, p.2). The provision of this information ensures students' motivation to write and complete the task at hand and increases their self-reliance by making them goal-oriented. The introduction of technology in this model, mainly electronic portfolio, is based on the popular belief stated by Backer (1997) that the more options we give to the students during the learning process, the more productive results can be obtained because today's students are equipped with sophisticated knowledge, especially with technology.

The next step is related to homework. During this step, teachers are going to use the homework as a follow-up activity through which students can activate what they have acquired and learnt in the class (Harmer, 2002). This includes, for example, writing small paragraphs where they can learn how to practice topic sentences and concluding sentences. The goal here is to use homework as an instructional tool where students can practice their writing skills through the assignments provided by the teacher. What is important is that, after delivering homework topics to students, teachers need to explain the procedure of writing and the deadline for the online submission. Moreover, for the success of the follow-up activity and students' satisfaction, the assignment needs to be related to the lesson goals, that is to say, to what they have learned in class. Through this, learners acknowledge the aim of the activity and become

more enthusiastic to complete it in due time. The application of such a procedure requires willingness and continuous work.

Step three is related to the use of technology when assessing learners' written products. The use of technology is based on the assumption that the incorporation of ICTs programs will liberate the teachers and permit them to give students more writing opportunities and that the provision of online feedback while writing will encourage students to make the necessary revisions. As a result, students can achieve the iterative aims of writing where students repeatedly visit the steps included in the process of writing until the designed aims are met (Warschauer & Grimes, 2014, p.32). The researcher suggests the use of the writing application "Grammarly" as a platform for checking the accuracy of students' writing and providing constructive suggestions to improve the overall quality of their writing. Indeed, it is a program that analyses the number of errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, style, average sentence length, discourse elements, and lexical complexity, and provides mechanical feedback and suggestions for revision. Moreover, it provides numerical scores that describe the extent of writing accuracy against the designed criteria and possible changes that the students need to undertake to elevate the score of their writing.

Based on the researcher's experience with the application "Grammarly", the explicit scores provided encourage the revision process where the writer is going to take the required move to elevate the score of their writing. Of course, with the introduction of artificial intelligence nowadays, students can use other applications to boost their writing quality. Existing evidence suggests that the significance of these applications and programs lies in their ability to promote students' engagement in autonomous activity through revision and feedback and freeing up teachers' time. Along the same line, although the use of the application "Grammarly" allows students to revise their writing as a reaction to the suggestion provided.

many studies (Mark and souglas, 2008) confirmed that the use of technical procedures such as "Grammarly" and other programs that use automated scoring helped students emphasize quick errors and address revision procedures at the word or sentence level, however, revisions related to the content, organization, and sentence structure were minimal if not absent, mainly because the aim of students was always to raise their writing scores and not improve the quality of their writing. This indicates that relying on ICTs requires teachers and users to be conscious about content and organization by adapting their teaching and assessment practices to meet this specific need and turning students' focus to these features to elevate scores, writing quality, and as a result departure from writer-based to reader-based prose. In this regard, Attali (2004 cited in Warschauer & Grimes, 2014, p.29) stated:

…. Almost all the revisions addressed mechanics, not content or style. In the observation, all the perceived revisions were of spelling, grammar, or word choice, not content or organization. To confirm this, we reviewed 10 randomly selected essays that were submitted two or more times to notice the modifications between the first and last drafts. None had been corrected for content or organization. ….. All of the corrections maintained the earlier content and sentence structure. Modifications were limited to single words and simple phrases; however, the original meaning continue to exist unchanged. Most changes appeared to be in response to the automated error feedback.

The above quotation indicates that the use of ICTs could increase students' writing productivity and to some extent quality by creating the habits of revising and correcting the errors found in their writing. Certainly, the creation of these habits is not the result of one session and/or opportunity but it requires giving the students a load of opportunities in which they practice writing and learn to spot the type of errors they are making to improve their writing quality and scores. Although most teachers in the EFL context may have negative attitudes toward the application of such a procedure "Grammarly", its application sounds beneficial for EFL learners as it can increase their motivation and lessen the number of errors in their writing which will encourage them to approach writing with enthusiasm, thereby creating the habit of writing and direct teachers' focus to content and organization which is the prime aim from teaching writing. (Warschauer & Grimes, 2014, p.34)

On the whole, the above suggestion serves as a guide for EFL teachers to incorporate technology in their teaching and assessment practices. The proposed mixed model can facilitate the assimilation of technology in situations where its implementation may appear difficult. For this specific reason, the researcher provided this model to help EFL teachers efficiently include technology in their daily teaching and assessment practices, thus developing students writing ability, boosting their writing scores, and their motivation to write.

4.8 Collaboration and Writing Skills

In the results of the current research, certain features of collaboration appeared important for students and writing skill development. Through the experience, it was revealed that the implementation of portfolio assessment with the Second-Year EFL students helped them collaborate and, as a result, produce to some extent a fine piece of writing. In this regard, the classroom teacher needs to encourage collaboration to arrive at an efficient writing product

and keep the students concentrated. As recognized in the study, allowing students to collaborate supports students' motivation to write and revise before submitting their papers for evaluation.

In the EFL Algerian context, writing is still viewed as an individual activity, and accuracy in writing requires students to practice more to achieve it. Yet, it has to be said that recent studies certified that collaborative writing extends students' knowledge of the language and makes the learning process successful. This procedure will enable students to pinpoint gaps in their knowledge, make hypotheses, and therefore explore the aspect of language. On this issue, Donato (1994, Cited in Storch and Wigglesworth, 2012, p.365) mentioned that collaborative writing authorizes students' interaction at higher levels of activity. Similarly, Swain and Lapkin (2001, Cited in Storch and Wigglesworth, 2012) highlighted that cooperative activities permit conscious engagement with the activity, testing hypotheses, and obtaining feedback on their hypotheses. Moreover, he pointed out that collective work refers to the social establishment of meaning through discussion that includes communication about the aspects of language itself. Indeed, this will enable students to concentrate on language issues and jointly increase their understanding of language. (Swain, 2006 Cited in Storch and Wigglesworth, 2012, p.365)

Moreover, concerning the discussion that occurs when students collaborate to produce a written product, evidence suggests that this activity comprises a load of interactive acts such as agreements, disagreements, and explanations which improve students' concentration on specific aspects of language. In this regard, Storch and Wigglesworth (2012, p.366) pointed out that collaborative writing makes the required procedure for learning operative via the different language processes which take place during the activity.

Furthermore, the collaborative procedure helps the students feel safe, confident, and positive. Shehadeh (2011 Cited in Storch and Wigglesworth, 2012) asserted that learners displayed positive attitudes toward collaborative writing and expressed their active participation in the task at hand and readiness for writing again collectively. Nonetheless, writing was always considered cooperative by nature namely because it holds a relationship between writer and reader. It is through cooperative activity that we can offer each writer a reader who can help negotiate meaning, make relevant decisions, and provide constructive reviews and suggestions. As a result, this makes the task practical, accurate, and reciprocally active (Supiani, 2017).

There is a general agreement that the most practical element of collaborative writing is the processing of feedback. In this concern, it is assumed that pair and/or group processing of feedback may assist the students to achieve higher accuracy in the short term and to some extent

acquisition in the long run. That is to say, students through the multiple opportunities of collective writing will be efficient enough and learn the correct use of grammatical structures, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. Supiani (2017, p.41) mentioned that the process of collaborative writing is related to the provision of feedback, discussion, negotiation of strategies, and cooperation between pairs and/or groups. He stated that the motivation behind writing collectively or in pairs is successful in reaching a high-quality product and setting up meaning collectively.

The implementation of collaborative writing requires awareness of the strategies and steps included within the cooperative activity. This latter is designed to make the activity easy and facilitate cooperation between students during the stages of writing. The first step requires students to take note of the topic discussed together to make drafts and review their ideas. Next, is jointly developing an outline for the essay that will be written. After that, students are asked to write the paragraph together to make sure that the written product is the outcome of collaboration and not one member's ideas. The subsequent procedure is revising and editing together. At this stage, students analyse the efficiency and accuracy of the written product. During this, students read the content of their writing and conduct the necessary modifications to elevate the quality of the product and render it more suitable to the reader. The final stage is out load reading. It consists of reading the written product load to check whether there is an association between the ideas and a link between sentences and paragraphs of the written product. These steps and strategies ensure a successful collaboration that would probably lead to effective and accurate writing (Supiani, 2017).

A substantial amount of research stressed the dynamic of cooperative work in the improvement and refinement of students' writing. According to Reid and John (2000, cited in Supiani, 2017, p.44), collaboration makes the writing process effortless and finer and facilitates the attainment of the designed goals. Due to this, it is important to raise EFL teachers' awareness by inviting them to integrate collaborative strategies into their classes. Indeed, the implementation necessitates following a pedagogical procedure that could render it operative and functional. This latter includes activities that teachers present to students to make their writing effective and accurate.

To facilitate the use of the collaborative procedure, the researcher suggested activities that teachers can use to encourage collaboration, guide the integration of cooperative work in EFL classes, and enable the students to gain an understanding of the organizational patterns of academic writing. Seemingly, while writing is a process that is made up of stages, in a real-world context, growing students as writers require them to work collaboratively and practice

appropriate activities and techniques. What follows is a description of the suggested activities that EFL teachers can use in their classes.

4.8.1 The Prewriting Stage

The preliminary stage is related to the generation of ideas. A process which requires students a load of time to find suitable information related to the topic suggested. Indeed, working collaboratively can provide relevant assistance to what is labelled writer's block as the students interact and exchange ideas in the group. The first activity that EFL teachers can use is collective brainstorming. Harmer (2002, Cited Supiani, 2017, p.44) explained that when students work in pairs or groups, the generation of ideas is stimulating and exciting and increases students' active participation. In the beginning, teachers assign students to work in pairs and provide them with the topic. The researcher suggested pair work to avoid chaotic situations and enhance active involvement with the activity at hand. Then, they start negotiating and disclosing information related to the topic while one member of the group jots down the uttered and gathered ideas. The second collaborative activity that EFL teachers can use in their classes is "peer interview". This activity consists of asking questions to get information relevant to the topic and motivating the students to help each other in reviewing ideas. First, Teachers can ask students to prepare a list of questions to ask their partners. (Juliana, 2000, p.41-42)

Once the questions are ready the students interview their peers and write down the answers provided by their peers. After that, they deliver the collected answers to their peers and use those notes to make ideas for the topic. Students can use WH-question and yes-no questions to direct their writing such as:

- ✓ Do you know about this topic?
- ✓ Is it interesting for you?
- ✓ What do you want to write about?
- ✓ What is your goal?
- ✓ What do you need to find out? (Juliana, 2000, pp.41-42)

These questions serve to illustrate how students can get ideas by questioning each other. Certainly, such a model stimulates students' active involvement and encourages sharing and exchange of the students to provide answers, review them, and together turn the obtained ideas into paragraphs. It seems therefore that getting ideas is a crucial step in the writing process and due to this, the suggested collaborative activities guide the students throughout the prewriting stage to collect appropriate ideas, successfully communicate them, and rehearse their writing capabilities. (Juliana, 2000, pp.41-42)

4.8.2 Drafting and Reading

After guiding students all around the prewriting stage, the following step is to use the collected ideas and information to write a paragraph. At this stage, students join forces to produce a rough draft based on the ideas provided in the prewriting stage. Eventually, students are required to organise their ideas and develop them into paragraphs while teachers have a role to play in offering flexibility and encouraging students to utilise resources that might be helpful, for example, using dictionaries and the internet. In the planning and for the success of the activity, teachers need to assign members of the group a specific task for instance the one who writes and the one who performs the role of helper and reviewer. Further, the role of the writer is to arrange the ideas into a coherent paragraph while the task of the helper is to go through the mistakes and flaws made by the writer, provide feedback, suggestions and comments, and talk about the ideas and their relevance to the aim of the topic. After the collaborative production of the rough draft comes reading. At this point, the writer reads the draft aloud while the reviewer tries to check the clarity of ideas, their consistency, the appropriateness of the words and phrases used, and provide relevant suggestions and comments that may be useful for the overall quality of the draft produced. Later based on the feedback and the comments supplied, the writer starts clearing up the mistakes and errors spotted, removes any ideas that might seem irrelevant or unrelated, and adjusts the quality of the written draft. (Supiani, 2017, p.46)

4.8.3 Revising

This stage requires students to examine various aspects of the written draft. The examination is designed to improve the quality of the draft through the multiple reviews and suggestions issued by the helper to the writer. In this regard, and for satisfactory results, the helper (the reviewer) can use the following checklist provided by Harcourt (2012, cited in Supiani, 2017, p.47) which aims to aid the reviewer in offering valuable suggestions to the writer.

Ideas
- ✓ Has the writer developed a thesis statement?
- ✓ Does each paragraph support the thesis?
- ✓ Has the writer incorporated adequate details to render the ideas comprehensible?

Organization
- ✓ Does the writing follow an explicit pattern of organization?
- ✓ Has the writer devised accurate introductory, middle, and concluding sentences?
- ✓ Do the sentences need to be reordered in any parts?

Word Choice

✓ Is the level of formality used by the writer efficient?

✓ Does the writer use specific nouns and authentic verbs?

✓ Does the writer keep away from repetition and redundancy?

Sentence Fluency

✓ Are the sentences accurate and explicitly written?

✓ Is there any variation in the beginning and length of the sentences?

✓ Is there any fluidity in the sentences provided? (Supiani, 2017, p.47)

4.8.4 Editing

Editing is especially important yet neglected in the writing process. It requires the pair to address unsuitable ideas, irrelevant ideas, and incorrect punctuation to improve the overall quality of the written product. During this stage, the pair together examine the paragraph and start correcting the mistakes discovered. Correction here consists of spotting where the mistakes are and recommending suggestions for improvement at the five editing criteria: meaning, organization, spelling, punctuation, and style. In this respect, Harcourt (2012, cited in Supiani, 2017, p.48) suggested a guide that EFL teachers can provide for their students to assist them throughout the editing step. The guide includes a Yes-No questions checklist related to the five editing criteria that the pair can use to spot errors and flaws and enhance the level of the written product.

Punctuation

✓ Do the sentences end with the proper punctuation?

✓ Do we use commas correctly in compound sentences?

✓ Do we use apostrophes correctly?

Mechanics

✓ Do we start the sentences with capital letters?

✓ Do we capitalize proper nouns?

✓ Have we checked for spelling errors?

Grammar

✓ Do the subjects and verbs agree in the sentences?

✓ Do the sentences use correct and inconsistent verb tenses?

✓ Do the pronouns agree with their antecedents?

✓ Have we avoided any other usage errors? (Supiani, 2017, p.47)

Through these checklists, EFL students learn to assist each other, spot mistakes, collaborate to render their writing product finer, train students to play the role of both feedback

giver and receiver and increase students' consciousness of what would be a relevant evaluation of their peers' writing. Moreover, the suggested checklist not only aids students' writing to appear accurate but also engages them in a load of cognitive processes that are beneficial to writing skills and language learning in general. (Storch and Wigglesworth, 2012, p.368)

It is important to note that before the teacher evaluation and after conducting the necessary changes to the written product, the pair are asked to choose the best version of their writing drafts to be submitted for evaluation. Typically, the teacher asks the pair to write or deliver the last version of their writing product which is the product of joint work.

4.8.5 Teachers Evaluation

Evaluation is regarded as the final stage of the writing process. At this stage, the teacher enlightens the students with productive comments and beneficial feedback that will help them advance their qualities, and thus, enhance their writing quality.

During this stage, the group or the pair are required to submit the best copy of their written product so that the teacher's correction can fed to the students and supply them with appropriate and detailed feedback. The provided feedback addresses the five editing criteria stated earlier, that is to say, meaning/idea, order, style, spelling and punctuation. After the provision of the required feedback, and on the grounds of teacher advice and comments, the pair/or the group examine their written product and undertake the necessary changes to refine the quality of the product. It might be useful for EFL teachers to rely on conferences as a means through which they can obtain a deeper understanding of their students' capabilities. Conferences have become a valuable element of the process approach to writing, and are best described as a dedicated dialogue that encourages the students to consider the reasons, learning procedures, and the quality of students' performance. In other words, conferences not only shift the goals of evaluation from authoritative to informative but also guide the students to track their strengths and weaknesses, value their progress, and set a detailed proposal for plans. Indeed, conferences increase students' awareness of what they know and what they need to know to work on, thus, helping the students proceed toward significant control and self-sufficiency. There are two types of conferences: student-teacher conferences and students-student conferences, however, our main concern is student-teacher conferences because the researcher believes that this latter is suitable to the EFL context and can comprehensively serve the needs of the students (Supiani, 2017).

4.8.5.1 Student-Teacher Conferences

Student-teacher conferences stimulate the active participation of the students in the learning processes because they allow them to negotiate the ideas provided and explain why choices and selections are made, help them get insight into the shorts found in the written product and as a result, lead to a better understanding. Graves (1983, p.138) asserted that conferences allowed learners to come across both new information and the feeling of fulfilment after realising something. This means that conferences can yield a positive impact on students' performance and motivation, and assist them throughout the learning process.

The purpose of conferencing is not only to have a discussion but also to promote students' self-assessment. When conferencing, students and teachers discuss the collected written products and permit the students to consider what they acquired, and then jointly design goals for the future. To be able to assist the students, teachers need to address efficiency, emphasise where the improvement is displayed, and guide them to identify the areas of limitations. In this way, conferencing provides the students with reinforcement directed at increasing their independence and communicating relevant strategies on what they need to be doing. Through this, self-assessment is shaped and performed with teachers on a relational ground and then assimilated and incorporated by the students on a personal level. (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Caroline, 2006)

When teachers make use of conferences, it is important to provide the students with a conference guide. This latter assists the students throughout the preparation process and serves as an opening for the discussion about their work. Moreover, it encourages the students to analyse their writing again and again before facing the teacher which as a result raises their cognitive activity and consciousness. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that teachers need to make sure that the aim of the conference is clear and that the students are well prepared for taking the conference. Additionally, the questions that the teacher includes in the conference need to be focused and based on the student's experience rather than imprecise questions based on theories. The questions need to highlight significant points like the strategies the students used when reading writing, for instance, "How did you get the ideas used in your writing?" "Was your writing reviewed by anyone else?" "Have you received any suggestions relevant to your writing?" "Did you modify your written product?" "If so, how?" and also address students' attribution and emotional reactions to the work at hand to ensure an accurate understanding of the student's needs and frustrations. For example, "What was the challenging part in writing this paragraph?" This type of question can be used to address the effort and difficulty the students face when writing. To address self-evaluation, teachers can ask questions as follows

"In which part of writing do you face serious limitations so that can work on it together?" Through this, teachers can understand the needs of students and spot where their limitations are, and thereby, work jointly to overcome the obstacles that prevent their writing accuracy. On the other hand, attribution can be tackled with questions such as "How do you regard your work?" "Have you done well or bad" Through these questions teachers can understand the students' emotional reactions and allow them to take the necessary steps to fit their needs (Caroline, 2006).

Based on the suggestions above, it is clear that the application of the earlier stated recommendations and suggestions can yield a positive impact on the students and lead to optimal results that enable EFL learners to write accurately and efficiently. But at the same time, the implementation of these suggestions necessitates changes in teachers' roles to fit the needs of the students and be up-to-date with the digital world of today.

4.9 Changes in Teacher's Role

It seems from the current research results that the use of technology in writing not only reinforces students' writing and cooperative abilities but also makes the learning environment motivating and stimulates teachers to change their role in class from full attachment and control to a kind of detachment that made students' responsible for their learning. Through this change, teachers need to reconsider the way they approach instruction, practices, and roles in the class and also, they need to refine their tech literacy and experience to keep away from any possible impairment.

It is clear that the introduction of technology in teaching writing in the EFL context necessitates training to augment ability in the fundamentals of technology. Indeed, many EFL teachers find the use of technology an obstacle that prevents them from embracing a technology-based intervention. However, relevant training can improve teachers' tech knowledge and skills and enable them to adopt technology in a useful way, that is to say, to actively encourage continuous change in behaviour and fluidity of practices and as a result increase students' attainment. This can be done through programs and coaching sessions designed to deal with teachers' needs, allowing them to accelerate the adoption of technology, and teaching them visible methods based on real experiences of incorporating technology in teachers' policy (Emma, 2020, p.2).

In a process pedagogy of writing where writing improvement is the goal, EFL teachers need to arrange their teaching methods so that all the stages of the writing process are included and that students are actively participating in the interactive and social processes that serve genuine communicative goals. Moreover, the arrangement requires teachers to provide students

with extensive writing opportunities, stimulating tasks, real occasions for feedback and revision, and authentic models. Focusing on these specific and relevant activities is a great way to maintain a process pedagogy of writing, and thus, elevate the overall quality of students writing.

Moreover, when integrating technology, it is relevant for teachers to be active facilitators. In such a dynamic situation, where students feel motivated and taken by technology, it may be appropriate for teachers to provide their students with deliberate writing tasks where they practice writing and set clear goals for development. These tasks involve seeking appropriate online resources so that technology can be accessible to the students. For example, teachers may rely on weblogs, Ning, and automated scoring apps like "Grammarly" and "Automated writing apps". By making use of these tech tools, the teacher can serve students' needs and stimulate their learning. Pinkman (2005 cited in Widiastuti, 2018, p.38) pointed out that the use of technological tools such as weblogs makes the students interested and encouraged to undertake online interaction, and thus, improve their writing quality. Further, the introduction of technology is an extra element to the traditional classroom where students can practise more in a supportive environment. It enables them to finish a load of writing assignments and provides them with immediate relevant feedback that leads them to revise and make repairs, even though it is at the surface level, it keeps them concentrated. Nonetheless, it encourages students' persistence. When teachers equip their students with tech tools, they become aroused, and motivated, and display greater autonomy. In this concern, Ellison & Wu (2008 cited in Widiastuti, 2018, p.38) revealed that participation in blog projects promoted students' persistence even after the semester was finished. This meant that teachers' roles with today's students needed to be different and should meet their expectations

Furthermore, an important role that EFL writing teachers need to perform within a process pedagogy needs to be based on providing students with the required scaffold and support. The term scaffold here refers to the provision of the necessary guidance to raise students' control over their learning. Wood, Burner and Ross (1976 cited in Ecra, 2022, p.401) defined scaffold as giving the required support that would enable learners to solve problems, and attain goals that were beyond their actual level. What can be inferred from what was stated earlier is that scaffolding on the one hand is important for the learning environment and on the other hand it helps learners and students overcome once unbearable obstacles. To provide students with the necessary scaffold there are three steps to go through. The first step is acting contingently which means being responsive, providing adapted feedback, and calibrating the scaffold. This step requires teachers to diagnose students' actual level and then supply them

with tailored support that fits their level of learning. The diagnosis incorporates active and formative assessment and constant checking of students' understanding. The second step is the gradual fading of scaffolding. It involves inspecting students' level of competence and development to decide the level of scaffolding fade. For example, when the teacher finds that students have control of the subject, his assistance fades because they exhibited control. The last step is related to the transfer of responsibility. This step signals the fading of teachers' scaffolding and a gradual responsibility for students' learning. Accordingly, students take responsibility for carrying out tasks. EFL writing teachers need to profoundly change their directions and draw their attention toward scaffolding as an important feature that can encourage students to write, practice, and take responsibility to grow as real writers.

To sum up, all the suggestions and recommendations are stimulating. The researcher hopes and believes that these suggestions will encourage positive practices, lead to improvement in writing quality and thus supply teachers with appropriate insight on how to develop their students' writing and collaboration.

4.10 Conclusion

The concluding part of this research is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the research tools, dealing with topics such as the experiment, observation, interview, and questionnaires. Meanwhile, it provided some suggestions and recommendations that EFL teachers can rely on to improve students' writing and collaborative skills. The first recommendation included a developmental model for portfolio assessment, which EFL teachers who have not received any training on portfolio assessment can rely on. Moreover, and in a similar vein, the researcher emphasised the need for the incorporation of technology in teaching and learning enterprises and suggested the use of electronic portfolio assessment through homework as a follow-up activity. Furthermore, regarding collaboration, the researcher suggested activities relevant to the stages of the process approach to writing that EFL teachers can use to encourage collaboration. Nonetheless, training was required and proposed by the researcher for successfully incorporating technology into the teaching/assessment process. Finally, the researcher stressed the need to renovate teachers' roles and practices to meet the expectations and needs of both students and education

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This thesis attempted to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on First-Year EFL students' writing, collaboration, and perception at Mascara University. Indeed, the basic aim was to determine the efficacy of a portfolio assessment procedure as an alternative to conventional practices in improving First-Year EFL students' writing accuracy, promoting collaboration and improving their social skills, and examining their perceptions and attitudes toward the treatment (portfolio assessment). Although the new reforms introduced in the higher educational system favour coping with students' needs by making them the centre of learning and giving them significant learning opportunities, assessing their writing skills still follows conventional practices that prevent them from frequent writing occasions and being active learners. Introducing a portfolio procedure in the assessment of EFL students' writing can provide them with numerous opportunities and encourage them to write without fear, thus, raising their writing productivity, and changing their mindset from getting marks to better production.

In this thesis, three research questions were discussed. The first research question was about the impact of portfolio assessment on second-year EFL students' writing skills. The second one addressed the effect of the portfolio assessment procedure on students' collaboration and social skills. The last research question considered students' perceptions and attitudes towards portfolio assessment. This study set out to find answers to the earlier questions and check whether the obtained results were credible. To answer the research questions, the researcher used various research tools and instruments to get an in-depth understanding of the effect of the treatment on dependent variables. Indeed, the current study used a two-group pre-test/post-test experimental design. The selection of this type of research was to understand the effect of the independent variable (portfolio assessment) on the dependent variable (students' writing, collaboration, attitudes, and perceptions). Moreover, three different questionnaires were delivered to the trainees after their experiment with the portfolio assessment for two semesters. They were all post-intervention questionnaires, that is to say, given to the students after experiencing the portfolio assessment procedure. Furthermore, two interview procedures were used to shed light on the effect of the treatment on students' collaboration and perceptions. The researcher also used observations to consolidate data obtained from various tools and brought insight from unseen angles that would enrich the quality of the research thus yielding plausible data.

To answer the first research question, the researcher relied on the pre-test/post-test experimental design and a questionnaire to determine the impact of portfolio assessment. These various tools were used to help the researcher throughout the process and elicit as much data as possible about the effectiveness of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on students' writing that would lead to an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study.

In the preliminary phase, the researcher used a pre-test to check students' writing accuracy, had an idea about their level and stood on the difficulties faced when composing a paragraph. During this phase, the researcher relied on both ratters' results and the application "Grammerly" when considering students' performance. The findings of the pre-test revealed that students lacked imagination and ideas when composing. Moreover, their paragraphs appeared short which signalled that the writing productivity was under the anticipated level. Furthermore, the findings showed that students' mastery level was far below the average as their writing was not accurate and appeared satiated of mistakes. Along the same line, the researcher noticed that the errors committed by students were mainly related to punctuation, spelling and grammar.

After the pre-test, the researcher started the treatment with diverse lessons to consolidate students' writing and to help them through the process. These lessons incorporated the process of writing, cohesion techniques, organization, and style. Indeed, they were designed to help first-year EFL students explore writing procedures and integrate these techniques into their writing. In addition, students received a load of writing opportunities in which students were asked to write paragraphs of different genres. The aim was to get students familiar with the different writing genres and to adapt their writing to the relevant genre. During this phase, students received feedback, but no rates or marks. Moreover, the researcher used a coding system that consisted of showing students' mistakes to increase their awareness, ease teachers' feedback and provide a warm environment for improvement.

Following the treatment, the students were subject to another test namely the post-test. This test aimed to check the accuracy of the intervention and to track the experimental group's writing after receiving the treatment. The data obtained revealed significant progress in the experimental group results compared to the pre-test and an empowerment of students' writing abilities. Moreover, the experimental group displayed control which was apparent in the ideas' richness, organization, and delivery. Furthermore, there was a decrease in the number of errors made by the experimental group compared to the control one. Additionally, the results indicated that the awareness of the writing process was apparent in the experimental group writing which

made their performance appear homogenous, lengthier than before the treatment, and meet the expectations.

Regarding the questionnaire results, it was revealed that students found portfolio assessment beneficial for their writing, and articulated that the treatment had a positive impact on their writing because it had responded to their needs and developed their writing performance. Moreover, the results also revealed that the features of portfolio assessment were found effective, taught the students how to reflect, and developed their writing performance. Further, they reported that their experience with portfolio assessment led them to prefer a portfolio procedure rather than conventional practices. At the same time, the results disclosed that students felt satisfied with their performance.

The findings obtained from the experiment and the questionnaire clearly articulated that the use of a portfolio assessment had a positive impact on students' writing. This confirmed and validated the hypothesis suggested by the researcher which stated that the use of portfolio assessment would encourage students to write, make repairs through revisions procedure and feedback, and as a result elevate their writing to a considerable level. Indeed, portfolio assessment led first-year EFL students to cease writing opportunities and to learn to improve their writing quality.

To test the second hypothesis which stated that the use of a portfolio assessment procedure would lead to a sort of cooperation between the students, therefore, positively impacting students' overall collaborative skills and developing their social skills, the researcher relied on a questionnaire, observation, and interview. The findings of the questionnaire showed that portfolio assessment permitted the sharing and the expression of ideas in groups between students and enabled group work when generating ideas for the paragraph and getting over writer's block. Moreover, the results revealed that the treatment encouraged students to take notes, work together, share with peers, provide constructive suggestions, and learn new planning and revision strategies. In the same vein, the results revealed there was a realistic consideration of peer feedback which led students to have positive attitudes toward the suggestions provided by their peers. Furthermore, the results indicated that all the students were correcting their mistakes before handing their papers to the evaluator and expressed their agreement with the fact that treatment developed their collaboration and writing.

On the other hand, the findings of the interview and classroom observation displayed students' satisfaction with portfolio assessment procedures and articulated that writing conditions were better under portfolio assessment procedures. Meanwhile, there was also a kind of resentment displayed by some students where they expressed preferences for conventional

assessments. Moreover, the findings showed that the portfolio assessment's wide range of corrective and non-corrective feedback was useful with a greater appreciation for teacher feedback. Additionally, students agreed that the treatment allowed them to work collectively, made them feel more cooperative, encouraged student-student and student-teacher exchange when writing, and supported students' sharing skills, and therefore, consolidated their writing collaborative strategies. In the same vein, the outcomes revealed that the treatment enabled students to face issues that might prevent successful writing, allowed them to resolve potential difficulties, practice problem-solving in groups, and stimulated their critical thinking. On top of that, the results disclosed that the treatment raised students' awareness and actively encouraged them to take responsibility for their learning. Similarly, the treatment also promoted positive dialogue between the students, and significantly, fostered their active listening as well as triggered their involvement and participation in the task at hand.

The review of the results obtained from the questionnaire, the interview, and the observation have produced a relevant answer to the second research question. They imparted that the use of the treatment promoted collaboration among the students since students' overall cooperative strategies and collaborative skills were improved after experiencing writing with the portfolio assessment procedure. Additionally, they disseminated that students' social skills namely, Active listening, positive dialogue, problem-solving, critical thinking, awareness, and engagement with tasks, were all improved after the experience. Accordingly, the hypothesis suggested was credible.

The last hypothesis suggested that students would have positive attitudes toward the use of the treatment in the assessment of their writing, as a result, leading to a change from getting better marks to working on elevating their mastery and accuracy in writing. To examine this hypothesis the researcher used a questionnaire, interview, and observation. The findings obtained from the earlier-mentioned research tools revealed that the treatment (portfolio assessment) created a feeling of satisfaction and comfort in students' behaviour, raised their awareness, and provided significant writing opportunities. Moreover, the results insinuate that there was a positive association between portfolio assessment procedures and students. Indeed, it was reported that the treatment created a feeling of satisfaction and comfort in their behaviour. Additionally, students certified that their writing improved after their experience with portfolio assessment. This led them to substantiate that portfolio assessment promoted writing improvement through multiple writing opportunities, revision procedures, and a feedback-rich environment. Furthermore, the finding revealed that the treatment developed students' writing and made them to some extent better EFL writers.

General Conclusion

On the whole, the analysis of the findings obtained from the research tools yielded a complete answer to the third research question. They demonstrated that students perceived portfolio assessment as an important tool for writing improvement and had positive attitudes toward its procedures. Furthermore, students stated that the options and possibilities included in the treatment were exciting and made them believe that the inclusion of the portfolio assessment procedure could certainly improve students' writing abilities, raise their awareness, and therefore, make them better EFL writers. In light of the evidence provided, the hypothesis was accepted.

The results of the present study demonstrated the relevance of a portfolio assessment in the EFL context which appeared to be practical in enhancing students' writing, supporting their collaboration, and improving their social skills. Due to this, EFL writing teachers need to be up-to-date with students' needs, provide them with appropriate strategies that fit their needs, and encourage them to grow as writers. It seems therefore that, in teaching and assessing writing, there was a possibility for the inclusion of portfolio assessments in the EFL context and that writing assessment required a departure from conventional practices to newer ones. What was evident, however, was that the incorporation required teachers' awareness of the procedure, training, readiness, and willingness. Most teachers might face difficulties when implementing portfolio assessments, and this was fairly understood, but they were required to change their perception toward both students' needs and writing assessments. Following a rigid method of teaching writing might not only deprive students of opportunities to write but might also discourage them from achieving the skills of future writers. Due to this, EFL teachers need to adapt their practices to fit the needs of their students and keep them interested in what will be presented to them. Because of this, it is important to change the input provided, which must reflect insight into students' needs and their prospects.

In this regard, the researcher insinuated the use of technology when teaching and assessing students' writing. Indeed, students are motivated and taken by technological devices. Therefore, these devices are incorporated, which could elevate students' attention, and focus, thus, leading to better attainment. For example, using electronic feedback could support quality in assessment, then unquestionably could be an influential learning procedure (Gips, 2005). In this vein, the researcher suggested the introduction of ICT-based assessment in the educational field, and specifically, the EFL context. The aim was to experience more writing opportunities, encourage revision, free up teachers' time for other activities, and thus support an iterative writing process. However, and because of the circumstances of the Algerian EFL context, the researcher suggested a mixed model of use that consists of both traditional methods of

assessment and ICT-based procedures. This suggestion consists of utilizing an electronic portfolio through homework as a follow-up activity to provide students with frequent writing opportunities and the writing application "Grammarly" as an instructional tool that can assist students, while they are writing by providing hints about mistakes and analysing the number of errors in their writing. Moreover, and at another level, growing students as writers requires them to work collaboratively and practice appropriate activities and techniques. In this regard, the researcher advocated activities that teachers can use to encourage collaboration and guide the integration of cooperative work in EFL classes, thus, enabling the students to gain an understanding of the organizational patterns of academic writing.

Furthermore, the researcher advocated changes in EFL teachers' roles. They need to reconsider the way they approach instruction, practices and roles in the class as well as refine their tech literacy. First, EFL teachers need to arrange their teaching methods so that all the stages of the writing process are included and that students are actively participating in the interactive and social processes. Second, it is relevant for teachers to be active facilitators and provide their students with deliberate writing tasks where they practice writing and set clear goals for development. Third, EFL teachers need to provide their students with the necessary scaffold that entails guidance to raise students' control over their learning.

The outcome of the study has provided a deeper insight into the impact of portfolio assessment which appears to have effects not only on students' writing but also on collaboration and their social skills. It is believed that this procedure permits a positive environment and changes students' perception and direction from conventional perspectives to updated ones, therefore, rendering the students active participators in the learning process. Further, the results also extend our knowledge of students' needs and teachers can use technology to provide learning opportunities and increase students' attainment.

To conclude, further research might explore the impact of e-portfolio assessment on students' productive skills (writing and reading) to keep going with technology and evaluate the efficacy of this procedure. Moreover, studies are needed to explore the impact of mixed models that consist of utilizing an electronic portfolio through homework as a follow-up activity to provide students with frequent writing opportunities and the writing application "Grammarly" as an instructional tool that can assist students, while they are writing. Furthermore, other investigations might be carried out to determine the impact of e-portfolio assessment on students' collaboration. It is important to note that due to the pandemic of Covid-19 circumstances, the researcher did not have enough opportunities to fully practice with the

experimental group. Indeed, the suggested modifications in practices will have a positive effect on students and teaching and assessment.

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Appendices

Post Intervention Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire aims to inquire about the effectiveness of the treatment you received. You are kindly requested to answer the following questionnaire related to the impact of the treatment you received on your writing.

1. were you satisfied with your writing performance

   Yes   No

2. Were you interested in improving your writing skills?

   Yes   No   Maybe

3. How did you perceive your writing ability?

   Bad   Moderate   Good

4. Were you satisfied with the assessment provided by EFL teachers at Mascara University?

   Yes   No

5. If No, explain why …………………………………………………………………

6. To what extent the assessment used by the researcher during the treatment was useful?

   a. Very useful

   b. Useful

   c. Undecided

   d. Useless

   e. Very useless

7. Were you aware of this writing assessment technique?

   a. Yes

   b. No

8. Did you receive any guidelines on how to use portfolio assessment by teachers?

   a. Yes

   b. No

9. Did the use of portfolio assessment helped you reflect on your writing?

   a. Yes

   b. No

10. What feature of portfolio assessment helped you improved your writing?

    a. Teacher feedback

    b. Peer feedback

    c. Self-assessment

    d. All of them

11. To what extent did you agree that portfolio assessment was useful for writing?

    a. Strongly agree

    b. Agree

    c. Undecided

d. Disagree

e. Strongly disagree

12. How did find the portfolio assessment procedure?

    a. Efficient

    b. Inefficient

13. What sort of impact did the use of portfolio assessment have on your writing?

    a. Positive

    b. Negative

    c. No impact

14. If positive, where did the positivity lie?

    a. Responds to students' writing needs

    b. Increase their writing awareness

    c. Develop their writing performance

    d. Build the habits of writing

    e. Other

15. According to your experience with portfolio assessment, which assessment was relevant?

    a. Conventional Assessment (Traditional)

    b. Portfolio Assessment

16. Were you satisfied with your writing after receiving the treatment?

    a. Yes

    b. No

Collaboration questionnaire

This questionnaire explores the impact of a portfolio system in raising collaboration and improving social skills among students in the writing process. Because you have experienced portfolio assessment, tick the appropriate response that best completes the following sentences. The data will be treated confidentially and used only for educational purposes. Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you so much for your precious time.

Tick the right box

Gender:　　Male

　　　　　　Female

Part One: Discussing Ideas for the Paragraph

1. Did you agree that portfolio assessment fostered the exchange of knowledge, information, experience, and ideas?

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

2. Working through portfolio assessment made me spend more time generating ideas in groups

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

3. *Working through portfolio assessment permitted me to work cooperatively*

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

4. Peer assessment (group work) helped overcome writer's block

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

5. Did you agree that portfolio assessment gave you the chance to express ideas with friends

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

Part Two: Producing rough drafts

1. Did portfolio assessment allow you to consider note taking?

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

2. Did portfolio assessment help you receive useful feedback when having an issue?

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

3. If the received feedback was helpful, from whom did you consider it? (Teacher, peer, self)

4. Did portfolio assessment allow you to focus on collective rather than individual efforts?

     　　　　　　　　　True　　　　　　　　　　False

5. Did you share and/or express ideas with peers when facing writing issues?

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

Part Three: Sharing and Editing Paragraphs

1. After finishing the first draft, did you share it with peers?

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

2. Did peer assessment provide constructive suggestions for improving writing?

     　　　　　　　　　Yes　　　　　　　　　　No

3. If peer assessment provided relevant suggestions, which category was addressed?

     　　　　　　3.1　meaning

3.2 Spelling

3.3 Punctuation

3.4 Cohesion

3.5 Style

4. To what extent do you agree that sharing allows you to learn new ways to plan your paragraph from peers?

Yes   No

5. Did portfolio assessment allow you to spend more time revising than when you write alone?

Yes   No

Part Four: Redrafting the paragraphs

1. How often did you note the suggestions peers offer?

    1.1 Never
    1.2 Rarely
    1.3 Sometimes
    1.4 Often
    1.5 Always

2. Did you accept the suggestions provided by peers?

Yes   No

3. If No, why?

4. Did you make the necessary changes before handing the paragraph to an evaluator?

Yes   No

5. Did you agree that portfolio assessment helped you learn how to use collaboration to elevate your writing performance?

Yes   No

Students Attitudes Towards Portfolio Assessment

This questionnaire explores students' attitudes toward portfolio assessment in the writing process. Regarding your recent experience with portfolio assessment. Tick the appropriate response that best completes the following sentences. Your participation is highly appreciated.

Part One: Merits of Portfolio Assessment

1. Did portfolio assessment help you make a good introduction covering information about who, when, and where at the beginning of text writing?

    Yes   No

2. Did you agree that through portfolio assessment you could organise your writing appropriately?

    2.1 Strongly Agree

    2.2 Agree

    2.3 Neutral

    2.4 Disagree

    2.5 Strongly disagree

3. Did Portfolio Assessment teach me how to organize events in my writing by using some chronological order?

    True   False

Part Two: Portfolio Assessment and Awareness

1. To what extent did working with portfolio assessment make you aware of your progress in writing?

    1.1 To a great extent

    1.2 To some extent

    1.3 To little or no extent

2. Did you agree that a portfolio assessment could show your efforts in learning writing?

    2.1 Strongly Agree

    2.2 Agree

    2.3 Neutral

    2.4 Disagree

    2.5 Strongly disagree

3. Did portfolio assessment make you realize that you can write anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom?

    True   False

4. Did portfolio assessment allow you to find writing mistakes after receiving feedback from the teacher and peers?

    Yes   No

5. To what extent did portfolio assessment help you understand your strengths and weaknesses in writing?

     5.1 To a great extent

     5.2 To some extent

     5.3 To little or no extent

Part Three: attitudes and perceptions toward the impact of portfolio assessment

1. Did you feel that portfolio assessment could present your writing results?

     Yes   No

2. Did you agree that portfolio assessment helped you to keep the habit of writing English regularly?

     2.1 Agree

     2.2 Disagree

3. Did portfolio assessment increase your grammatical mastery?

     True   False

4. Did portfolio assessment allow you to acquire new vocabulary items?

     Yes   No

5. Did the portfolio assessment increase your willingness to write actively?

     Yes   No

6. Did you agree that portfolio assessment allowed you to choose how to plan and write according to your writing style?

     6.1 Strongly Agree

     6.2 Agree

     6.3 Neutral

     6.4 Disagree

     6.5 Strongly disagree

Part Four: Students' perceptions and attitudes toward the content of the portfolio assessment

1. Was the content of the portfolio assessment important and helpful for your writing?

     Yes   No

2. Did you consider Reflection and self-evaluation the most important part of portfolio assessment?

     True   False

3. Did you consider peer feedback as the most valuable feature for writing improvement?

     True   False

4. Were the revision procedures important for your writing?

     Yes   No

5. To what extent did the portfolio assessment procedure help you grow as an independent EFL writer?

     5.1To a great extent

     5.2 To some extent

     5.2 To little or no extent

Collaboration Interview Guide

Part one: The treatment procedures

1. How do you perceive your experience with portfolio assessment?

2. To what extent were you satisfied with the portfolio assessment procedure?

3. What do you think of incorporating portfolio assessment in EFL classes at Mascara University?

Part Two: impact of the treatment (portfolio assessment) on collaboration

4. Did portfolio assessment provide a wide range of corrective and non-corrective feedback?

5. Did portfolio assessment make the student focus on collective work?

6. Did portfolio assessment make you feel more cooperative?

7. Did portfolio assessment positively promote class members' exchange?

Part Three: the effect of portfolio assessment on students' social skills

8. Did your experience with portfolio assessment make problem-solving easier, especially in groups?

9. Did the experience of portfolio assessment stimulate your critical thinking?

10. To what extent did portfolio assessment make you take responsibility for your learning?

11. Did the procedure of peer assessment included in the treatment encourage active listening and positive dialogue?

12. Did portfolio assessment teach you active participation in tasks?

Perception Interview Guide

Student interview guide.

Part One: Assessment in general

1. How do you perceive assessment in general?

2. Could you tell the difference between assessment, evaluation, and examination?

3. How do you feel about the assessment methods used by Mascara University teachers?

Part Two: Writing Assessment

4. How do you perceive writing assessment at Mascara University?

5. What do you think of the assessment methods used by EFL teachers at Mascara University? (Prompts: nervous /stressful/enjoyable /relaxed /high impact/anxiety/de-motivated)

6. How was writing taught and assessed at Mascara University?

Part Three: The experience of portfolio assessment

7. Have you heard about portfolio assessment before taking this course?

8. Could you briefly recount your portfolio experience this semester?

9. What do you like most and least about portfolio assessment?

10. In what way do you think portfolio assessment may promote or impede the learning of writing? Why?

Part Four: The Impact of the Portfolio Assessment on Writing Improvement

11. Which aspects of writing did you improve after performing revisions in the portfolio process?

12. What do you think about the relation between text revision and writing improvement?

13. What kinds of feedback do you consider constructive in improving your writing after one semester? (Prompts: teacher written feedback, teacher verbal feedback, direct/indirect feedback)

14. What type of feedback did you favour?

15. To what extent, did participation in the portfolio program may make you a better L2 writer?

Why or why not?