

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Portfolio-based assessment (hereafter, PBA) is an alternative approach to writing assessment that highlights the related process, students' independence, and self-reflective capability (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000). The portfolios provide an opportunity for both teachers and students to evaluate the writing progress. PBA as an alternative assessment (Weigle, 2002; Stobart & Gipps, 2010; Cheng & Fox, 2017) can be considered as one of the great assessment tools for recording the students' language development over time. As Lam (2018) revealed, PBW enables the teacher to recognize the students self-regulated learning through their writing development over time. A current study also reported that PBA as an alternative assessment allows the students to monitor their learning progress, and increase their self-confidence and learning motivation (Ma'arif, Abdullah, Fatimah, Hidayati, 2021). Due to this reason, PBA in writing indicates the collective functions in helping teachers evaluate processes in writing assessment.

Since the PBA has an extended history in first language settings than second/foreign language settings, it is reasonable to reconsider the portfolio-based assessment to be a common assessment tool for formative purposes. As it plays a key role useful in the Second and Foreign Language writing classroom. Burner (2014) examined the potential formative benefits of applying portfolio-based

writing assessment (PBWA) in second and/or foreign language classrooms by reviewing miscellaneous recent literature. The study utilised several methods to search for relevant research including database search, manual search, and citation search. Based on various literatures, the study revealed that PBWA has potential benefits due to its process-oriented, authentic, integrated, interactive, and learner-centred characteristics (Burner, 2014). In the EFL context, Qinghua (2016) found that PBWA can be considered as a method to gain students interest in writing and how it can enhance their writing strategies through its process. PBWA is also considered as a more preferable writing instruction to the traditional one due to its significance in reducing L2 writing anxiety (Fathi, Derakhsha & Safdari 2020). The PBWA an opportunity for both teachers and students to evaluate the writing progress. In this line, PBWA is perceived as an approach that can establish the connection between teaching, learning, and assessment of L2 writing.

Practically, Creative Writing (henceforth, CW) is taught in one of the universities in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. This course is designed to capitalise on students' creativity in producing literature works (e.g. poetries, short stories, haiku, etc.). These become their resources for learning different values and ideologies characterised in these genres as discourses. The literary techniques instruction is given directly to the students' writing processes (e.g. peer-assessment, written and oral corrective feedback and dissemination of literary works). Students are also demonstrated by selected writers in outstanding texts to work on manuscripts within literary conventions (Sulastri, 2019). During this

process, the application of portfolios becomes the students' collection in literature works.

Based on the previous studies, most of them discovered that PBWA resulted in some positive impacts for the learners (Burner, 2014; Qinghua, 2016; Lam, 2019; Fathi, Derakhsha & Safdari 2020; Tyas, 2020; Yan, 2020). However, these previous studies only focused on how portfolios promote students' academic writing such as essays and paperwork. As Kalra, Sundrarajun and Komintarachat (2017) stated that there are few studies that specifically investigate the impacts of PBWA on sub-skills of purpose, content, organization, sentence structure and mechanics. Even, there is little attention addressed to empirical investigations on the contributions of portfolio assessment to their creative writing skills. Hence, this study aims to investigate the contributions of portfolio-based writing assessment on EFL students' writing skills during the CW course.

## **1.2. Formulation of the Problem**

A research question addressed in the present study is “What are the contributions of portfolio-based writing assessment on EFL students' writing skills during Creative Writing (CW) course?”

## **1.3. Operational Definitions**

<b>1.3.1 Porfolio :</b>	The collections of students' regular task where they draf their writing from the beginning until the end of the course.
<b>1.3.2 Portfolio-based Writing Assessment :</b>	An alternative assessment to collect the students' work during the course. This also

	<p>can be assessment tools for recording the student's language development, especially in writing. This enables the students to learn autonomously and offers an opportunity for teachers to evaluate students' progress and achievements completed in their writing development.</p>
<b>1.3.3 Writing Skills :</b>	<p>The ability to express ideas through the written word. Writing has micro and macro skills. A micro aspect includes specific written forms at the level of word or sentence such as mechanism, spelling, and punctuation. Meanwhile, the learners emphasised macro aspects of writing which cover content, audience and discourse.</p>
<b>1.3.4 Creative Writing :</b>	<p>Creative writing is a course which is designed and led by the teacher to facilitate and develop students' writing. This course is designed to capitalise on students' creative abilities and also as the overview of the writing of original poetry and short fiction. These become their</p>

	resources for learning different values and ideologies characteristic in these genres as discourses.
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#### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

The study aims to investigate the contributions of portfolio-based writing assessment on EFL students' writing skills during the CW course.

#### **1.5. Significances of the Study**

##### **1.5.1. Theoretical use**

This study contributes to the existing theories on Language Assessment that categorise the portfolio as an alternative assessment and also a brief discussion about CW as the course.

##### **1.5.2. Practical use**

The present study contributes to the English language teachers' concern with the implementation of portfolio assessment in developing students' writing skills. The use of portfolios as a classroom-based assessment indicates the significance of students' progress and achievements completed in their writing development. The portfolios allowed for both teachers and students to evaluate the writing progresses during the course

##### **1.5.3. Empirical use**

This study reviewed the previous studies on the application of portfolio-based assessment and its impact on writing skill. However,

these issues are often studied by many researchers. Thus, this study aimed to investigate broader issues with a more significant field in CW.