TO MY BELOVED FAMILY

THE ROLE OF WRITING PORTFOLIOS IN INCREASING LEARNERS'

CONFIDENCE IN WRITING AND PROMOTING THEIR ATTITUDES

TOWARDS WRITING

Graduate School of Education

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF WRITING PORTFOLIOS IN INCREASING LEARNERS'
CONFIDENCE IN WRITING AND PROMOTING THEIR ATTITUDES
TOWARDS WRITING

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MA., Department of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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July 2006

This study investigated the role of writing portfolios in increasing learners'
confidence in writing and possible attitude changes towards writing. The study also
examined the attitudes of students and teachers towards using writing portfolios as a
self-assessment tool. The study was conducted with 60 pre-intermediate level
students, one experimental and two control groups, and their classroom teacher in the
Preparatory School of English at Zonguldak Karaelmas University in the spring
semester of 2006.

The data for the study were gathered through two questionnaires, interviews,
reflection papers, and peer- and self-assessment sheets. A six-week portfolio
implementation was started for the experimental group after the administration of
pre-questionnaires to all groups. After the implementation, the experimental and the

control groups were given the same questionnaires as post-treatment. The interviews were conducted with the experimental group students and their instructor.

The results of the analysis of the questionnaires revealed no significant differences after the treatment in the students' confidence level in writing. However, there was a significant increase in the experimental group students' attitudes towards writing. The analysis of the qualitative data supported this increase and suggested that both the students and the teacher were positive towards using writing portfolios as a self-assessment tool.

Key Terminology: Portfolio, self-assessment.

ÖZET

ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZMA KONUSUNDAKİ GÜVENLERİNİN
ARTTIRILMASINDA VE YAZMAYA KARŞI TUTUMLARININ
GELİŞTİRİLMESİNDE YAZIM PORTFÖYLERİNİN ROLÜ

Bayram, Fatma

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Charlotte Basham

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Bu çalışma yazım portföylerinin öğrencilerin yazma konusundaki güvenlerinin arttırılması ve yazmaya karşı tutumlarının geliştirilmesindeki rolünü araştırmıştır. Çalışma ayrıca öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin yazım portföylerini öz-değerlendirme aracı olarak kullanmaya karşı olan tutumlarını incelemiştir. Çalışma Zonguldak Karaelmas Üniversitesi Hazırlık Okulu'nda 2005-2006 akademik yılında, bir deney ve iki kontrol grubu olmak üzere, 60 öğrenci ve bir öğretmenle gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Veriler iki farklı anket, görüşmeler, düşünce yansıtma, arkadaşları tarafından değerlendirilme ve öz-değerlendirme çalışmaları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Anketlerin bütün gruplara uygulanmasından sonra deney grubu için altı haftalık portföy uygulama süreci başlatılmıştır. Aynı anketler uygulama sonrasında tekrar verilmiştir.

Daha sonra deney grubu öğrencileri ve öğretmenleriyle yapılan görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Anket analiz sonuçları uygulamadan sonra öğrencilerin yazma konusundaki güvenlerinde önemli bir değişiklik olmadığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Fakat deney grubundaki öğrencilerin yazmaya karşı olan tutumlarında önemli bir artış olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Diğer verilerin analiz sonuçları da bu artışı desteklemiş ve hem öğrencilerin hem de öğretmenin yazım portföylerinin öz-değerlendirme aracı olarak kullanılmasına karşı pozitif bir tutum sergilediklerini ileri sürmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Portföy, Öz-değerlendirme.

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Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my family members. I owe too much to my father, my sisters, and my brothers. I am very lucky since they are my family and they are always with me.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Writing is generally regarded as a complex process and it is even more complex for learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). While it is impossible to know precisely what is going on EFL learners' minds while they are composing in English, we can generalize from experience to say that many EFL learners find writing in L2 a painful process. They need to take many things into consideration before, while, and after writing. Trying to follow the steps which will lead one to the path of successful writing is not as easy as it seems. The burden on students becomes heavier when they have to write academically because they have to learn the target language, and at the same time they have to learn and apply the rules of academic writing. While writing, they usually struggle so much that they can not see that they are progressing. That is why they feel desperate, and sometimes want to give up. One method that has been proposed for helping students monitor their own progress is keeping "writing portfolios".

Vavrus (1990) defines a portfolio as "a systematic and organized collection of evidence used by the teacher and student to monitor growth of the student's knowledge, skills and attitudes" (as quoted in Cole et. al., 2000, p. 9). There may be variations in its definition, form, and content depending on the specific purpose of the portfolio, but in general, writing portfolios consist of pieces of writing in draft

and final forms, journals, diaries, and other personal reflections, self-and peer assessments and comments, evaluations, and checklists. What goes into a portfolio is related to the objectives aimed to be achieved by its implementation. In language learning settings, writing portfolios are typically viewed as alternative assessment tools; however, this study demonstrates that portfolios are more than assessment tools, as they provide an opportunity for the students to monitor their improvement in writing. The idea behind using portfolios as a self-assessment tool in writing classes is to encourage learners to monitor their own progress and their linguistic and strategic development over time. Going through their own material from time to time may allow students to evaluate their learning process and to see their progress. Students' involvement in self-evaluation of both their progress in learning and the contents of their portfolios is an important component of this procedure in writing classes.

The present study attempts to evaluate the success of the use of portfolios in helping students monitor their own progress in an EFL context in a Turkish state university preparatory class program. The study focuses on using writing portfolios as a self-assessment tool to increase confidence in writing, and to promote positive attitudes towards writing. Furthermore, the students' perceptions related to keeping portfolios are investigated. The study also focuses on state university preparatory class EFL instructors' attitudes towards using writing portfolios.

<center>Background of the Study</center>

The need to find an attractive alternative approach to writing assessment caused researchers to experiment with portfolio-based approaches, and then portfolio pedagogy began to emerge as "a personal, multiple-use tool for both teachers and

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students" (Park, 2004, p.2). By using portfolios in EFL classrooms, the teacher can not only diagnose the learners' skills and competences, but also become aware of their preferences, styles, dispositions, and learning strategies, thus being able to adopt a more learner-centered practice (Nunes, 2004). For some teachers, the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment program, and it can either include a record of students' achievements or simply document their best work. For other teachers, the portfolio documents the students' learning process, and still others use it as a means of promoting learner reflection (Nunes, 2004).

The first portfolio implementations were for native speakers of English. Until recently, portfolios have not been so popular in EFL settings; however, nowadays researchers and authors advocate the use of portfolios for ESL and EFL learners. Hamp-Lyons and Condon find portfolios especially convenient for non-native English-speaking students because "portfolios provide a broader measure of what students can do, and because they replace timed writing context, which has long been claimed to be particularly discriminatory against non-native writers" (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000, p.61). Students who are non-native speakers of English usually think that they are 'bad' writers because they are not writing in their mother tongue, and most of the time, at their first attempt, their writing does not look 'good'. Here, the portfolio can play an important role, since students can evaluate their progress in writing better by looking at the differences between first and final drafts. According to Song and August (2002), "Portfolios can be used to examine progress over time, and can encourage students to take responsibility for their own writing" (p.50).

A good many of the strengths of the portfolio approach seem to lie in its potential for providing the learner with opportunities for self-assessment. In the

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opinion of Schendel and O'Neill, the self-assessment of writing is a topic which has been growing for the last decades, and with the use of portfolios, reflective writing, and other self-assessment technologies, it has gained a renewed interest among writing teachers (Schendel and O'Neill, 1999).However, self-assessment is not emphasized enough in EFL settings. If we can incorporate portfolios into the curricula of writing courses, self-assessment of writing might be more widely used and valued.

During self-assessment processes, learners are expected to judge their own performances, which may sometimes result in a particular grade. However, self-assessment may serve other purposes as well, including helping learners become more aware of their own problems and processes in writing.

As self-assessment enables students to monitor their progress and relate learning to individual needs, it can contribute to the larger goal of developing learner autonomy in language learning (Harris, 1997). Still, there is not much room for self-assessment in formal educational settings, especially in the EFL settings. This lack of opportunity is not a desired situation for learners, because when students are actively involved in the self-assessment of their written work, and are given the opportunity to evaluate their composing process from time to time, they may have more chance to see their progress over a period of time. If the learners can become more aware of their progress, this may help them improve confidence in writing. Especially students who have writing apprehension may overcome this feeling with the enhancement of confidence in writing.

As teachers of writing in the EFL setting, we can have students who make positive judgments about writing in our writing courses. On the other hand, most of

our students make negative judgments about writing, and some are indecisive in their attitudes towards writing. Even though attitude has not received much attention in the past, it is now considered an important factor affecting writing performance. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) maintain that learners' motivation increases and they show more effort in learning when they have positive perceptions related to learning (as cited in Topuz, 2004). Moreover, according to the results of some studies in the literature (Powell, 1984; Rubin, 1983), there is a relationship between the students' positive attitudes towards writing and their success in composition courses. It is suggested that when students see themselves as incompetent writers, they will be less successful in writing (Kear et. al., 2000). Therefore, it may be beneficial if we can improve the learners' attitudes towards writing in our classes which, in turn, might bring about an increase in their motivation and success.

How students feel about their writing and the writing process may be positively influenced by the portfolio implementation in the writing classes. Most designs for portfolio use in writing classrooms include opportunities for teacher and student evaluation of the learner's achievement, growth, and thinking processes. If the learners feel they are improving while keeping a portfolio, their confidence in writing may increase. The portfolio implementation might strengthen the students' confidence in writing and improve their attitudes towards composing.

Statement of the Problem

There are a lot of studies dealing with various issues of writing in a second language and on writing portfolios. However, it is difficult to find studies on portfolio implementation, particularly in an EFL context. Additionally, most of the research available deals with portfolios as an alternative assessment tool. As a result,

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there is not much written about students self-monitoring their progress through portfolio use or on teacher perceptions of portfolio implementation. The present study may be beneficial by filling a gap in the literature related to portfolio implementation in EFL settings.

There have been limited attempts in Turkey to implement portfolios at all levels of education. Still, the teachers of English and their students have not had a chance to make use of the potential of a portfolio until recently. At the university level, some Turkish universities have recently launched portfolio implementations in their preparatory class programs. Some of the universities that have portfolio systems in their preparatory schools are Hacettepe University, Bilkent University School of English Language, Yıldız Technical University, and Anadolu University. However, the use of portfolios is still not very common.

The Preparatory School of English at Karaelmas University gives importance to improving students' academic writing skills. The students are expected to complete a variety of assignments for their writing classes. In order to cover lots of subjects in a limited time frame and to allow students to produce as many writing pieces as possible on different topics, the students write only one draft; they do not necessarily revise it, nor do they keep their writing pieces in a file. However, there is no portfolio system for writing classes in the preparatory school, so neither learners nor teachers are able to monitor the developmental process of the students and this may prevent the students from perceiving writing as a process and being able to judge their progress.

Another issue at the Preparatory School at Karaelmas University is that there is not much room for self-assessment in writing classes. The students are generally

passive in their approach to learning. This is a big disadvantage when we take into account that most of the students do not seem to come to the writing classes with a high level of confidence. By keeping portfolios in writing classes, the students may be able to track their progress and thus become more confident in writing. This study intends to introduce portfolios in writing classes and to serve as a pilot study of portfolio implementation for all of the students at the preparatory program at Karaelmas University next year.

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

The purpose of this research is to explore the effects of keeping writing portfolios on learners' attitudes towards writing and their level of confidence in writing at Karaelmas University Preparatory School. As a portfolio system may provide this opportunity, portfolios can be used in the Preparatory School of English as a self-assessment tool to help individuals monitor their progress over time. To sum up, this study aims to find out the possible effects of using portfolios on increasing students' level of confidence in writing and on their attitudes towards writing. It also aims to explore the students' and teachers' perceptions related to the use of portfolios in writing classes.

In order to explore the effects of using portfolios on learners' level of confidence in writing and on their perceptions about writing, a portfolio system was developed for the pre-intermediate level in the Preparatory School of English at Karaelmas University. Some aspects of a portfolio such as reflection papers, peer- and self-assessment activities, selection of are emphasized, since in this study the portfolio will be used as a self-assessment tool rather than an alternative assessment tool. The students are expected to put their writing assignments as two drafts with a

final version in order to let them be aware of their own writing processes. The portfolio will not have a place in the grading system, thus the students are expected to be free of the apprehension of being graded on the basis of their portfolios.

The portfolio design that is used in this study will allow learners to choose and justify the pieces to be included. In other words, students will be involved in selection process to make portfolios a selection rather than just a collection. Because the students are expected to look at and evaluate their pieces of writing from time to time, they will be provided with help how to do this with portfolio and writing self-assessment activities. In that way, the students may be able to monitor their own progress in writing.

Significance of the Study

Writing is a challenging process for learners, and they need confidence to engage in this process. One possible tool to increase the level of students' confidence in writing may be using portfolios, which involve learners in self-assessment. Yet, in the literature there is little research on the effects of using portfolios on learners' confidence in writing and their attitudes towards writing. Thus, this study may contribute to the literature by displaying any possible effects of keeping portfolios on improving students' confidence in writing and their perceptions related to writing.

The writing portfolios provide students with an opportunity to go through their own material whenever they want, and this enables them to evaluate their own progress. The students may end up with a higher intrinsic motivation after realizing their own development. This might help to lessen the pain students have while writing. The results may suggest some changes before portfolio implementation for the whole school. It is also possible that the study can provide information for other

preparatory programs which consider portfolio implementations in writing classes. It may encourage other institutions to start using writing portfolios.

At the local level, this study will be the first on portfolio implementation in the Preparatory School at Karaelmas University. It attempts to provide empirical support for the idea that allowing students to monitor their own progress could result in students' higher confidence in writing. This study will serve as a pilot study of using process writing portfolios in writing classes, and most probably all of the preparatory school students will start to keep writing portfolios next school year. It is highly possible that the results of the study will help us to foresee possible problems before the main application. Students' reflection papers may provide valuable feedback for teachers to understand the students' thoughts about writing.

This study might form a baseline for future research focusing on process-oriented portfolio grading. The portfolio may be accepted as an alternative assessment tool, and subsequently may find a percentage in the grading system. Therefore, it seems probable that the results will influence the testing office, curriculum, administrators, and instructors. Thus, all parties in the target school or program can make necessary modifications related to portfolios before actually putting this method into practice.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

In this study the research questions are as follows:

1. Will the students' attitudes towards writing in English be improved as a result of keeping a portfolio? Will their reactions to writing change after portfolio implementation?

2.	Will the students who keep portfolios and thus assess their own progress show a higher confidence in writing than the students who do not keep portfolios?

3.	How will the students respond to keeping writing portfolios as a self-assessment tool?

4.	What are the attitudes of instructors' towards using portfolios in writing classes? Do they view portfolios as a useful tool in writing?

Key Terminology

The following concepts are frequently used in this thesis.

Portfolio: A portfolio is a selected collection of what students produce in order to display their efforts and progress in one or more areas along with their reflections and their involvement in selection and assessment.

Self-assessment: Self-assessment is a formative type of assessment in which students closely monitor their progress and can judge their language ability or language performance (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the literature on writing and portfolios, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the problem, research questions, and key terms which will be repeatedly used in the thesis. The next chapter is the literature review section, which will present the relevant literature on L2 writing, affective domains in writing, portfolios, and portfolios as a self-assessment tool. The third chapter is the methodology chapter, which reports on the participants, materials, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures of the study. The fourth chapter is the data analysis chapter,

which displays the data analysis, and the analyses of the tests that were run along with the results of the interviews conducted. Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion chapter, in which the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This research study addresses the use of portfolios in writing classes to help students monitor their own progress in an EFL context in a Turkish state university preparatory class program. In particular, it investigates the role of writing portfolios in increasing learners' confidence in writing and possible attitude changes towards writing after the portfolio implementation period in Prep School at Zonguldak Karaelmas University. The main concern of the study is the use of the portfolio as a self-assessment tool and an opportunity for the learners to reflect on their writing process. The study partially focuses on EFL learners' and instructors' attitudes towards using portfolios in writing classes.

This chapter reviews the literature on the process approach to writing, writing in L2 classes, and affective domains in writing. In addition, it presents the literature on portfolios, including definitions, content, and types. The last section covers portfolios used as an alternative assessment tool and as a self-assessment tool along with the studies on portfolio use in writing classes.

The Process Approach to Writing

Writing is included in the syllabus of English Language Teaching (ELT) in general not only because people frequently have to communicate with each other in writing but also because writing helps students learn. Moreover, in the opinion of

Axelrod and Cooper, writing contributes to the way people think, learn, and develop their world view in terms of discovering how they perceive issues and concepts in their own environment and in the world (Axelrod & Cooper, 1991). While this view of writing was applied to L1 writers, it can also apply to L2 writing, as discussed in the next section.

According to Raimes, with the process approach to writing, the teaching of writing began to change its direction from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing (Raimes, 1983). Kehl (1990), who advocates a process approach to teaching writing, perceives writing as a process composed of several steps starting with generating ideas via different sources, discovering what one intends to say, revising, getting feedback from readers, and writing again. In Skidmore's opinion, the process writing system helps students understand that writing is a multi-step process which good writers follow (Skidmore, 1994).

The process approach to writing emerged in the early 1970s while teachers and researchers were exploring the factors which differentiate between good and poor writers (Williams, 1998). The name of the approach reveals its main principle, putting emphasis on writing as a process. The goal of the model is to improve writing by providing the learner with the opportunities to "master a range of behaviors associated with effective composition" (Williams, 1998 p. 45). Learners try to internalize the practices utilized by good writers in order to write effective composition.

In the model set forth by Williams (1998), students need to realize that what they first put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product but just a beginning, a setting out of the first ideas, a draft. The process model does not focus

on the completed essay but on helping students through various stages of composing (Williams, 1998). Before students obtain a finished paper, they might go through several stages which include a complex interaction of activities. There are different views on the stages that writers go through in producing a piece of writing, but a typical model identifies four stages: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing (Tribble, 1996 as cited in Badger & White, 2000). These stages are not separated; they can be in interaction with each other throughout the composing process.

Yan (2005) points out that the process approach to writing is important because it makes the writing process more meaningful for learners. Yan maintains that learners "make a personal connection to the topic and come to understand the processes they follow when writing about it" (Yan, 2005 p.19). Students do not write for the teacher to find and correct the errors, but instead they write for themselves. They show their drafts to the teacher or to each other, reread what they have written, and think about it. During this period, they explore the topics and start to open their minds for new ideas (Raimes, 1983). According to Raimes (1983), with the process approach the students are given two important means of support by their teachers: "time" to explore ideas and "feedback" on their drafts, which help them to turn writing process into a process of discovery.

In short, the focus of teaching writing has moved in recent years from the finished product to the process of writing. Learners' attention is attracted to the stages of writing rather than what they put down on papers in their first attempts. Students are encouraged to focus on meaning and since they are not expected to reach perfection in a single draft, some of the pressure is reduced. On the other hand,

their responsibility has increased as they have active roles in each stage of the composing process.

<p style="text-align:center">Writing in a Second Language</p>

Writing in the ESL and EFL settings is different from writing in English as a native language. Usually in L1 writing courses, the focus is on meaning; writing is not perceived as a chance to practice vocabulary or grammar. Yet, many EFL teachers think of writing as an opportunity to practice what was taught in grammar courses. This is not the only difference between writing in L1 and L2. In addition, EFL learners' writing needs are not the same as native speakers' writing needs. In this section the particular needs of EFL writers will be discussed in relation to developing a process approach to teaching writing.

It is assumed that writing in L2 is more challenging than writing in L1. Schoonen et al. (2003) and Wolf (2000) allege that writing in a second language is a more difficult process than writing in one's native language because some sub-skills necessary for writing may not have developed adequately (as cited in Topuz, 2004). That may be one of the reasons why writing is given importance in EFL settings. Through writing, knowledge can be displayed and transferred by using the language which is mastered as a foreign language (Akmenek, 2000). Despite this focus on mastery, in recent years writing has been introduced in earlier levels of language learning.

Generally, students who receive education in a foreign language are usually required to do a lot of writing for their studies and activities before they 'master' the language. They are frequently expected to report or comment on issues that are especially related to their major field study, and they have to do it in an appropriate

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writing style. That is, students are expected to use writing as a tool to express their feelings and ideas. However, this does not seem like an easy task for an EFL learner.

Raimes (1983) asserts that writing helps learning a language in three ways. First, the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that students have learnt up to that point are reinforced while writing. Second, while students are writing, they can explore new things within the language and take risks. Third, learners have to put effort into writing, so they necessarily become very involved with the new language, which reinforces learning.

According to Cumming (2001), one of the dimensions that research in L2 writing has focused on is the composing processes that L2 writers use while they write (Cumming, 2001). Research on the composing processes suggests that as people learn to write in a second language, they are better able to plan, revise, and edit their texts effectively.

Though interest in EFL writing and in the composing process has increased in recent years, there are not many studies conducted in this field. The studies in the literature mostly compare the effectiveness of the traditional approach and the process approach on ESL or native speakers' writing skills. However, there is a small but growing literature on data-based studies that tackle the capabilities of EFL writers, or the effect of the process approach on EFL learners' writing strategies (Akmenek, 2000).

Küçükal (1990) conducted a study with fifty-eight EFL university students to examine the assessment technique of the process approach, in particular focusing on content at the revising and drafting cycles and delaying correction of mechanical errors to the final draft of the writing as opposed to the traditional way of assessment.

The words the learners used in three drafts were counted by the researcher in order to obtain quantitative data for the study, and then the researcher examined the content of students' papers according to the criteria determined by the researcher to measure the qualitative changes. The study revealed that although there was no quantitative difference between the groups, there had been qualitative improvement in the writing of the students in the experimental group. The study is important in the sense that it is one of the limited number of studies which contribute to the literature on EFL writing and the results of the study might suggest beneficial implications for the composing process of EFL learners.

One of the critical issues in second language writing is evaluating students' performance. EFL teachers usually find assessment in writing as a demanding task and they usually try to avoid it. Yet, generally it is unavoidable and in one or the other way learners' writing is assessed. In the following section, issues related to assessment of second language writing are discussed.

Assessment of L2 Writing

Most of the studies on L2 writing assessment are related to ESL students' writing rather than EFL students' writing. Hence, there is an information gap related to the assessment of EFL learners' writing. However, some generalizations can be applied both to the EFL and ESL contexts and suggestions and conclusions can be drawn for both settings. Therefore, it may be beneficial to look at assessment of writing from both sides.

Hyland (2003) maintains that assessment does not mean simply administering exams and giving grades. Furthermore, evaluation of students' writing performance is a formative process which has a significant effect on student learning, design of

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the writing course, teaching strategies, and teacher feedback (Hyland, 2003). One of the most important things teachers do is assessing students' writing, since the way they decide how to give scores may influence students' lives and learning significantly (Williams, 1998). Generally writing teachers experience great difficulty while assessing students' writing performance.

The process approach to writing has important implications for writing assessment. Writing checklists, writing conferences, dialogue journals, learning logs, peer assessment, and self-assessment can be listed under the types of alternative assessments used in process writing approach (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) propose that assessment in the process writing approach is not summative but formative. Summative assessment is defined as assessing "what a student has grasped and it typically occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction" and formative assessment is "evaluating students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process (Brown, 2004, p. 6). Alternative forms of assessment focus on writing as a process rather than a product. The role of the teacher changes in the assessment when writing is perceived as a process. The teacher helps the students with constant feedback to improve their writing skills and provides the students with the opportunity to edit and revise their work as a part of the writing assessment process.

In the opinion of Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), ESL students' writing is more appropriately evaluated in large-scale assessments like portfolios. They argue that portfolios are suitable for ESL students since they supply a broader view of students' writing abilities and provide a better alternative to timed exams. Ruetten

(1994) reports on research which indicates that ESL students find competency exams particularly difficult. In her study students were expected to pass a proficiency exam for the second course of a composition sequence. Both native and non-native speakers of English achieved a comparable pass rate when their portfolios, which contained several representative pieces of writing, were evaluated. Ruetten concludes that some kind of portfolio assessment is particularly useful in evaluating ESL writers (Ruetten, 1994).

Assessing writing, which is not a simple task because of the ambiguity related to the objectives and criteria used, is one of the great difficulties in language learning settings. EFL learners' writing assessment is much more difficult since usually the educators involved in the assessment have a conflict between assessing the writing performance or the language ability of the learners. Although the focus of the present study is not on using portfolios as an alternative assessment tool, the literature is relevant, as many see the benefits of using portfolios in assessment of writing, especially in EFL settings.

<div align="center">Affective Factors in Writing</div>

Among the variables suggested as having an impact on successful foreign language learning, Gardner, Tremblay, and Masgoret (1997) list "language anxiety, language aptitude, attitudes and motivation, field dependence/independence, learning strategies, and confidence" under the most frequently investigated variables, and these classes of variables have been shown to relate to evaluation of achievement in a second language (p. 344). There have been examples of studies which investigated the relations between some of these variables (Brand, 1990; McCarthy, Meier & Rinderer, 1985; Köse, 2005).

One of the variables mentioned above, language anxiety, has various definitions. McLeod (1987) describes it as follows: "Writing anxiety is generally understood as negative, anxious feelings (about oneself as a writer, one's writing situation or one's writing task) that disrupt some part of the writing process" (p. 427). Some students in writing classes may show strong apprehension about writing, which could interfere with their writing success or their ability to learn how to write effectively. Writing anxiety might cause students to avoid fields that require writing. In the literature there is research indicating that affective aspects of learning such as anxiety influence the student's ability to learn the course content (McLeod, 1997 as cited in Köse, 2005). Furthermore, according to Smith (1984), "writing apprehension interferes with the development of writing skills" (as quated in Köse, 2005, p. 19). Clark (2004) points out that students generally have writing anxiety because they have their writing evaluated, they have a lack of confidence in their writing ability and potential as well as a limited understanding of the subject they are writing about, and they anticipate that writing is a hard work.

McLeod (1987) asserts that "writing is an emotional as well as a cognitive activity - we feel as well as we think as we write" (p. 426). She then points out that there has been a tendency to ignore the affective domain in research on and speculation about the writing process. This may be due to the difficulty of observing the effects of such domains. Brand (1990) stresses that the study of emotions has been troubled by two important problems: "their harsh social implications and the lack of precise definition" (p. 290)

Brand (1990) conducted a series of studies to explore the psychology of writers. The participants were asked to complete a self report designed to measure

particular emotions involved in writing. The results of the studies showed that writers' emotions change noticeably when they compose. Whereas their positive emotions intensified during the writing sessions, their negative emotions, described by adjectives such as *afraid, angry, anxious, frustrated, and disgusted*, resisted change (Brand, 1990). It might be concluded from the results that changing students' negative feelings about writing into positive is a challenging task for educators and this might take a long time.

McCarthy, Meier, and Rinderer (1985) give examples of studies on anxiety and writing. They state that the results of Bandura's study (1977) show that high anxiety (an intense feeling of uneasiness) is correlated with weak efficacy expectations, which lead to poor performance. Other examples were from studies conducted by Miller and Daly (1975). Their studies have suggested a similar correlation between anxiety in the form of writing apprehension (distress experienced in anticipation of writing) and the quality of writing. Learners with greater writing apprehension were more likely to be less effective in writing, while the individuals with less apprehension were better writers (McCarthy, Meier & Rinderer, 1985).

Minot (1989) suggests that the relationships between personality and writing have been examined by some researchers in the field of writing. However, he complains that the researchers have mainly emphasized cognitive issues and only a few of them, such as Tixier, McLeod, and Brand, have studied affective issues in relation to writing. He proposes a model to build "the self-concept or self-esteem of students through carefully designed writing assignments that emphasize persona" (p. 353).

Cheng (2004) conducted a study to develop a self-report measure of foreign language writing anxiety which was based on the L2 learners' reports of anxiety experiences and the "multidimensional conceptualization of anxiety" (p. 318). In the multidimensional approach, anxiety is understood as consisting of three different and relatively independent components: cognitive, psychological, and behavioral. The participants of the study were three groups of EFL students majoring in English in Taiwan. They were asked to fill out an open-ended questionnaire that was about their anxiety experiences while writing in English. In the light of the answers Cheng developed the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, which appears to hold the potential of research and diagnostic utility (Cheng, 2004).

Turula (2002) suggests, based on the findings of her ethnographic study carried out at private language schools, that it is a false belief that anxious learners are less likely to be successful in foreign language learning. On the other hand, it is true that when we compare them to successful learners, success is harder to achieve for anxious learners. She draws a picture of anxious learners' characteristics by formulating a table from different sources.

Table 1

A Comparison of Anxious and Good Learners (Turula, 2002, p. 29)

Anxious Learner	Good Learner
1. Is reluctant to take risks	1. Is willing to take risks
2. Relies heavily on memory	2. Is tolerant of ambiguities
3. Is reluctant to hypothesize	3. Possesses good cognitive strategies of guessing and inferring
4. Is disorganized and inefficient in recall of learned items	4. Shows good strategies of monitoring, categorizing, and synthesizing
5. Feels apprehension and self-doubt; is frustrated	5. Shows positive attitude; is sociable and outgoing

Assuming that a lot of students have apprehensions about writing which prevent them from being successful in writing classes, Daly and Miller (1975) constructed an instrument to assess writing apprehension. The results of their study indicated that the highly apprehensive students perceived their chances of success at a significantly lower level than those who were less apprehensive (as cited in Powell, 1984).

There are other researchers who have brought into focus the relationship between attitude and writing. Powell (1984) designed a study to compare the degree to which students' attitudes are related to their achievement in composition courses. The study addressed two hypotheses: 1) There will be a relation between the students' level of writing apprehension and their success in composition courses, and 2) students' desire to succeed academically in all subjects will affect their achievement in composition courses. The results revealed that the percentage of A and B students having low apprehension (high confidence) was far greater than those having high apprehension (low confidence). Conversely, the number of D and F students having high apprehension (low confidence) was higher than those having low apprehension (high confidence). According to the results of the study, it appears that there is a powerful connection between apprehension and writing performance. In a similar manner, a strong relationship between two variables, attitude and success, was also found.

This research shows that confidence, low apprehension, and success in writing courses are closely related to each other. It can be assumed that if individuals have confidence in their writing abilities, they are more likely to be successful in their writing performance. Thus, improving learners' confidence in writing could be

a beneficial way to help them become better writers. In the next section, the role of portfolios in enabling students to monitor their performance in writing will be discussed.

Portfolios

There have been various definitions in the literature for portfolios, a concept which originated from artists' collections of their works. These definitions are supposedly not totally different from each other. However, there are some minor differences among them according to the purposes of usage. In order to have a deeper look at the role of portfolios in writing classes and comprehend the differences among the perceptions related to the portfolio, it is necessary to understand what is meant by a portfolio.

Coombe and Barlow (2004) give a very explicit definition of a portfolio: "As far as portfolios are defined in writing assessment, a portfolio is a purposive collection of student writing over time that shows the stages in the writing process a text has gone through and the stages of the writer's growth" (Coombe & Barlow, 2004, p. 19). French (1992) gives a definition of a portfolio as "a purposeful, chronological, collection of student work to reflect student development in one or more areas over time and student outcomes at one or more designated points in time" (p. 256).

Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991) state clearly what is expected from a portfolio and add to the above definitions that "the collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection" (p. 60). They also maintain that when

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carefully implemented portfolios become "an intersection of instruction and assessment" which yields more than either one alone (p. 61).

Chamot and O'Malley (1994) emphasize the strength of using portfolios in classroom: "Portfolios are useful for monitoring student progress and for adapting instruction to student needs" (p. 127). They call attention to the role of portfolio in documenting learner growth and bridging between learner needs and instruction rather than its role in assessment.

The definitions discussed above might be useful to understand the portfolio from different perspectives. These different definitions share some common points, too. They all indicate that a portfolio is not just a mere collection but a collection with a certain purpose. The purpose may differ from one institution to another, yet it is an important point to set the objective of using portfolios at the very beginning. Furthermore, the definitions illustrate that one of the significant functions of portfolios is displaying learners' progress over time. On the other hand, some definitions focus on the role of as an assessment tool more than the others. They all look at the same concept from various perspectives.

Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) describe nine characteristics of good portfolios. They emphasize that all portfolio systems may not have these characteristics equally or totally. The first one is *collection*. Multi performances are judged by the portfolio - not a single performance. The second one is *range*. Various genres which show off different areas of expertise can be used by the writer. *Content richness* comes as the third one. Writers bring their experiences with them into the assessment. *Delayed evaluation* is another characteristic. Students have the opportunity to go back and revise their pieces. *Selection* is very important so the

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students should participate in the selection process. The sixth listed characteristic is *student-centered control*. The responsibility is on the learner for success. *Reflection and self-assessment* are very important. The learner is involved in self-assessment procedures and reflects on what he/she has learned. Portfolios provide evaluators with the opportunity to ask questions related to the *growth along specific parameters*. *Development over time* is the ninth characteristic emphasized.

These characteristics of good portfolios can also be interpreted as their benefits in writing. They draw a clear picture of what keeping a portfolio can bring for a language learner.

<center>Content of Portfolios</center>

Needs of the students, curriculum of the institution, and the purpose of the portfolio determine what will go into it. "What is called a portfolio can range from a collection of personalized student products to a comprehensive array of student work and teacher records to standardized student assessments" (Wolf & Siu-Runyan, 1996, p. 30). Portfolios vary noticeably in their contents, in the way they are constructed, and in how they are organized. Although there are variations in what the portfolios contain or their dimensions, the main element which gives shape to portfolios is the portfolio's purpose (Wolf & Siu-Runyan, 1996). We should expect to see different things in a portfolio which promotes self-assessment and self-confidence in students than in a portfolio whose aim is to provide a valid and reliable basis for evaluation of student performance. In the former, the emphasis is possibly on students' reflections or learning diaries and self-assessment checklists, whereas in the other it is not necessary to include anything else than learners' composing drafts and final versions.

Samples of creative work, tests, quizzes, homework, projects and assignments, audiotapes of oral work, student diary entries, self-assessments, comments from peers, and comments from teachers are among the items that can be found in a portfolio (Hancock, 1994). Mabry (1999) states that a portfolio reflects samples of student work, and it may also contain "narrative descriptions, grades, or other evaluations by teachers and others, official records, student reflection or self-evaluation, responses from parents, suggestions for future work, and audio or photographic records" (p. 17). Due to its purpose some of these elements could be omitted from the portfolio. Furthermore, time limitation or lack of material might not allow inclusion of some components such as audio or photographic records.

Cole et al. (2000) claim that a portfolio will have more than one purpose, but the purposes will not conflict with each other. They suggest that a portfolio should contain the student's personal goals, interests, and learning styles. One central purpose of a portfolio, which is almost universal, is to demonstrate the "student's progress in the institution's instructional program" (p. 11). They argue that both formal and nontraditional evaluation can be included, since a portfolio contains many entries. In a way, portfolios contribute to the evaluation of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills (Cole et al., 2000).

Two outstanding elements of portfolios are stressed by Seidel and Walter (1997) in their description of a portfolio as "thoughtful collections of student work meant for active and often long-term review" (as cited in Doğan, 2001). Rather than just being a random collection, a portfolio is purposeful and systematic. Seidel and Walter also assert that choosing what to put in a portfolio demands a careful decision-making process. They maintain that a portfolio system is different from a

mere collection of exercises because it is supposed to be developed carefully and systematically. Moreover, Seidel and Walter emphasize the characteristic nature of a portfolio system, that is, portfolios demonstrate student's growth, progress, weaknesses, talents, and efforts over time. That is how portfolios can provide educators with an opportunity to observe learners' growth and progress.

<div align="center">Types of Portfolios</div>

In the literature different types or models of portfolios are presented. The majority of the proposed models are for native speakers of English. Even though most of the portfolio types share a lot in common, they may be named differently. In the following paragraphs some of them will be described.

O'Malley (1997) asserts that there are at least three different types of portfolios: a collection portfolio, a showcase portfolio, and an assessment portfolio. In collection portfolios, learners put everything they have produced, whereas showcase portfolios contain a student's best work. An assessment portfolio, which is usually accepted as useful to help students and teachers in planning future learning activities, demonstrates growth with respect to the determined instructional objectives (as cited in Doğan, 2001).

Although Wolf & Siu-Runyan (1996) accept that it is hard to categorize all portfolios into one of the three models they provided, and generally they are combinations of two or more, they have shown sharp contrasts between the models to illustrate the key features. Ownership portfolio focuses on student choice and self-assessment. It includes a variety of information which shows learner's progress in reading and writing. Learners set goals for themselves and reflect on the development of their work. The main objective of the ownership portfolio is to

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enable students "to explore, extend, display, and reflect on their own learning" (p. 33). Feedback portfolios, co-constructed by the student and teacher, provide ongoing documentation of student learning. They contain student work and reflections, teachers' records on student learning, and information from parents and peers. Teachers, students, and parents use these portfolios to obtain a broad picture of the student's strengths and needs. The third portfolio model is the accountability portfolio. It contains selective collections of student work on a basis of specific criteria, teacher records, and standardized assessments. The main point of the accountability portfolio is to assess student achievement for accountability and program evaluation.

Valencia and Calfee (1991) provide another useful categorization of portfolios according to the purpose they are designed to serve. The three major types they define are: showcase portfolio, which is student focused, documentation portfolio, student and teacher focused, and evaluation portfolio, teacher and administration focused.

Jenkins (1996) draws attention to three major portfolio models which are developed to help learners, especially native speakers of English, become better writers. They are benchmark portfolio, showcase portfolio, and collaborative portfolio. These three models are based on a set of theoretical assumptions and have instructional implications. The teacher's or the institution's assumptions and practices determine the portfolio assessment model to be used. Very briefly, figure one below illustrates the differences of the models according to their central point.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                               │
│                    Portfolio Stance                           │
│                                                               │
│ Showcase Portfolio      Collaborative Portfolio   Benchmark Portfolio │
│                                                               │
│ ................□……………………………□…………………………….□………… │
│                                                               │
│    LEARNER          LEARNER AND TEACHER          TEACHER      │
│                                                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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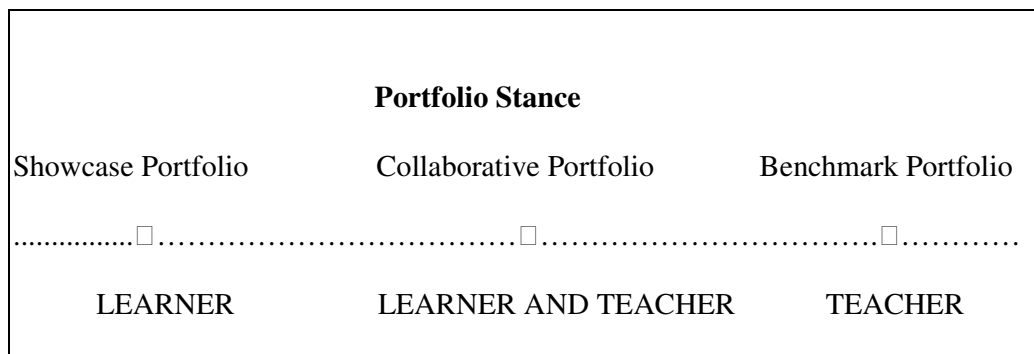
Figure 1- The portfolio stance (Adapted from: Jenkins, 1996, p. 12)

Portfolios as an Alternative Assessment Tool

With in the ELT field, alternative assessment procedures include some performance assessments, such as role plays and group discussions, and personal response assessments, such as checklists of student behaviors or products, journals, reading logs, videos of role plays, audiotapes of discussions, self-evaluation questionnaires, exhibitions, conferences, self and peer assessment questionnaires, and portfolio assessment (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

Although there is no single definition, Hancock (1994) describes alternative assessment as "an ongoing process involving the student and teacher in making judgments about the student's progress in language using non-conventional strategies" (p. 1). Portfolio assessment is listed under alternative and authentic assessment. Hancock provides a good definition of portfolio assessment:

> Portfolio assessment is an ongoing process involving the student and the teacher in selecting samples of student work for inclusion in a collection, the main purpose of which is to show the student's progress. The use of this procedure is increasing in the language field, particularly with respect to the writing skill. It makes intuitive sense to involve students in decisions about

which pieces of their work to assess and to assure that feedback is provided. Both teacher and peer reviews are important (p. 2).

Hirvela and Pierson (2000) mention that educators started to attach significance to portfolio-based assessment around the mid-1980s in the United States as a reaction against the educational standards at that time. Sweet (1993) explains why he thinks that portfolios are valued as an assessment tool. Portfolios are representations of classroom-based performance, and they can be easily integrated into the curriculum. Sweet suggests that many teachers, educators, and researchers think that portfolio assessment is more efficient than old-style tests for shaping instructional objectives and evaluating academic skills (Sweet, 1993). Moya and O'Malley (1994) maintain that a portfolio used for educational assessment "must offer more than a showcase for student products; it must be the product of a complete assessment procedure that has been systematically planned, implemented, and evaluated" (p. 14).

Enginarlar (1994) claims that recent work and studies on the portfolio assessment approach seem to offer sensitive solutions to validity, reliability, and beneficial backwash effect issues in grading writing. The students are not assessed on the basis of one sample at one sitting; instead, they are assessed with several samples of their writing at different sittings. In addition, with the standardization of criteria and by giving multiple scores scoring reliability may be improved. For the beneficial backwash effect of the portfolio, Enginarlar (1994) suggests that the portfolio approach demands students to write better by providing them with the opportunities of revision, feedback from the peers, and feedback from the teacher. These solutions

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lie in the nature of portfolio approach. Leki (1991) gives a definition of the approach as follows:

> The portfolio approach is based on assembling a representative sample of the students' best work, usually final drafts but sometimes including an in-class 'timed' essay. At the end of the term, the entire portfolio is evaluated for a grade rather than assigning a grade to each paper separately or using some sort of grade averaging system (as quoted in Enginarlar, 1994, p. 171).

Tierney et al. (1991) draws a picture of portfolio as a new frame of reference for assessment, which facilitates student reflection. It is a "framework that responds to demands for student empowerment, the changing nature of classrooms, and a new consensus regarding the need for revamping testing practices" (p. 42). They attach significance to the dynamic property of portfolios, which are based on what students are actually doing.

In the literature there have been studies related to the use of portfolios as alternative assessment tools. In some of the studies the participants are native speakers of English, but most of these studies are conducted in ESL and EFL settings. Hedge (2000) points out that the theoretical research related to the use of a portfolio system suggests the use of portfolios in EFL classrooms (as cited in Nunes, 2004).

In a study conducted by Song & August (2002) performances of two groups of advanced ESL students in a composition course were compared. At the end of the course, one group was assessed on the basis of portfolios and a writing assessment test whereas the other group's performance was assessed only through the writing assessment test. The study intended to compare the pass rates of these two groups at

the end of the course and their grade distribution in the next writing course. The results showed that the number of students who passed the course on the basis of portfolio was nearly twice of the number of students who were evaluated by the test. Moreover, there was not a significant difference between the groups' grade distribution in the next course. Therefore, portfolio assessment was more effective in identifying the students who proved to be successful in the next English course. The study demonstrates that portfolio assessment can be reliable for making judgments about the writing proficiency of ESL students when carefully implemented with clear evaluation standards (Song & August, 2002).

Enginarlar (1994) conducted a study with 27 students of an English composition class in a university in Turkey. The participants were partially assessed on the basis of a portfolio. At the end of the term, a questionnaire on students' attitudes towards the process-oriented portfolio grading was distributed to the students. The results of the questionnaire and group interviews indicated that the learners were likely to have positive attitudes to the process approach and portfolio grading. The study is important in the sense that it contributes to the limited number of studies on writing portfolio assessment in EFL settings and provides information about EFL learners' attitudes towards portfolio.

<center>Portfolios as a Self-Assessment Tool</center>

Self-assessment is a part of a student's monitoring his/her progress over a period of time. Harris and Graham (1996) describe the conditions when self-monitoring occurs as: "when a student determines whether or not, or how often or how long, a specific behavior has occurred, and then self-records this in some way" (p. 161). According to this definition, the elements of self-monitoring are self-

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assessment and self-recording. Harris and Graham suggest that self-monitoring can enable learners to comprehend the processes involved in writing and help them improve their writing. Furthermore, they maintain that students do not only self-assess the writing products but "aspects of the writing process can also be self-assessed, including issues related to the task or topic, structuring the environment to facilitate writing, planning, revising, maintaining, motivation, seeking assistance, etc." (Harris & Graham, 1996, p. 164).

Although there are more examples of portfolios used as alternative assessment tools by teachers, there are also examples of portfolios used as self-assessment tools. Some educators view the portfolio as a document of student's learning process or as an opportunity to promote learner reflection. An important component of a portfolio is the self-evaluation of students. However, Mabry (1999) complains about the lack of opportunities for formal self-assessment in education. She alleges that educators should provide students with the opportunities to develop skills, and help learners realize that their judgments have a great significance while making important decisions. Besides, she claims that students also "need help in engaging in the intellectual effort to assess achievement, not merely to describe effort or feelings" (p. 73).

According to Hirvela and Pierson (2000), the focus in portfolio pedagogy is on 'performative' evaluation rather than the usual 'summative' assessment encountered in most timed-testing systems. In performative assessment a formative view of assessment is at work and as reflected in students' writing portfolios in the long term, performative assessment "emphasizes what the students can do rather than what they do not know" (Huot, 1994 as quoted in Hirvela & Pierson, 2000, p. 108).

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In this way, portfolios enable teachers to have a better understanding of students'

writing ability. Unlike summative assessment, performative assessment provides

opportunities for 'learner-directed' evaluation which prevents learners from just

being an object of the assessment, and makes them participate in the evaluation

process actively and creatively (Hirvela & Pierson, 2000).

Some experts in education accept portfolio as the most obvious and widely-

used learning instrument that could be used as input for self-assessment (Todd,

2002). Todd (2002) asserts that the portfolio is very appropriate for self-assessment

because it provides evidence for learners to witness their own efforts, progress, and

achievements. Harris (1997) clearly shows the importance of self-assessment in

educational contexts:

> It is widely accepted that self-assessment is a key learning strategy for
>
> autonomous language learning, enabling students to monitor their progress
>
> and relate learning to individual needs. But what is the role of self-assessment
>
> in formal education settings, where there is less room for self-directed
>
> learning? Paradoxically, it is perhaps in these settings that self-assessment is
>
> most needed to focus learners' perceptions of progress. Students are often
>
> passive in their approach to learning, and may become demotivated if they
>
> cannot see any clear progress. Self-assessment produces learners who are
>
> more active and focused, and better placed to assess their own progress (p.
>
> 12).

If self-assessment is to help learners monitor their progress and thus prevent

them from being demotivated, it might be very beneficial when it is carefully

integrated into the writing classes. The writing portfolio as a self-assessment tool

may be a way to integrate self-evaluation in the long run. As Borthwick (1995) points out self-assessment is central to the idea of portfolios. She emphasizes that while choosing the best work for the portfolio, students learn the features of good work, what is important when selecting work, and how to judge one work as better than the others. In order to do that, the learner must be aware of the standards and how to choose work that meets the standards. It can be suggested that students who know the standards and can assess their own work have an additional advantage of knowing what to focus on when producing work in the first place. They are ready to start their journey to being better learners (Borthwick, 1995).

Johnson and Rose (1997) believe that by helping students assess their own strengths and weaknesses and motivating them to produce polished work that meets explicit standards, portfolios are an excellent tool for teaching students to present themselves in a more confident way. When this aspect of portfolios is presented to the students to its fullest potential, students can be more enthusiastic to take the responsibility for their learning, and they can become more aware of the relationship between classroom instruction and how it relates to their world. Understanding how to evaluate one's own learning is a lifelong skill which may also be beneficial for learners for their future success (Johnson & Rose, 1997).

<div align="center">Studies on Portfolios</div>

In this section, some example studies on using portfolios will be presented. These studies mainly focus on the use of portfolios in EFL settings. They provide a rationale to implement a portfolio system for, especially, EFL learners in their writing courses by pointing out the benefits of keeping portfolios from different dimensions.

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Coombe and Barlow (2004) commented on two portfolio assessment case studies in the United Arab Emirates. The first study was conducted in Dubai Men's College during an 18-week semester. The writing portfolio was used to assess students' writing achievement. At the end of the semester, the students were asked to comment about the portfolio implementation. The comments were positive in general. However, the portfolio system lacked a reflective element. From the experience at DMC, teachers at UAE University decided to implement a similar portfolio system with an expanded reflective element. The participants were asked to fill out a Likert scale questionnaire to reflect about the portfolio implementation. The researchers suggested that including a reflective element in the portfolio strengthened students' writing, but training students on how to reflect and assess themselves took too much time. Coombe and Barlow (2004) conclude that there is no single right way to design a portfolio because each portfolio will differ somewhat. "Implemented appropriately, portfolio assessment with a reflective element is a type of assessment that is continuous, collaborative, multidimensional, grounded in knowledge, and authentic" (p. 22).

Nae-Dong Yang (2003) conducted a study in Taiwan in which portfolios were integrated into the framework, procedures, and instruction for strategy training. The study tried to find out what college students think about the use of portfolios in their EFL class, the problems or advantages of using portfolios to enhance foreign language learning, and which assessment tool, portfolios or traditional tests, was more effective in facilitating EFL students' learning and autonomy. The researcher designed a questionnaire to assess students' beliefs and attitudes about portfolio and learning strategy use. The results showed that students had positive reactions to the

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use of portfolios, although they listed some problems such as time management and troubles in record keeping as disadvantages of using portfolios. Only 23% of the students chose paper-and-pencil tests whereas 51% of the students preferred to be assessed by portfolios rather than the traditional tests. The study suggested that portfolio implementation raised students' awareness of learning strategies, facilitated their learning process, and enhanced their self-directed learning.

Nunes (2004) summarizes an exploratory study carried out over one year's time with a group of 10th grade students in a Portuguese high school. The researcher hypothesized that the teachers can diagnose the learners' skills and competences and can become aware of their preferences, styles, dispositions, and learning strategies by using portfolios in EFL classrooms. The study emphasized the role of student reflection in helping the teacher make decisions and choices in the classroom and involving students in the teaching-learning process, which finally leads to creating more autonomous learners of English. The students were introduced to the portfolio at the beginning of the study and were told that they could include whatever they believed to be important for their learning process.

During this study the participants were expected to write reflections in English since the researcher considered its long term benefits for the students. In order to help students reflect on their learning, questionnaires were used, and students received training on learning strategies. At the end of the year, the students' portfolios were collected and examined to have more information about the learning process. The study suggested making reflection through portfolio implementation an integral part of EFL learning. The researcher asserted that the portfolio allowed the teacher to adjust instruction to learners' needs and objectives by providing

information about their learning styles, needs, and difficulties. Nunes (2004) also claimed that portfolios helped learners self-monitor their own learning and more easily identify obstacles for their learning by enabling them to reflect on their learning through reflective dialogues between the students and the teacher. The results revealed that in order to facilitate the use of learner-centered practice, portfolios could be used as a pedagogical tool. The strength of the study seems to lie in these suggestions.

An important study conducted by Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002) investigated whether portfolio assessment contributes to EFL learners' achievement and their feelings of responsibility towards monitoring their progress. The instruments of the study were a Nelson English Language Proficiency Test, portfolio assessment, a teacher-made achievement test, and a satisfaction questionnaire prepared by the researchers. The experimental group was assessed both on the basis of portfolio and teacher-made test whereas control group's achievement was assessed only through the teacher-made tests. The results indicated that the participants had positive attitudes towards portfolio assessment and portfolio assessment was beneficial for Iranian EFL learners' achievement and their feelings of responsibility towards monitoring their progress.

According to the findings of this study, the portfolio proved to be a useful tool to provide the continuous, ongoing measurement of students' growth. The study is significant in its contribution to the research on portfolio assessment in EFL learning and using portfolio to promote learners' responsibility of monitoring their progress. When portfolio assessment is not only used as a tool to assess students' achievement, it can be beneficial for EFL learners in different ways, as these

researchers attempt to show in this study. Along with its success in evaluating students' achievement, the researchers underlined one of the key points of portfolio assessment as its role in improving learners' attitude towards monitoring their learning experiences and awareness of their progress.

<u>Benefits of the Portfolio</u>

The portfolio is generally considered to be beneficial by many researchers both for teachers and students in various ways. It is not only an assessment tool which provides teachers and learners with the opportunities to actively participate in the assessment process, but it can also be a way to achieve the match between instruction and assessment, and also a tool to promote student learning, motivation, self-assessment, and collaboration.

Chamot and O'Malley (1994) state that can make use of portfolios as documents to point to the specific examples of students' work which indicate this progress. They suggest five main advantages of using portfolios: "portfolio assessment is systematic, it provides visible evidence of student progress, it is accessible, it is focused and efficient, and portfolios are useful for making instructional design" (p. 127). They focus on its function as enabling both the teachers and students to monitor the learning process.

Portfolios enable students to go back, review, and think about their writing from time to time. Hence, this gives students more responsibility for their own learning. Hirvela and Pierson (2000) support this point of view when they write: "One advantage cited frequently in the portfolio literature is the notion of student authority or ownership caused by the opportunity students have to review their writing and decide which pieces they will present to their teachers and/or what they

would like teachers to see in that writing" (p. 109). In addition to the advantages mentioned above, they maintain that students' sense of authority or ownership may improve their motivation since the learners can feel an increased personal share in their production (Hirvela & Pierson, 2000).

Enginarlar (1994) suggests that a portfolio approach gains importance when its potential in providing good backwash effect on the teaching of writing is taken into consideration. He maintains that portfolios make the process approach truly operational because they encourage revision, peer feedback, and collaboration towards production and selecting better pieces of writing to be placed in the portfolio.

According to Cole et al. (2000) portfolios can be a vehicle for a change to make the classroom serve as a "natural environment for the infusion of innovative learning" (p. 33). They allege that portfolios provide opportunities for reflection both for teachers and students.

Under the list of advantages of using portfolios, the most important one may be its enabling students to realize their weaknesses and strengths over time. Keeping a record of what has been produced by the students and choosing good ones among them require students to differentiate between their weak and strong points. Especially, in writing courses, this function may help learners to know themselves better and have a clearer idea about their profiles as writers. This realization may increase their confidence in writing since they are more ready to improve themselves and exhibit their strengths more openly.

A study was conducted to investigate the effects of portfolios on disenchanted adolescents by Young et al. (1997). The data for the study were collected from three

sets of records: written records of portfolio conferences, personal preference inventories, and transcripts of interviews with students. The results revealed that students perceived themselves as partners in the portfolio assessment, that they thought that setting their own goals was fair, and that they perceived the portfolio process as helpful in developing as language learners (Young, Mathews, Kietzman, & Westerfield, 1997).

In another study, Shober (1996) investigated how portfolios can be used to present growth in students' narrative writing and how they can be used as a discussion tool for parent/teacher/student conferences. The students' three writing pieces produced during the twelve-week period were evaluated for growth and understanding of writing process. Writing processes, that is planning, prewriting, drafting, conferring, and revising were actively practiced during the completion of the three writing samples. The study focused on sharing the portfolio with parents, so teacher-parent-student conference had great importance. Assessment conferences were held between the teacher and student, student and a peer, or in a small writing group. The results of the study indicated that 68% of the students showed improvement in narrative writing. Teachers and parents were surveyed about using portfolios as a communication link which demonstrated that parents had positive attitudes towards portfolios and conferences. The study can show that portfolios enable learners to monitor their improvement in writing and facilitate the communication between students and teachers.

Challenges of Using Portfolios

Portfolio approach promises a lot of benefits for learners and teachers in assessment and instruction. On the other hand, it is not totally void of challenges. Although limited in number, in the literature there have been comments on the disadvantages of using portfolios. Brown and Hudson (1998) listed these disadvantages under five categories as a summary of the literature: the issues of design decision, logistics, interpretation, and assessment qualities such as reliability and validity.

 In the opinion of Hamp-Lyons et al (1993) the design decision issue is related to the content of the portfolio and its grading criteria. Before using portfolios, it must be decided on what should go into the portfolio, and how they will be evaluated. It is not an easy job to clearly state who will decide upon the content. Deciding on the purpose of the portfolio is also a challenging task since it is not fixed who will do it and how it will be done. Without making these decisions, it does not seem possible to prepare grading criteria. Establishment of grading criteria is also a crucial issue, since it has been found that portfolio readers often lack explicit criteria and standards to measure portfolios (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 1993).

Assessment qualities are challenging subjects, especially when portfolios are heavily relied on as an assessment tool. Although some consider reliability and validity as unnecessary for portfolio assessment, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) are among the ones who believe that both reliability and validity are necessary and must be established. Establishing standards for reliability and validity in portfolio assessment challenges most of the educators but it is considered to be necessary to make evaluation objective and realistic.

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Of great concern is the portfolio assessment's time-consuming nature. Song and August (2002) assert that portfolio assessment programs bring additional demands on instructors. "While planning portfolio tasks and lessons, coaching students on drafts, and helping them compile portfolios can be comfortably folded into a process-oriented course, the actual evaluation of portfolios is inevitably labor intensive, requiring a significant amount of time from instructors" (p. 51). The workload and time demand may cause instructors to avoid grading portfolios. Subaşı (2002) conducted a study on teachers' understanding of projects and portfolios. In her study some of the participant teachers stated that they did not assess portfolios. The researcher explained this issue with increased workload of teachers and too much time demand.

As affective disadvantages of portfolio assessment Elbow and Belanoff (1991) list the following issues:

- Portfolio assessment puts more pressure on teacher because if a student fails, the teacher might feel s/he has failed.

- Some teachers feel that it dominates the course too much.

- The emphasis on revising can make lazy students depend too much on the help they receive from their teachers and peers (as quoted in Şahinkarakaş, 1998, p. 18).

To sum up, the portfolio is accepted to have both advantages and disadvantages for learners and educators. Despite its beneficial role in assessment and instruction, it is not an easy task to deal with the problems which usually arise from the nature of the portfolio. The balance between the benefits and challenges

may be achieved with a careful design stage according to the objectives aimed at before the portfolio implementation.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This chapter provided background on the literature relevant to the study. The information on the process approach to writing, affective domains in writing, and portfolios was reviewed. The use of portfolios in writing classes was discussed concerning its different functions, as an assessment tool or a self-assessment tool. The previous studies on L2 writing and portfolio implementation were briefly presented in order to supply a general framework for the present study. The next chapter is the methodology chapter, which reports on the participants of the study, the instruments, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examines the confidence level of students in writing classes in preparatory classes at Zonguldak Karaelmas University (ZKU) by investigating whether using portfolios in writing classes as a self-assessment tool increases confidence in writing. The study also investigates the possible effect of portfolios on students' attitudes towards writing and students' attitudes towards keeping portfolios. In addition, through interviews, the study explores the attitudes of the writing class instructor towards using writing portfolios in writing class and the perceptions of students towards using portfolios as a self-assessment tool.

In this chapter, information about the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis will be provided.

Participants

The study was conducted at Zonguldak Karaelmas University English Language Preparatory School. The participants were 60 pre-intermediate level students and an instructor of English. The students were from three different classes, one class was the experimental group, and the other two classes were the control groups. Each class had a different instructor for their writing courses. While deciding on the experimental group, the willingness of their writing teacher to participate in

the study was taken into consideration. The other two classes were chosen randomly to be the control groups.

Although there was no indication of low level of confidence in writing among the students, the class named C-16 was chosen as the experimental group, and classes named C-19 and C-7 were selected randomly as the control groups. There were twenty students in each class, both in the experimental and control groups. There were two control groups in the study in order to have more information about the confidence level of students in writing.

Only the students in the experimental group, C-16, were expected to keep portfolios in writing classes. Classes C-19 and C-7 did not keep portfolios and followed the regular class curriculum. The students in the experimental group completed five assignments during the implementation period, wrote reflection papers, and put them in their portfolios. After the implementation period, all of the twenty students in the experimental group were interviewed. The instructor of English who was the teacher of writing course for C-16 participated in the study, and she was also interviewed at the final stage.

<center>Instruments</center>

Two questionnaires, a confidence in writing questionnaire (See Appendix A) and an attitude towards writing questionnaire (See Appendix C), and interviews with the students along with their teacher were the instruments used to collect the data in this study. Other materials included a portfolio peer assessment sheet (See Appendix E), a portfolio self-assessment sheet (See Appendix G), and a self-assessment checklist (See Appendix F) for writing assignments for the students.

The first questionnaire was designed, revised, and piloted by the researcher in order to obtain data related to the confidence level of students in writing. The questionnaire items were written following a review of the literature on affective domains in writing, self-assessment of writing, and using portfolios as a self-assessment tool. I have also used my background knowledge about writing habits of the students. The questionnaire consisted of thirty-two items which were designed in a five-point Likert scale, with 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'partially agree', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' options.

The confidence questionnaire included items related to the habits of students before writing, while writing, and after writing. The students were asked about their feelings about writing in English and their writing assignments. Omitting or adding details, apprehension of making mistakes, comparison of writing skills with other skills were among the criteria considered to determine the students' level of confidence in writing. The questionnaire was first written in English and then it was translated into Turkish since the proficiency level of the students was not high enough to respond to the questions in English.

The second questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Topuz's study (2004). Originally created by Demir (2002) as an attitude towards reading survey, the questionnaire developed by Topuz (2004) consisted of forty-four questions and had two sections. The first part was omitted because questions about the students' background were irrelevant to the study. Moreover, not all of the forty-four items in section two were included in the study. Only the items that investigated students' attitudes and motivation towards writing in general were taken and used in this study. Therefore, the attitude survey consisted of eighteen items designed in a five-point

Likert scale, with 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'partially agree', 'agree' and 'strongly agree' options. Both questionnaires included an informed consent form which informed students about the questionnaire's being voluntary and their responses being confidential.

In order to prevent any possible language interference during implementation, both of the questionnaires were translated into Turkish through a back translation process (See Appendix B and Appendix D for the Turkish versions of the questionnaires). First, I translated the two questionnaires into Turkish and then asked three colleagues in the MA TEFL program at Bilkent University and another colleague at ZKU, my home institution, to translate the Turkish version into English. By comparing the back translation received from the colleagues with the original questionnaire, necessary changes were made on the Turkish version of the questionnaire. The Turkish versions of these two questionnaires were piloted with a pre-intermediate class, which was not included in the study, at Zonguldak Karaelmas University. Only one item was modified according to the results of piloting.

Oral interviews were also conducted with all of the twenty students in the experimental group. The students answered fourteen main questions about their perceptions related to keeping portfolios in writing classes. They were also asked questions to reveal their ideas about self-assessment and peer assessment, and if the whole process had any effect on their attitudes towards writing in English. The interview protocol was also tape-recorded and transcribed for data analysis soon after.

Data Collection Procedures

On January 16, 2006, I received permission from the Preparatory School of Zonguldak Karaelmas University to conduct the study. The instructor and the class that would participate in the study were determined. Two weeks later, the Turkish versions of the two questionnaires were pilot-tested. The piloting of the questionnaires was conducted with a class which had similar features, e.g., level of proficiency in English, with the experimental group. The respondents gave feedback on the comprehensibility of the items in the questionnaire. Afterwards, changes were made accordingly.

In the week of February 6, the Turkish versions of both questionnaires were given to the experimental group and the two control groups. During the same week, the researcher and the instructor of writing came together to decide on the topics of the assignments which would be put into the portfolio. The researcher suggested ten topics, and the teacher agreed to use five of them for the study. The teacher was free to choose topics from among the ones on the list suggested by the researcher or any other topic of interest. The students were expected to complete five assignments and choose three of them as the best representative of their writing pieces. During the portfolio implementation period, the students were also expected to write reflection papers and put them in their portfolios. The researcher and the teacher agreed to examine at least two reflection papers in the portfolio.

Since the students were not familiar with writing reflection papers, they received training on how to write reflection papers. Eight guiding questions were prepared by the researcher, and they were explained to the students. The students were free to add anything they would like to mention in their reflections. The training

session that included information about how to write the portfolio assignments took fifty minutes.

All of the assignments were on the paragraph level because the students had not yet started to write essays. The students were expected to write the same paragraph three times. The students would write a first draft on the given topic. For the first draft, the teacher gave feedback on the content; about the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and coherence and cohesion of the paragraph. Then, the students revised their assignments and wrote them for the second time. This time, they received feedback on linguistic aspects such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The students were supposed to revise the second draft, write the final draft, and put them in their portfolios. During the implementation period, the students also wrote two reflection papers at any time in between the assignments.

In the week of February 13, the portfolio implementation period started. The procedure ended on March 22, lasting for six weeks. During the last week of the procedure, the students completed a portfolio peer assessment sheet, a self-assessment checklist for writing assignments, and a portfolio self-assessment sheet prepared by the researcher. During this period, the students in the control group did not keep portfolios and did not complete any of the assessment sheets given to the experimental group.

At the end of the treatment period, the same questionnaires were given to all three groups as post-questionnaires. The post-questionnaires for the experimental and the control groups were given in the same week. After completing the questionnaires, all of the students in the experimental group were interviewed. When interviews with the students were completed, on the last day of the study, the interview with the

instructor of English was conducted. The figure below illustrates the data collection

procedure for this study:

Week 1   Week 6

portfolio implementation (experimental group)

peer-assessment
+
self-assessment activities
(experimental group)

Pre-questionnaires   post-questionnaires
(experimental and control groups)   (experimental and control groups)
+
interviews
(experimental group)
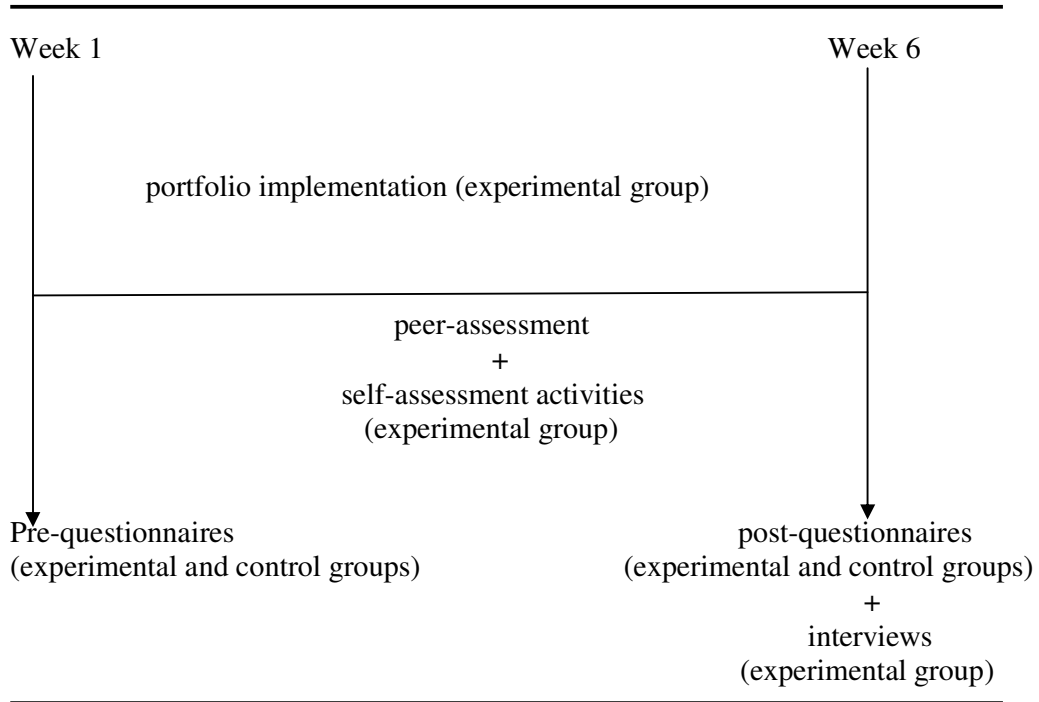
Figure 2- The data collection procedure

Methods of Data Analysis

This study included both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data

were gathered from the pre- and post-questionnaires. The data collected from the pre

and post confidence and attitude questionnaires were statistically analyzed using the

SPSS 10.0 version. To analyze the data, the means of each student were computed.

Both for the pre- and post-questionnaires, the items in the five-point Likert scale

were assessed values ranging from 1 to 5. The scoring for the positive statements was

as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Partially agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly

disagree = 1. Some items in the confidence in writing questionnaire were reverse

scored (See Appendix A).

Professional aid was received for the statistical analysis of the data. Individual student means were calculated to run the tests for comparisons within groups and comparisons between groups. Independent- Samples t-test and Paired-Samples t-test were used to see if there were changes in the students' attitudes. The results of the experimental group were analyzed in order to see if using portfolios as a self-assessment tool made any changes on students' confidence in writing and on their attitudes towards writing in general.

The qualitative data collected from the interviews with the students and the instructor were also analyzed. In order to analyze the interviews they were transcribed, and then the basic themes in these interviews were identified. The interviews with the students revealed their perceptions of using portfolios in writing classes. After transcribing the relevant parts of the interviews, these parts were translated into English by the researcher since the interviews were originally conducted in Turkish.

Conclusion

In this chapter, general and descriptive information about the participants, the materials and the instruments used in this study, the data collection procedures, and the methods of data analysis in the study were given. In the next chapter, the results of the data analysis will be presented.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study was designed to investigate whether portfolios used as a self-assessment tool in writing classes has a positive effect on students' attitudes towards writing in general and on students' confidence in writing. The teachers' and students' perceptions related to using writing portfolios were also investigated.

This study was conducted with the participation of three classes of pre-intermediate students in the Preparatory School of English at ZKU. There were two control groups, with twenty students in each, in the study in order to obtain more data related to the level of students' confidence in writing. The experimental group also consisted of twenty students. The two control groups followed their regular writing courses while the students in the experimental group kept portfolios in their writing classes and self-assed their portfolios at the end of the treatment period.

This chapter will present an analysis of the results of pre- and post-administrations of the confidence in writing questionnaire and the attitude questionnaire, and later on, interviews with all participants in the experimental group will be presented. The participant instructor was also interviewed for her perceptions of using portfolios as a self-assessment tool in writing classes. The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews and questionnaires will be explained in terms of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Analysis of Questionnaires

The quantitative data for this study were gathered through two instruments, pre- and post-treatment of two questionnaires. They were administered to three classes before and at the end of a six-week portfolio implementation period. The data collected from the pre- and post-questionnaires were statistically analyzed using the SPSS 10.0 version. First, the results of the attitude questionnaire will be discussed and then it will be followed by the results of confidence in writing questionnaire.

Analysis of the Attitude Questionnaire

The first instrument was an attitude questionnaire adapted from Topuz's study (2004). It consisted of eighteen items designed on a five-point Likert scale which were assessed values ranging from 1 to 5. The scoring for the positive statements was as follows: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Partially agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly disagree = 1. The negative items were reverse scored during the computing of the results. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be .88 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency.

After scoring the pretest for all three groups, standard deviations and means were calculated. *T*-tests were used to compare the means and to explore any possible attitude changes within and between groups. Mean values from 1.00 to 3.00 were considered negative and values from 3.01 to 5.00 were considered positive for the purpose of this analysis. The means of both the experimental group and the two control groups were compared with each other and within each group as pre- and post-questionnaires.

First, for the pre-questionnaire, the mean scores of the students in the three groups were compared. The responses were analyzed by calculating individual student means and by running an ANOVA test. Table 2 below shows the groups' mean values for the pre-questionnaire before the treatment.

Table 2

Mean Values for Attitude Questionnaire (Pre-treatment)

Groups	N	M	sd	F	Sig
Control A	20	3.50	0.46	2.12	0.12
Control B	20	3.31	0.64		
Experimental	20	3.68	0.54		

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, F= variance, Sig= significance of difference

According to the mean values of the three groups, the students were all positive towards writing in general. The control B group had the lowest mean values, and the experimental group had the highest mean values according to the results of the pre-treatment attitude questionnaire. The table shows that all the mean scores are positive and there are not any significant differences among the groups regarding attitudes towards writing in general. After a six-week implementation period, during which only the experimental group kept portfolios, the same questionnaire was administered to all three groups. In order to see whether there occurred any changes in the students' attitudes towards writing among the three groups, an ANOVA test was used. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Values for Attitude Questionnaire (Post-treatment)

Groups	N	M	sd	F	Sig
Control A	20	3.34	0.60	7.32	0.001**
Control B	20	3.28	0.57		
Experimental	20	3.88	0.43		

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, F= variance, Sig= significance of difference **$p < .005$

The results of the post-treatment questionnaire show that the students' mean scores are still positive. However, when compared to the means gathered from the pre-treatment questionnaire results, the mean values of the control group A (3.50 to 3.34) and the second control group B (3.31 to 3.28) show a decline. On the other hand, the mean values for the experimental group (3.68 to 3.88) show a rise in the results of the post-treatment questionnaire. This increase is significant when compared to the results of control groups. The results in Table 3 also illustrate that a significant difference exists between the experimental group and the control groups. In the next step, in order to compare control groups and the experimental group individually, two *t*-tests were run. Table 4 below demonstrates the results of the comparison between the results of the post treatment questionnaires of the control group A and the experimental group.

Table 4

Comparison of Mean Values of Experimental Group and Control A for Attitude

Questionnaire (Post-treatment)

Groups	N	M	sd	t	Sig. (two-tailed)
Control A	20	3.34	0.60	-3.21	0.003**
Experimental	20	3.88	0.43		

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t= t value, Sig= significance of difference **p < .005

As can be seen from Table 4, after the six-week treatment period there was a

significant difference between the results of the control group A and the

experimental group when mean scores of these two groups were compared using an

independent samples t-test. The experimental group's mean score was higher than

the mean score of the control group A. Subsequently, another independent samples t-

test was run between the second control group and the experimental group. The

results of the comparison of mean scores of these two groups are shown in Table 5

below.

Table 5

Comparison of Mean Values of Experimental Group and Control B for Attitude

Questionnaire (Post-treatment)

Groups	N	M	sd	t	Sig. (two-tailed)
Control B	20	3.28	0.57	-3.69	0.001**
Experimental	20	3.88	0.43		

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t= t value, Sig= significance of difference **p < .005

The results in Table 5 illustrate that there is a significant difference between

the mean scores of the control group B and the experimental group. Although the

mean scores of all the students who took the post-questionnaire show that the students' attitudes towards writing in general are positive, because of the decrease in the mean scores of both control groups and the increase in the experimental group, the significant difference was found when the control groups were individually compared to the experimental group.

In order to determine whether the significant difference between the experimental and the control groups occurred because of the decrease in the mean values of the control groups or not, three paired samples *t*-tests were run. Each group's pre- and post-questionnaires were compared to each other individually. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Paired Samples *t*-test Results for Attitude Questionnaire (The Pre-and Post-Questionnaire Results of Three Groups)

Groups	N	M	sd	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-experimental	20	3.68	0.32	-2.78	0.01*
Post-experimental	20	3.88			
Pre-control A	20	3.50	0.74	0.93	0.36
Post-control A	20	3.34			
Pre-control B	20	3.31	0.88	0.18	0.85
Post-control B	20	3.28			

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t = T value, Sig. = significance of difference, *p < .05

As can be seen in Table 6, there is a slight decrease in the mean values of both control groups although it is not statistically significant. However, the results demonstrate that there is still significant difference between the mean values of pre-

and post-treatment questionnaires of the experimental group. Therefore, the significant difference that was found in the ANOVA and *t*-tests above can not be totally attributed to the decline in the mean values of the control groups. The results may be accepted to justify the positive increase in the attitudes of the students in the experimental group after the portfolio implementation.

In short, the results of the attitude survey yield that there occurred changes in students' attitudes towards writing. The change in students' attitudes has been positive in the experimental group, and there has been a negative change in students' attitudes in the control groups. Therefore, a significant difference has been observed in the analysis of the comparison between groups on the attitude questionnaire. In the next section, the results of the analysis of the second questionnaire are presented.

<u>Analysis of the Confidence in Writing Questionnaire</u>

The second instrument used to obtain quantitative data in the study was a researcher-prepared confidence in writing questionnaire (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire). This questionnaire was given to both the experimental and the two control groups before and after the portfolio keeping period. It was used to measure the general confidence level of students in writing in English.

The confidence in writing questionnaire has 32 items, designed with a five-point Likert scale, with values ranging from 1 to 5. The scoring for the positive statements was as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Partly Agree = 3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree = 5. For the analysis, some items in the questionnaire were reverse scored (See Appendix A for the number of the reverse scored items). While analyzing the data, ANOVA tests and t-tests were run to investigate the confidence levels of students in writing between and within groups before and after the

treatment. ANOVAs were used to analyze the comparisons between groups in the confidence in writing levels before and after the treatment. T-tests were used to explore the change within the groups in terms of students' confidence level in writing.

For the purpose of the confidence in writing questionnaire analysis, mean values from 1.00 to 2.49 were defined as no confidence, values ranging from 2.50 to 2.99 were defined as low confidence, values from 3.00 to 3.49 were considered as confidence, and values from 3.50 to 5.00 were defined as high confidence. The distribution is displayed in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Distribution of the Confidence Values and Their Descriptions

Mean values	Description
3.50-5.00	High confidence
3.00-3.50	Confidence
2.50-3.00	Low confidence
1.00-2.50	No confidence

(Adapted from Köse, 2005, p.36)

The confidence in writing questionnaire was administered to both control groups and the experimental group before the treatment. The responses were obtained from 40 students in the control groups and 20 students in the experimental group. After the six-week treatment, the same questionnaire was given to the same participants. In order to analyze the data from the pre- and post-confidence questionnaire, a paired samples t-test was run to investigate the general level of writing confidence within the experimental group and the control groups. Also, an independent samples t-test was run to explore any difference in the improvement of

the students' confidence in writing among all three groups. The data were analyzed

by determining the mean values and the standard deviations.

First, the mean scores of the students in all the three groups for the pre-

questionnaire were compared. The responses were analyzed by calculating individual

student means and by running an ANOVA test. Table 8 below displays the groups'

mean values for the pre-questionnaire before the treatment.

Table 8

Mean Values for Confidence in Writing Questionnaire (Pre-treatment)

Groups	N	M	sd	F	Sig
Control A	20	2.79	0.40	1.24	0.29
Control B	20	2.87	0.33		
Experimental	20	2.95	0.24		

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, F= variance, Sig= significance of difference

The results displayed in Table 8 reveal that the students' mean scores in these

three groups were between 2.50 and 3.00, which is the range of low confidence. The

students in both the control groups and the experimental group had low confidence in

writing. The results also show that there are not any significant differences among

the groups in terms of their general level of confidence in writing. According to the

mean scores of the participants, control group A has the lowest confidence level, and

the experimental group has the highest confidence level in writing with a slight

difference among the groups.

The same questionnaire was administered to all these groups again after six

weeks of implementation, during which only the experimental group kept portfolios.

In order to determine whether there were any changes in the general level of

confidence in writing among these three groups, an ANOVA test was run with the

mean scores of the post-questionnaire. The results are demonstrated in Table 9.

Table 9

Mean Values for Confidence in Writing Questionnaire (Post-treatment)

Groups	N	M	sd	F	Sig
Control A	20	2.89	0.38	1.99	0.14
Control B	20	3.03	0.35		
Experimental	20	3.11	0.31		

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, F= variance, Sig=
significance of difference

The mean scores of the students presented in Table 9 show that there has been

a rise in the post-treatment questionnaire. When compared to the mean values of the

pre-treatment questionnaire all of the groups, control group A (from 2.79 to 2.89),

control group B (from 2.87 to 3.03) and the experimental group (from 2.95 to 3.11),

display an increase in their mean scores. The first control group is still in the range of

low confidence whereas the second control group B and the experimental group rise

to the level of confidence. According to the mean values of the post questionnaire,

the experimental group still has the highest confidence level in writing, and the

control group A has the lowest mean values. Since all of the three groups display

nearly the same amount of increase in their confidence level, there was no significant

difference among the groups.

In order to have a deeper look at the comparison of control groups and the

experimental group according to their pre-and post-questionnaire results,

independent samples t-tests were run between the groups individually. First, the

results of the control group A and the results of the control group B were compared.

Table 10 below illustrates this comparison.

Table 10

Mean Values for Control Group A and Experimental Group (Pre-and Post-

Questionnaires)

Groups	N	M	sd	t
Pre-control A	20	2.79	0.40	-1.57
Pre-experimental	20	2.95	0.24	
Post-control A	20	2.89	0.38	-1.99
Post-experimental	20	3.11	0.31	

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t= T value

According to the table no significant difference was found between the pairs of pre-experimental and pre-control A and post-experimental and post-control A when an independent samples t-test was run between these two groups. The standard deviations indicate that there is less variance in the experimental group results both in the pre questionnaire and the post questionnaire. This means that experimental group results were less varied than the control group's results. Another independent samples t-test was run between the second control group B and the experimental group. The results are demonstrated in Table 11.

Table 11

Mean Values for Control Group B and Experimental Group (Pre-and Post-

Questionnaires)

Groups	N	M	sd	t
Pre-control B	20	2.87	0.33	0.86
Pre-experimental	20	2.95	0.24	
Post-control B	20	3.03	0.35	0.77
Post-experimental	20	3.11	0.31	

Note. N = number, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t= T value

As shown in Table 11, the result of the comparison of the experimental group with the second control group is the same as with the first control group. Besides, there is no significant difference between the pairs of pre-experimental and pre-control B and post-experimental and post-control B. Although the standard deviations are closer, especially in the post-questionnaire, again there is more variance in the control group results than the experimental group results.

With the purpose of having a better idea about the confidence levels of students in writing within groups before and after the treatment, three paired samples t-tests were run. The results of the pre- and post-questionnaires within each group are displayed in Table 12 below.

Table 12

Paired Samples *t*-test Results (The Pre-and Post-Questionnaire Results of Three

Groups)

Groups	N	M	MD	sd	t
Pre-experimental	20	2.95	0.16	0.24	-2.42
Post-experimental	20	3.11		0.31	
Pre-control A	20	2.79	0.10	0.40	-0.96
Post-control A	20	2.89		0.38	
Pre-control B	20	2.87	0.16	0.33	-1.23
Post-control B	20	3.03		0.35	

Note. N = number; M = mean; MD= mean difference, sd = standard deviation; t= T value

As the results in Table 12 present, none of the groups displayed any significant difference in their confidence levels. However, there is an increase in the confidence level of the students in all three groups after the six-week portfolio implementation period. Although the two control groups did not keep portfolios, they still showed an increase in their mean scores. Moreover, the amount of increase in the experimental group and the second control group B is the same, 0.16. The results indicate that there was no significant change, neither in the experimental group nor in the control groups, in terms of the general level of confidence in writing since all the three groups showed nearly the same amount of increase when their pre-questionnaires are compared to their post-questionnaires.

Categorization of Similar Items

In order to have detailed information about the results of the confidence questionnaire paired samples *t*-tests were run among the categories according to the results of the pre- and post-treatment questionnaires. First, the items related to each

other were categorized, and then each category was given a name. The *t*-tests were run with five categories since the researcher anticipated finding a significant difference in these categories. The categories are: depending on outer aid, the influence of topic, feelings while writing, satisfaction with the assignments, and the awareness of progress and weak sides. These categories were thought to have a more direct relation with students' confidence in writing than the other categories. The paired samples *t*-tests results for the pre- and post-questionnaires of the experimental group are discussed below.

1. Depending on outer aid

The first category analyzed was related to the students' dependence on outer aid to write in English. There were six items (Item 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12) in the questionnaire investigating whether students relied on themselves or others like peers and teacher while writing. The mean scores show the students' level of confidence in the items of this category. The results were compared by running a paired samples *t*-test, and they are demonstrated in Table 13.

Table 13

The Comparison of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Items for Category 1

CN	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire			
	M	sd	M	sd	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Depending on outer aid	3.37	0.66	3.49	0.74	-0. 65	0.51

Note. CN= category name, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t = t value, Sig. = significance of difference

The mean score of this category for the pre-questionnaire was 3.37, and it increased to 3.49 in the post-questionnaire. The increase indicates that after the

portfolio implementation period the students became less dependent on outer aid. The increase can be interpreted as the increase in students' confidence level because they relied less on their friends or teacher while writing. However, there was no significant difference between the results of pre- and post-questionnaires. The six-week implementation period may not be enough to have a significant influence on this aspect. Keeping portfolio may help students to depend on themselves rather than others while writing in the long term.

2. The influence of topic

The second category was related to the influence of topic on students' writing. Items 14, 15, 16, and 17 were intended to investigate whether the topic or who chose the topic affect them while writing. The students were considered to be more confident if the influence of the topic were less. The result of the analysis is shown in the table below.

Table 14

The Comparison of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Items for Category 2

	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire			
CN	M	sd	M	sd	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
The influence of topic	2.92	0.43	3.10	0.37	-1.59	0.14

Note. CN= category name, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t = t value, Sig. = significance of difference

According to the results of the pre-questionnaire, the students' mean score for this category was low (2.92) because the influence of the topic was high on students' writing. The influence of topic on students' writing decreased to some extent after the implementation of portfolios. This indicated that the students' level of confidence

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in writing increased (to 3.10) in the post-questionnaire. Although this increase was not a significant difference, it may still be promising for future improvement. When students feel that they can write on any topic, they may feel more confident in writing and they may write better.

3. Feelings while writing

In this category there were three items (18, 19, and 20) which were related to what or how students feel while writing. The students were asked if they could express themselves easily, whether they felt comfortable, and confident while writing. In a way, these items were directly related to the purpose of the questionnaire which investigated students' level of confidence in writing. The result of the comparison is displayed in Table 15.

Table 15

The Comparison of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Items for Category 3

	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire			
CN	M	sd	M	sd	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Feelings while writing	2.76	0.82	3.06	0.68	-2.34	0.03*

Note. CN= category name, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t = t value, Sig. = significance of difference, *p < .05

As illustrated in Table 15, when feelings were considered, the students' level of confidence was low (2.76) in the pre-questionnaire. However, after keeping portfolios for six weeks, the students' level of confidence increased to 3.06 in these items. There occurred a significant difference between the pre- and post-questionnaires results in terms of this category. This increase is positive since in the post-questionnaire the students responded that they felt more comfortable and

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confident while writing. This could be a natural result of continuing writing during the six-week period. As students keep on writing, the feeling of comfort and confidence may increase naturally. Another interpretation of this result might be that the portfolio implementation may have also affected the students' feeling while writing. Keeping a portfolio may help students feel more comfortable and confident in writing.

4. Satisfaction with the assignments

The fourth category consisted of two items (21 and 22) which investigated whether the students were satisfied with their assignments or not. It was accepted that if the students were satisfied with their homework, they were confident in writing. The reflection of students about their assignments can reveal whether or not they feel confident in writing. The mean scores of the items in this category were compared by running a paired samples t-test.

Table 16

The Comparison of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Items for Category 4

	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire			
CN	M	sd	M	sd	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Satisfaction with assignments	3.07	0.56	3.67	0.46	-3.73	0.001**

Note. CN= category name, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t = t value,
Sig. = significance of difference, **p < .005

There was a significant difference between the results of the pre- and post-questionnaires in this category. The students' level of confidence increased from 3.07 to 3.67 in the post-questionnaire. This positive increase indicated that the students were more satisfied with their assignments at the end of the portfolio implementation

period, and thus they were more confident in writing. This result may show that the

students got used to completing assignments for their portfolios, and that is why their

satisfaction with their assignments got higher. It might also indicate that portfolios

helped learners to write better and to become more satisfied with their writing.

5. Awareness of progress and weak sides

The fifth category consisted of two items (31 and 32) in which the students

were asked whether they were aware of their progress in writing and whether they

could see their weak sides in writing. There considered to be a relation between

being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses and being confident. The mean scores

for this category were computed and the results of the comparison are displayed in

Table 17 below.

Table 17

The Comparison of the Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Items for Category 5

CN	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire			
	M	sd	M	sd	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Awareness of progress and weak sides	3.90	0.86	4.25	0.65	-1.54	0.13

Note. CN= category name, M = mean, sd = standard deviation, t = t value,
Sig. = significance of difference

As shown in the table above, the students' mean score for this category in the

pre-questionnaire was already high (3.90). Although the mean rose to 4.25 in the

post-questionnaire, there was no significant difference between the results. The

learners responded to the items positively indicating that they were aware of their

progress and weak sides in writing. The increase is still meaningful, since the

students were more aware of their strengths and weaknesses in writing after keeping

portfolios for six weeks. It is possible that portfolios have positive influence on making students become more conscious about their own weaknesses and strengths.

Summary

The attitude questionnaire interpretations show that there is a significant positive change in the experimental group's attitude towards writing compared to the control groups after keeping portfolios in writing classes for six weeks. The two control groups display a decrease in their attitudes towards writing after this period. On the other hand, from the interpretations of the confidence questionnaire, there is no significant difference among these groups. All of the three groups showed nearly the same amount of increase in confidence in writing after six weeks of portfolio implementation. However, the results of the t-tests run among the categories within the confidence questionnaire revealed that there were significant differences within some categories. In order to investigate the students' attitudes towards using portfolios in writing classes, the students in the experimental group were interviewed. The results will be discussed in the following section.

Analysis of the Interviews

This section consists of an analysis of the interviews conducted by the researcher with the students in the experimental group and the interview conducted with their teacher. The basic themes in these interviews were identified and categorized after they were transcribed from the audiotape.

Interviews with the Students

All of the participants in the experimental group were interviewed by the researcher. The interviews were conducted in Turkish to allow the students to

express themselves more clearly and freely. The main purpose of the interviews was to learn the perceptions of the students towards keeping portfolios in writing classes. The students' attitudes towards keeping portfolios were important since some researchers have identified a relationship between attitude and success (see Chapter 2). The researcher conducted interviews with all of the students, not with a representative sample group of students, in the experimental group since the data gathered would reveal more about what students think about their portfolios and the portfolio implementation period. The students were mainly asked about their feelings and ideas related to the portfolio activities. In order to analyze the data, the interviews were transcribed and then translated into English.

The interviews were analyzed to identify themes. The themes were determined according to questions prepared for the interviews. The following are the themes that will be discussed in this section:

1. What students think about keeping writing portfolios

2. Self-assessment and students' monitoring their own progress

3. Peer-assessment

4. Disadvantages of keeping portfolios

5. Students' ideas about continuing keeping portfolios

6. The relationship between the portfolio use and confidence in writing

These themes will be discussed below along with some parts of the transcriptions from the interviews. In order to use some sample excerpts from the transcriptions the students were given pseudonyms.

<u>What Students Think About Keeping Writing Portfolios</u>

When students were asked about their ideas related to keeping portfolios in writing classes, all of the students talked about it positively in general. Only two students talked a little bit more negatively about keeping portfolio compared to the rest of the class. The students' responses could be categorized as a) interest in writing classes, b) responsibility, c) discipline, d) using portfolios for future profession, e) enhancing vocabulary.

<u>a) Interest in Writing Classes</u>

As seen in the responses of the students, keeping portfolios in writing classes raised their interest in writing classes. They reported that they had started to take writing classes more seriously and favor writing in English more. Fourteen students explicitly mention this issue in their interviews.

> (Banu) I felt special because putting your assignments in a file was something different. When I look at other classes, I see that we are doing something different from them. This caused me to take the writing course more seriously.

> (Tamer) I tried to hand in my assignments on time. I got more interested in writing classes and other lessons. I started to do research for my writing assignments.

> (Salih) At the beginning of the school year, I did not want to deal with English. Especially, I did not want to write. I knew that it was important but I did not want to study. However, it is better now. My interest in writing has increased and I favor writing more. I am more positive towards writing now.

> (Recep) Keeping portfolios has been beneficial for us for our writing course since we started to take it more seriously.

The students' comments on their interest in writing support the results of attitude questionnaire. According to the results of the attitude survey, the

experimental group was the only class which displayed a positive increase in their

attitudes towards writing.

<u>b) Responsibility</u>

Another issue which was frequently mentioned by the students was

responsibility. They take the issue from two points of view. They believe that

keeping a portfolio requires responsibility, so in a way it increases their

responsibility towards writing classes. Six of the interviewed students drew attention

to the role of portfolio in promoting responsibility.

> (Buğra) Keeping a portfolio requires seriousness and tidiness. You start to be more careful since you are responsible towards your teacher and the writing course.

> (Uğur) In fact, it was a little bit difficult for me to hand in the assignments on time. I could not get used to it easily. On the other hand when I did not give the homework to my teacher, I felt miserable because my responsibility has increased.

> (Serap) Before I started keeping a portfolio, I was not very careful about doing my homework. I used to hand them in late or sometimes not at all. However, when I see my portfolio in front of me, I feel that I am responsible. I should write my assignments on time and put them in my portfolio. I was also responsible to my teacher.

The students' answers indicate that keeping a portfolio can make a student

feel more responsible to his or her teacher or for the lesson. The idea of keeping the

assignments in a file may increase the necessity of doing them. In fact, one of the

students, Uğur, was a student who did not speak very positively on behalf of keeping

a portfolio, but even he mentioned that not doing the homework made him uneasy

because of the responsibility. Another explanation for the increase of the

responsibility could be the consciousness raised by the study. The students might feel

more responsible, since they are aware that they are participating in a study.

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c) Discipline

One of the most frequently mentioned themes in the interviews was the discipline issue. Thirteen students indicated that they had to be more disciplined while keeping a portfolio. They think that keeping a portfolio teaches how to be more organized and disciplined, which is considered to be good while learning a new language. Some of the students complained about the difficulty in getting used to being disciplined, but still they found it very useful.

> (Sevim) Discipline is very important while keeping a portfolio. You learn how to be organized. However, some students who are not used to being disciplined can have difficulty while keeping portfolios.

> (Kemal) If I had not kept a portfolio, I would have lost my assignments. I know this because before keeping a portfolio, I would throw away the assignments after my teacher gave them back. Now, I am more organized and disciplined. I keep all my assignments in my file.

> (Gökhan) I was an untidy person. I used to put my assignments in different places after my teacher gave them back. I could not find them when I needed them. The portfolio helped me in this issue. I can find my assignments easily when I need them. It made me more disciplined.

> (Mehmet) I found keeping portfolio very beneficial because it brought discipline for my lessons and assignments. Especially, it is very good in this sense.

As the students responses indicate, the students think that keeping a portfolio caused a change in their study habits, and they became more disciplined, which could be interpreted as a natural result of keeping what you produce in writing in a file. Although some of the students were familiar with this idea, for most of them keeping their writing pieces in a file was very new. None of the students complained about the necessity of being more disciplined. Moreover, they listed it under the benefits of keeping a writing portfolio.

d) Using Portfolios for Future Professional Life

      Although this theme was only mentioned by two students, it was interesting to see the students very enthusiastic about using their portfolios in their professional lives. These two students were also very eager to continue keeping their portfolios in the long run. They even mentioned keeping portfolio after university.

> (Burak) Keeping a portfolio is a very important subject. In fact, one can keep a file for many reasons and he or she should keep throughout his or her life both for the professional life and for daily life in order to be more disciplined… Portfolio helped me to see my progress. I think it will also be very helpful in my professional life…You can present what you have done up to that time to the employers with your portfolio.

> (Hale) I would like to keep a portfolio for more than one year. In the future, I may want to look at what I wrote in the past…It can be helpful in my professional life since it teaches me to be organized and disciplined.

      The students' thoughts show that they consider the benefits of keeping a portfolio in the long run and from different dimensions. These two students were very willing to continue keeping a portfolio for a long period of time. This is, in fact, one of the underlying ideas behind using portfolios; the learners can make use of portfolios in many ways over a long period of time.

e) Enhancing Vocabulary

      The analysis of the interviews with the students revealed that ten students considered keeping portfolio helpful in learning vocabulary. This, in fact, was not one of the openly stated objectives of the portfolio, but it was one of the most frequently mentioned themes by the students. They mainly focused on the relationship between writing, keeping a portfolio and using the new words they have learnt. Below are some example excerpts from the students' transcriptions about vocabulary learning.

(Cemil) I sometimes take my portfolio and look at my assignments one by one. I examine them carefully. I see that I try to make sentences more detailed. I try to reflect what I have learnt both in grammar and vocabulary. I try to use the vocabulary I have recently learnt.

(Mehmet) In general I usually cannot learn and memorize vocabulary very easily. However, I can memorize them easily if I use them while writing my portfolio assignments. For example, I cannot forget "inequality" because I used it in one of my assignments. I wrote it many times while revising my paper, that's why I cannot forget it.

(Cenk) At the beginning while writing my assignment, words could not come easily to my mind. I was not good at using the words I have recently learnt. Day by day it became easier, now I can use more words, and I do not forget them easily because I used them.

(Demir) When you have a portfolio, you sometimes gaze into it. For example, before writing my assignment, I look at my portfolio and read my previous assignments. I try not to use the words I used in those assignments. I try to use different ones, so I use a dictionary while writing. I do not want to write the same word every time.

The students suggested that writing for their portfolios and looking at the assignments in their portfolios from time to time helped them to improve their vocabulary. Generally while writing, the students learn vocabulary as they use them. Here, according to Demir, the portfolio enabled him to examine his previous assignments and in that way he tried not to use the same words in his next assignments. He claimed that keeping a portfolio caused him to use a larger range of vocabulary and use the dictionary more frequently.

Self-assessment and Students' Monitoring Their Own Progress

During the interviews the students were asked about self-assessment. They talked about their ideas and feelings related to assessing their own writing and portfolios. All of the twenty students had positive feelings about self-assessment. The majority of the students indicated that they liked assessing their own writing and

portfolios. The students drew attention to the role of portfolio in providing them with the opportunity to compare their previous assignments and the latest one. They could easily see the differences between their assignments. The example transcriptions of students' statements about self assessment are presented below.

>(Şule) Keeping a portfolio helped me see my own mistakes. Writing reflection papers was also a kind of self critique… It was certain that I could not write very well at the beginning… I even could not make sentences. I did not like my own writing. However, with the portfolio, I took my assignments more seriously. Therefore, I believe that I have improved myself in writing.

>(Buğra) I believe that I have improved myself and progressed in writing. I can now use the forms that I did not know earlier. After I started to keep a portfolio, I started to feel that I have progressed more. I pay attention to the coherence and cohesion in a paragraph but I did not use to do it before.

>(Işıl) I feel that I have improved since I started keeping a portfolio. I write my assignments without delaying. I try to use the forms I learnt in the grammar lessons. I now try to use the new things that my teacher taught in the lesson in my writing. I do not say that I have improved because of portfolio, but it caused me to see this progress better.

>(Serap) I can easily evaluate myself with the help of my portfolio. I can easily find my assignments whenever I want. I can keep everything in my file. I benefited from it a lot. I can see that I have improved in writing… My first writing pieces were very simple. With the portfolio, I started to examine my previous assignments and tried to use different structures in each writing piece.

>(Hale) We can see our errors more clearly with the portfolio. Since we have recently started learning English, we can easily make mistakes. Our teacher corrects our mistakes, shows us our mistakes, and we correct them in the next draft. I think writing the same assignment for three times for my portfolio is very beneficial… When I look at my portfolio, I see that towards the end I started to use more complex sentences instead of simple ones. I can express myself better now.

>(Cenk) I showed progress in writing. Maybe not at the beginning but at the end I realized that portfolio activities were very important for me. I tried harder, I studied harder, and now I can see the result. There has been improvement in my writing.

The responses above and lots of other responses from the students suggest that students feel happy to see their progress in writing. Most of the students mentioned that keeping portfolio helped them a lot to realize this progress. They started to compare their assignments with previous ones. This can be interpreted as portfolio fulfilling one of its objectives, since allowing the students to examine their writing pieces was one of the purposes of using portfolios in writing classes for this study.

Peer-assessment

The students' portfolios were assessed by their peers towards the end of the portfolio implementation period. Although the students were not directly asked about their feelings and thoughts related to peer-assessment, fourteen students talked about this theme during the interviews. Only one of these students was negative about peer assessment. The rest talked very positively about being assessed by their friends. The following sections are taken from the interviews of the students who were happy to be evaluated by their friends. The last example is from the interview with the student who had a negative attitude towards peer-assessment.

> (Tamer) Being evaluated by my friends and by my teacher helped me a lot to see my weak sides. You can correct your mistakes and you can improve your writing.

> (Sevim) I can see everything in my file. This is very helpful and my friends' assessments were also very helpful. They helped me to see everything better.

> (Banu) Being assessed by others is sure very helpful. However, I would like to be assessed by people who do not know us. They could be more objective. For example, I was influenced by my friend's efforts in the writing classes, so I could not evaluate him negatively.

> (Buğra) I can see the things my friend cannot see, and my friend can see what I cannot see. Therefore, mistakes can be seen more clearly, so peer-assessment is necessary.

(Burak) If my classmate can see the progress in my writing, which I
can see, I become very happy.

(Serkan) I did not like seeing my mistakes in the assignments that I
put into my portfolio. Being evaluated is not something nice, either.
However, true comments can be good.

As revealed from these comments, the students believed in the usefulness of

peer-assessment. They expressed that their classmates helped them to see the

mistakes that they ignored or the ones that they could not notice. The students also

mentioned that when they shared same thoughts or positively evaluated by their

friends, they became more motivated.

Disadvantages of Keeping a Portfolio

There were different disadvantages mentioned by the participants during the

interviews. According to the analysis of the transcriptions, eighteen students

indicated a disadvantage for keeping a portfolio. The most frequently indicated

negative aspect about portfolios was the topics of the portfolio assignments. The

topics for the portfolio assignments were assigned by the teacher, sometimes with

two options. Six students complained about the topics and said that it was very hard

for them to write about a topic which was not familiar to them. Some suggested

having more options for topic choice.

The other disadvantages discussed by the students were forgetting to bring

the portfolio to school, lack of time to complete the assignments, being obliged to be

tidy, the stress caused by the feeling of responsibility, the necessity to write the

assignments more than one time, and carrying the portfolio to school. One student

complained about using the dictionary too much while completing his homework.

Another student complained about not writing well enough although she believed

that she could write better. One of the students just mentioned the noise in his

dormitory as a disadvantage while he was writing in his room. Some of these

disadvantages will be displayed below.

> (Banu) The only problem I had with my portfolio was forgetting it at the dormitory. I wanted to have my file with me in the classes, but it was a problem when I forgot to bring it.

> (Şule) In fact, nothing about the portfolio was difficult for me. However, while writing on some of the topics, nothing came to my mind. Maybe I did not know anything about that topic, and I had to do research. I realized that I had to do research then. It was difficult for me to write at those times.

> (Serkan) I am not a tidy person, so keeping a portfolio was a little bit difficult for me. That is the only disadvantage I can mention.

> (Recep) The thing that I liked least about keeping a portfolio was the necessity to bring it to the class. It was difficult to carry it, yet still I prefer keeping it not the teacher.

The students' comments do not include very serious disadvantages of keeping

portfolios. They are usually related to the practical aspects. Some comments are

basically related to writing, such as the topic choice.

Students' Ideas about Continuing Keeping Portfolios

When participants were asked if they wanted to go on keeping their portfolios

and recommend it to the other students at the preparatory school, nineteen students

answered the questions positively. One student did not want to continue keeping his

portfolio, and the section of his transcription related to this question will be given

below. The other excerpts are from the interviews of the students who were willing

to go on keeping portfolios and recommended it to other students.

> (Bülent) No I do not want to continue. I do not like writing on separate pieces of paper and filing them. I like writing in a notebook. I can keep my own notebook.

> (Kemal) Yes I will continue keeping my portfolio. I think all students should keep portfolios. It is very useful both for the teacher and the students.

(Serap) Keeping a portfolio has really been very useful for me. I will definitely go on keeping it. I strongly advise it to other students. With the help of the portfolio, they will improve in writing. They will have more responsibility towards their lessons.

(Buğra) Yes I would like to go on keeping my portfolio. I think the other students will benefit from it, too. It is necessary to monitor the progress. Keeping a portfolio is a responsibility.

The responses of the participants suggest that nearly all of the students liked the idea of keeping their portfolios in the future. Some of the students insisted on continuing using portfolios even though their teacher did not ask for it.

The relationship between the Portfolio Use and Confidence in Writing

Although the participants were not asked questions about the relationship between their level of confidence in writing and keeping a portfolio, eight students mentioned the influence of keeping portfolio on their confidence in writing. Some of these students talked about some aspects related to the items in the questionnaire which were accepted by the researcher as related to confidence in writing. The illustrating transcribed sections are presented below.

(Şule) I believe that I have progressed in writing. At the very beginning I was afraid of writing. I used to ask my friends to help me. I was not sure about anything; therefore, I used to ask them. However, I can easily decide on what to write by myself. I feel relaxed and I am not that much afraid of making mistakes…I can say that portfolio has been very beneficial for me. First of all, I am more confident now. I used to think that I could not write. Writing in English seemed impossible for me. I was always asking my friends who were good at English. Now, I only ask for their ideas. I write by myself.

(Işıl) Doing the homework in a more disciplined way and sharing the portfolio with friends made me feel the responsibility, but this is in the good sense. When you are more responsible, you work harder. This made me more fluent, comfortable, and confident in writing.

(Hale) As I started to write more, I began to write in a more relaxed and confident way. I believed that I could improve my English. This made me feel better.

(Burak) I have improved in writing and in English. With the help of the portfolio, I am more aware of this improvement. I have not attended a preparatory school before, but now I can challenge a student who has attended prep classes before. Especially in writing I trust in myself, and we can compete.

(Recep) I think that writing is a good lesson. I did not use to like writing. I still do not like it totally but certainly there has been a change in my attitude towards writing. At the beginning, I did not feel confident, yet in the course of time I felt a little bit more confident. I am not afraid of writing and writing assignments are not so challenging any more.

(Salih) When people write more, they get used to writing. You can feel more comfortable while writing if you keep on writing. I was afraid of making mistakes before, but now I am more comfortable while writing. Keeping my writing pieces in a file helped me more. I can understand where I made errors better. I can see my mistakes better. I am not afraid any more.

As seen in the students' comments, the more they write, the more confident they feel in writing. Time and practice may increase the level of students' confidence in writing. The role of portfolio in this frame can be summarized as displaying both the students' progress and mistakes. As the students state, seeing their own mistakes generally has a positive effect on their writing. By keeping a portfolio, the students may become more aware of their errors and their improvement. Realizing both the weak and strong sides may have positive effects on students. The students may feel more comfortable, relaxed, fluent and confident as they mentioned during their interviews. This may be only one of the benefits of using portfolios in writing classes as a self-assessment tool.

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Analysis of the Students' Reflection Papers and Peer-and Self-Assessment Sheets

The reflection papers, peer-and self-assessment sheets that the students completed for their portfolios were used as the secondary source of data for this study. They were analyzed in order to find out how students reacted to writing reflection papers and taking part in peer assessment and self-assessment. In other words, what the students thought about keeping writing portfolios as a self-assessment tool could be understood from what they have written in their reflections and peer-and self-assessment sheets.

During the six-week implementation period, the students in the experimental group were expected to write two reflection papers and put them in their portfolios. However, some of the students did not fulfill this requirement. They did not write reflections, probably because they were not used to reflecting their own ideas and feelings. It was the first time that they were asked to write reflection papers in their writing course. On the other hand some students took it seriously and completed two reflection papers. Although the students were told that they could write reflections in Turkish, one student wrote the reflections in English. Generally the students wrote about how they felt about writing and whether they liked that particular assignment or not. Sample transcriptions from the learners' reflections are presented below:

Sevim's reflection paper:

I liked this assignment because I did not work too hard while writing it. I did not do any research to complete this assignment. I was very happy while writing since I love the person I wrote about. It was not difficult to write about her. It was very enjoyable. I wanted to write very much, but I could not remember the details. I think I prepared a better outline for this assignment than my previous one…

Salih's reflection paper:

I did not like this assignment because I could not write much on the topic. Nothing came to my mind. Then, I got angry with myself, since I do not do any research but just use the dictionary. I prefer writing on the subjects that I have lots of things to say about. For example, if I can imagine a lot of things on the topic the teacher assigned, then the topic is appropriate for me. I feel very happy while writing on those topics. I had difficulty while writing this assignment since it was not interesting for me. I made a lot of grammar mistakes. I do not think that this is better than my previous assignment…

Kemal's reflection paper:

For this assignment, I wrote about something I can do well and it was football. I did not have any difficulties while completing the assignment because I was writing about something I liked very much. I did not need to do any research. All I needed was to write the things in my mind. On the other hand, while completing other assignments, I usually can not find many things to write, but I am trying to fill this gap slowly…

Bülent's reflection paper:

I like writing very much, but since I do not like reading, I have difficulty in finding ideas related to the topic. In addition, I do not do research and I do not like it. However, I feel very happy while writing as if I had accomplished a very important task. I really love writing. This assignment was a bit easier than the previous one. Still, I made grammar mistakes. Yet, I can form longer sentences and join the sentences in a better way than before.

As the transcriptions above illustrate, the students mostly preferred talking about their feelings related to writing and their writing assignments. They mentioned the influence of topic choice on their writing and whether they did research to complete the assignments or not. When it is taken into consideration that this was the first experience of the students about writing reflection papers, the results indicate that the students were able to reflect on their own writing and express their feelings and thoughts. This may be interpreted as a positive reaction of the students towards keeping writing portfolios as a self-assessment tool.

One of the elements of the portfolio system used in this study was peer-assessment. Towards the end of the six-week period, the students in the experimental group completed peer-assessment sheets prepared for the study. The students were asked to evaluate their friends' portfolios especially focusing on the growth that their friends displayed. The students' answers in the peer-assessment sheets revealed that they could follow the progress of their classmates in writing. They made some suggestions for their friends and emphasized their weak and strong sides in writing by looking at the portfolios. The transcriptions below are taken from the students' peer-assessment sheets.

For Hale's portfolio:

…She tries to write long paragraphs and this effort shows that she is trying to improve her writing…She did not give importance to cohesion and coherence in her earlier assignments, but in her later assignments I can see that she put more emphasis on cohesion and coherence…Her portfolio was well-organized. This was one of her strong sides…

For Burak's portfolio:

…He did not repeat the mistakes that he did in his earlier assignments in the later ones. Therefore, he has progressed…He completed all of the assignments and took them very seriously. I can say that his performance in writing is very good…

For Gökhan's portfolio:

He prepares an outline for the assignments, so this shows that he gives importance to the writing homework. I can say that he is progressing in writing because he makes fewer mistakes towards the end…I think that with each assignment, he gets better at writing…

For Işıl's portfolio:

She made lots of grammar mistakes in her first assignments in the portfolio, but later on I see that she decreased her number of mistakes…She is good at using conjunctions especially in the last assignment. She wrote longer and made very few grammar mistakes. I think that she has progressed a lot.

The sample transcriptions from the students' peer-assessment sheets indicate that the students took participating in peer-assessment seriously. They showed effort to evaluate their friends' progress in writing by looking at their portfolios. One possible explanation of their efforts might be that they were positive towards peer-assessment and since peer-assessment was a part of the portfolio system, this could be interpreted as their positive attitude towards keeping writing portfolios as a self-assessment tool.

Another secondary source of data was the learners' self-assessment sheets. The students were required to evaluate their portfolios and express their feelings related to keeping portfolios at the end of the portfolio implementation period. Their responses in the self-assessment sheets revealed that the students were mostly positive about keeping writing portfolios. The students also assessed their own progress they have displayed since they started keeping portfolios. The students' responses could be accepted as an indication of the significance they attached to self-assessment activity. Below are sample transcriptions from the learners' self-assessment sheets:

> (Işıl) When I started keeping a portfolio, I saw that I could be disciplined and organized…I think that I have improved a lot since the beginning. There are differences between my first and last assignments in terms of grammar, number of sentences, and using conjunctions. The difference is very clear…I cannot still express my feelings very well, but I become more successful with every assignment.

> (Cemil) All my assignments are together in the portfolio. Therefore, I could easily access to them whenever I wanted. I became organized…Now I try to make more elaborated sentences. I try to use everything I learnt in my paragraphs… I feel more confident about writing in English. Although at a slow pace, I feel that I have progressed…When I look at my portfolio, I can criticize myself…

(Şule) Keeping a portfolio helped me see my mistakes and become more disciplined…Although I still make mistakes, I feel more confident while writing…My sentences were very simple at the beginning but now they are more complex…After I started keeping a portfolio, I became aware of my weak sides in writing and I am trying to improve them…

(Mehmet) I had not kept a portfolio before. It is a really beneficial activity which makes you more organized…I realize that I have improved in writing because I used more conjunctions and different vocabulary in later assignments…I feel very good about my writing performance, I am more confident. Making fewer mistakes makes me feel relaxed…

(Banu) Even when I am bored, I can look at my portfolio and go through what I have written before…I am trying to write more developed paragraphs and make complex sentences… I can see my weak sides such as my grammar mistakes…I find writing enjoyable and relaxing…

The students' responses revealed that examining their portfolios enabled them to monitor their progress in writing. Generally, the students thought that they had improved in writing since they started keeping a portfolio. In addition, the students mentioned in the self-assessment sheets that being able to monitor their growth contributed to their confidence in writing. It might be concluded that they had positive reactions towards using portfolios as a self-assessment tool. In short, the students responded positively to writing reflection papers and being involved in peer-and self-assessment activities.

Interview with the Instructor

The participant instructor, who was the teacher of the writing course for the experimental group, was interviewed by the researcher. She had implemented portfolio in her writing classes for six weeks. The interview was conducted in English since the teacher and the researcher did not find it necessary to conduct it in

Turkish. The interview was recorded and then was transcribed from audiotape in order to analyze the themes. These themes will be discussed separately below. The analyzed themes from the interview with the teacher are as follows:

1. Teacher's perception of portfolio as a self-assessment tool

2. Peer-assessment

3. The applicability of portfolios as a self-assessment tool at ZKU preparatory school

4. Benefits of keeping a writing portfolio

5. Perceptions of using the portfolio as an assessment tool

6. Possible problems of portfolio implementation for the preparatory school

Teacher's Perception of Portfolios as a Self-assessment Tool

At the beginning of the interview the teacher briefly summarized the portfolio activities that she did in her writing classes. She thought that the portfolio activities brought a bit more work for her students.

> …They have written their assignments for two times and they have received feedback from me for two times. They completed four assignments during this period. This was a hard work for the students…

Her interpretations of the portfolio activities reveal that she could look at these activities from the students' point of view. Since the students were expected to complete extra assignments for the portfolio study, she emphasized that the students had to study extra for the writing course.

Although portfolio study was hard work for the students, the instructor stated very positive responses for portfolio use as a self-assessment tool. She favored students' assessing their own writing performances very much. She indicated that students performed better in self-assessment than she expected and this had a

positive influence on students' writing performance. She expressed her thoughts

about using portfolio as a self-assessment tool as follows:

> I believe that using portfolios as a self-assessment tool in writing course was very helpful. It helped students to see their own progress. While writing the assignment I gave them, they could check their previous assignment. They told me that while writing the new assignment, they were looking at their old assignments in order not to make the same mistakes. They try to do their best by comparing the new assignment to the other ones. The portfolio system helped them see their progress. They know the rules about how to write a good paragraph, and they want to apply all the rules at once in the first draft, but usually they cannot do it. When they see that the third is better or it is really good, they can understand that they are progressing.

The instructors' comments demonstrate that keeping portfolios provided

students with the opportunity to become aware of their improvement in writing. The

students could compare their new assignment with the previous ones while writing it.

This caused them to be more careful about their errors and mistakes. Besides, the

awareness of improvement was also beneficial for the students. One of the points

that the teacher mentioned was the students' effort to write the best or at least very

well in their first draft. She states that this is not realistic, and the students realized it

with the help of the portfolio.

> When I checked their self-assessment sheets, I clearly saw that they really assessed themselves successfully. They were able to monitor their success, their own negative sides and positive sides, and what he or she did in writing especially during this period. They openly see their progress or in other words they can see the process openly. The students' performance in filling the self-assessment sheets amazed me. They were like professional writers and they criticized themselves professionally. I believe that they really reflected themselves very well on their papers. I really can say this.

The instructor frequently indicated the benefits of self-assessment for students. Her comments show that the teacher believed in the use of portfolios as a self-assessment tool.

Peer-assessment

The instructor was very content with the results of self-assessment, and she talked about peer assessment activity that she did with her students in the classroom. She stated that she had been surprised with the peer assessment activity since she had not expected students to take it very seriously. She reflected her amazement as:

> Moreover, the students assessed their peers' portfolios. The results of peer assessment activity were really good and beneficial. The students took their friends' comments very seriously as if they were my feedback. In addition, they were very serious while giving feedback to their friends. I was really happy and shocked when I checked their peer assessment sheets. They wrote wonderful comments for their classmates.

As seen in the comments above, the instructor was very positive about peer assessment. She admitted that the results were better than she anticipated. She mentioned two important aspects of peer assessment: giving feedback to friends and evaluating the feedback from friends. The teacher observed students as being very serious in both of these dimensions. She was happy with results and attitudes of students towards peer assessment.

The Applicability of Portfolios as a Self-Assessment Tool at ZKU Preparatory School

When the instructor was asked if it were possible to use portfolio as a self-assessment tool at ZKU preparatory school, she stated that it would be better for all students. She gave her students' reactions for the self-assessment activity as an example and concluded that the students could benefit from it a lot.

Yes. As my students were able to see and assess their performances in writing by the help of their portfolios in this implementation period, I believe that the other students at this school can also be aware of their performances in writing if we can successfully apply the portfolio system. In the long run it would be better I think. During the whole term the students can have chances to see the improvement in their writing or at least their attempts to write better… we should implement the portfolio system for students at all levels here. We had better include it in our future writing syllabus.

As the teacher comments above, she is positive towards using portfolio as a self-assessment tool in writing classes for all levels. She demonstrated her belief that all students can assess their performances in writing since her students showed a good performance in self-assessment. The instructor focused on the role of portfolios in enabling learners to realize and assess their own performances in writing. She suggested that portfolios provide students with opportunity to see their improvement better. She emphasized the importance of portfolio in the long run.

Benefits of Keeping a Writing Portfolio

The instructor was asked if she found using portfolios in writing classes beneficial or not. Her response to this question revealed that she found keeping portfolio very beneficial for her students. She stated that portfolio enabled the students to see both their weak and strong points. Moreover, keeping portfolio made the students more confident in writing because they were able to monitor their progress, and they could manage to complete the portfolio assignments successfully. Her comments on the benefits of keeping a portfolio from the point of students are as follows:

Yes, because it really helped students to see their mistakes and weak points in writing. I think that it is would be beneficial for all students especially in the long run. Keeping portfolios helped them to become more confident in writing… From the interaction in the classroom I can say that when I was giving them their first assignment, they were afraid. They were not sure of themselves

whether they could manage to complete the assignment and write it for three times. I could see that they were hesitating, but for the following assignments I did not see this hesitation. They became more confident and I think writing became easier for them… The feeling of success, maybe, made them feel so. However, the role of the portfolio in making them aware of this success or progress is undeniable.

As the instructor's comments demonstrate, she believes that keeping a portfolio provides a student with more than one benefit. The students can see strong and weak points in their writing. Moreover, the teacher indicates that completing the portfolio activities and assignments gave them a feeling of success and confidence. She pointed that the students' fear of writing disappeared as they kept on writing for their portfolios.

Perceptions of Using the Portfolio as an Assessment Tool

The instructor's reaction to the idea of using portfolio as an assessment tool rather than as a self-assessment tool was negative rather than positive. She emphasized the importance of portfolio in providing the students with the opportunity of assessing their writing performances. On the other hand, she stated that the portfolio could be used as an assessment tool because it might be more effective then with some students. Her response illustrates her point of view related to using the portfolio as an alternative assessment tool very clearly.

First of all, I can say that I do not want the portfolio system to be an assessment tool for the teachers because the university students should be responsible for their own work. They should know that this is good for them. However, it sometimes depends on the personality of the student, and the students may not take the portfolio system serious when you are not using it as a teacher-assessment tool. Therefore, when used as an assessment tool, all students may take it serious. However, in my opinion, without the pressure of being graded, the students must know their responsibilities.

The instructor noted that the university students should take responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, she was not in favor of using portfolios only as an assessment tool. Although she admitted that it might make some students give more importance to portfolio activities, she did not totally agree to use portfolio as a teacher-assessment tool.

Possible Problems of Portfolio Implementation for the Preparatory School

When the instructor was asked about the problems she anticipated in the future implementation of the portfolio system, she explained the situation by giving examples from her own experience during the study. She drew attention to two problems from the point of teachers as time consuming and possible problems with irresponsible students.

> The only problem for me during this period was the time problem. It really took a lot of time. I can say that it was time consuming and I had to deal with, cope with lots of paper work. It was a loaded paper work. It was tiring because of these two reasons. These were the only problems I faced with. For the students, in terms of students, my students did not cause any problems for me. However, in general some students may not be so much responsible and disciplined. We may have problems with those kinds of students at the beginning of the implementation period but only at the beginning maybe. Yet, I still insist that we should imply the portfolio system for all levels of students here.

It is clear from her comments that the teacher expects some problems for the teachers in the implementation of a portfolio system. Nevertheless, she does not think that these are very serious problems since she showed her insistence on including portfolio implementation into the writing syllabus.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In short, in the qualitative section of the analysis, two kinds of analysis were carried out. In the first analysis, the themes in the students' interviews were

identified and discussed. In the second one, the interview with the instructor was analyzed. The interview results of both the students in the experimental group and their instructor indicated that they were positive towards using portfolios in writing classes. Their responses in the interviews showed that they favored keeping portfolios. The students and the instructor also mentioned about some problems or disadvantages of the portfolio system, but they were all very positive towards it rather than negative.

Conclusion

This chapter reported the results of the pre- and post-questionnaires and interviews which were conducted to investigate the effect of using portfolio as a self-assessment tool on students' confidence in writing and on their attitudes towards writing in English along with the teachers' and students perceptions related to using writing portfolios. The analysis of attitude questionnaire revealed positive significant difference in the experimental group students' attitudes towards writing when compared to the results of the control group students' attitudes. However, the results of the confidence questionnaire did not display any significant differences between the groups and within groups.

The analysis of the qualitative data showed that students and the instructor shared positive attitudes towards the portfolio system implemented for six weeks. Although the portfolio implementation period did not prove to be effective in increasing students' level of confidence in writing, it promoted students positive feelings towards writing in general. According to the qualitative data results, the use of portfolio as a self-assessment tool in writing classes was perceived as positive

more than negative by the participants. The benefits of using a portfolio system in writing classes were mentioned both by the instructor and the students.

In the next chapter, recommendations and implications will be presented within the light of the results obtained in the analysis of both the quantitative and the qualitative data in this chapter.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study investigated the effect of keeping portfolios in writing classes on increasing confidence in writing and on students' perceptions about writing in general. This study was conducted with three groups of pre-intermediate level students studying English in the Preparatory School at Zonguldak Karaelmas University. One of the groups was the experimental group and the other two groups were the control groups. There were twenty participant students in each group. The participants in the experimental group kept portfolios in writing classes during six weeks of treatment while the control groups followed their current writing syllabus which did not include any portfolio activities.

Two questionnaires were administered to all three groups at the beginning of the study. Then, the portfolio implementation period started for the experimental group. The students completed four assignments for their portfolios in three drafts and the students were engaged in peer-assessment and self-assessment activities at the end of the period. The control group students completed their regular assignments in one draft and were not engaged in peer-assessment nor self-assessment activities. When the treatment ended, the same questionnaires were given to the students as post-questionnaires. In addition to the pre- and post-questionnaires, interviews were

conducted with the students in the experimental group. The participant instructor was also interviewed.

The results of the two pre- and post-questionnaires were entered into computer and analyzed using SPSS version 10.0. ANOVA and *t*-tests were run in order to compare the results within and among the groups. The themes in the interviews were identified after they were transcribed.

This chapter includes the findings and discussion, the pedagogical implications, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

Findings and Discussion

The results of the statistical analysis showed no significant changes in increasing confidence in writing by keeping portfolios after the six-week treatment. However, there was a significant positive increase in students' attitudes towards writing at the end of the portfolio implementation period. Data analyses addressed the four main research questions of the study. The results are discussed in the order of these questions.

Research Question 1: Will the students' attitudes towards writing in English be improved as a result of keeping a portfolio?

In order to answer the first research question an attitude survey (Topuz, 2004) was given to the experimental group and the control groups as pre- and post questionnaires. The average mean values for the control groups and the experimental group in the pre-questionnaire were similar. After the treatment the same questionnaire was administered again to detect any changes in the students' attitudes towards writing. The post-questionnaires results indicated that the mean values for control groups decreased whereas the mean value for the experimental group

increased after the portfolio implementation period. Therefore, a significant difference was found between the experimental and the control groups when pre- and post questionnaires were compared. The significant difference also occurred when the experimental group's pre- and post-questionnaires' results were compared. Therefore, it is possible to state that the significant increase in attitude was not simply a result of the decrease in the attitudes of the control groups but a probable result of using portfolios in the experimental group.

The analysis of the quantitative data revealed that there was a positive improvement in attitudes of the students in the experimental group. Moreover, this indication was also supported by the qualitative data in the study. The analysis of the interviews conducted with the students in the experimental group showed that the students started to favor writing more after they began keeping portfolios. Fourteen students out of twenty reported that they started to be more interested in writing classes while they were keeping portfolios. Both the questionnaire results and analysis of the interviews indicated that a positive increase was observed in students' attitudes in the experimental group after a six-week portfolio treatment period.

The improvement in learners' attitudes towards writing can be attributed to the portfolio implementation. Keeping a portfolio may have positive influence on students' perceptions about writing. Since students were expected to complete their assignments in three drafts, the learners might develop this positive attitude towards process approach to writing. The individuals in the experimental group used to hand in their assignment in only one draft, like the students in the control group, before the study. This new approach may have changed their ideas about writing in English.

Not being expected to produce a perfect piece of writing for the first draft can make students develop positive feelings about writing.

Another explanation for the improvement in students' attitudes might be having their consciousness raised by the study. The learners may have become more aware of their feelings and thoughts about writing as they were explicitly asked about them. In addition to having their awareness raised, the learners may have felt an obligation to answer the questions more positively in the questionnaire.

The positive change in students' attitudes towards writing can be beneficial in terms of learners' motivation. As Masgoret and Gardner (2003) maintain, learners can become more motivated and show more effort in learning when they have positive attitudes towards learning. The improvement in individuals' perceptions about writing may result in an increase in their motivations in writing. Besides, research shows attitudes affect success. The results of the study carried out by Powell (1984) showed that students' attitudes towards their learning affected their success in writing.

Research Question 2: Will the students who keep portfolios and thus assess their own progress show a higher confidence in writing than the students who do not keep portfolios?

The students' level of confidence in writing was explored by a questionnaire prepared by the researcher. The comparison of pre- and post questionnaire results showed that there was an increase in students' level of confidence in all three groups. However, this increase was not significant because both the experimental group and the control groups displayed nearly the same amount of change. The average mean

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values of the groups were close to each other both in the pre-and post-treatment questionnaire.

The analysis of the pre- and post-questionnaires displayed no significant difference among the groups. On the other hand, eight of the interviewed students reported that they have become more confident in writing since they started to keep portfolios, without being asked about it. According to the interview interpretations, students felt less apprehension about making mistakes and more comfort while completing their assignments. They added that being aware of their progress in writing made them feel more confident while writing.

Although it was not a significant difference, the analysis of the quantitative data revealed that there was an increase in the confidence level of the experimental group. The interpretation of the interviews also supported this result. However, this increase cannot be completely associated with the portfolio implementation since the confidence level of the control groups increased nearly in the same amount, too. Keeping a portfolio might have affected students' confidence in writing as indicated by some students but the increase may not result from the treatment. Students may feel more confident in writing as they write more. Time can be an important factor when affective domains in writing are considered. In the literature it is suggested that making changes on affective domains in writing is not very easy and takes a long period of time. The six-week implementation period may not be enough to change students' level of confidence significantly.

Research Question 3: How will the students respond to keeping writing portfolios as a self- assessment tool?

The students were generally positive about the portfolio and believed that the portfolio was beneficial for them. The interpretation of the interviews implied that students were able to see the benefit of keeping portfolios from different dimensions. Eighteen of the twenty students explicitly mentioned that they liked keeping their assignments in their portfolios and doing portfolio activities. Some individuals reported that their feeling of responsibility and discipline increased during the treatment period. Others suggested that keeping a portfolio was also influential on enhancing their vocabulary learning.

The analysis of the students' reflection papers, peer-assessment sheets, and self-assessment sheets also supported the interpretations of the interviews. The students displayed a positive attitude towards peer-and self-assessment. Although some students did not write reflection papers, it should not be forgotten that these were pre-intermediate students and that they did not use to neither write reflections nor take part in peer- and self-assessment before. However, they took completing peer- and self-assessment activities very seriously, which might be interpreted as their valuing the portfolio as a self-assessment tool.

The students mentioned some disadvantages of using portfolios but the disadvantages mentioned by the learners were less than the advantages mentioned in the interviews. Even most of the aspects shown as disadvantages by students were not directly related to portfolio activities.

Although self-assessment was not something the students in the experimental group were used to, they all expresses positive feelings about self-assessment. They

liked being actively involved in assessing their own writing and portfolios. This finding affirms the statement by Hirvela and Pierson (2000) that the portfolio provides opportunities for 'learner-directed' evaluation which prevents learners from just being an object of the assessment and makes them participate in the evaluation process actively and creatively. The students were aware that the portfolio enabled them to compare their assignments within drafts and with each other openly. Self-assessment caused positive feelings about writing in students' perceptions and more awareness in learners about their progress.

The positive perceptions related to portfolio keeping may have resulted from the benefits it brought to students. Without the fear of being graded by an authority and being able to assess their own writing might motivate students. Using portfolios as a self-assessment tool in writing classes may promote students' awareness about their own writing performances. The positive attitude of students towards using portfolios can also be associated with the feeling of novelty. The students could have developed this positive attitude, since they were introduced with something new which might disturb the monotony of their regular classes. However, the interview interpretations showed that almost all of the students were willing to continue keeping portfolios. This might be an indication of students' awareness about the benefits of portfolios in the long term.

In general, all the students in the experimental group can be accepted as being positive towards using portfolios as a self-assessment tool in writing classes. The learners agreed on the benefits of the portfolio which helped them see their progress and mistakes in writing much better. As self-assessment was shown as a key learning strategy for autonomous language learning by Harris (1997) and it is one of the main

concerns of the portfolio, the positive reactions of the students' may promote their autonomy in writing classes.

Research Question 4: What are the attitudes of instructors' towards using portfolios in writing classes? Do they view portfolios as a useful tool in writing?

In order to explore the answer to this research question, the participant instructor was interviewed by the researcher. The analysis of the interview with the instructor was accepted to represent the instructors' views about using portfolios, since she was the only teacher who implemented portfolios in her writing class. The interpretation of the interview indicated that her perception about using portfolios was also positive in general.

The teacher believed that using the portfolio as a self-assessment tool in writing classes was very beneficial. Like her students, she told the researcher that portfolios played an important role in making learners monitor their own progress. She thought that her students would not be so successful in assessing themselves and in peer-assessment activities. She emphasized the importance of both assessment methods in educational setting. As Mabry (1999) asserts that formal educational settings lack opportunities for self-assessment, the teacher suggested that the students were not allowed to assess their own work in the current educational system, so she was a supporter of the idea of self-assessment in education. During the interview, the instructor frequently mentioned the benefits of enabling individuals to assess their own performances.

The portfolio was perceived as a tool to encourage independent learning by the instructor. She suggested that while writing a new assignment, students started to compare it with their previous assignments and tried not to make the same mistakes.

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According to the interpretation of the interview, the instructor believed that the portfolio encouraged students to do their best and to write better. She also reported that portfolios enabled learners to see their development over time and promoted collaborative learning with peer-assessment activities. She found her students very successful both in providing feedback for their friends and taking their peers' comments seriously. The interview results supported the claim by Hirvela and Pierson (2000) that portfolios are not merely used for assessment purposes, but learning purposes as well.

Another point that emerged from the interview with the instructor was that she did not favor using portfolios as an assessment tool in writing classes. However, in the literature, the portfolio is accepted as an important assessment tool in education since it could achieve fair, reliable, and valid assessment (see Chapter 2). This finding is also contrary to the results of Oğuz (2003), which showed that the majority of the instructors expressed positive feeling about portfolio-based assessment since they could assess student performance directly, accurately and fairly through portfolios.

The interview interpretation revealed that the instructor was not very keen on using portfolios as an alternative assessment tool. She explained the reason by mentioning that being graded would make students feel stressed and under pressure. Moreover, she wanted learners to take responsibility for their own learning since she asserted that portfolios promoted the feeling of responsibility. However, she was not completely against the idea of portfolio-based assessment. She insisted on including the portfolio system in the syllabus and implementing it for all levels. The instructor's enthusiasm about using portfolios can be based on her positive

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experiences during the study. She also interpreted her students' reactions as being very positive towards keeping portfolios.

In conclusion, the attitudes of both students and the instructor were highly positive towards using portfolios. This positive attitude was supported by the significant increase in students' attitudes towards writing. The students' perceptions about writing changed in a positive way. On the other hand, no significant difference was found in students' level of confidence in writing. Although an increase was observed in their level of confidence, it could not be attributed to portfolio use. The increase may be related to time and practice in general.

<center>Pedagogical Implications</center>

This section discusses pedagogical implications for the curricula of writing classes at preparatory schools. Because of the positive reactions of students and the teacher, I can recommend integrating portfolio use into the curriculum as a self-assessment tool. However, it should not be forgotten that careful and systematic preparation is necessary to integrate portfolios into the curriculum. Self-assessment procedure may yield beneficial results for learners, especially when they receive training to assess their writing performance.

In order to promote autonomous learning at ZKU, portfolios can be used in writing classes. The students may become more responsible for their own learning. Judging their own weaknesses and strengths may increase their interest in their performances. Portfolios can become an intersection of assessment and instruction as Paulson at. al (1991) suggest. The learners may feel a pressure to write better since the portfolio enables them to compare their writing pieces with each other easily. In

addition, the learners may be more motivated towards writing classes, since they can notice their progress.

The peer-assessment and self-assessment activities were favored by almost all students and the teacher. Portfolios could be used to make use of these activities in writing classes. The students may develop a more critical eye for their friends' performances and apply this insight to their own performances. They may also gain more information on the feedback issue. Giving feedback for their peers and evaluating their comments may improve their perceptions related to writing process.

The confidence level of the students was not influenced by portfolio implementation but the students' affective domains should not be neglected. As some learners suggested they were afraid of making mistakes while writing. Therefore, teachers might be more sensitive to students' apprehension about making mistakes or not producing a good writing piece. Teachers may help learners to lower this apprehension and can encourage them about their progress. The learners may become more motivated when they can see their improvement.

The results of the attitude survey can be shared with instructors at the preparatory school. The positive increase in students' attitudes towards writing might form a rationale to implement portfolios in writing classes. Since the relationship of attitude and success is accepted by some researchers, improving learners' attitudes could be an important method to increase their success in writing. Another pedagogical implication can be interpreted as the positive reactions of learners towards completing their writing assignments in three drafts. The process approach to writing may have affected students' views about writing. Therefore, students may

be allowed to complete their writing assignments in multi drafts rather than one draft causing them to revise their papers more than once.

Although this study focused on using portfolios as a self-assessment tool, portfolio-based assessment may also be implemented at preparatory school of English at ZKU. In order to assess students' writing performances in a more reliable, valid and fair way, portfolio assessment could be chosen. Rather than grading students at one sitting with only one draft, portfolios can be an alternative assessment of writing performance. In short, in the overall picture, using portfolios in writing classes may be suggested as an important tool in terms of learning and assessment purposes.

<div align="center">Limitations of the Study</div>

There were a number of limitations in this study in terms of investigating the effect of portfolio use on increasing confidence in writing and improving perceptions related to writing. First of all, the research had to be completed in a very limited amount of time. The six-week period was not enough to look at the differences before and after the treatment.

Another limitation of the study was that it was carried out with only one level of students, pre-intermediate. There were classes at three levels of proficiency: pre-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate, at the preparatory school at ZKU. Hence, all levels could have participated in the study. The results could be more easily generalized, as it would have been related to more levels of students.

In addition to the limitations above, the students in the experimental group may have felt pressure of the study and acted accordingly. They might have given positive responses in the questionnaires and interviews in order to help the

researcher. Furthermore, they might have given positive reactions due to their positive feelings about their teacher. The researcher observed that there was a positive interaction between the experimental group and the participant instructor before the study.

One of the questionnaires used in this study was a confidence in writing questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared and piloted by the researcher. Exploring the students' level of confidence in writing via a questionnaire can have some disadvantages. The factors included in the questionnaire might not be directly related to confidence or some items may not be affected by portfolio implementation. However, every questionnaire has a starting point and a first study to be used in. It can be developed and improved in further studies.

Lastly, the instructor and the students could have received training about keeping portfolios before the study. The instructor and students were not explicitly informed about the objectives of the portfolio. In addition, some aspects such as writing reflection papers were not taken so seriously by some of the students. Although they were guided about writing reflections, because of the time limitations, it turned out to be inadequate. Also, the students should have received training about how to assess their peers' writing performances and their own writing performances. In a longer period of time, the portfolio system could have been implemented more successfully.

<div align="center">Suggestions for Further Research</div>

Considering the findings and limitations of the study, some suggestions for further research can be made. To begin with, a research can be done with all level of students to explore the effect of portfolio on different levels. It might be interesting

to investigate the effects of level and gender on their perceptions of portfolio use. Another factor can be the learners' departments. All these factors might be included in a further study.

Another study could include administrators' perception about portfolio implementation. Whether or not to include portfolio system into the grading system could be discussed with the administrators and teachers. They can also be asked if they are content with the current assessment system they are using and if they would like to try the portfolio as an alternative assessment tool in writing classes.

Thirdly, the effect of portfolio implementation on different aspects might be investigated. As seen from the interpretation of the interviews with the students, the portfolio was claimed to be influential on discipline, responsibility, and success in writing. These can be very interesting topics to investigate related to portfolios. The relationship between portfolios and different domains can be explored in order to help learners who have deficiencies in those areas. The relation between success and portfolio use may reveal results which are useful to increase learners' success in writing.

Finally, a study could be conducted to develop a portfolio system for the preparatory school of English at ZKU. The portfolio system can be specific to the school, as each school generally has a different curriculum. The preparatory schools may have different goals and objectives. Especially, developing a portfolio system in an EFL context might be emphasized. In the study a portfolio system which matches with goals and objectives for writing course can be prepared and implemented. The focus of the study can be on the development or preparation period rather than the implementation.

Conclusion

This study investigated whether portfolios, when used as a self-assessment tool in writing classes, were effective on increasing learners' confidence in writing and improving their attitudes towards writing in general. It also aimed at exploring students' and teachers' reactions related to portfolio implementation. The analysis of the data collected through questionnaires and interviews indicated results for these purposes.

The results showed that the portfolio implementation did not make a significant difference on students' level of confidence in writing. On the other hand, a significant difference occurred in students' attitudes towards writing. The change was in the positive direction.

The students' and instructor's attitudes towards keeping portfolios in writing classes were highly positive. They all favored using portfolios as a self-assessment tool. The results can be encouraging to promote portfolio use as a self-assessment tool in EFL settings, since EFL learners are not generally provided with the opportunities to self assess their performances in writing classes.

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Appendix A

Confidence in Writing in English Questionnaire

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I first write my writing assignments in Turkish, and then I translate them into English.					
2. I find monolingual English dictionaries useful while writing.					
3. I use the monolingual dictionary frequently while writing.					
4. I use the bilingual dictionary frequently while writing.					
5. Using a bilingual dictionary is more beneficial than using a monolingual dictionary while writing.					
6. For me, writing in English without using a bilingual dictionary is difficult.					
7. I frequently want help from my friends while writing.					
8. After I finish my writing, I always want a friend whom I believe is very good at English to check it.					
9. After I finish my writing, I always check it myself.					
10. Writing without consulting a friend whom I believe is very good at English is challenging.					
11. I always consult my teacher about my writing assignments if I have a chance.					
12. Completing writing assignments with friends who are good at English is better than doing them alone.					
13. I prefer using my own ideas while writing rather than others' ideas.					
14. I feel that I can write on any topic.					
15. I can only write well on a topic I am familiar with.					
16. I prefer writing on a topic assigned by the teacher.					
17. I prefer writing on a topic of my own choice.					
18. I can express my ideas and feelings easily while writing in English.					

19. I feel confident while writing in English.					
20. I feel comfortable while writing in English.					
21. I am never satisfied with my writing assignments.					
22. I always hand in well-prepared writing assignments.					
23. I always make changes according to my teacher's feedback on my writing even if I do not agree with the changes.					
24. For me, my writing skill is better than my reading skill.					
25. For me, my writing skill is better than my listening and speaking skills.					
26. I only make changes on my writing if I agree with the teacher's comment.					
27. I make my writing assignments as detailed as possible.					
28. I prefer omitting details while writing.					
29. I am afraid of making mistakes while writing.					
30. I am disturbed when my teacher finds lots of mistakes in my writing.					
31. I can see how I have improved my writing.					
32. I am aware of my weaknesses in my writing.					

Note: Items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 22, 24, 29, 30, and 31 were reverse

scored during the analysis.

Appendix B

İngilizce Yazı Yazmada Güven Anketi

İFADELER	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1. Yazma ödevlerimi önce Türkçe yazar, daha sonra İngilizce'ye çeviririm.					
2. Yazı yazarken İngilizce'den – İngilizce'ye sözlük kullanmayı faydalı buluyorum.					
3. Yazı yazarken sıklıkla İngilizce'den-İngilizce'ye sözlük kullanırım.					
4. Yazı yazarken sıklıkla İngilizce-Türkçe/Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük kullanıyorum.					
5. Yazarken, İngilizce-Türkçe/Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük kullanmayı İngilizce'den-İngilizce'ye sözlük kullanmaktan daha yararlı buluyorum.					
6. Benim için, İngilizce-Türkçe/Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük kullanmadan yazmak zordur.					
7. Yazarken çoğu zaman arkadaşlarımdan yardım isterim.					
8. Yazımı bitirdikten sonra, İngilizce'sine güvendiğim bir arkadaşımın yazdıklarımı her zaman kontrol etmesini isterim.					
9. Yazımı bitirdikten sonra her zaman kendim kontrol ederim.					
10. İngilizce'sine güvendiğim bir arkadaşıma danışmadan yazı yazmam gerçekten zordur.					
11. Eğer fırsat bulursam, yazma ödevlerimle ilgili olarak her zaman öğretmenime danışırım.					
12. Yazma ödevlerimi İngilizce'si iyi olan arkadaşlarımla yapmak, tek başıma yapmaktan daha iyidir.					
13. Yazarken kendi fikirlerimi kullanmayı, başkalarının fikirlerini kullanmaya tercih ederim.					
14. Her konuyla ilgili yazı yazabileceğimi düşünüyorum.					
15. Sadece bilgi sahibi olduğum konularda iyi yazabilirim.					
16. Öğretmen tarafından verilmiş olan konular hakkında yazmayı tercih ederim.					
17. Kendi seçtiğim konular hakkında yazmayı tercih ederim.					

18. İngilizce yazarken kendi duygu ve düşüncelerimi rahatlıkla ifade edebiliyorum.					
19. İngilizce yazarken kendime güveniyorum.					
20. İngilizce yazarken kendimi rahat hissediyorum.					
21. Yazma ödevlerimden hiç memnun değilim.					
22. Her zaman iyi hazırlanmış yazma ödevleri teslim ederim.					
23. Değişikliklere katılmasam da, öğretmenimin yorumlarına göre yazdıklarımı değiştiririm.					
24. Bence, yazma becerim okuma becerimden daha iyidir.					
25. Bence, yazma becerim dinleme ve konuşma becerimden daha iyidir.					
26. Yazdıklarımda sadece öğretmenimin yorumlarına katılırsam değişiklik yaparım.					
27. Yazma ödevlerimi mümkün olduğunca detaylı yaparım.					
28. Yazarken ayrıntıları atlamayı tercih ederim.					
29. Yazarken hata yapmaktan korkarım.					
30. Öğretmenim yazdıklarımda çok hata bulduğunda rahatsız olurum.					
31. İngilizce yazma konusunda ne kadar ilerlediğimi görebiliyorum.					
32. İngilizce yazma konusundaki eksikliklerimin farkındayım.					

Appendix C

Attitude towards Writing in English Questionnaire

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Partially Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I enjoy doing research for my writing assignments.					
2. When I am given an assignment, I look forward to putting my ideas on paper.					
3. For me, brainstorming ideas before writing an essay is a waste of time.					
4. I am glad we have a writing course.					
5. Writing skills that are taught in the writing course can be helpful to me in my everyday life.					
6. Being able to write in English is important to be a successful student at this university.					
7. Writing in English is an enjoyable activity.					
8. Learning to write in English requires serious effort.					
9. I think I am good at writing in English.					
10. For me, revising the paper is useless.					
11. Writing skills that are taught in the writing course can be helpful to me in my future job.					
12. Making an outline is a waste of time.					
13. To me, writing in English is a skill that I can improve.					
14. I like to learn new vocabulary.					
15. I like learning writing skills.					
16. I enjoy writing essays / paragraphs.					
17. Learning to do research is useful to me.					
18. I postpone doing the writing homework as long as I can.					

Appendix D

İngilizce Yazı Yazmaya Karşı Tutum Anketi

İFADELER	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kısmen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1. Yazma ödevlerim için araştırma yapmayı severim.					
2. Ödev verildiğinde fikirlerimi kağıda dökmeyi sabırsızlıkla beklerim.					
3. Bence, yazmaya başlamadan önce aklındakileri kağıda dökmek (brainstorming) zaman kaybıdır.					
4. Yazma dersimiz olduğu için memnunum.					
5. Yazma dersinde öğretilen yazma becerileri bana günlük hayatımda yardımcı olabilir.					
6. Bu üniversitede başarılı bir öğrenci olmak için, İngilizce yazı yazabilmek önemlidir.					
7. İngilizce yazı yazmak eğlenceli bir aktivitedir.					
8. İngilizce'de yazı yazmayı öğrenmek yoğun bir çaba gerektirir.					
9. İngilizce yazı yazma konusunda iyi olduğumu düşünüyorum.					
10. Yazdıklarımı gözden geçirip düzeltmeler yapmanın gereksiz olduğunu düşünüyorum.					
11. Yazma dersinde öğretilen yazma yöntemleri bana gelecekteki işimde yardımcı olabilir.					
12. Yazmaya başlamadan önce taslak çıkarmak zaman kaybıdır.					
13. İngilizce yazı yazma becerimi geliştirebileceğimi düşünüyorum.					
14. Yeni kelimeler öğrenmeyi seviyorum.					
15. Yazma yöntemlerini öğrenmeyi seviyorum.					
16. İngilizce yazı yazmayı seviyorum.					
17. Araştırma yapmayı öğrenmenin benim için yararlı olduğunu düşünüyorum.					
18. Yazma ödevlerimi yapmayı mümkün olduğunca ertelerim.					

Appendix E

Writing Portfolio Peer-Assessment Sheet

1. Do you think that these three pieces of your friend show the improvement in writing?

2. Can you suggest one thing for the writer (friend) to focus on next time?

3. What are your friend's strengths as a writer?

4. How do you feel about his/her performance?

5. What can you say about the writer's progress by looking at his/her portfolio?

6. What did you like most about the portfolio of your friend?

7. What did you like least about the portfolio of your friend?

Appendix F

Self-Assessment Checklist for Writing Assignments

	Yes	No
1. I did research about the topics.		
2. I knew what my aim was before starting writing.		
3. I made a list of ideas or an outline before writing.		
4. I organized my thoughts before writing.		
5. The paragraph has a strong topic sentence.		
6. The paragraph has a strong controlling idea.		
7. The paragraph has at least three supporting ideas.		
8. Each supporting sentence has enough minor details.		
9. I used enough examples to support my ideas.		
10. My paragraph has a concluding sentence.		
11. The order of ideas is logical.		
12. My work has a beginning, middle, and end.		
13. I checked to see if the writing met my purpose.		
14. I edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar		
15. I reread what I wrote to see if it made sense.		
16. I used new vocabulary.		
17. I wrote grammatically complete sentences.		
18. I used correct subject-verb agreement.		
19. I liked what I wrote.		
20. I tried to use conjunctions appropriately.		
21. I tried to add as many details as possible.		
22. I tried to be creative.		

Appendix G

Writing Portfolio Self-Assessment Sheet

1. What did you like about keeping a portfolio?

2. What didn't you like about keeping a portfolio?

3. What did you learn from keeping a portfolio?

4. Did you include anything else in your portfolio other than your assignments?

   If yes, please indicate what.

5. Why did you choose these pieces to go into your portfolio?

6. What do you want to improve in these items?

7. Do you think your writing has improved since you started?

8. Do these pieces show your progress in writing?

9. How do you feel about your performance?

10. Do you feel more comfortable and confident about writing than before?

11. Would you like to add more writing pieces in your portfolio?

12. Can you see your weak and strong sides in writing by the help of the

    portfolio?

13. What does your portfolio suggest about how you have changed as a writer?

14. What can people learn from your portfolio about you as a writer?

15. Would you like to use the portfolio in the future?

Appendix H

Interview Questions

Interview Questions for the Instructor

1. Can you briefly tell what your students have done for their portfolios in writing classes?

2. What do you think about using portfolios as a self-assessment tool?

3. Do you think that the students were able to assess their own writing performances by looking at their portfolios?

4. Can we use portfolios as a self-assessment tool for all of the students in the Preparatory School at ZKU?

5. Should we include teacher assessment and use portfolios as an assessment tool also? What do you think about it?

6. What problems do you anticipate if we apply the portfolio system at this school?

Interview Questions for the Students

1. What have you done for your portfolio during the past six weeks?

2. Were you interested in portfolio activities? Why or why not?

3. Do you find portfolios helpful in writing classes? Why or why not?

4. How would you assess your writing performance by looking at your portfolio?

5. What does your portfolio tell about you as a writer?

6. Do you think that the portfolio has helped you see your progress since you started keeping it?

7. Do you feel that being able to monitor your own progress in writing has changed your attitude towards writing? If so, how?

8. Would you like to go on keeping your portfolio?

9. Would you recommend keeping a writing portfolio to the students at this preparatory school?

10. What did you like most about keeping a portfolio?

11. What did you like least about keeping a portfolio?

Appendix I

Informed Consent Form

Dear students,

My name is Fatma Bayram and I am a student of MA TEFL Program at Bilkent University. I am conducting a study about using portfolios as a self-assessment tool in writing classes to increase students' confidence in writing. The following questionnaires are designed for this study. I would appreciate it if you can answer the questions in the following questionnaires. Another version of the same questionnaires will be distributed later this term.

All data collected through your responses will remain anonymous. Your identity will not be revealed in any report derived from these data. Your signature on the consent form below will be held separately from the completed questionnaires in order to ensure your anonymity.

Please read the questions carefully and answer all of them. Your answers will contribute to my study. Thank you for your participation.

Fatma Bayram

MA TEFL Program

Bilkent University

Ankara

I have read and understood the above and agree to participate in this study.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix J

Bilgi ve Kabul Formu

Sevgili öğrenciler,

Adım Fatma Bayram ve Bilkent Üniversitesi'nde İngilizce'nin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programında öğrenciyim. Öğrencilerin yazma konusundaki güvenlerinin yazma dersinde dosya sistemini kendilerini değerlendirme aracı olarak kullanarak artırma konusuna yönelik bir araştırma yapıyorum. Elinizdeki anketler bu araştırma için hazırlandı. Anketlerdeki soruları cevaplarsanız memnun olurum. Bu anketlerin başka bir versiyonu bu dönem içinde size tekrar dağıtılacak.

Kimliğinizle ilgili hiçbir bilgi bu araştırma sonucunda hazırlanan hiçbir raporda kullanılmayacaktır. Ders öğretmeniniz dahil hiç kimse verdiğiniz cevaplarla birlikte adınızı bilmeyecektir.

Lütfen soruları dikkatlice okuyun ve hepsini cevaplayın. Cevaplarınız araştırmaya katkıda bulunacaktır. Katılımınız için teşekkür ederim.

Fatma Bayram

MA TEFL Programı

Bilkent Üniversitesi

Ankara

Bu formdaki bilgileri okudum ve araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum. Çalışmanın sonunda hiçbir raporda araştırmacı tarafından adımın kullanılmayacağını biliyorum.

Adı ve soyadı:

İmzası:

Tarih: