

## *The Effect of Wikifolios on Developing Secondary Stage Students' EFL Writing Skills*

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### **Abstract**

*The current study aims to investigate the effect of Wikifolios on developing EFL writing skills of secondary stage students.*

*Forty first year secondary students were randomly divided into two groups: experimental (n=20) and control (n=20). The experimental group used Wikifolios assessment in EFL writing while the control group underwent regular writing assessment. The findings indicated that students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group in their writing skills.*

**Keywords:** *Wikifolios, EFL Writing skills, Secondary stage students.*

### **1. Introduction**

The method of teaching English writing in language classes has been shifting from traditional way of the end product to the process of creating writing. (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). By such an emphasis on writing process, students learn how to develop their writing, the technique to solve problems and how to think critically. However, it is somehow difficult to assess this

new method of writing via conventional assessment techniques such as timed impromptu writing test. Therefore, new techniques of assessment have been developed to demonstrate what students learn and what they can do with their own knowledge. These new techniques of assessment are called "authentic" or "alternative" measures. Among all the procedures of alternative assessment, portfolio has become a popular technique. As Moeller (2010) points out, portfolios show students' progress, achievement and self-reflection in one or more areas. Portfolio assessment is an ongoing process. It does not evaluate progress and performance of the learners through an impromptu paper and pencil test or enable instructors to evaluate their student's performances within a very short and limited period of time. According to Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009), an ongoing assessment is a learning process that examines and documents learner progress at certain intervals. The main goals of portfolio assessment are encouraging learners to become more autonomous, take the control of their learning, make decisions, participate in the evaluation of their own work and solve the problems they may face.

Although students' active participation is vital during the portfolio assessment process, the teacher is the key to the successful use of such a technique (Wang & Liao, 2008). According to Espstein (2005), portfolio assessment transforms the role of the teacher away from generating comparative rankings of achievement

and toward improving student achievement through evaluation feedback and self-reflection.

Despite of its popularity, using writing portfolios is not so common in EFL contexts.

## **1.2. Background to the Study**

Based on interviews with (27) English language teachers in the secondary stage to ask them about the method of writing assessment, they reported that they use the timed writing test as it is the dominant way of assessing writing. The emphasis is on the final product. They believe that the process-oriented writing pedagogy could improve EFL learners' writing skills but it is not so common in the Egyptian context.

## **1.3. Aim of the Study**

The current study aims to develop some EFL writing skills of the first year secondary stage students through using the wikifolio assessment technique

## **1.4. Questions of the Study**

**The study tried to find answers to the following main question:**

What is the effect of using Wikifolios on developing of some EFL writing skills of first year secondary stage students?

Out of this main question, the following sub questions are stated:

1. To what extent does the implementation of Wikifolios develop the sentence structure skills of first year secondary students?

2. To what extent does the implementation of Wikifolios develop the content related skills of first year secondary students?
3. To what extent does the implementation of Wikifolios develop the tense consistency skill of first year secondary students?

#### **1.4. Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control one concerning the development of overall EFL writing skills in favor of the experimental group.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control one concerning the development of sentence structure skills in favor of the experimental group.
3. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control one concerning the development of content related skills in favor of the experimental group.
4. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control one concerning the development of tense consistency skill in favor of the experimental group

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The current study is significant as it might help:

Students as using wikifolio as one of the writing assessment techniques could give them the confidence to continue to write, develop their skills and overcome problems in writing. Besides, the wikifolio as a self-

reflection assessment could be appealing because it changes the way writing has been graded and constitutes a grading system whereby the teacher shares control and works collaboratively with students. In this way, wikifolios in EFL context could increase the level of students' motivation and give them a sense of autonomous learning. Students take the responsibility for knowing where they are with regard to learning goals, broaden their view of what is being learned; and begin to see language learning as a process.

Teachers as wikifolios could help them review the status of student progress and development at any time. They do not have to review students' portfolios in the classroom. Besides, the teacher uses information in student portfolios to diagnose their needs and to guide instruction. Wikifolios also give the teacher a solid foundation on which he can base instruction. Moreover, student wikifolios could provide the teacher with a record of student strengths and areas for improvement.

### **1.6. Delimitations of the Study**

1. The participants of the current study are students in the first year of the secondary stage in El Masaie El Mashkoura School in Shebin El Koum.
2. The EFL writing skills which the current study is concerned with are content related skills (unity and coherence), sentence structure and tense consistency skills.

## **1.7. Definition of Terms**

### **1.7.1. Wikifolios**

The current study adopts Hickey & Rehak's (2013) definition which views wikifolio as an electronic format for learners using the wiki tool to record their work, their achievement and goals, to reflect on their writing and to share and be supported.

A wiki is a powerful, free Internet tool that allows users to quickly create web pages organized into websites without special training. The web page editing screen has recognizable formatting tools. Although these tools are limited, wikis have a number of exceptional features that enhance web page creation for educational use, both individually and collaboratively.

### **1.7.2. Writing Skills**

Writing skills are used in this study to refer to the specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message. These abilities include lexical and syntactic knowledge, organizing, and putting ideas into meaningful texts. (Tabatabaei & Assefi, 2012).

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1. Nature of E-Portfolios**

According to Pelliccione and Dixon (2008) and Barrett (2011), e-Portfolios encourage a self-directed, individualized approach to learning that students can use throughout their lives. As they develop the

appropriate skills to regulate their own learning and become responsible for it beyond the walls of the classroom, they can engage both individually and collaboratively in the e-Portfolio project. The primary audience for a formative portfolio is the student and often their parents in student-led conferences.

E-Portfolios can transform and enhance curriculum and demonstrate to students and educators the connections between students' learning and the assessment criteria. One can assess e-Portfolios both qualitatively and quantitatively; they constitute sound source of both kinds of information about students.

In e-Portfolios, students build themselves a resource that, once assessment is complete, they can take with them into the workplace. E-Portfolios thus constitute a form of sustainable assessment (Hallam, 2008).

According to Beetham (2005), there has been a big shift from summative assessment which represents the product oriented approach to writing to formative assessment that reflects the process oriented approach. It stresses the need for assessment to be integrated with the goals of the curriculum and to have a constructive relationship with teaching and learning. It includes a variety of assessment procedures such as learner- centered assessment, student-designed tests, and portfolio assessment which the teacher and

students can collaboratively choose and use successfully in language classrooms.

As Wang & Liao (2008) point out, advances in technology and pedagogical outlooks have led to the evolution of electronic portfolios that operate on the metacognitive as well as the practical level in ways that have the potential to surpass even the best reflective paper portfolios. Like its paper counterpart, the electronic Portfolio provides a space for students to organize, assess, and reflect on their work. The e-Portfolio also can fulfill the traditional role of final assessment tool for a course. But unlike hard copy, Housego & Parker (2009) believe that the e-Portfolio can be a permanent yet organic system that grows with the student, preserving a record of the past, establishing links in the present, and helping plan for the future. It creates what can be called a virtual identity, which undergoes continuous change and is shared with others. This evolving self-portrait, painted by the student and carried with him/her from the first-year experience through graduate school, can be a lifelong student-centered learning tool. As students collect their work and transcripts, they create an arena for discussion and planning in which they and their advisors can easily access and refer to information (Moeller, 2010). The e-Portfolio tools, including e-mail asynchronous and synchronous chat, blogs and wikis also can facilitate deeper communication between advisor and student.

## **Collaborative work with wikis**

Working collaboratively in pairs and groups allows students to negotiate meaning together to internalize their learning. When students of varying abilities work together, they can assist each other or create a scaffold that supports their learning. Later, the students will successfully perform similar tasks independently.

According to Bellizzi (2008), in the wiki, the “discussion” tab allows students to comment on wiki pages and negotiate additions and changes before they actually make them. This simulates real-world collaborative writing. In addition, when teachers guide students in criticizing their classmates’ completed writing in the “discussion” tab, the students practice critical reading and writing skills, reinforcing their understanding of what makes comprehensible writing from the eye of the reader.

While writing collaboratively, the various drafts of the writing process with the many additions, deletions and changes can be confusing to the writers and almost impossible for the teacher to understand as an outside observer. The “history” tab organizes this by color-coding along with saving the versions under the user’s name and date of the contribution. Students have these previous versions organized and readily accessible while the teacher can easily follow the collaborative writing process gathering information on students’ strengths and weaknesses.

## **Classroom applications**

E-portfolios can be developed on wikis since they both foster collaborative learning. It is also advantageous to utilize wikis if they have already been explored by the students. Hickey & Rehak (2013) advise selecting the most suitable software and tools for the e-portfolios to meet the needs of students. Rather than introducing several tools, it is better to focus on tools that can be utilized in line with the class objectives, and as the aim here is to promote writing, a wiki serves as a good option. Barrett (2011) further suggests that feedback on e-portfolios should not be public. While working on the wiki, students can work collaboratively and give feedback to each other, and by changing the setting, the wiki can be set as private. Students developing their English skills can incorporate wikis into their project-based learning in a number of ways. Wikis can improve students' internet research, reading and writing skills by responding to their personal research in their own words on a wiki. The wikis allow the students to incorporate video and photos, practice correct citation of resources and share their work with classmates seamlessly.

Another valuable use of wikis in the EFL classroom is for portfolio work. For effective language development, it is important for learners to reflect on and write about their learning process, including successes and areas for improvement. Richardson (2010) points out that keeping a digital record of portfolio reflections in a

wiki aids the teacher with organization and streamlines responses from classmates with the “discussion” tab feature. Students can include a photo of their poster, a recording of their poetry reading or even a short video of their skit, examples of student products that are difficult to include in traditional paper portfolios.

Electronic portfolios provide capabilities for storing and displaying examples of work in a variety of formats. The viewing options of electronic portfolios allow the user to submit work not only in traditional documents, but also in multimedia forms of audio, video, electronic projects, and links to other websites. These increased forms of output provide the assessing group a more interesting, holistic perspective on student learning. (Lam& Lee, 2010).

According to Chan (2009), Hickey& Rehak (2013), electronic portfolios also provide solutions to logistical issues encountered with paper portfolios. Because electronic portfolio information is stored electronically, the student can store vast amounts of information without needing extensive storage space. Furthermore, electronic portfolios assist multiple reviewers by providing simultaneous access. Reviewers no longer need to physically meet to review portfolios; instead, reviewers may view the portfolios at their convenience from any computer with Internet capabilities. This easy access allows multiple reviewers to be involved in the process and decreases time spent waiting for others to

analyze traditional portfolios one by one. Fahim & Jalili (2013) point out that ease of use makes electronic portfolios a feasible tool for assessing student learning. Paper portfolios often require extra staffing of clerical personnel who collect or verify the collection of work examples maintained in portfolios. With electronic portfolios, teachers can require students to submit their work directly into the portfolio and thus reduce the need for extra personnel in the data collection process. E-Portfolio advising has short- and long-term benefits for the student, the advisor, and the institution.

### **Short- and long-term benefits of Wikifolios**

Regarding short-term benefits, Epstein (2005), Brown, Anderson, Simpson, and Suddaby (2007), Baturay& Daloglu (2010) point out that the short-term benefits are practical, more measurable, and perhaps easier for students as well as faculty to appreciate. They include:

- **Accessibility.** Students and advisors can use the portfolio anytime and anywhere. If a student thinks of a question while studying at home, she/he can send an electronic query to an advisor while the subject is fresh.
- **Time management:** The ability to communicate with advisors online may reduce the number of meetings required, freeing up student as well as advisor time.
- **Showcase for student work:** Electronic preservation and organization of student work and records in a variety of media including text, sound, hyperlinks, graphics, and video enrich student presentations

and provide a fuller picture of the student's skills and talents.

- **Context:** students and advisors can view the body of work and how the pieces fit together. This one-stop organization makes it easier for students and advisors to track progress and identify areas that need attention.
- **Planning:** Easy access to advisors and to an organized view of past work, plans of study, and academic records enhance a student's ability to select pieces of work and set goals.
- **Portability and preservation:** Students can take their information with them from school to school and job to job, making it easy for advisors to track a student's academic history and patterns. Information stored in the e-Portfolio is saved to be used anytime.
- **Interactivity:** Online comment features and synchronous chat expand the opportunity for more frequent and more fruitful student/ advisor communications.
- **Organization and record-keeping:** All student's work and records can be centralized. In addition, comments and communications between students and advisors are archived for future reference, creating a history of the exchanges.
- As for the long-term benefits, Housego & Parker (2009) point out the following:
- **Development of reflective thinking:** E-Portfolios encourage students to think about their growth and

become active and self-reliant learners, assessors, and planners.

- Creation of a record of growth and accomplishment over time.
- Formation of student identity that is directed by the student with guidance from advisors.

E-Portfolios achieve a goal that many other assessment methods cannot; they change the student role in assessment from passive research subject to active participant as students are called upon to select samples of their classroom and co-curricular work products for the e-Portfolio and to reflect upon why these artefacts were selected and how they demonstrate learning.

### **The wikifolios process**

Gunn & Peddie (2008) and Hughes (2008) point out that the cognitive skills required for self-directed students in a wikifolio are "collect, select, reflect, connect".

#### **Collect**

In this stage, students gather evidence of academic, professional, or personal growth. It could be projects from classes, written paragraphs or essays. For an e-Portfolio, a piece of evidence must be in a format accessible on the Web.

#### **Select**

Many of the artefacts held in the e-Portfolio represent some aspect of an individual's thoughts and

growth. The student has to select those pieces of evidence that are most representative of his/her work.

## **Reflect**

This step involves reflection and discussion of what the student has learned. A wikifolio is not just a collection of work and evidence. It should also contain evidence of academic, intellectual, and personal growth. It is important to link the passages written and the growth achieved to the evidence of work presented. A wikifolio isn't just about what has been done; it is about what has been learned and the way forward.

## **Connect**

The student connects the teacher and peer feedback and his own reflection to write the final product.

## **2.2 The Relationship between Wikifolios and EFL Writing Skills**

Hirvela & Sweetland (2005) believe that the most important factor in writing is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Encouraging student participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills, requires a certain pragmatic approach. Within the communicative framework of language teaching, the skill of writing gains a great importance. With so many conflicting theories concerning writing, the teaching of writing has undergone a great change in the past quarter century. Tabatabaei & Assefi (2012) point out that the popularity of portfolios resulted from the shift in

writing theory from a focus on writing products to that of writing processes. Table (1) presents the differences between traditional writing assessment and wikifolios as highlighted in a publication of the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC, 2011).

**Table 1: Traditional Assessment vs. wikifolio Assessment**

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>wikifolio</b>
<b>Measures student's ability at one time</b>	<b>Measures student's ability over time</b>
<b>Done by teacher alone; student often unaware of criteria</b>	<b>Done by teacher and student; student aware of criteria</b>
<b>Conducted outside instruction</b>	<b>Embedded in instruction</b>
<b>Assigns student a grade</b>	<b>Involves student in own assessment</b>
<b>Does not capture the range of student's language ability</b>	<b>Captures many facets of language learning performance</b>
<b>Does not include the teacher's knowledge of student as a learner</b>	<b>Allows for expressions of teacher's knowledge of student as learner</b>
<b>Does not give student responsibility</b>	<b>Student learns how to take responsibility</b>

The process of generating ideas, drafting, redrafting and editing are vital elements of writing and these

important dimensions are not sufficiently assessed in a one-shot attempt of traditional testing. (Elahinia , 2004).

According to Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli, & Ansari (2010), writing skill is more challenging for students in EFL context than native speakers' in timed writing assessment . Having a set time during a writing test, EFL students cannot focus on the skills needed for L2 writing and on culturally related issues in the process of writing at the same time.

According to Chan (2009), portfolio assessment is particularly applicable to foreign-language assessment. Standardized tests provide foreign-language teachers with an incomplete picture of students' needs and learning. Currently, teachers tend to apply a process-oriented technique in writing instruction. In such technique, students spend time to select the topics, gather information, write about the topics and before submitting a final piece of writing, draft, revise and edit it.

According to Behzad (2010), the new trend in teaching writing in EFL classrooms is concentrating on writing processes to create a certain product, therefore, it is essential to apply an assessment technique that develops and encourages such a trend as assessment and teaching are two sides of the similar coin. As Richardson (2010) points out, portfolio assessment, as an authentic innovative technique of assessment,

provides a tool of assessing the processes of writing as well as the end product of writing. It is a technique that improves students' writing performance. The portfolios include all of the student's work and a reflective essay that analyzes how the work has evolved and how the student has changed as a writer. Other portfolios may require the student to select work as evidence of skills and concepts he or she has mastered. The reflective essay or cover letter for this type of portfolio analyzes how each example of work demonstrates the required skill. Students are often asked to discuss their weaknesses as well as their accomplishments and to set goals for improvement. They are asked to choose their best pieces of writing to put in portfolio to submit assessment. Students can also include those samples of writing that represent the development of writing process, including planning, drafting, revising and editing. Portfolio assessment can develop students' autonomy, critical thinking and linguistic competence. Furthermore, it supports the notion that writing is process that involves growth, development, and learning as well as a product (Al-Serhani, 2007).

### **2.3. Related Studies**

In the literature of teaching and learning EFL writing, there are a number of studies that deal with the development of portfolio assessment and the students' attitudes toward using portfolio, but it has not been so enlarged by quantitative research to investigate using portfolio with EFL learners. Some experimental studies have been conducted in last decade dealing with

portfolio assessment that report technical information and employ accepted research techniques.

Apple and Shimo (2004) tested students' perceptions of portfolio creation in an EFL context in Japan. The participants were sixty one students in two different universities attending English writing class. A student-selected portfolio work was used as the elementary means of assessment. Tests were not used for assessment. A self-report questionnaire was used to measure the responses of the learners. Findings revealed that portfolio technique helped participants improve expressive and compositional writing ability.

Marefat (2004) investigated views of the students on portfolio use in an email-based EFL writing class. The majority of the subjects found that the portfolio technique was a positive opportunity for their writing. In addition, some students improved a personal understanding of their learning process. Hirvela and Sweetland (2005) described two case studies which investigated student experiences with portfolios in two ESL writing classes. The findings showed that the subjects liked the idea of portfolios but they did not endorse their use as employed in those writing courses.

Paesani (2006) conducted a writing portfolio project whose purpose was to assemble the learning of skills, content and language competences through literary study. The findings indicated that the portfolio

project developed the students' writing skills and grammatical competence. Besides, the reactions of the students to the portfolio writing project stressed the perceived value of the project.

Baturay& Daloglu, (2010) conducted a study entitled "E-Portfolio Assessment in an Online English Language Course". This study reflects that traditional approaches to assessment of student progress in EFL writing lack indicators of students' development of the skill. To achieve the aim of the study, the researchers worked with two groups of students: the e-portfolio group who kept an electronic portfolio in the online elementary level English language course and the traditional assessment group who did not keep an e-portfolio. Although there were not significant differences between the post-test scores of the two groups, there were significant learning gains in both groups. The perceptions of the students in the e-portfolio group reflected that they benefited from and enjoyed keeping a portfolio.

Behzad (2010) investigated the effect of portfolio assessment on final examination scores of EFL students' writing skill. To determine the impact of portfolio-based writing assessment 40 university students who enrolled in composition course were initially selected and divided randomly into two experimental and control groups. A quasi-experimental research design was adopted in this study. In order to appraise the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups,

comprehensive English Language test (CELT) was employed at the beginning of the study. The pre-test was applied to both the experimental group and control group. Later in the study, a post-test of dependent variables was implemented for both groups. The findings of the study revealed that that students whose work was evaluated by a portfolio system (portfolio-based assessment) had improved in their writing and gained higher scores in final examination when compared to those students whose work was evaluated by the more traditional evaluation system (non-portfolio-based assessment). The findings of the study highlighted the fact that portfolio assessment could be used as a complementary alternative along with traditional assessment to shed new light on the process of writing.

Tabatabaei& Assefi (2012) aimed to investigate the effect of portfolio assessment technique as a teaching, learning and assessment tool on writing performance of EFL learners. To this end, forty Iranian EFL learners who were all English teaching majors were randomly divided into two groups: experimental (n=20) and control (n=20). The experimental group received the treatment i.e. portfolio assessment while the control group underwent the traditional approach of writing assessment. The findings of statistical analysis indicated that the students in experimental group outperformed the students in control group in their writing performance and its sub-skills of focus, elaboration, organization, conventions and vocabulary.

The findings suggest that portfolio assessment technique improves writing ability of the students. The results have also some implications for assessment, teaching and learning of L2 writing.

Fahim & Jalili (2013) investigated the possible effects of using writing portfolio assessment on developing the ability of editing among thirty eight Iranian EFL learners. The learners were asked to perform some writing tasks. Then, they edited their own papers and corrected their writing products using the five categories of content, organization, grammar, spelling, and mechanics. There was a continuous dialogue between the teacher and the learners. The findings indicated that the learners could be trained to use editing in their writing. Editing seems to be an effective way for higher proficiency learners to improve the organization of their writing.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Participants**

The participants of the study included 40 first year secondary stage students. They are divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental one. Each group consisted of 20 pupils.

#### **3.2. Instruments**

##### **3.2.1. A Pre-Post Writing Skills Test**

###### **3.2.1.1. Test Description**

It aims to test the pupils' performance on the intended writing skills the study is concerned with

(tense consistency, sentence structure and content related skills). The test (Appendix A) consists of four questions; the first one asked students to write a paragraph where the three kinds of sentences (topic, supporting, and concluding) have to be clear, related, arranged and relevant to the topic. The second question was to write an e-mail. As for the third question, participants have to decide where the mistake is and correct it. The last one was to put the verb in the correct tense.

### **3.2.1.2. Test Validity**

The test was given to a panel of jury in the field of teaching English as a foreign language to judge its validity. The panel of jury agreed that the test is valid and measures the intended skills.

### **3.2.1.3. Test Reliability**

Test retest method was used to get the test reliability. The participants were first tested on the 6th of February 2013. Two weeks later, they were retested. The correlation coefficient was 0.74

### **3.2.1.4. Pre-testing**

The test was administered as a pretest to the control and the experimental groups. A rubric, designed by the researcher, was used to assess the pupils' writing skills. All the paragraphs and e-mails were scored by three raters according to the rubric. Each participant's score was the mean of the three raters' scores (the total score=100). Finally, the Pearson correlation coefficient ascertained that the level of inter-rater reliability is 0.77

Table (2) The Writing Skill Rubric

Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Topic &amp; Ending Sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topic sentence is unclearly stated and sentence structure is not correct</li> <li>• topic sentence is not restated in the closing sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topic sentence is unclearly stated but sentence structure is correct</li> <li>• topic sentence is unclearly restated in the closing sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topic sentence is stated with correct sentence structure</li> <li>• topic sentence is restated in the closing sentence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topic sentence is clearly and articulately stated with correct sentence structure</li> <li>• topic sentence is clearly and articulately restated in the closing sentence</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Detail Sentence(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paragraph has no supporting details</li> <li>• sentences do not relate to the main idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paragraph has one to two supporting details</li> <li>• sentences relate back to the main idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paragraph has three supporting details</li> <li>• sentences clearly relate back to the main idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paragraph has more than three supporting details</li> <li>• sentences clearly and articulately relate back to the main idea</li> </ul>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentences are not organized or relevant to topic</li> <li>• writing does not flow or follow order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentences are somewhat organized and relevant to topic</li> <li>• writing somewhat flows and follows some order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentences are organized and relevant to topic</li> <li>• writing flows and follows order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sentences are clearly organized and relevant to topic</li> <li>• writing flows logically and follows structured order</li> </ul>
<b>Tense Consistency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all sentences are not consistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• most sentences are not consistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some sentences are consistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all sentences are consistent</li> </ul>

Table (3) showed that there were no significant differences between the two groups.

**Table (3): The Significance of Differences between the Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control groups on the Pre-test**

Skill	Participants	Mean	SD	t-Value	Significance
Sentence Structure	Experimental Group	18.65	2.960	0.551	Not Significant
	Control Group	18.10	3.338		
Tense consistency	Experimental Group	17.80	3.188	0.492	Not Significant
	Control Group	17.35	2.560		
Content	Experimental Group	17	3.356	0.327	Not Significant
	Control Group	16.7	2.341		
Total	Experimental Group	41.75	12.294	0.503	Not Significant
	Control Group	39.05	12.951		

### **3.2.2. A Computer Literacy Questionnaire (Appendix B)**

#### **3.2.2.1. Description of the Computer Literacy Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consists of 23 statements. It was administered to the participants of the experimental group. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out whether the participants were computer literate or not. Computer literacy is essential for carrying out the wikifolio assessment model. Findings showed that all participants know how to use the computer.

#### **3.2.2.2. Questionnaire Validity**

The questionnaire was given to a panel of jury in the field of teaching English as a foreign language to

judge its validity. The panel of jury agreed that the questionnaire is valid and measures the participants' computer literacy.

## **4. Wikifolio Assessment Model**

The main aim of the wikifolio assessment model is to develop first secondary graders' writing skill including the following sub skills: (tense consistency, sentence structure and content related skills). It consists of four procedures: collect, reflect, select and, publish (final draft). As Behzad (2010) points out, the uses and types of electronic portfolios are diverse and multi-faceted, but they all include some degree of self-reflection

### **4.1. Experimental Procedures**

#### **4.1.1. Orientation sessions**

These sessions are to prepare participants for the experiment.

#### **First orientation session**

In this session, the researcher:

- Explains the importance and the aims of the experiment;
- Indicates what's meant by wikifolios,
- Familiarizes students with general computer usage and basic typing skills.

#### **Second orientation session**

The researcher is required to do the following:

- Training students on the basic searching skills, and how to browse the Internet

- Demonstrating what is meant by the wiki and how to use it. Participants are informed that a **wiki** is a collection of Web pages designed to enable anyone with access to contribute or modify content, using a simplified markup language. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites
- Explaining that there is a wiki for each participant which basically contains the program guidelines and the assignments demanded from the students. Each student can log in and read or edit her wiki only by using her username and password. Other students can collaborate by checking each other assignments and the teacher is to check these assignments after their due dates. They can also communicate with each other or with the teacher through the comment box of their wiki.
- Training students on how to access, browse and use their wikis.
- Distributing a paper for each participant. This paper contains her wiki URL as well as her own username and password.

#### **4.1.2. The Process**

The experiment consisted of two orientation sessions and four processes. First, participants were asked to write a paragraph each week. Writing genres that will be focused on through the experiment are: description, email, and narration. These are the most commonly used genres in the first secondary graders' English course.

Once participants have uploaded the first draft of the assignment by the due date, the teacher started to provide feedback and edit the paragraph or the e-mail. Participants were asked to read the instructor's response and comments and begin modifying the first draft. They also received feedback from their peers. By means of these comments, participants could gain their strong and weak points in these aspects of writing. Then, they were asked to reflect on or self-assess their writing and evaluate it. Once they have made all the changes they wish to make, participants uploaded the new draft. The final draft was assessed using the rubric in the editing checklist. This rubric was also used to rate students' writing for both pre-test and post-test.

Wikis allowed unlimited uploads so instructors could ask students to revise their writing much more often. At the end of the experiment, the students in the experimental group were asked to choose two out of four of their best writings for final evaluation.

## **5. Findings and Discussion**

The writing test was administered as a post test to both groups. The researcher and another scorer used the rubric to rate students' answers.

Table (4) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in favor of the experimental group. It shows that the participants of the experimental group outperformed those of the

control group regarding all the writing skills which the study is concerned with.

**Table (4): The Significance of Differences between the Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control groups on the Post test**

Skill	Participants	Mean	SD	t-Value	Significance
Sentence structure	Experimental Group	21.20	2.261	7.582	Significant
	Control Group	14.95	2.910		
Tense consistency	Experimental Group	20.60	2.500	6.818	Significant
	Control Group	14.65	2.996		
Content	Experimental Group	20.65	2.254	7.736	Significant
	Control Group	14.10	3.041		
Total	Experimental Group	78.55	10.292	9.623	Significant
	Control Group	42.80	13.040		

These findings might be due to the following:

1. Wikifolios encourage students to think about their writing and become active and self-reliant learners and assessors.
2. Participants can use the wikifolio anytime and anywhere. They are not limited to write at a certain time or place. No pressure is loaded on them.
3. As participants collect their writings, they create an arena for discussion and planning in which they and their advisors can easily access and refer to information.

4. Students and advisors can view the body of work and how the pieces fit together. This one-step organization makes it easier for participants and advisors to track progress and identify areas that need attention.
5. Wikifolios facilitate deeper communications between advisor and student.
6. The student can get a wider view of her writing from the teacher and peers. This makes her easily realize her mistakes.
7. The student has the facility of editing his writing many times in an easy and quick way.

The results of quantitative data analysis show that wikifolio assessment had a positively significant effect on students' overall writing. It shows that the combination of the portfolio scores and the writing test scores to assess the participants' writing performance and growth can be beneficial. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of earlier research conducted by Aly (2002), Elahinia (2004), Al-Serhani (2007), Yurdabakan and Erdogan's (2009), Behzad (2010), and Fahim & Jalili (2013) which indicated that portfolio assessment had a positively significant effect on students' language skills.

## **6. Conclusion**

The current study aims to investigate the effect of Wikifolios on developing EFL writing skills of secondary stage students. Forty first year secondary students were randomly divided into two groups:

experimental (n=20) and control (n=20). The experimental group used Wikifolios assessment in EFL writing while the control group underwent the traditional approach of writing assessment. The result of statistical analysis indicated that students in the experimental group outperformed those in control group in their writing skills.

Based on the findings of the current study, wikifolio assessment technique has a significant positive effect on EFL learners' overall writing ability and its sub-skills. It is an effective instructional technique as well as assessment tool. In addition, wikifolio assessment offers authentic information about the progress of students and helped to overcome their writing anxiety in L2. A positive correlation appeared in the wikifolio in relation to the English writing test. Using this technique allowed students to create a bridge between their teacher and themselves. The teacher can use portfolio assessment technique to analyze student growth and use the information for decision making regarding future instruction.

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