Abstract—This study is a narrative analysis of the Portfolio-Based Timed-Handwriting Technique (PBTHT) implementation in Writing Class. It narrates the story of a purposively selected individual student’s experiences and perspectives in completing writing tasks with PBTHT. On a blank sheet of paper, the student has to compose a single independent paragraph on an assigned topic with PBTHT which is administered weekly at the beginning of class. Only 15 minutes is allocated to complete the task without any help. After retyping, discussion, feedback, and revision processes, all compositions are compiled into a digital portfolio. This study examines the digital portfolio artifacts and conducts in-depth chats via WA and e-mails with the student which covers the implementation of the PBTHT process, efforts, and reflection in completing the paragraph-based writing tasks. This study shows that firstly all PBTHT steps have been well accomplished by the student by doing all stages in detailed and serious manners. Secondly, the writing progress can be well seen and monitored through the portfolio. Next, PBTHT is positively perceived. Concerns, efforts, and reflections on PBTHT implementation are clearly and fairly stated for student’s writing skills improvement. The findings imply some contributions toward the improvement of the student’s writing skills.

Keywords: narrative analysis, portfolio, handwriting, timed-writing

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a narrative analysis of the Portfolio-Based Timed-Handwriting Technique (PBTHT) implementation in a paragraph-based writing class at the English Education Department of Universitas Muria Kudus (EED of UMK). It narrates the experiences and perspectives of a purposively selected individual student in completing writing tasks. With PBTHT, on a blank sheet of paper, the student has to compose a single independent paragraph on an assigned topic which is administered weekly at the beginning of class. Only 15 minutes is allocated to complete the task without any help.

PBTHT owns some distinctive features, i.e. time limit, assigned topic, no assistance mode, handwriting mode, and fair play mode. During timed-handwriting practice, students have no access to any help from peers, instructors, notes, books, and (smart) gadgets.

The PBTHT process consists of the following activities (1) warming up, ice-breaking, schemata activation, (2) giving a topic to develop just before the timed-handwriting. (3) timed-handwriting (4) scanning the original composition sheet, (5) Retyping (computerized), (6) revising by referring to the scoring rubrics, doing self-revision, peer/group revision, discussion, offline and online literature support, instructor revision/feedback, (7) doing final revision, (8) Submission/the process of writing in the portfolio. (8) Reflection: telling experiences/reflection while the students do timed-writing with handwriting mode and (9) Evaluation.

The process and product of timed-handwriting, retyping, discussion, feedback, and revision processes of all compositions are compiled into a digital portfolio of the PBTHT project.

The PBTHT is relevant to views of constructivism (Bozyigit & Eksi, 2017; Hosni, 2017), process-based writing (Hasan & Akhnan, 2010; David, 2015), and output-hypothesis (Swain, 2005; Pappamihiel, 2008; John, 2019; Donesch-Jezo, 2016). Writing in EFL is a complex language skill to master for students (Muslim, 2014; Negari, 2011). It is not a random combination of words or sentences (Atasoy & Temizkan, 2016). Students are required to compose a well-organized paragraph using an acceptable format, mechanics, content, organization, and grammar. This is relevant to Yuliasri (2014) as a manifestation of cooperative learning techniques.

Handwriting has some specific features such as automatic (Beminger, 2012), brain-compatible. Silver (2018), effective for visual identification and letter recall (Mangen, 2018). It also stimulates certain parts of the brain (James & Engelhardt, 2012; Bounds, 2010) and the working memory (Limp, 2014).
Handwriting serves good activities for ELT (Lund, 2015, Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014) with strong authenticity in its singularity, individuality, and materiality (Neef, 2006).

The use of portfolio project has been widely known to be beneficial for learners to improve students’ composition (Lam, 2018; Khodashenas & Rakhsi, 2017; Kongsubuechart & Suppasetseree, 2016; Saeedi & Mehami, 2015) through writing process-based and self-assessment (Alawdat, 2015; Tahriri, 2014; Barrot, 2016; Omidi & Yarahmadzehi, 2016).

Meanwhile, a timed-writing practice, and practice in a given specified amount of time to write (Datchuk, 2017 in Rogers, 2018), provides benefits for students (Stevenson & Stevenson, 2010; David, 2015). Lau (2013) proposed a timed writing assessment. Ayotte (2018) argues that during timed writing, a fair play among students during PBTHT is very well maintained (Syafei, 2010, 2014, 2019). The original handwritten compositions are collected, assessed, discussed, revised, and finally put into a writing portfolio (Lam, 2018; Syafei, 2012; Aydin, 2010). Syafei, Mujiyanto, Yulisasi & Pratama (2020) reveal that timed-handwriting technique is effective quantitatively to improve students’ writing performance and strengthen their positive perceptions.

A narrative analysis of PBTHT implementation to teach writing is hardly available and accordingly in need. Based on the student’s portfolio projects and narration, this narrative inquiry is to uncover her experiences and reflections during the implementation of PBTHT in the paragraph writing class. The narration is expected to provide a lesson learned and better insights on how a student can perform well in paragraph-based writing with PBTHT.

II. METHODS

Through a narrative analysis (Connelly & Clandinin in Creswell, 2012; Wijayatilake, 2012; Bense, 2012; Listiyanto & Fauzi, 2016), this study is to present narrative experiences of an individual student who performed well during the PBTHT implementation. It is to investigate her process of doing the PBTHT project in a paragraph-based writing class at EED of Universitas Muria Kudus of even semester in the academic year of 2019/2020. It is to address the student’s experiences in completing the PBTHT project successfully to achieve the learning objective. The participant of this study is a student who is purposively selected based on her outstanding success and commitment to the project. She is a third-semester college student of the English education department who began to learn English for the first time when she was in the fourth grade of elementary school. She became interested in English because one day nobody could answer her teacher’s question in her English class and then she convinced herself that she had to master English which, according to her, is a beautiful language.

Instead of in-depth face to face communication, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, written communication via WA chats and e-mail was done to retrieve her narrations by paying attention to Pratama (2012) concerning the affection of interviewer support during an interview. To confirm the narration, this study also examines the digital portfolio artifacts made by the student concerning the implementation of PBTHT procedure, efforts, reflection in completing the paragraph-based writing tasks.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data retrieved from the student’s narrations, the implementation of PBTHT process, efforts, and reflection in completing the paragraph-based writing tasks, the findings are presented as follows:

a. The Narrative Inquiry of the PBTHT Process.

This study shows that firstly all PBTHT steps have been well accomplished by the student by doing all stages in detailed and serious manners. The student’s narration is also supported by and in line with her PBTHT documents. In her initial story, the PBTHT project is her first time writing paragraphs in English. She used to write paragraphs in high school but they were written in Bahasa Indonesia. She felt a bit confused about her limited experience in writing. She was also afraid of making mistakes, so she needed more time to study.

She initially managed to read the procedure PBTHT attachment given by the lecturer. The listed steps of implementing PBTHT were provided in it. Sometimes she also asked her classmates about some parts of the project she did not yet understand. The WA group created by the lecturer enabled her to ask questions directly, and it was very helpful.

Computerizing and scanning the original handwritten were done as soon as she finished writing her original paragraph. The reflection part, which was being her favorite, and the revision part followed. She honestly admitted that she had revised her paragraphs more than what she had typed on the PBTHT project. This narration indicates that the revision process played a significant role in the quality of her compositions.

Further, she voiced that the first time she heard about paragraph writing, she thought it would be complicated and challenging. She imagined it would be something like the definition of a paragraph, random sentences, or even a multiple-choice assignment. She claimed honestly that PBTHT was a very strange thing for her. In PBTHT, she had to be able to make a series of paragraphs with a specific topic in a limited time. She had also to revise it several times to make it perfect. Discussions and literature reviews are done with classmates who
were needed in the process. According to her, it was tough at the beginning. Fortunately, she believed in a saying "You can if you want". Then she kept writing, and eventually, PBTHT became enjoyable for her.

She explained that finally, she learned that a good paragraph consists of a topic sentence, controlling idea, supporting ideas, and conclusion. She learned how to improve her writing skills through PBTHT. She had to learn every step needed in PBTHT, including the preparation, outlining, until revising. She admitted that PBTHT helped her a lot to improve her writing skills. Alawdat (2015) showed a similar condition when exploring the implementation of e-portfolios by writing teachers.

b. The Student’s Efforts to Improve the Compositions

At the beginning of PBTHT implementation, she thought her paragraphs were too short and found it difficult to combine sentences. The weaknesses of her first paragraph including aspects of grammar, punctuation, coherence, and cohesiveness between paragraph elements. Please kindly see Hajabi (2018) on grammatical errors in paragraph writing. She articulated that her weakness was because of her limited ability. When she got unfamiliar topics, she felt difficulties in writing her paragraph; she does not know what information she should write. The limited vocabulary also became a problem for her because it made her not being able to write longer. She often made grammar errors in her paragraph because of her limited grammar or structural expression. This brainstorming step can be done in the revision steps as presented by Hermasari & Mujiyanto (2015) who investigated the effectiveness of online brainwriting and brainstorming techniques in teaching writing.

She conveyed that she realized a need for more supporting knowledge to make her writing enjoyable. She started reading some more articles and reading material, outlining her writing, and asking her friends for advice. She maintained that the unfamiliar theme or topic can make her difficult to write because her vocabulary is still low. She revised her texts several times before getting the final revision. She made it seriously and full of hard work, and she tried to fix all the errors. The multimodality (Lim & Polio, 2020) in the efforts should be relevant with Grapin & Llosa, 2020 and Hafner, Yee, & Ho (2020) for the processed-model.

She posited she learned a lot of things when fixing her original paragraphs. Sometimes it was difficult for her to put together one sentence to another to make it coherent. So she needed to read and reread her paragraph to make sure that it was perfect for her.

Related to her efforts to improve her composition, she voiced as follows “Writing a paragraph in 15 minutes is not easy for me. I am not a genius student who can write a lot of things in a short time. There will always be hundreds of ideas that come to my mind when I'm writing, but the problem is I cannot make it into a good paragraph. My vocabulary is also still low, and I have to do more exercise. This is my second time writing a paragraph in English, so I think my skill has improved a little bit. Next time, I will try harder and harder”.

She further voiced, “Now, I try to read more and diligently because Mr. Syafei (the lecturer) always tells us to read anytime and anywhere. I always use Grammarly to improve my paragraphs. I read several articles about why everyone likes English. I also watched a few posts on Instagram about English. To make my paragraph longer, I added a few additional sentences and new things that I didn't know before. I will work harder to make good paragraphs until the final assignment.”

The above-quoted student’s reflections shared some similar findings with Demiril & Duman (2015) who investigated the use of portfolios in English language teaching and its effects on achievement and attitude. In a verbal context, this might be in line with Fitriati, Isfara, & Trisanti, (2017). The student grammar and punctuation. She also read some stories on the internet to get ideas. She read Wikipedia about her city and try to get the correct data. She also used Google Translate to learn more vocabulary she was not familiar with before.

For another instance, when editing a paragraph on the Covid-19 pandemic, she also used Grammarly and read a lot of literature. She read the literature on Covid-19 and how to prevent it. She accessed the official website of WHO and read several stories of people whose countries were quarantined. From these efforts, she was able to find out how they survived Covid-19 when their country was at lockdown and also how they adopted a healthy lifestyle to apply in everyday life. Then she used the information into her paragraph and she maintained that the unfamiliar theme or topic can make her difficult to write because her vocabulary is still low. She revised her texts several times before getting the final revision. She made it seriously and full of hard work, and she tried to fix all the errors. The multimodality (Lim & Polio, 2020) in the efforts should be relevant with Grapin & Llosa, 2020 and Hafner, Yee, & Ho (2020) for the processed-model.

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portfolio may have helped her to elicit more words for writing.

c. The Narration on the Use of Handwriting Mode, Timed-Writing and Portfolio Project

Concerning the use of handwriting in writing class, she narrated that most of her tasks were done through a computer or laptop. All assignments were typed, and she rarely completed it by handwriting. According to her, handwriting activity is a very important activity because it can improve her writing skills and how she manages to make good sentences. She added that, based on an article she read, by writing, people will pay more attention to the grammar they use and they will remember more of what they have written. When we are typing on a computer or laptop, the wrong words will be corrected automatically, but by handwriting, we must correct our writing manually. Sometimes when she reads her handwriting, she still finds some typos, and then she realizes that she has to be more careful when writing. She also still makes a summary of her courses by handwriting. Related to this position, Al-Ghabra (2015) perceived handwriting as useful.

Through the use of timed-writing, she claimed that it can train herself to do her task as well as she can in a limited time. She became accustomed to going fast and trying to use time as much as possible. In the allotted time, she tried to write as long as she could, and she also tried to make the most of her time. When we write in a long time, we will tend to delay it, but when we write with limited time to write, we will try to complete the task on time. Although at first, she felt difficulties, it will be easy if we do it regularly. This finding is relevant to Ayotte (2018) who found out that timed-writing in the foreign language classroom contributed to students’ writing.

She narrates that the use of portfolios in writing class allows her to decide everything that she wants to put in the portfolio. She even can share her reflection, efforts, and evaluation in the portfolio. She can monitor her progress and personal development in writing. The portfolio also helps her to make sure that all her paragraphs are right. She has chances to revise her paragraph as long as she wants; it helps her to produce a good paragraph. The portfolio can be her virtual teacher on how she wants; it helps her to produce a good paragraph. Through PBTHT, she tries to improve her grammar, punctuation, and she began to write a paragraph in English without googling it first. Cakan, Mihladiz, & Taskin (2014) might have been for this finding.

One more thing, she expresses is that PBTHT can improve her confidence in writing a paragraph. Through PBTHT implementation, she can produce an original paragraph and then can revise it many times. When composing the original paragraph or revising it, she always tries to make them as good as possible. She always works hard to make a good composition. She also tries to write her original paragraph without help from the internet so that it can enhance her vocabulary.

There are a lot of processes of PBTHT, and she can learn many things from all the processes. PBTHT is also viewed to boost her motivation and confidence more autonomously. It also encourages student-lecturer interaction. PBTHT is a dynamic process, and it is not boring. She claimed she always enjoys every process. This should be relevant to findings by Farahian & Avarzaman (2018).

In the beginning, it was hard for her to do PBTHT, but after doing PBTHT regularly, she began to like it. There was no longer anxiety in writing a paragraph, and she can write a paragraph without pressure. The number of written words becomes longer and longer as time goes by. Even though PBTHT increases the number of mistakes, such grammar and punctuation mistakes can be all revised accordingly.

She also argued that PBTHT implementation in writing courses can provide feedback to increase her paragraph. Through PBTHT, she gets information about paragraph development methods and technique and she learns much about essential parts of a paragraph. She learns to do the outline before writing a paragraph. PBTHT provides the solution to her problems in writing. Eventually, she even gets some tips and tricks for doing the technique. Through PBTHT, she tries to improve her grammar, punctuation, and she began to write a paragraph in English without googling it first. Cakan, Mihladiz, & Taskin (2014) might have been for this finding.

d. The Narration on the Use of the PBTHT in Writing Class.

PBTHT gives me opportunities to develop and strengthen critical thinking skills. According to her narration, it gives her a chance to do independent learning, so she can adjust the learning process to suit pace and interest. PBTHT also gives her enjoyment blended with learning; it is very fun and not boring. Through PBTHT implementation, she knows what a good paragraph is and how to write it. She explains further that a good paragraph consists of a topic sentence, controlling idea, supporting the idea, and the conclusion.

Before PBTHT, she tends to write a paragraph in the wrong way, and now after PBTHT, she knows to make a good paragraph. PBTHT also involves many processes that help her to improve her writing skills, including the preparation before writing such as planning, drafting, reflecting, until revising. All of them increase her motivation in writing.

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e. The Narration on PBTHT Implementation
In her narration, she stated that PBTHT implementation was a very good program. She enjoyed every process of doing it. PBTHT gave her the chance to develop her paragraph and revise it as much as she wanted. It also enables her to use all the media or application that can help her to revise her work. By PBTHT, she can identify her mistakes and improve her knowledge of a new theme. This is following Cassidy & Bailey (2018) on the role of the feedback writing process. She also thought PBTHT is an effective assessment that will help the student to improve their writing skills.

She gave one more concern on the PBTHT. She argued that it is hard for her to write a paragraph with an unfamiliar theme. The more familiar with the theme, the easier for her to do the PBTHT paragraph. She maintained that writing is not only how much words we can produce but how well we can combine every sentence. Sometimes I'm too lazy to work on paragraphs, so my paragraph still the same, and there is no change. Besides that, the limited vocabulary was also very annoying, sometimes I wanted to write down a lot of things, but I didn't know the vocabulary. However, I still can search for it on google translate, so it is not a very difficult thing to solve.

In the narration, she elaborately stated that the materials, the aim, and the plan in PBTHT are appropriate with the objectives of the paragraph-based writing course. The PBTHT is useful for the student to learn writing and other English skills, especially intertextual reading. This can be viewed as in line with Celce-Murcia (2018). The material is very good because it is not only presented but also explained and then practiced. For her, the use of supporting applications during PBTHT implementation such as Word and Grammarly is also very interesting and easier to learn more new things. She also maintained that she likes the evaluation process in PBTHT because her lecturer gives her a lot of time to do this PBTHT and reviews this implementation regularly. She also may ask anything even though it is through virtual learning because of the pandemic.

The narration also suggests that to maintain and keep improving her current paragraph writing skill after finishing the writing classes, she planned to keep writing in her blog. During the whole semester, she also got the project to make her blog and she would continue to write there. This may become one of the multiplier effects of the PBTHT implementation. This has a relation with Abhakorn (2014) who investigated the use of student portfolios to develop students’ metacognition in English as a foreign language learning. It is also following Dahvianti, Gita, & Iskan dar (2019) who used portfolio assessment to improve EFL students’ expository-writing performance. The participant whois a prospective English teacher has some qualities of a professional English teacher as presented by Hartono (2016).

IV. CONCLUSION

The previously discussed narrative analysis shows that PBTHT can improve many aspects related to her writing skills. In PBTHT, more attention to paragraph aspects like format, mechanics, content, and organization of a well-developed and unified paragraph. Compared to regular writing, narratively, the PBTHT is certainly more effective.

The student is trained to write in a short period so that it would increase the speed of her thinking. She also learned to compose sentences to make paragraphs that are well-organized and worth reading. The narration also indicates that PBTHT requires more effort than regular writing, but the benefits are also better.

From the narration, this study shows that all PBTHT steps have been well accomplished by the student by doing all stages in detailed and thoughtful manners. Secondly, the writing progress can be well seen and monitored through the portfolio. Next, PBTHT is constructively perceived. Concerns, efforts, and reflections on PBTHT implementation are clearly seen and monitored through the portfolio. Next, PBTHT is constructively perceived. Concerns, efforts, and reflections on PBTHT implementation are clearly and fairly acknowledged for student’s writing skills improvement. The findings stimulatingly imply some contributions towards the progress of the student’s writing skills. Further investigations are expected from different perspectives of PBTHT implementation.

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