The Effectiveness of the Portfolio Assessment Approach in Developing EFL Creative Writing Among Secondary School Students

Dr. Fatma Sadeq Mohammed   **Dr. Eman M. Abdel-Hack**
Professor of EFL   Professor of EFL
Mohammed Ahmed Hammed Okasha
(English Language Researcher)
Curriculum &Instruction, Faculty of Education, Benha University

Abstract:

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach in developing EFL creative writing among secondary school students. The design of this study is pre-post, experimental-control group. The instruments of the present study include a writing test and a rubric for correcting the writing test prepared by the researcher and judged by the jury members. The writing test was applied on the study sample before and after the implementation. Results of the study revealed that EFL creative writing improved among experimental group students.

الملخص :

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى معرفة أثر فعالية مدخل سجل الأداء التقييمى لتنمية مهارات الكتابة الابداعية باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الثانوية. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (٧٠) طالبا من الصف الاول الثانوى ؛ (٣٥) طالب فى المجموعة التجريبية (٣٥) طالب فى المجموعة الضابطة.تم استخدام مدخل سجل الأداء التقييمى بما يحتويه من طرق تدريس واستراتيجيات مع المجموعة التجريبية بينما تم التدريس داخل المجموعة الضابطة بالطريقة التقليدية . كانت أدوات الدراسة عبارة عن اختبار فى مهارات الكتابة الابداعية ومقياس لتصحيح هذا الاختبار. طبق الاختبار على المجموعتين- قبليا وبعديا-   لمعرفة أثرمدخل سجل الأداء التقييمى. أسفرت النتائج عن تفوق المجموعة التجريبية مما يؤكد فاعلية استخدام مدخل سجل الأداء التقييمى فى تنمية مهارات الكتابة الإبداعية .

الكلمات المفتاحية: مدخل سجل سجل الأداء التقييمى – مهارات الكتابة الابداعية

Introduction:

Meaningful and strategic learning is reflective, constructive, and self-regulated. The portfolio approach has inspired classroom teachers and students to reflect on the meaning of their work. The portfolio is considered to be a teaching and evaluation approach at the same time. It is a diagnostic and remedial approach that let students know their shortcomings and how to overcome them.

The portfolio assessment creates more independence for the students and assists them in developing their own learning, so it is considered to be constructivist learning, (Engel, et al., 2003).

The relation between the portfolio and teaching writing brings the writing process into the classroom and enables teachers to see writing from a new perspective , they are collaborators, coaches, responders, and evaluators with their students. The processes of writing are more evident in portfolio. Portfolio in classroom practice is a representative of students writing over a period of time. Portfolio is an evidence of the evolution and improvement that each student's writing has undergone from beginning to end. Portfolio reflects writing; students get an idea, explore it, discuss it with others, write it down and develop it, discuss it with others, revise it and finally, perhaps publish it. A portfolio is defined as a purposeful collection of a learner's work that gives a broad picture of student's efforts in a given area of language skills (Dietel, et al., 1991).

Creative Writing:

Theoretical Framework

What is creativity?

The word creative means 'producing new and original ideas and things, imaginative and inventive', while creativity is defined as 'the ability to produce new and original ideas and

things.' 'Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture'.

Despite the extensive research on creativity, there is little consensus on what creativity means, how it is manifested and how it is enhanced. On the one hand, this is because of the divergence in people's understanding of creativity. On the other hand, it is because of the way creative behaviors are valued differently in different contexts (Sak, 2005). Actually, the definition of creativity varies from one person to person, from place to place and from time to time; therefore, it is safe to say that creativity is a complex and subjective phenomenon.

According to the constructionist view, human knowledge is constructed through meaning-making activities of the individual mind.

If things are so complicated, how then creativity could be defined? The Oxford dictionary defines creativity as "having power to create." Actually this definition does not clarify the term properly. The act of creating requires intelligence and imagination, not only a mechanical skill. Sake (2005) defines creative people as those who are free thinkers and have imaginative intelligence. The key word is imagination, and if it is accompanied with intelligence, the result would be a genius creative writer. Imagination, in fact, is the essence of creative writing.

Creative writing manifests itself in novels, short stories, poetry, drama, and of course in any other forms of writing. But how do writers go about their topics, characters and themes? Before addressing these issues, it is necessary to have a quick look the theoretical framework within which the process (act) of writing takes place.

Unless the writer talks about how he goes about writing a story, no one knows how that task, writing, is accomplished. However, there are two techniques for writing a story (Sak, 2005).

Some writers write slowly, correcting, revising and editing as they go along. Following this technique in writing has its own merits: One's ideas are manipulated carefully, and then drawn on a paper with selected words to guarantee an elegant style.

Careful and immediate editing of what has been written. Possible immediate changes of words, phrases, sentences and even paragraphs. Ample time is available for the writer to speculate, imagine a draw a clear picture of the idea he has in mind.

Ample time for planning the events of the novel where some of them might be changed, adjusted or even restructured.

Some writers write fast without going back over their pages until they have finished their first draft. Afterwards, they go back and rewrite, edit, and correct whatever needs to be corrected. This technique of writing is really aborious .

It is taken for granted that when one writes fast, he will write a lot that has to be reworked. And that is actually a problem, but not a big one. The important point here is that one keeps himself writing, writing and writing.

Creative writing classes provide an opportunity to develop confidence in presenting one's own work and critiquing others. Adults can explore interests while experimenting with self-expression and taking personal risks. Three elements of the topic (presentation, action, and interaction) were developed through which individual assessment, collaboration, and creativity could be encouraged.

THE NECESSITY OF CREATIVE WRITING

Tompkins (1995) suggests seven reasons why students should write creatively   1) to entertain; 2) to foster artistic expression; 3) to explore the functions and values of writing; 4) to stimulate imagination; 5) to clarify thinking; 6) to search for identity; and 7) to learn to read and write.

Fantasy or science fiction. These are areas that they might not have as easily accessed through other types of writing. Thus, their understanding of their world is deepened.

The relationship between assessment and creative writing

Many teachers view creative writing as "impossible to grade," and think that any form of evaluation is necessarily subjective and therefore often unfair. Related to this belief, they think that if students' work cannot be judged fairly, then there is no way of accurately monitoring their growth and progress. Glazer (1994), acknowledges these worries, but argues that assessment can be practical, useful, and fair, providing that the teacher clearly communicates consistent criteria for the work that will be evaluated, criteria focusing on writing skills such as description, organization, and punctuation, rather than relying on the teacher's general "impression" of the quality of the work, or comparison with other students' work. These criteria can be tailored to specific student strengths and weaknesses, and can be modified as the child's abilities develop. Glazer provides an example of a "framework," a collection of several of these criteria that she uses to assess students' writing.

Many teachers look at publication, in some form, as being a useful and satisfying conclusion to a unit of writing fiction. Having a finished version of the student's work can often be a source of pride to the student, and a way to share the specialness of creative writing with his or her family. Publication also provides motivation for a student to do the extra work of revision and proofreading, which they might otherwise be lacking. Sak (2005) discussed specific techniques that will help teachers present their students' work in the best, most attractive fashion. Simic (1993) presents other alternatives to publishing as a way of presenting student work to an audience, such as writing competitions .

Why teaching creative writing?

Writing, like speaking, is a means of communication, a way of getting ideas across, and teachers should deal with it as such. Nevertheless, things are different in practice. Speaking, reading and listening seem to occupy most of the time allotted to a lesson, writing being left at the end, when the teacher looks at it as at a proper piece of homework, a task usually meant to reinforce what learners have studied in class. When the next English lesson comes, two or three students read it as quickly as possible while most of their classmates are not involved at all. As for the teacher, he/she is satisfied that he/she has worked according to his/her plan, without thinking of its inefficiency.

Experienced teachers know that students get easily bored unless the activities they are involved in are varied and meaningful. Not only does creative writing offer the learners the variety they need, but it rewards them for their effort as well. Students get used to handling language better by producing their own pieces of writing. In fact, this is the only way they find that new meaning is added to the vocabulary and grammar structures they are familiar with.

So, Creative Writing in the English classroom fills in the present gaps and invites students to look from the inside at the relationship between form and meaning. This way of approaching writing in class will help learners reconsider their attitude towards literature and, why not, change many of them not only into fiction 'producers' but also into fiction consumers.

There are two ways for a teacher to help his/her students unlock their imagination:

1- To allot creative writing exercises one special class per week

2- To introduce creative writing exercises within the usual EFL class as a variation to other types of activities.

Theoretical Background:
The portfolio assessment approach:

The movement of the alternative methods of assessment has evolved from the dissatisfaction of both instructors and learners with current evaluation procedures. All types of literacy stakeholders have expressed a desire for meaningful appraisal and thus, a variety of new approaches has emerged. Alternative assessment-portfolio- is alternative because it provides choices that go beyond traditional or standardized measurement, (Robishaw, 1992). Theses new approaches are all based on several key principles. The most important one is that assessment should measure the learner's required and desired outcomes. In order to achieve this, it is fundamental that the assessment process should be participatory. In other words, the learners must be a full partner in the early assessment, the ongoing assessment and the end assessment.

This participatory approach establishes a direct relationship between the instructor and the learner. Together, they plan the program, the pace, the type of assessment, all based on a collaborative effort, and always learner-centered. Learner-centered means, self-directed, having choices, being able to self-evaluate, taking responsibility and placing the learner at the center of the assessment procedure. The learner might describe what kinds of practices or strategies seem best suited to his/her learning styles. Part of this exchange may also include an attitude assessment, where the student reveals how he/she feels about his/her education or lifelong learning, (Taylor, 1998).

The creative learners express what they want to learn, how they want to learn it and how they want to track the results. This form of assessment captures emotional, social and psychological factors associated with the learning process. This qualitative mode of assessment reveals learner strength and identifies areas which require extra work. It also provides feedback to both student and teacher regarding changes in

comprehension levels, writing ability, problem solving and so on. In this way, portfolio assessment becomes a process of informing. Learners – in their classes- are asked to identify and discuss knowledge and skills they have acquired since they began in the program. This is usually in an informal way, relaxed setting, this kind of assessment reflects and can account for what is happening in learner-centered programs. These approaches are often multi-dimensional or multi-purposes and always participatory, (Askov, 1993).

In the past, people considered portfolio as the large memory boxes in which they recognized each piece and its association with a particular time or experience. They shared these collections with grandparents to reinforce feelings of pride. They reflected on the collections and this allowed them to attribute importance to these artifacts, and they gave witness to the story of their early experience, (Elizabeth, A. 2001). Teachers who are uneasy with standardized tests and single-number characterizations of students' progress, they used the modern memory boxes-portfolio- as an attempt to prove their students' achievements. Portfolio reflects the realities of students' education rather than only the high points have been lost.

Portfolio is critical. It tells us what and how something has been learned. Historically, the use of standardized tests was and continues to be, the most common instrument in educational setting. Briefly, a standardized test is a test administered under certain conditions so the scores reflect the skills being assessed and nothing else. Two types of standardized tests that have been frequently used in education are the norm-reference test and the criterion-referenced test. A norm -referenced test is a test in which a learner's score is compared to the scores of others who have taken the test. While a criterion –referenced test is a test in which a learner's score is compared to an absolute standard such

as 80, 90 or 100 percent mastery of domain of skill. Portfolio is used to compare learner to himself not to others via comparing his work over a period of time to see and notice how much progress and development he has done, (Venezkey, 1992).

Standardized tests are inadequate because they don't measure how new skills are used by students. In fact, they don't and can't measure all new skills acquired in basic education .Countless reports have also been mentioned the difficulties that learners encounter when they undergo testing. They are bothered by feeling of anxiety, degradation, insecurity and intimidation. Learning via using standardized tests not only loses much of its appeal but also much of its significance. Many educators are now asking why we can't integrate assessment with curriculum in a more meaningful way, (Rebishhaw, 1992).

Portfolios encourage a unique response to the question "what I have learned?" Because the response is personal and self-generated. Collecting and reflecting on self-selected evidence of learning allows the portfolio maker to assume genuine responsibility for both assessing learning and expressing that assessment to others who have a stake in it (teachers, parents, and co-learners.) A portfolio can be understood as a learning repository that contains evidence of skills attained over time, topics of interest, and history of what we thought to be important and why. There is also an active state for portfolio, an ongoing and generative interaction between the collection and the collector. This interaction represents one of many unrecognized dimensions of portfolios.

Teachers are encouraged to focus on what students can produce, and what can be seen and easily understood by parents and the community as students' progress towards meeting objective standards. Teachers should know how new information changes students and how students incorporate new learning into every thing else they know. This focus on a more far-reaching notion of life-long accountability is just one of the unique

benefits that portfolios can provide. The most powerful reason for teaching students how to use portfolio is to engage them in the reflective assessment of their own learning, and become competent participants in the teaching/learning process, (Elizabeth, 2001).

In engagement theory, students must be engaged in meaningful tasks, with other people, (Salmon, 2002). In schema theory, the most important factor influencing learning is what the student already knows, (Sak, 2005). A constructivist view sees education as student-centered; the student construct knowledge for themselves, building upon what they already know and knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received from the environment. These aspects of constructivism look to the individual learner as constructor. Social constructivism recognizes that a learner is affected by those around them, including teachers, peers, friends and society in general. Individuals can participate in teaching and learning strategies using portfolio as a referent often value meaningful activity over correct answers which has significant implications for assessment models, which would then need to consider process as well as or instead of the product, (Wood et al, 1995).

The learner in-constructivist theory can often think and act in more complex ways when they are in supportive environments. The challenge for the teacher is then to establish and promote environments that encourage dialogue oriented towards achieving reciprocal or mutual understandings, (Taylor, 1998). Portfolio reflects the theories of engagement and constructivism.

Characteristics of the portfolio assessment approach

There are eight characteristics to design a powerful portfolio:

1- A portfolio must contain information that shows that a student has engaged in self-reflection.

2- Student must be involved in the selection of the pieces to be included.

3- The portfolio must be explicitly or implicitly convey the students' activities.

4- The portfolio is separate and different from the student cumulative folder.

5- At the end of the year, the portfolio may contain only materials that the student is willing to make public.

6- A portfolio may have multiple purposes.

7- The portfolio could contain information that illustrates growth.

8- The skill and techniques that are involved in producing effective portfolio don't happen by themselveves. Students need models of portfolio and how others develop and reflect upon them, (Paulson et al, 1991).

Review of related Literature:

In this section, the researcher presents a review of previous literature and studies related to the variables of the study. It was divided into three sections. The first section is devoted to studies that dealt with the portfolio assessment approach, while the second to studies of EFL creative writing. In the third section, the researcher introduces the studies that dealt with both the portfolio assessment and EFL creative writing.

Frazier, (1991) wanted to show growth in student writing as measured by the six - trait analytical model and improve students' self assessment skills. The students selected a piece of writing for the portfolio each month. The selection included both the rough and final drafts, the student's ratings of his or her own work, and student self- analysis of their writing. The teacher used these student work samples to analyze student progress, and herself wrote a self – reflection essay stating what she learned about student writing and the evidence from the samples to

support these conclusions. The article include both the self selected samples of student work, and the criteria used to analyze the work.

Simmons, (1992) conducted a study to use writing portfolio for large-scale assessment in grades 5, 8 and 11.Two hundred sixty-three students selected what they considered to be their three best pieces of writing and completed   a cover sheet for each piece that indicated reasons why the paper shows quality writing, when the paper was started and finished, the amount of time spent on it, and its length. Students also submitted a timed writing sample on an assigned prompt. All samples were scored using a holistic system. Additional analyses were carried out such as: comparing students' perceptions of their strengths to score perception of strengths, comparing the timed piece to others, comparing writing time to quality of products, etc.   The author discovered that it is possible to obtain interesting information about products (the quality of students work), process (the way in which students go about writing), and programs (the way that writing is taught) from these analyses. for example : the longer student spent on their pieces , the better they were ; students generally chose narratives as examples of their best writing; students who score low on timed writing samples look much better on their portfolio work; portfolio pieces were often included with substantial teacher comments left unaddressed.

Clemmons et al., (1993) described a portfolio system for documenting students' growth in reading and writing for the fifth-grade students. The system includes emphasis on students' control, self evaluation, and goal setting. The authors articulate well that the goal of the portfolio is to allow students to control of learning. They outlined a step-by-step plan for getting started and involving parents. They described a procedure for teaching self-evaluation and goals setting -skills. They conducted student-

teacher portfolio conferences. The tools they used were letters, questionnaires, forms, and charts. They concluded that portfolio help increase students' reading and writing skills.

Collins, (1993) focused on his study on a portfolio system for middle school students to demonstrate their communication proficiency. Students choose evidence from any course but have to shave at least one piece of writing, one audiotape of something spoken, and one visual piece. Students have mailboxes in their homerooms in which to place evidence. Students meet in terms every two or three weeks to review portfolio content. Portfolio is scored holistically for the quality of the evidence and self-reflection, but not for progress in communication. The author found that the students achieved a great deal of quality and were able to reflect them selves well and this manifested in their work.

Helal, (2003) aimed at identifying the writing skills necessary for first year secondary school students. The subjects were 82first year secondary students were randomly selected from Helmiyat El-Zeitoun secondary school for girls and divided into two groups : experimental (n=42) and control (n=40). Students of the experimental group received training through the proposed program developed by the researcher in the light of the process writing approach. On the other hand, students in the control group received regular instruction. Results showed that an increase in students' overall writing and writing skills also an increase in students' involvement and motivation due to focusing on writing as a means of communicating one's idea, information, viewpoints and feelings rather than language tasks.

Abdel-Razek, (2006) investigated the effectiveness of the genre-based approach in developing EFL writing skills among first year secondary school students. The study sample consisted of 80 students from El-Shohada Secondary School for girls who were divided into two groups: the experimental and control groups. Students in booth the experimental and control groups

were pre-tested using a writing test prepared by the researcher. Then, the experimental group students were taught using the genre-based approach, and the control group students were taught using the traditional method. finally, students in both groups were post-tested using the same writing test .Results showed that the genre-based approach proved to be effective in developing EFL writing skills among first year secondary school students as there were statistically significant differences between the experimental and control group students in paragraph writing, letter writing, story writing and overall writing skills in favour of the experimental group students.

Gouty et al., (2002) described a program to improve student writing ability through the use of the teacher interventions. The targeted population consisted of first and third grade students in a middle class community, located in the Midwest. The problem of inadequate writing and the results of the interventions were documented. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students lacked positive experience with literacy-related activities. The data stated students would not become effective writers without guidance. Reviewed curricula content and instructional strategies revealed appropriate assessment alternatives that moved away from traditional testing to a portfolio system. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others , combined with a review of the problem setting , resulted in the following interventions: process writing was used effectively in the primary grades , students found pleasure in writing when there was a purpose , teacher modeled writing and not just assigned work , and portfolio development helped instructional strategies , learning, and assessment . Post intervention data indicated an increase in the students' use of grammar and vocabulary. Students' improvements also increased in self-editing skills and attitudes towards writing.

Kowalwski et al., (2002) described a program for instructing students in the writing process in order to improve their overall writing skills. The targeted population consisted of fourth and fifth grade students in a growing upper middle class community, located in northern Illinois. The writing problems of the students were documented through data revealing lack of use of process writing skills under formal and informal assessment. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students demonstrated a lake of skills related to organization and revision in the writing process. Reviews of instructional strategies revealed a lack of teacher modeling, instruction literature connections, time provided for student writing, revision, self-assessment, and reflection. A review of solution strategies suggested by authors and researchers resulted in the implementation of new teaching strategies. These included an increase in the time allowed for writing, more teacher modeled demonstrations of writing techniques using six writing traits (organization, ideas, word choice, students fluency, voice, and conventions), increased use of literature as examples of good writing , increased use of assessments and reflections and greater opportunities for a variety of audiences. The results of this action research showed a marked improvement in students writing skills, the students exhibited greater ability to communicate more effectively through their writing rubric, final writing reflection, portfolio rubric, student reflection for portfolio, students' self-assessment for portfolio.

From the previous presentation of related studies that dealt with the portfolio assessment approach and EFL creative, the following points can be concluded:

1- Students' involvement and motivation due to focusing on writing as a means of communicating one's idea, information, viewpoints and feelings rather than language tasks help students increase their writing skills and attitudes towards writing [e.g. Helal, (2003)].

2- Genre-based approach proved to be effective in developing EFL writing skills among first year secondary school students [e. g. Abdel-Razek, (2006)].

3- Using the peer review groups on teaching essay revealed that students' writing performance improved and they had more positive attitudes towards peer review groups. It was also clear that students' writing apprehension lessened significantly and the students incorporated their peers' suggestions in revising their drafts .

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the present study is to determine the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach in developing EFL creative writing.

Statement of the Problem:

In spite of the importance of writing, there is still a lack in the EFL writing skills among secondary school students. They have negative attitudes towards writing in English language. The researchers got their evidence out of their experience in the field of EFL instruction.

Terminology:

The Portfolio Assessment Approach:

Wade and Yarbrough, (1996) said that portfolio was originally designed as an authentic assessment approach for improvement, development and growth and its assessment is real and active. In this study, the researcher used the portfolio assessment approach as an approach to achieve development in writing skills.

EFL Creative Writing:

Creative writing focuses on students' self-expression. Creative writing is anything where the purpose is to express

thoughts, feelings and emotions. In this study creative writing is usually taught in a <u>workshop</u> format rather than <u>seminar</u> style. In workshops students usually submit original work for peer critique. Students also <u>format</u> a writing method through the process of writing and <u>re-writing</u>, (Sak,2005).

Questions of the Study:

To face this problem, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1- What are the EFL writing skills required for first year secondary school students?

2- What are the bases of portfolio approach?

3- What is the effectiveness of using portfolio approach in developing first year secondary school students' EFL writing skills?

Hypotheses of the Study:

1- There are statistically significant differences at 0.01 between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group on the post-test in overall EFL writing and in writing sub-skills (fluency, content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and structures and conventions) in favour of the experimental group.

2- There are statistically significant differences at 0.01 between the mean scores of the experimental and the control group on the pre and post-test in favour of the experimental group.

Procedures of the Study:

The following procedures will be followed:

Identifying the EFL writing skills required for first year secondary school students through:

(1) Reviewing the literature and previous studies to EFL writing skills

(2) Investigating the nature of teaching EFL writing at the secondary stage through reviewing the directives of the

Ministry of Education.

(3) Preparing a list of EFL writing skills required for first year secondary school students in the form of the checklist.

(4) Submitting the checklist to a jury to verify its validity.

(5) Modifying and setting the EFL writing skills list according to the jury's suggestions in its final form.

Designing the portfolio for developing first year secondary school students' EFL writing skills and attitudes towards EFL writing through:

(1) Reviewing the literature and previous studies related to EFL writing skills and attitudes towards EFL writing.

(2) Reviewing the literature and previous studies related to portfolio writing approach.

(4) Identifying the procedures and the evaluation techniques during implementation.

(5) Submitting the program to jury to verify its validity.

(6) Modifying and setting the program in its final form according to their suggestions.

Identifying the effectiveness of the portfolio in developing the first year secondary students' EFL writing skills in English Language through:

(1) Preparing a writing test and a rubric for correcting it for assessing first year students' writing skills.

(2) Submitting the test and the rubric to a jury to verify their validity.

(3) Modifying and setting the test and the rubric according to their suggestion in their final form.

(4) Applying the test on a group of the first secondary school students for assessing their statistical validity.

(5) Teaching the experimental group via using the portfolio assessment approach and the control group via using the traditional method.

(6) Applying the writing test on the two groups.

Method of the Study:

Sample of the Study:

The sample of the present study consisted of 70 first year secondary school students randomly drawn from Belal Abdel Salam Secondary School in Waked, kom-Hammada, Behira Governorate. They were divided into two groups: 35 for the experimental group and 35 for the control group.

Tools of the Study:

The tools of the present study were:

1- An EFL writing skills checklist.
2- A writing test and a rubric for correcting the writing test.

Reliability of the test:

Reliability of the writing test:

Reliability refers to the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trails, (Key, 1997:2). For estimating the reliability of the writing test, the following method was used:

Inter-rater reliability:

The test was corrected by two raters: the first was the present study researcher and the second a school colleague - teacher of English- then, the correlation coefficient between the scores of the first and the second rater was measured using Pearson Formula , and the reliability coefficient was 0.720 which was statistically significant at 0.01 level . Hence, it can be said that the test was reliable.

The portfolio Assessment Implementation:

Sources of Developing the Portfolio Assessment Approach:

The researcher prepared the portfolio assessment implementation on the review of previous research including: Ibrahim (2007:60), Abdel-Gwad (2003: 206-207), Helal (2003:169-170) and Abdel-Hack (2004:18).

Description of the Portfolio Assessment Approach

The portfolio assessment program consisted of fourteen sessions. The first session was devoted to the introduction of the program to the experimental group students. The remained sessions were instructional sessions through which the EFL creative writing activities were given to the experimental group through the implementation of the portfolio assessment approach (self-reflection- teacher and peer feedback- formative and summative feedback- individual conferences-self-understanding; weak and good points…etc.) At the beginning of each session, the objectives of the session, the teacher's role and the instructional materials are established. The students are asked to perform writing tasks the topics of creative writing were of their own. Moreover, at the end of each session the teacher gave the students some tasks to perform.

Objectives of the Portfolio Assessment Approach:

By the end of this program, students will be able to:

1- Identify the importance of the portfolio assessment approach.
2- Identify the importance of EFL creative writing in general.
3- Gain mastery in Writing in English.
4- Mastering the required writing skills in a creative way.

Duration of the Implementation:

The program lasted for ten weeks with two sessions per week and each session lasted for about 45 minutes.

Instructional Aids:

The researcher used the following instructional aids in implementing the program: blackboard, paper and pencils.

Creative writing activities:

1- Word List to Paragraph

In Vocabulary, (Morgan & Rinvolucri 2004: 89) there is a fantastic activity in which learners write a list of words to describe a picture, then write a paragraph based these words.

2- Think about a place' (about 45 minutes)

In this activity, the teacher participates alongside the students at every stage.

The teacher asks learners to silently bring to mind a beautiful, scary, exciting or otherwise remarkable place where they have been. It could be their home, or a place they've visited.

3- On the board, the teacher draws a horizontal timeline representing his/her weekend and writes a maximum of twelve words on it. These can be words like 'friends', 'football' or 'reading' as well as feelings like 'tired' or 'bored'. The teacher asks the students to write about these topics.

Evaluation of the Portfolio Assessment Approach:

The researcher evaluated students' progress during the implementation of the program by giving the students some tasks at the end of each session to make sure that the students achieved the objectives of the sessions (formative evaluation). Moreover, at the end of, at the end, of the program, the researcher applied a writing test to measure students' creative writing in general (summative program).

Findings and Discussion:

First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis states that "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group students in the post assessment in creative writing skills in favour of the experimental group students." Table (1) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviation, t-value and level of significance of both the experimental and the control group in the post assessment of the EFL creative writing.

Table (1)
Results of t-test between the experimental group and control group in the post –assessment of EFL creative writing

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Experimental	35	126.5278	13.8615	5.884	0.01
Control	35	102.2778	20.4766		

It is obvious from table (2) that there are statistically significant differences at 0.01 (one-tailed) between the mean scores of the experimental group (x1=126.5278) and the control group (x2=102.2778) in the post- test of the overall writing in favour of the experimental group as indicated by t-value (5.884) according to t-value in t-distribution table (2.374) . These differences can be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the portfolio assessment approach the experimental group students received.

Second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis states that "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group students in the pre and post assessment in creative writing skills in favour of the post assessment." Table (2) presents the students' mean scores, standard deviation, t-value and level of significance of both the experimental and the control group in the post assessment of the EFL creative writing.

Table (2)
Results of t-test of the pre-test and post –test of the experimental group in overall EFL writing

Test	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Sig.
Pre-test	35	56.0857	11.4593	20.106	0.01
Post-test	35	126.0857	13.8040		

Table (2) indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pre-test (x1=56.0857) and post-test (x2=126.0857) of the experimental group in favour of the post-test as indicated by t-value (20.106) which proved to be statistically significant at 0.01 (one-tailed) as it is > t-value in t-distribution table(2.44). This difference between the pre-test and post-test can be attributed to the use of portfolio assessment approach

Discussion of the Results:

The previous results show that the portfolio assessment approach was effective in developing EFL creative writing among first year secondary school students .This progress might be attributed to some factors.

- Students in the experimental group had the opportunity to practice a lot of writing activities during the implementation of the portfolio assessment approach.
- The steps of the well-planned strategies used in this approach helped students improve their writing much such as training them on how to make brainstorming, sentence expansion, conducting a brief class lesson on common errors, individual conferences with the teacher, whole class discussion about some defects of students' mistakes in writing, assessment sheet that helped students concentrate on their writing, constructive assessment and summative assessment.
- The teacher writes comments on the students' pieces of writing and this enabled students to develop the skills of writing; fluency, content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and structures and conventions. This commentary focuses on what the students have written. The teacher sheds light on the points that need much clarification, (Abdel-Razek, 2006).
- Teacher's comments on the students' writing enhanced the skills related to the study.
- Brainstorming strategy helped students to generate a lot of ideas that helped students write a lot and develop their writing skills, (Abdel-Hack, 2004).

- Free writing and neglecting worrying about committing mistakes helped students to write without fear.
- Using the assessment sheet created accuracy in students' writing also focusing on the points that need much work helped students to improve these points.
- Sometimes, students weren't able to find the correct word that suit the nature of writing, so the teacher asked them to use suitable simple alternative words that give the same meaning instead of using the difficult words that may affect and hinder their writing. Students might stop for long times thinking of these difficult words and this might discourage students to complete their writing.
- Teacher–students conference provided students with individualized instructions.
- Feedback on students' writing enabled students to tackle any problem related to sentence development and made students aware of what constructs a good piece of writing. Feedback also enables students to choose the appropriate tense form for a piece of writing and how to state the topic sentence and conclusion of any piece of writing.

Conclusion:

The portfolio assessment approach was concluded to be effective in developing first year secondary school students' EFL writing skills and attitudes towards writing in English language, this approach provided a useful framework for developing students' writing skills and attitudes towards writing in English language.

Recommendation of the Study:

Based on the results, the present study researcher recommends the following:

1. The portfolio assessment approach provided in the present study can be adopted by secondary school teachers for teaching writing in English language to first year secondary school students and training

teachers of English on this approach and how to apply it inside classrooms.

2. Teachers should focus on teaching writing in English language as a process not as a product.

3. There is a need for using new techniques for providing feedback to students' EFL writing such as peer-review, writing conferences and self-correction.

4. Teaching can be made learner-centered, with more emphasis on the learning process.

Suggestions of Further Research:

1. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach on developing other language skills apart from writing.

2. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach on developing language skills among university students.

3. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach on enhancing positive attitudes of students towards listening and speaking skills.

4. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach on developing reflective teaching and creative thinking among pre-service-teachers.

5. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach on developing writing skills and attitudes towards writing among preparatory school students.

6. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach on developing EFL reading and writing skills and attitudes towards reading and writing among secondary school students.

7. Investigating the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment approach using e-mail on developing reading and writing skills among secondary school students.

References

1. Abdel-Gawad, Nehal Helmy (2003): Using School Journalism for Developing Some Writing Skills for Secondary Stage Students. Unpublished M.A. thesis. Faculty of Education, Zagazig University.

2. Abdel-Hack, Iman Mohamed (2004): The Effectiveness of Using Journal Writing in Developing EFL Majors' Critical Thinking Disposition and Writing Performance. Journal of Studies in Curricula &Instruction, (Issued by: Faculty of Education, Ain Shams University) no.97, pp.4-33.

3. Abdel-Razek, Tahany Abdel-Hady (2006): The Effectiveness of Genre-Based Approach in Developing the Writing Skills for EFL First Year Secondary School Students. Unpublished M.A .thesis. Faculty of Education, Monoufia University.

4. Askov, E. (1993): Approaches to Assessment in Workplace Literacy Program: Meeting the Needs of all Clients. Journal of Reading Vol.35\7 PP.550-554.

5. Clemmons, Joan, Lois Laase, & Donnal Cooper (1993): Portfolios in the Classroom: A teacher's Sourcebook. Available from: Scholastic Professional Books, Scholastic Inc., 2931 E. Jefferson City, Mo 65102.

6. Collins, L. (1993): Portfolio Assessment: A Key to Identifying Hidden Talents and Empowering Teachers of Young Children. Located in: Gifted Child Quarterly 38, spring, pp.65-69.

7. Dietel, Lauren & Jurich, Donna (1991): The Missing Link .Students and Teacher Writing Together Prospectives on Journal Writing (pp.35-47). Alexandaria (U.S.A.): Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Inc. (TESOL).

8. Elizabeth, A. (2001): The Power of Portfolios: What Children can Teach us about Learning and Assessment .The Jassey-Bass Education Series.ISBNN-0-7879-5871-9.

9. Engel, Monica, Ronda, R. & Amond (2003): Authentic Assessment: It Really Works. M.A. Action Research Project .Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development Field-Based Master's Degree. (An online ERIC Database Fulltext No. ED 471788).

10. Frazier, Darlene M. (1991): Composite Portfolio in Special Education. Available from: Leon Paulson, Multnomah Educational Service District, PO Box 301039, Portland, OR 97230.

11. Glazer, Susan Mandel (1994). "Collaborating with Children to Assess Writing Objectively." Teaching K-8, 24(5), 108-09. [EJ 476 516]

12. Gouty, Jackie; Lid & Sany (2002) : Improving Student Writing Ability Through the Use of Teacher Interventions. Master of Arts Research Project, Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development Field-based Program.

13. Helal, Ebtihal Abdel-Aziz (2003): A Proposed Self-Access Reading Program for Developing English language Writing Skills for first Year Secondary Students .Unpublished M.A. thesis. Women's College for Arts, Science and Education, Ain Shams University.

14. Ibrahim, Hany Ibrahim (2002): The Effect of Using the Whole Language Approach on Developing the Literacy Skills among First Year English Department Students at the Faculty of Education of Al-Azhar University. Unpublished M.A. thesis. Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University.

15. Kowalwski Erini; Murphy, Jili, Starns &Marilyn (2002(: Improving Student Writing into Elementary Classroom. Master of Arts Action research Project .Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development Field-Based Master's Program.

16. Morgan, J & Rinvolucri, M, (2004) Vocabulary (2nd Ed.), Oxford University Press, pp. 89

17. Paulson, Leon Paulson, and carol Meyer (1991): What Makes a Portfolio a Portfolio? Located in: Educational Leadership. Available from: Multnomah Educational Service District, PO Box 301039,Portland,OR 97230.

18. Sak, U. (2005). About Creativity, Giftedness, and teaching the Creatively Gifted in the Classroom. Available at:

19. http://we17.epnet.com/citation.asp

20. Simic, Marjorie (1993). "Publishing Children's Writing." ERIC Digest. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication. [ED 363 884]

21. Simmons, (1992): Portfolios for Large-Scale Assessment .Located

22. in: Donald graves and Connie Sustein (eds.), Available from: Heinemann Educational Books Inc., 361 Hanover St., Portsmouth,NH03801.

23. Taylor, M., (1998): Literacy Portfolio Assessment: A Resource for Literacy Workers. Ottawa Univ. (Ontario). Faculty of Education. National Literacy Secretariat, Ottawa (Ontario).

24. Tompkins & Hoskinsson, (1995): Teaching Writing: Balancing Process and Product .New York: Macmillan.

25. Venezkey, R. (1992): Matching literacy testing and Social Policy: What are the Alternatives? University of Delaware and National Center on Adult Literacy.

26. Wade and Yarbrough, (1996): The Portfolio Process: New Roles for Meeting Challenges in Professional Development. Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Association of Teacher Education, Pensacola, FL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 229342).