Using Edmodo-Supported E-Portfolio as Authentic Assessment in EFL Writing Course

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Abstract— **Dissatisfaction issues rise for the usage of only one piece of writing as a basis for assessing writing skills make many teachers look for alternative assessment type, like portfolio assessment. A high interest given to the usage of portfolio coincides with the rapid development of technology integration into classrooms has led to a shift from paper-based portfolios to e-portfolios. Seeing this trend, this study aims to examine whether reflective writing using Edmodo-supported e-portfolios better enhances the students' quality of writing than using traditional portfolio. Participants included first-year students taking the Paragraph-based Writing course. The experiment lasted for 14 weeks, and the students received both traditional portfolios and e-portfolios teaching, respectively. Data were taken in the form of students' writings in each stage of process writing, which includes pre-writing, planning (outlining), writing and revising drafts, and writing the final draft. A t-test was utilized to examine the effectiveness of the two teaching strategies based on the students' writing scores. Results indicated that students' writings with e-portfolio outperformed their writing quality when using paper-based portfolio. Therefore, the implementation of Edmodo-supported e-portfolio is recommended in the writing course.**

Keywords— authentic assessment, Edmodo, e-portfolio, EFL writing

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, teachers of writing tend to shift writing instruction from a product-oriented to a process-oriented approach. In a process-oriented approach, students are facilitated to practice writing by doing a sequence of process writing stages. It is including pre-writing activities, planning or outlining, writing and revising drafts and writing the final draft. These steps of writing are seen to be more natural to be implemented in the writing course since real authors will commonly do some pre-writing activities and many revisions before achieving acceptable writing to publish. A single-timed piece of writing is not a good idea for either amateur or skillful writers.

Alternation from product to process-oriented approach surely requires a new way of assessment which is process-centered. In this case, alternative assessments that are systematic and able to count each student's progress in every stage of process writing are highly expected. Moreover,

remembering that writing assessment is an extremely complex and disorganized area [1], the alternative assessment must be able to accommodate the teachers' difficulties in arranging the evaluation. Besides, the alternative assessments must look beyond the standardized tests which commonly only focus on recalling memorization. Many parties have agreed that standardized tests are no longer enough to reveal learners' multiple competencies [2].

As expected, new ways of assessment have been developed to enable students to perform what they have learned and demonstrate meaningful application of their knowledge and skills [3], [4]. These new ways of assessment are called authentic or alternative assessments. Among all the kinds of alternative assessment, the portfolio has become a popular technique. A portfolio is defined as a purposeful collection of students' work showing their potential progress and achievements [5]. In the context of a writing course, the portfolio will contain a collection of students' works in each writing stage. In other words, the portfolio will showcase the development of students' writings from pre-writing activities to the final drafts.

Meanwhile, the positive role of ICT integration into EFL writing class has encouraged the alternation of a paper-based portfolio to an e-portfolio [6]. The use of digital platform will help managing the time allotment which commonly limits the activities of process writing in the class. As known, the product-oriented approach of writing is widely used because it is easy to manage under the time allotment given to English subject in the class, which is very limited. Process-oriented approach along with its stages of writing may challenge the teachers to effectively implement it. Hence, this study suggests the use of Edmodo, one of online applications, to accommodate activities that can be conducted out of class. Edmodo provides some features which are useful for classroom setting, namely classes, assignment, quiz, deadline for each assignment submission, library, grade/progress, etc. Many studies have shown the positive impact of Edmodo integration into the classroom, including in the writing class. Sumarno and Shodikin's research indicated that Edmodo helped the students improve their writing quality and learning engagement [7]. Blended learning using this media also reported as enhancing the students' skills, particularly reading and writing skills [8]. It was also found that students' final drafts' quality was improved

after the implementation of Edmodo [6]. Although these studies noted that Edmodo supports the writing class, its usage as e-portfolio platform in a writing class still receives low attention. Researches on e-portfolios are largely done in many other online media such as Facebook or e-portfolio system/software. A project which was done to test the impact and challenges found when using Facebook-based e-portfolio in ESL writing classrooms indicated that it gave a positive influence on the students' writing pieces [9]. Some suggestions for future implementation were reported in this study. Another study also found that e-portfolio software, with peer and teacher feedback, triggered a valuable improvement of ESL students' writing performance [10]. Considering these backgrounds, this study aims to investigate the effects of Edmodo-supported e-portfolio in the EFL writing course.

II. METHOD

By using quasi-experimental research, the researchers tried to achieve the study's objective. Thirteen first-year students at English Department of Darul 'Ulum Islamic University, taking a Paragraph-based writing course, were actively participating in this study. In 6 meetings before the midterm test, they got writing instruction by using a paper-based portfolio. Then, 6 meetings afterward, the students received writing class with Edmodo-supported e-portfolio.

In those 12 meetings of teaching and learning process, the students practiced each step of process writing. Steps of process writing used in both class conditions were following the steps of process writing suggested by Oshima & Hogue, which including pre-writing, planning (outlining), writing and revising drafts, and writing the final draft [11]. Pre-writing stage in process writing was done by doing activities to enable students choosing the topic that they were going to develop. Common students are confused to state the topic they want to write immediately. It is such a complicated task for their mind. They usually end up with a too broad or too specific topic. To avoid this, in this study, the teacher facilitated the students by making an inverted-pyramid. It could scaffold them narrowing down their topics line by line. The students were also reminded to choose topics that were not too wide or too narrow. After specifying the topic, the students did brainstorming. It aimed to generate their ideas about the topic. They can do brainstorming by listing words, clustering or free-writing. Results of the brainstorming stage then were used in the planning/outlining stage. Planning stage was firstly done by making a sub list. The sub list contained the words that they had listed in the brainstorming stage. The words were arranged in such a way so that it constructs reasonable supporting points and supporting details about the topic. After making the sub list, the teacher guided the students to make a topic sentence of their topic. This step was quite problematic for the students. Hence, in this study, the teacher checked the students' works one by one until their topic sentences were appropriate and grammatically correct. With a suitable topic sentence, the students then made an outline for their text. The teacher showed a model of outline to make the students understand. Stage 3 then was done afterward. In stage 3, the students started writing their first drafts by developing the outline. Their first drafts were then evaluated for its content and organization by the lecturer. After

being revised, they exchanged their works with a pair to get peer-feedback for its grammar, language use, and punctuation. Feedback for their second drafts was also given by the teacher. Corrections from their peer as well as teacher were the suggestions for them to revise the second draft and write the final drafts. These final drafts were the ones which subject to assess in this study.

The students' writings were scored by using an analytic scale for writing composition by Brown & Bailey [12]. It assessed students' writing in term of its development of ideas, organization, vocabulary used, grammar, and punctuation. After evaluating the students' works, a T-test was utilized to examine the effectiveness of the two teaching strategies based on the students' writing scores.

In addition to doing the quantitative analysis, the researchers also made a small observation to note the problems that the students encountered while doing the process writing, both in the paper-based portfolio and e-portfolio conditions. It was not included in the research question but was presented as suggestions for future practices.

III. RESULT

This study's objective was to investigate the effectiveness of Edmodo-supported E-portfolio compare with the usage of the paper-based portfolio in an EFL writing course. A data of 13 students' writings were statistically analyzed using T-test. Yet, normality and homogeneity tests were initially utilized to see whether the distribution of the data was normal and gotten from the same population.

TABLE I. TABLE TYPE STYLES TESTS OF NORMALITY

Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		
	Statistic	*df*	*Sig.*
Paper Portfolio	.137	13	.200*
E-Portfolio	.117	13	.200*

Normality test presented in Table 1 indicated that the significance value was 0.200 or more than 0.05. It means that the distribution of data was normal.

TABLE II. TEST OF HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCE

	Levene Statistic	*df1*	*df2*	*Sig.*
Based on Mean	.172	1	24	.682
Based on Median	.155	1	24	.698
Based on Median and with adjusted df	.155	1	23.986	.698
Based on trimmed mean	.163	1	24	.690

Meanwhile, the homogeneity test as shown in Table 2 also indicated that the significance value was more than 0.05 (0.682). It means that the data were taken from the same population.

TABLE III.   INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

	t-test for Equality of Means			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Equal variances assumed	.031	-6.615	2.883	-12.567
Equal variances not assumed	.031	-6.615	2.883	-12.569

T-test showed that the significance value was below 0.05, that was 0.031. It means that Edmodo-supported E-portfolio significantly better enhanced the students' writing scores compare to the paper-based portfolio. Thus, the use of this media is recommended in the EFL writing course

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of quantitative data analysis showed that the students' quality of writing after taught by using Edmodo-supported e-portfolio outperformed their writing quality in the paper-based portfolio class. It shows that the combination of portfolio and digital technology can be beneficial. It can reduce one of the problems in the process writing class which is the time limitation. Via Edmodo, some writing activities can be done digitally but still with the control of the teacher. Thus, each step of process writing stages can be performed by the students and evaluated by the teacher. The sense of authorship will also rise since the students should work for their best-version final drafts through a sequence of developmental steps.

This result echo earlier findings in the literature. Precisely, it is consistent with Barrot's study which noted that online platform portfolio had a positive impact on the students' practice of writing [9]. This research's finding is also incongruity with the study of Alshahrani & Windeatt who found that e-portfolio software has triggered a valuable improvement of ESL students' writing performance [10].

Above all, however, based on the researchers' observation during the research, the researchers would take a stance that either paper-based portfolio or e-portfolio will be beneficial for students depend on the classroom condition and consideration. A class with a poor internet connection will increase the students' stress and anxiety in writing instead. Thus, the teacher's wise and creative decision is subject to concern.

Furthermore, the researchers also noted in the observation sheets that the students really enjoyed the pre-writing activities. They rarely did this stage before in their previous writing courses; hence it was quite bothersome in the beginning. Yet, as they got accustomed to it, it released their puzzlement in writing. Making an outline was also noted as helping the students write systematically. As known, usual students may just directly write their drafts without creating the outline; whereas, an outline is beneficial for the process of writing. In addition, the revision stage with feedback from teachers and friends were the students' favorites. It was seen from their enthusiasm to do the revisions until they wrote their final drafts. They looked more confident in turning in their final

version of their writing. It seemed that they had learned a lot from the revision stage.

As the limitation, it is acknowledged that the number of participants in this research is not quite sufficient for a quantitative study. This is because the classes in the Department of English, Darul 'Ulum Islamic University, are not big. Yet, the researchers persist to conduct the study for the sake of teaching and learning quality improvement.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine whether the combination of portfolio and digital application in the form of Edmodo-supported e-portfolio will better enhance the students' quality of writing rather than using traditional paper-based portfolio. The findings indicated that students' writing scores after being taught by using Edmodo-supported e-portfolio were significantly higher than after receiving paper-based portfolio method. Therefore, the implementation of Edmodo-supported e-portfolio is recommended in the writing course.

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