

## Effective Strategies for Maintaining an English Writing Portfolio to Enhance Students' Writing Skills and Continuous Assessment Scores



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**ABSTRACT:** English Writing Portfolio plays a crucial role in Bhutanese education, serving as a tool for continuous assessment and fostering the growth of students' writing skills. This study examines the effectiveness of various strategies employed in maintaining and assessing writing portfolios, focusing on class XI and XII students at Peljorling Higher Secondary School. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data, the research investigates the impact of writing portfolios on students' writing proficiency and their attitudes toward portfolio maintenance. Findings underscore the significance of writing portfolios in enhancing writing skills and improving continuous assessment scores. The study reveals the importance of tailored approaches to portfolio assessment, emphasizing the need for collaborative engagement among students, teachers, and peers.

**KEYWORDS:** Writing Portfolio, Continuous Assessment, Writing Skills, Formative Assessment and Rubric-based Evaluation

### INTRODUCTION

Portfolios for students are an integral part of the English Curriculum in Bhutan. It is the collection of processed works presenting the gradual growth of students and the collection happens with certain specifications. The purpose of keeping a portfolio is a must for both students and teachers. As per Olds(1997), approaches to keeping a portfolio may be successful, if the instructor has a clear purpose for asking students to maintain it and if the purpose is clearly articulated to students. Such as writing a variety of business and work-related documents, including letters, memos, and emails, meeting minutes, speaker introductions, reports, and résumés, in which they show understanding and control of the elements of the respective forms of writing. Similarly, Burke (2021) shared the purpose such as the demonstration of students' growth over time, identification of specific skills to show improvement, creation of a tangible body of evidence to show, collection of reflections on growth and learning, initiate personal responsibility on behalf of the student, documentation of learning standards with corresponding products and communication device for parents, teachers, and students. Thus, having a purpose is necessary for Portfolio keeping.

Further, to fulfill the competency and the learning objectives, teachers are instructed to consider the 'Learning Experiences' such as "before allowing learners to maintain their writing portfolio, have learners recall lessons on writing process... Teachers can frame rubrics in collaboration with the learners" (DCPD, 2022). As per Burke (2021), students' portfolio requires criteria such as "demonstration of academic achievement and progress, alignment with grade-level standards, reflections on the individual's learning process and archive of accomplished work". Since the works in the portfolio include processed works, the quality of learners' work gets better. Thus, developing positive attitudes such as motivation, risk-taking, flexibility, responsibility, and perseverance. Further, it helps learners focus on comprehension aspects of learning which further calls for the enhancement of higher thinking skills and self-reflection of their works. Portfolio in Bhutanese schools includes reading and writing portfolios and are assessed as a part of formative assessment. The former includes the reading records and later the writing records, decided by the students and teachers in unison. A Writing Portfolio consists of a continuous collection of materials finalized by students and teachers which presents the growth of the learners after completing the writing process. As per REC (2020), "The student collects all work samples related to the concept or skill being mastered which shows the progression from the beginning to the best-finished product improved over time." Writing Portfolio is significant for every student since it has a bearing of 20 to 30 percent on their results depending on their class level. Further, it enhances the writing and communication skills. "Portfolios help students reflect on their growth as writers, help students to interact with peers in the discussion

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of writing, and help faculty and students discuss ways in which students may become better writers” (Olds, n.d.). To avail the skills and acquire better marks, it is mandated for every student to use the writing process for all the genres decided by the students and the subject teacher.

The benefits of writing portfolio are experienced by both students and teachers. It helps one become a proficient writer by offering multiple opportunities to practice and demonstrate a mastery of writing. For both students and teachers, portfolios offer many advantages over other forms of assessment. First and probably the most important, from the student’s point of view, writers gain more control over their writing and therefore over their grades. Instead of demonstrating the skill in a single essay, in the final examination, one creates, selects, revises, and polishes different pieces for the portfolio throughout the semester. While doing so, students consult with teachers and peers for the enhancement of one’s writing. For the same reasons, teachers also like this method of evaluation: including portfolios in writing assessment allows them to focus on revision, on improvement, and on a process of collaboration among students, teachers, and peers.

The Writing Process includes the stages of writing to perfect a material. The writing process “means the steps and methods used to generate a finished piece of writing” (University of Maryland Global Campus, 2020). The writing process at Peljorling includes 6 stages for all the genres such as ‘1<sup>st</sup> Draft, 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft, 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft, Revising, Editing, and Revising’. While walking on the process if a student can perfect his/her writing piece before reaching the final stage ‘Publishing’, the student is made to stop at the perfection stage. For instance, if student A perfects his/her Poem at ‘Revising’, the teacher makes him or her stop with a remake to note perfection. These stages present the growth of students’ writing with the help of peers, the community, and teachers.

Through Portfolios, students’ higher thinking skills and self-reflection are triggered. As per REC(2020), a portfolio benefits students’ attitudes and values where students will be able to see characteristics like motivation, risk-taking, flexibility, responsibility and perseverance, attitudes, and values. Multiple benefits of Writing Portfolio are seen not only in the students but also in the teachers and the environment. As per REC (2020), a writing portfolio exhibits the following benefits;

- Provides an opportunity for the student to exhibit what has been accomplished and to demonstrate his or her strengths as well as weaknesses
- Enables the student to be reflective about his or her work and knowledge
- Encourages teacher-student conference
- Helps communicate to parents what has been learned
- Provides multiple opportunities for observation and assessment as it is ongoing
- Provides information about a student to subsequent teachers
- Promotes student responsibility
- Encourages Peer Assessment which provides peer feedback;
- Makes students aware of performance, process, products, and work habits.

### Aim

This research aims to identify and evaluate effective strategies for maintaining an English Writing Portfolio to support students in improving their writing skills and achieving higher scores in continuous assessments.

### Objectives

- To investigate the impact of Writing Portfolios a tool for Continuous Assessment on the writing skills of class XI and XII students at Peljorling Higher Secondary School

-To study the attitude of students towards the culture of keeping a Writing Portfolio in English.

### Situational analysis

At Peljorling Higher Secondary School, for the reading portfolio, students and teachers finalize the format and the number of reading records and the students record their reading using a set format. Furthermore, students’ language is not marked though it is checked (PHSS, 2022).

Sl. No	Category	marks
1	Records of Reading	5
2	Critical analysis	5
3	Quantity (no. of books read)	5
4	Quality	5
Total	20	

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Contrary, for the writing portfolio, students write on the topics and genres decided by the students, and these creations are marked. Unlike the reading portfolio, language is an integral part as evident with the rubrics used to assess the content 'Sl.No 2 and 3' (PHSS, 2022).

### 1. Writing Portfolio

Sl. No	Category	Term 1-Marks	Term 2-marks
1	Content	5	5
2	Task Completion	2.5	2.5
3	Tidiness/h-writing	2.5	2.5
4	Relevancy	2.5	2.5
5	Submission	2.5	2.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

#### i. Content- 5 marks

SL.No	Category (content)	3 marks	2 marks	1 mark
1	Quality/acknowledgement	Original work. No plagiarism	Few phrases/sentences copied but acknowledged	half copied but acknowledged
2	Grammar and spelling	No errors in spelling, punctuation, and well-structured sentences	Less than 3 errors in spelling, punctuation, and well-structure sentences	More than 3 spelling, punctuation, and multiple grammatical errors
3	Style: Language and tone	Use of formal language and appropriate tone	A mix of formal and informal tone	Subjective writing which seems highly based on opinions
4	Quantity	Has written 10 pieces (any genre)	Has written 8 pieces (any genre)	Has written less than 5 genre
5		Has written more than 4 different (diff.) genre	Has written 3 diff. genre	Has written only 1- 2 genres.

Since the components are more and language is considered, students score more in reading than in the writing portfolio.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of writing portfolios in the development of writing skills of class XI and XII students has been the subject of limited research. Additionally, there is a lack of focus on students in Bhutan regarding this topic. This gap in the literature provides an opportunity for the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the topic under study

The concept of keeping a portfolio is like the papers used. As per REC (2012, p.97), "A portfolio is a collection of many types of materials selected with the students and teacher input, designed to demonstrate progress and growth in students' work, understanding, problem-solving processes, and attitudes". Similarly, to Doe & Doe (2015) it is the culmination of works revised to a professional standard that represents the student's highest effort and achievement in his/her undergraduate writing. However, DCPD (2022) not only focuses on the compilations of a learner's best work but also the inclusion of evidence and work products that demonstrate how learners improved over time. These works are grouped as Reading Portfolio and Writing Portfolio considering the stands in focus. The materials in both can be further categorized into Progress Portfolio, Special Project Portfolio, and Showcase Portfolio where in the first "the student collects all work samples related to the concept or skill being mastered which shows the progression from the beginning to the best finished produced improved over time" (REC, 2020). For the second, "students can document the progress from start to finish by collecting examples of work related to the project" and at the last students select the work that they feel is the best and improve it (REC, 2020). Additionally, Courts and McInerney (as cited in Olds, 1997) have mentioned the 'nonselective' portfolios. In a nonselective portfolio works in each course are collected and chronologically dated. Further, it involves the concert evidence from the students proving their involvement in the work.

Students' works which are included in the portfolio, undergo a process. Before maintaining a portfolio, students know how many pieces are to be included, how to arrange the materials, and how the portfolios are assessed (Thoughtful Learning, 2022). Thus, making the pre-phrase prominent in the writing portfolio. Remova and Andrew (2011) considered portfolios to be pedagogical tools for developing

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academic writing with multi-drafting such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing which are enhanced by responding, evaluating, and post-writing creating a feedback loop. These advance awareness of cohesion and coherence and understanding of writing as a recursive process thereby empowering the learners. Further, prewriting, peer and teacher feedback, and revision are presented to be fundamental practices for process-based approaches. Similarly, to Farrah and Kolb (cited by Farrah, 2018) portfolio as a tool is rooted in the social constructivism theory and experimental learning where students write, revise, and reflect on the writing. This study of teaching and assessing using multi-draft portfolios emphasizes the importance of seeing learning not only as a cognitive/meta-cognitive process but also as a social one where learners view teaching texts and their own versions of them in the contexts of the discourse communities of which they are artifacts.

Discourse communities are inextricably connected to student investments in Academic Writing and multi-draft portfolios represent a union of assessment and learning. Thus, providing learners with different tactics and gauging their results.

Nevertheless, the length of materials differs depending on either the writing process or the number of materials decided to be included. Doe & Doe (2015) emphasized “two to three short stories; Fifteen to twenty poems; Two chapters of a novel; Three to four substantive essays; One sustained research project; Four to five professional or technical projects; or One to two acts of a script or. Whereas DCPD (2022) calls for “Best pieces of writing selected by students, Original short story (employing elements of a short story), Best pieces selected by the teacher, the Journal writing for the book review, Meeting minutes, Resumes, Personal, transactional and poetic writing”. Thus, it is evident that Doe & Doe (2015) emphasize counts for seven genres instead of emphasizing the writing process and DCPD (2022) on the writing process which includes prewriting, writing, editing, revision, rewriting, and publishing. However, it has been beneficial mostly for high achievers. When it comes to the present research, the writing process not only includes stages but also sub-stages such as 1<sup>st</sup> Draft, 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft under the Drafting stage considering the low achievers. Further, the genres decided by students are Argumentative essays, short stories, reports, memorandums, and information transfer for the writing portfolio.

Further, maintaining a portfolio provides various benefits to both students and teachers. Portfolios have been found to “be a valuable way to improve their critical thinking skills as well as their ability to be self-reflective and self-critical” since they allow students to share and learn from peer responses and provide faculty and students with one-on-one opportunities to discuss specific strengths and weaknesses of student writing. “In addition, it serves as a “performance”, a way of selling potential employers on a student’ versatility, language abilities and critical thinking skills” (Olds, 1997). When students are engaged with difficulties and challenges, they gain a deeper appreciation of academic literacies and Academic writing strategies. It allows writers to self-editing and the insight to reorganize academic texts. Multi-draft portfolios can assess both macro (mechanical, formal, accuracy-focused) and macro (textural, thematic, discursive) aspects of progress related to course aims, objectives, and outcomes (Remova & Andrew, 2011). Further, it plays a significant role in socializing learners to target discourse communities. As per Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) writing process helps learners solve problems, discover ideas express thoughts in writing, and revise texts. Multi-draft portfolio not only provides feedback loop and data about learners cognitive operations but also enhances learner’s understanding of writing as a socially situated process participating in language socialization” (Remova & Andrew, 2011). Along with those, students understand discourse features and structures other than language and vocabulary and play a significant role in socializing learners to discourse communities.

Significantly, Coutts and McInerney (cited in Old, 1997) have listed the following benefits.

- The teacher has access to all the students’ work and therefore has a relatively complete sense of the students’ general progress.
- Students have an opportunity to look at and reflect on everything that they have been doing.
- For programmatic assessment, the nonselective portfolio provides an overview of the types and amount of writing required in a particular course.
- Students could use the portfolio to their advantage in “selling” their prospective employer or graduate school on the types and quality of writing they have been doing.

Similarly, benefits are seen for instructors as well. Using the assessment of writing portfolio, instructors can promote performance and sub-skills of writing among students, and gain professionalism with active and meaningful involvement in students’ evaluation. (Ucar and Yazier, 2016). The portfolio-keeping process is found to be a motivating and worthwhile experience. As per Olds (1997) the face-to-face discussion that happens between teacher and students to review the portfolio’s content not only helps both discuss their perceptions but also students grow as writers.

Thus, moving away from grades and to process and progress.

However, Coutts and McInerney (cited in Old, 1997) found disadvantages of the nonselective portfolios such as the overwhelming sheer bulk of the portfolio, placing a heavy demand on the teacher’s time and energy, and the amount of time required to evaluate a portfolio which depends to some extent on the purposes for which it is being evaluated. Therefore, while portfolios can be scored holistically to quickly assess overall performance, they should be reviewed carefully to discover the specific difficulties experienced by a teacher and

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a student.

In addition, the variances are evident in the purpose of maintaining a writing portfolio. Olds (1997) focuses on helping students reflect on their growth as writers and interact with peers in the discussion of writing, and helps faculty and students discuss ways in which students may become better writers. In addition, a student's versatility, language abilities, and critical thinking skills are enhanced. Whereas, REC (2020) considers attitudes and values where students will be able to see characteristics like motivation, risk-taking, flexibility, responsibility and perseverance, attitudes and values whereby the following benefits are to be exhibited which are similar to Olds (1997);

- exhibit what has been accomplished and to demonstrate his or her strengths as well as weaknesses
- Enables the student to be reflective about his or her work and knowledge
- Encourages teacher-student conference
- Helps communicate to parents what has been learned
- Provides multiple opportunities for observation and assessment as it is on-going
- Provides information about a student to subsequent teachers
- Promotes student responsibility
- Encourages Peer Assessment which provides peer feedback;
- Makes students become aware of performance, process, products, and work habits.

Though the skills and ways to achieve those are emphasized, the effectiveness of the writing portfolio considered for the CA is not reflected in both.

A major difference can be seen in the assessment of a writing portfolio. For instance, the writing portfolio presented by Doe & Doe (2015) includes a portfolio director who advises students in selecting and revising materials, students who will edit and proofread and a portfolio reader who provides suggestions and comments but uses those for the students' CA is not emphasized. However, the writings of the students are expected to be evaluated by self and peers in case of thoughtful thinking (2022) which is like the research but the use of it for the CA is again not included. However,

Olds (1997) at the end of the semester, asked students to select one work and write a short (1 to 2 pages) reflection on what they learned from writing it and encouraged peer review of papers which can be done either during the draft stage or with the finished product without keeping a portfolio. Further, he also focused on the use of portfolio for the summative assessment where the teachers grade students' works.

However, this research called for students and teachers to decide on the Genres to include in the writing portfolio, followed by the rubrics considering the amount of information included, quality and variety of pieces included, and growth in performance by both teacher and students which is not a case in former literature. Though the use of peers and language teachers as assessors is common, the use of non-English teachers and local people is new. Writings in a portfolio are assessed. Students are made aware of the assessment and the assessors use specific writing rubrics to grade each piece as it is written and a portfolio evaluation to grade the whole collection once it is assembled. Further, a critique sheet is developed based on the goals established by the assessors for the portfolio (Thoughtful Learning, 2022). This assessment has moved from product-oriented pedagogy, which focuses on a disembodied written text requiring strict adherence to native speaker (NS) expectations, to process-oriented writing, with its instruction focus on learner discovery (Romova and Andrew, 2011).

Similarly, Tabatabaci & Assefi said that teaching writing has shifted from the traditional way of end product-oriented approach to the process of creating writing (as cited in Ucar and Yazier, 2012). Thus, replacing summative assessment with formative assessment. However, Azarfam et al. (2017) said that "students are asked to be involved in the writing process through peer and self-assessment but are not given any specific criteria or scale". He further stated that lack of formative evaluation and feedback is a problem in writing classes leading to a lack of quality in students' writing. Though students know the traits of writing they fail to write with quality because students are unaware of the assessment. The conventional way of teaching writing has changed to process-based writing. With its assessment techniques such as peer, self and portfolio assessment necessitate learners to become a part of the complete learning cycle and to create a product that shows what they can do" (Ucar and Yazier, 2016). One of the purposes of facilitating portfolio keeping is to give them opportunities to critically evaluate and compare their work with others in the class (Olds, n.d.) and is an excellent way of 'spreading the learning' in a writing classroom (Olds, n.d). However, he emphasized that the students who do not have the habit of receiving or giving advice to/from peers need help. Thus, as said by Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) and Ucar and Yazier (2016), portfolio assessment has a significant effect on overall writing performance and subskills of writing.

Nevertheless, students and teachers together confirm the process and the common assessment rubrics for all the decided genres. The

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differences are seen in the final compilation. Doe & Doe (2015) shared on situating the materials in Creative Writing, Professional Writing, or a combination of both and is submitted on CDs or DVDs. For REC (2022) works are documented but DCPD (2022) emphasizes the creation of an e-portfolio. Whereas, students of class XI science maintain a book for the compilation. Further, REC (2012) which is a reference for the DCPD (2022), does not present the use of writing portfolios for students' CA despite emphasizing portfolio keeping. All the pieces of literature do not emphasize either grading or the weightage of writing portfolio as evident in DCPD (2022), which is the baseline of portfolio keeping for the students of class XI Science. Only DCPD (2022) is with sample rubrics. However, this will change depending on the students and the subject teacher's discussion. Contrary to all the literature, this research will use the rubric modified and finalized by the students and the subject teachers of class XI at Peljorling Higher Secondary School. Furthermore, as per the exploration of the researcher, no literature focused on the effectiveness of writing portfolios for class XI students in Bhutanese schools, thus providing a scope of the study.

### Research Questions

What are the effective strategies for maintaining an English Writing Portfolio that can support class XI and XII students of Peljorling Higher Secondary School in enhancing their writing skills and achieving higher scores in continuous assessments?

#### Sub- Questions

1. What is the impact of Writing Portfolio as a tool for Continuous Assessment and the writing skills of class XI and XII students at Peljorling Higher Secondary School?
2. What is the attitude of students towards the culture of keeping Writing Portfolio in English, and how does it affect their motivation and engagement in the writing process?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research setting

The research was conducted at Peljorling Higher Secondary School (PHSS), located in Trashicholing Gewog, Samtse Dzongkha. PHSS is the only high school in Trashicholing Gewog and has a student population of 1568 and 96 staff (75 teachers). Of these, data was collected from 66 student participants of class XI Arts A and XI Science (2022) and 6 English teachers. The participants have been practicing the culture of maintaining portfolios since their primary school.

### Sample

The researcher used Non-probability Sampling and Purposive sampling, since the researcher sampled with a purpose in mind and had one or more specific predefined groups based on the purpose of the research (Trochim, 2006).

### Research Design

Mixed method research was used. According to Creswell (2009), "Mixed method research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms". This design is chosen since this approach comprises both quantitative and qualitative data, assimilating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks.

### Research Instrument

The researcher used the Explanatory sequential mixed method. According to Creswell (2014), "Explanatory sequential mixed method is one in which the researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyses the results and then builds on the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research". The initial quantitative data was collected through a survey, and the subsequent qualitative data were gathered through interviews with selected participants and document analysis using the writing records maintained by students.

### Data Analysis

For the data analysis, the researcher first calculated Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Later Descriptive, Thematic, and Text mining were used to analyze the data.

### Data Analysis

#### 3.1 Survey Questionnaire Result

The reliability of the survey questionnaires was tested using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). It was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the items as a group. 0.70 to +1 is considered "acceptable".

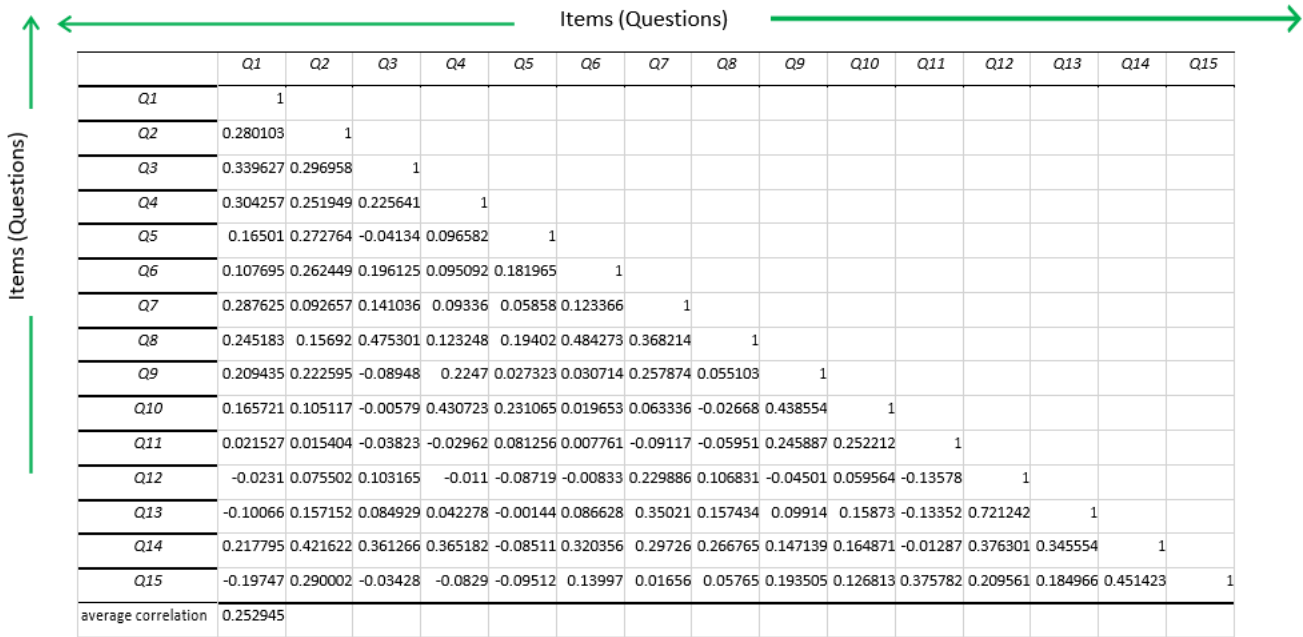
The following formula was used:  $\alpha =$

$$\frac{nr}{1+(n-1)r}$$

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$\alpha$  =Cronbach's alpha  
 n=number of observations  
 r=average correlation coefficient

Code	Description
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Agree
4	Strongly Agree



**Figure 1: Average correlation coefficient for students' Survey questionnaire.**

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Q3	0.645490.6454	1													
	7	97													
Q4	0.471400.4714	0.0912	1												
	5	05	87												
Q5	0.320250.3202	0.0620	-	1											
	6	56	17	0.1132											
				3											
Q6	1	1	0.6454	0.4714	0.3202	1									
			97	05	56										
Q7	-	-	-0.2582	0.4714	-	-	1								
	0.1666	0.1666	05	0.2401	0.1666										
	7			9	7										
Q8	0.560110.5601	0.8677	0.1485	0.3363	0.5601	-0									
	2	12	22	22	36	12									
Q9	0.645490.6454	0.0912	0.2401	0.0620	0.1666		Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	
	Q17	97		97	17										
Q10	0.420080.4200	0.6507	0.1980	0.60											
	0	4	84	91	3										
Q11	0.091280.0912	0.6363	-0.2												
	1	7	87	96											
Q12	0.353550.3535	-0.091													
	2	3	53												
Q13	-	-0.1666													
	3	0.16667													
Q14	0.2581														
	4	9													

**Figure 2; Average correlation coefficient for Teachers' Survey questionnaire**

**Table 2: Calculation of Cronbach's alpha**

Calculation of Cronbach's alpha for students	Calculation of Cronbach's alpha for teachers	Reliability Coefficient	
$\alpha = \frac{15 \times 0.252945}{1 + (15 - 1) \times 0.252945}$	$\alpha = \frac{14 \times 0.348041}{1 + (14 - 1) \times 0.348041}$	+1	Maximum
$\alpha = 0.835495$	$\alpha = 0.881988$	>0/90	Very high reliable
$\alpha = 0.84$	$\alpha = 0.88$	<b>0.8-0.89</b>	<b>Highly reliable</b>
		0.7-0.79	Reliable
		0.6-0.69	Marginally/minimally reliable
		<0.6	Unacceptably low reliable

**Table 3. Values for Cronbach's alpha's**

Symbol	Value for Students	Value for Teachers	
r (average correlation coefficient)	= 0.252945	= 0.348041	
N (number of observations/items)	= 15	= 14	



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The Cronbach's alpha for survey questionnaires for students and teachers are 0.84 and 0.88 respectively. As per the Institute for Digital Research and Education (2019), Cronbach's alpha between 0.8 and 0.89 is considered highly reliable. Thus, the data used for the research are 'Highly reliable'.

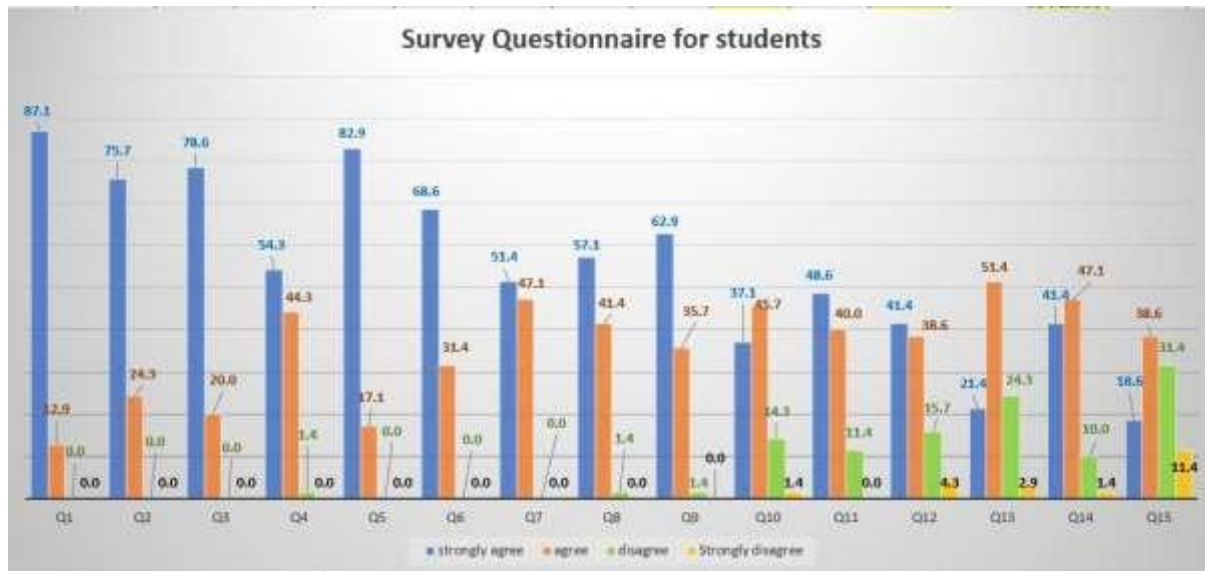


Figure 3: Response to the questionnaire by students.

The findings presented in Figures 3 and 4 underscore the pivotal role of English writing portfolios in enhancing students' writing skills and continuous assessment scores. The resounding agreement among both students and teachers on the significance of the writing portfolio is evident, with substantial percentages acknowledging its importance. The positive impact of the portfolio on academic performance is strongly supported by student responses, demonstrating its role in achieving higher scores and fostering skill development. The unanimous consensus on its effectiveness is further echoed in the improvement of students' performance in continuous assessments and English I papers. The collaborative process at Peljorling Higher Secondary School, involving students and teachers in rubric creation and genre selection, highlights the value of collective participation in refining the portfolio experience. The involvement of non-English teachers, peers, and community members in assessment showcases the multi-faceted approach taken to enhance the reliability and quality of students' work. The alignment between teacher and student perceptions of the quality of assessment rubrics and process efficacy emphasizes a positive reception. In sum, the study validates the instrumental role of an English writing portfolio in enriching students' writing abilities and assessment outcomes, promoting collaborative learning, and fostering continuous improvement in academic performance.

### 3.1 Analysis of Semi-structured Interview

The interview analysis revealed that all 10 student respondents and 2 teacher respondents acknowledged significant improvements in writing skills using writing portfolios. The students reported gaining new writing ideas, identifying, and rectifying mistakes, and improving language proficiency. Moreover, they mentioned that the portfolio helped them grasp various writing formats and essential components, such as the PEEL framework.

Three distinct interventions were implemented, each involving different assessment approaches. The first intervention utilized a multi-assessor method with multiple stages of assessment, while the second intervention retained the same stages but involved a single assessor (the subject teacher). The third intervention involved a segmented approach with students perfecting one writing aspect at a time.

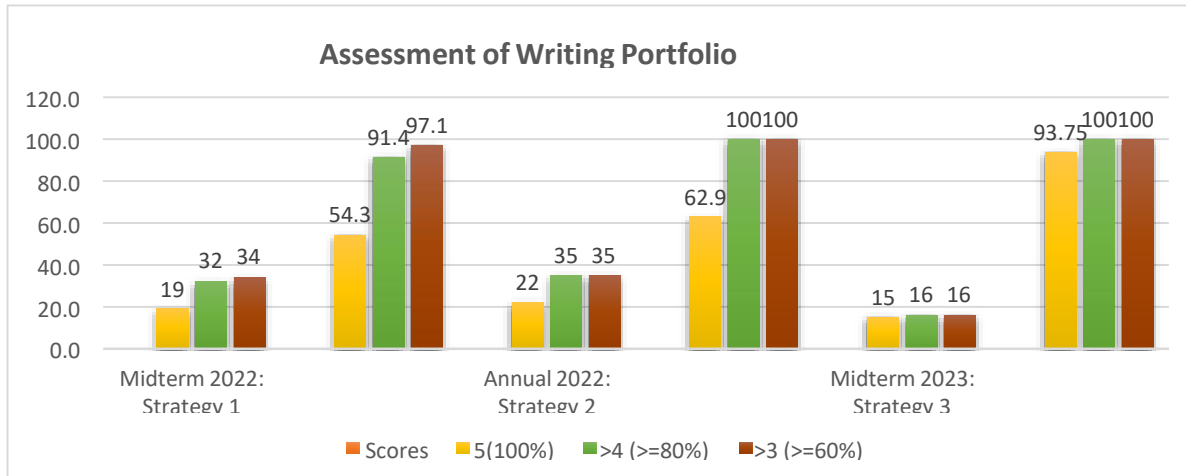
Student preferences varied, with some favouring the multi-assessor approach for its comprehensive feedback and exposure to diverse perspectives, while others preferred the efficiency and consistency of the single-assessor method. The advantages and disadvantages of both approaches were highlighted, with the single assessor approach being more time-efficient and comfortable for students.

The segmented assessment approach by a single assessor received widespread support, allowing students to focus on perfecting one aspect at a time, addressing doubts, and saving time. This approach was highly beneficial, with no apparent disadvantages mentioned. Thus, the interview analysis emphasized the need for a balanced approach to assessment, considering both student preferences and learning outcomes. It highlighted the benefits and drawbacks of multi-assessor and single-assessor methods, with the segmented assessment approach receiving widespread favour among participants.

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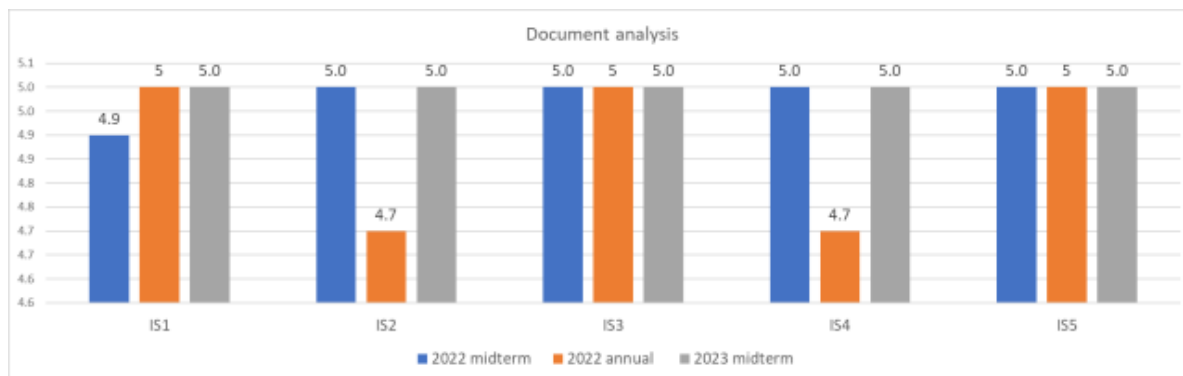
### Document analysis

Continuous Assessment of XII Science A's students for 2022 (they were in class XI) and 2023 were used to authenticate the findings of the survey questionnaire and the interview questions.



**Figure 4: Document analysis for 'Assessment of Writing Portfolio.**

The teacher-researcher used 5 random writing portfolios to check the significance of each strategy. The strategies used for the student's writing portfolio and its assessment showed gradual inclination in the writing skills and the scores of the students. Strategies 1, 2, and 3 were used and accordingly, CA for the 2022 midterm, 2022 annual, and 2023 midterm were given. According to the graph above, in 2022's midterm CA, out of 35 students, 19 (54.3%) perfected their writing portfolio, 32 (91.4%) scored above 80% and 34 (97.1) scored 60%. Numbers increased with strategy 2 with 22 (62.9%) perfecting the score and 35 (100%) scoring above 80%. For the third, 100% of students scored above 80%. Significantly, out of 16 students 15 students (93.75%) perfected their score. Thus, the third strategy proved to be the best for the participating students.



**Figure 5: Document Analysis of Records maintained for three terms.**

### Strategy 1

For IS1, in the first draft, her spelling and sentence structure were checked. She was asked not to use contractions. In the 2nd draft, her spelling was checked, and she received the comment, "Good one! Just one more thesis." In the third draft, English teacher 1 checked her draft, and her grammar, spelling, and punctuation were improved. In the revising phase, English teacher 2 gave 6 comments, including suggestions like "specify points in background information" and "focus evidence on 'how' to support the point." In the editing phase, English teacher 3 helped with vocabulary, transition words, spelling, and grammar. Further, she was asked to make her points clear, minimize her opinions, and include valid evidence. In the publishing phase, she had problems with originality, errors, and quality, resulting in a score of 29/35. With additional comments for her 2nd publishing, she scored 34.5.

For IS2, in the first two drafts, he did not receive any comments. In the 3rd draft, he was asked to "stop putting full stops in the title" and "use evidence to support his points instead of examples." For revising, he was asked to "avoid repeating transition words," "provide valid evidence," and "use correlative conjunctions." Further, language and spelling were corrected. In the editing phase, he was asked

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to avoid using symbols like '&' and place evidence logically. In the publishing phase, he was asked to explain and provide evidence for his last body paragraph and start his conclusion by restating his thesis statement. He had problems with language and quality, scoring 32.5. With his 3rd publishing, he scored 35/35.

IS3 was asked to use the PEEL method and add evidence to her body paragraphs in the first draft. In the 2nd draft, she was asked to be mindful of spelling and received seven comments, including one positive one. In revising, she had a good essay but was asked to support evidence in the 3rd body paragraph. In editing, minor changes were made, and in publishing, she scored full marks. For IS4, in the 1st draft, spelling, transition words, and language were improved. Comments suggested, "provide strong points" and "support your thesis with background information." In the 2nd draft, the missing topic was included, and new spelling errors were identified. She was asked to "provide strong points" and "avoid personal pronouns." In the 4th draft, she was asked to "avoid personal pronouns," "provide evidence," and "tackle sentence structure." In revising, she had problems with articles, counterclaims, refutations, and a poor conclusion. In editing, minor language errors were corrected, and in publishing, she scored full marks.

For IS5, he received no comments for the 1st and 2nd drafts, though language errors were corrected. In the 3rd draft, his points for the 3rd body paragraph were rephrased, and he was asked not to support the other side of the argument in the last body paragraph. In revising, he received comments like "hook and background info mismatch" and "focus your evidence on 'how'." In the editing phase, he was asked to add strong points to all the body paragraphs. In publishing, he had problems with errors and quality, which were resolved in the 2nd publishing, resulting in a full score.

### **Strategy 2**

IS1, in the first draft, received help with language, and in the 2nd body paragraph, she was asked to support her claim. In the 2nd draft, she received help with minor language issues and scored 34.5. IS3, in the first draft, was asked to introduce the topic and the claim for background information, use linking words, avoid 1st person pronouns, and use valid evidence. In the 2nd draft, she was asked to specify her claim, develop a thesis statement in her introduction, and match her counterclaim and refutation. Her work was perfected in the 3rd draft. IS3 missed her point in her 1st body paragraph in the 1st draft and was asked to include key points and a strong statement in her conclusion.

For IS4, in her first draft, the topic was missing, and she did not introduce it in her introduction. In the 2nd body paragraph, her elaborations did not match her point. She was asked to provide valid evidence, elaboration, and avoid contractions. Further, she was asked to rewrite her conclusion. In her 2nd draft, her body paragraphs improved, but she was asked to present the ills of virtual learning instead of introducing a new concept for her counterclaim. For her conclusion, she was asked to restate her thesis statement, include key points, and end with a strong statement. She scored 32.9.

IS5 was asked to elaborate on virtual learning in his 1st body paragraph and was asked to write the disadvantages of virtual learning for the counterclaim and select points related to his counterclaim for refutation. In the conclusion, he was asked to add key points. In the 2nd draft, he was asked to change the elaboration in the 2nd body paragraph, support with evidence, and change the counterclaim. In revising, his conclusion was changed, and he scored a full score in editing.

### **Strategy 3**

IS1 designed her mind mapping twice, wrote her introduction twice, body paragraphs for the claim once, and the paragraph with refutation thrice in the 1st draft. In her 3rd draft, she scored 35/35. IS2 designed 1 mind mapping, wrote the introduction twice, the 1st body twice, and others once in the 1st draft. With his 3rd draft, he scored 35/35. IS3 designed his mind mapping once, wrote the introduction twice, and body paragraphs once in the 1st draft, other than the 4th body paragraph. He perfected his essay with his 3rd draft.

IS4 designed her mind mapping once, wrote the introduction once, and body paragraphs twice in her 1st draft. With her 3rd draft, she scored 34.75, with a 0.25 deduction for preposition and capitalization. IS5 designed his mind mapping twice, wrote the introduction thrice, and the body once in his 1st draft. With editing, he scored a full

## **CONCLUSION**

This research explored and evaluated the effectiveness of the English Writing Portfolio in improving the writing skills and continuous assessment scores of classes XI and XII students at Peljorling Higher Secondary School in Bhutan. Writing Portfolio is important in education for its role in fostering students' growth, critical thinking, and self-reflection. Variations in types of writing, purposes, and assessment methods, indicated the need for a more tailored approach to suit the specific needs of the students and teachers in Bhutanese schools.

At Peljorling Higher Secondary School, students maintain both reading and writing portfolios as part of their formative assessment. It

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has been found that writing portfolio carries a significant weightage in the overall assessment, making them crucial for students' academic results. The study holds the potential to inform educational practices in Bhutan and contribute to the global discourse on the use of Writing portfolios in improving student's writing skills and assessment scores.

Interventions used provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of each strategy in enhancing students' writing abilities. In the first strategy, students received feedback and revisions at multiple stages of the writing process. This approach resulted in significant improvements in their writing, with most students scoring above 80% in the continuous assessments. The detailed feedback and multiple assessments helped students identify and rectify their mistakes, leading to higher-quality essays. The second strategy, which involved a single assessor providing feedback, also yielded positive results.

Students appreciated the efficiency and consistency of this approach. Their scores consistently improved, and all students scored above 80% in the continuous assessments. This strategy emphasized the importance of a single guiding source for students, leading to more focused and effective feedback. The third strategy, which divided the assessment into segmented stages with a single assessor, proved to be highly effective. Students were able to focus on perfecting one aspect at a time, leading to a deeper understanding of writing frameworks and improved writing quality. This strategy resulted in the highest scores, with almost all students achieving full marks in the continuous assessments except for one who scored 4.9 out of 5.

### Research limitations

In 2022, there were 35 students in XI Science A and all were used as the research participants. However, in 2023 the researcher could only include 17 students since due to new admission, the class was split into XII Science A and B and the latter was given to another teacher. Further, out of 24 students in XII Science A, only 17 were used since the remaining 7 were newcomers who did not take part in 'Strategy 1 and 2', last year. Thus, limiting the number of participants. The variation in the strength of the class, provided the teacher research a limitation.

Further, the data for the study were collected from English teachers and class 11 students of 2022 who are currently in class 12 at Peljorling Higher Secondary School. Thus, the generalizability of the interventions used may be limited to other subjects, class levels and schools.

### Future Scope

The study aimed to analyze effective techniques to help students enhance their writing skills and achieve higher scores in their Writing Portfolio. Thus, the researcher anticipates offering valuable insight to English and Dzongkha Teachers under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, especially the Secondary English Teachers, enabling them to enhance students' individual writing skills and improve their scores in Writing Portfolio, which is a crucial component of students' CA scores.

Further, these findings provide valuable insights for educators and curriculum designers seeking to enhance students' writing skills through effective assessment practices. The combination of strategies, as evidenced in this research, can offer a well-rounded approach to writing portfolio assessment, ensuring continuous improvement in students' writing abilities. effective assessment tool in language education.

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