The Effects of Portfolio Keeping on Writing Anxiety of EFL Students

Hande ÖZTÜRK

mhande78@yahoo.com

Sevdeğer ÇEÇEN

sevdeger@hotmail.com

Abstract

There has been a growing body of research which documents the importance of portfolios in foreign language teaching. The current study is an action research that investigates the effects of portfolio keeping on the writing anxiety of students. Two instructors working collaboratively aimed to overcome the writing anxiety of their students. They had a class of fifteen prospective teachers of English who were in their preparatory year in a foundation university, in Istanbul, Turkey. Data were gathered by means of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004), a background questionnaire and two reflective sessions. Findings of the study revealed that portfolio keeping is beneficial in terms of overcoming writing anxiety. The results also indicated that the experience with portfolios may affect the participants' future teaching practices positively. Therefore; this study suggests that portfolio keeping deserves to be taken into consideration in the programme of Foreign Language Education Departments.

Keywords: portfolio, writing anxiety, action research, foreign language teaching

Özet

Yabancı dil eğitiminde portfolyonun önemini belgeleyen çok sayıda çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada ise portfolyo tutmanın öğrencilerin yazma kaygısı üzerindeki etkileri bir eylem araştırmasıyla incelenmiştir. Çalışmaya İstanbul'da bulunan bir vakıf üniversitesinin hazırlık sınıfında eğitim görmekte olan onbeş İngilizce öğretmeni adayı katılmıştır. Çalışmanın verileri İkinci Dil Yazma Kaygı ölçütü (Cheng, 2004), bir artalan anketi ve iki adet yansıtma oturumu aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları yazma kaygısını gidermek bağlamında portfolyo tutmanın faydalı

olduğunu ortaya çıkartmıştır. Bulgular ayrıca portfolyo tecrübesinin öğretmen adaylarının gelecekteki öğretim uygulamalarını olumlu etkileyebileceğini göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma portfolyo tutmanın yabancı diller eğitimi bölümlerinde göz önüne alınması gerektiğini önermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: portfolyo, yazma kaygısı, eylem araştırması, yabancı dil öğretimi

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost in every educational institution there are students who suffer from anxiety. For many students, foreign language classrooms are the places where anxiety-provoking situations occur most (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Several eminent researchers have expressed their concerns over the quantity of anxiety experienced in language classes (Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Cope-Powell, 1991; Muchnick & Wolfe, 1982; Price, 1991). The negative effects of anxiety on academic achievement are one of the major resaons for this concern (Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Gardner, 1985; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clement, 1997). Hence, studies investigating the nature of foreign language anxiety and ways of overcoming this issue exploit the potential of improving foreign language education.

Like the other educational settings, English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) settings are experiencing the problem of anxiety in foreign language education in different domains of language. Most discussions about foreign language anxiety concentrate on the productive skill of speaking (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Mejias, Applbaum, Applbaum, & Trotter, 1991; Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986). Only recently researchers and practitioners have started to have serious considerations for learners' anxiety about writing, listening, and reading in the second language (L2) (Cheng et al., 1999; Saito et al., 1999; Vogely, 1998).

The current study focuses on portfolio keeping as a self-growth tool for reducing writing anxiety in an EFL setting. To our best knowledge, there have not been any studies on the effects of portfolio keeping on the writing anxiety level of students. Thus, the present study aims to fill in this gap in the literature. Moreover, the participants were prospective teachers of English who were in their preparatory year at university. Thus, the present study seems to offer several implications for the teacher education programmes as well as foreign language teaching context.

The inspiration for this study stemmed from our observations on the writing anxiety of our students. Having two skill-based courses, namely; integrated skills and academic writing, they still had difficulties in writing in English. Being their integrated skills instructors, we felt that it was our responsibility to help them to overcome their writing anxiety. First, we started to read the related literature. As we read more, we came up with the idea of making them keep a portfolio. Literature suggested that keeping a portfolio has several benefits (Brown & Irby, 2000; Ersin, 2005; Johnson, Mims-Cox, & Doyle-Nichols, 2006; Yang, 2003). For example, portfolios promote student involvement in assessment, responsibility for self-assessment, interaction with teachers, parents, and students about learning, collaborative and sharing classrooms, students' ownership of their own work, students' ability to think critically and excitement about learning (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). We wondered whether overcoming writing anxiety is one of them.

1.1. Exploring Writing Anxiety

Writing anxiety is unique to the language-particular skill of writing (Bline, Lowe, Meixner, Nouri, & Pearce, 2001; Bugoon & Hale, 1983). It is defined as the 'fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from ability to write' (Thompson, 1980, p.121). With the realization of the fact that writing anxiety clearly negatively affects writing performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Smith, 1984), researchers and practitioners became more sensitive to this phenomenon. Specifically, writing anxiety and L2 relation has recently captured attention. With regard to educational contexts, there have been studies focusing on this particular aspect of language anxiety i.e., writing anxiety (Atay & Kurt, 2006; Cheng, 2002; Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Masny & Foxall, 1992).

In the related literature, the sources of writing anxiety have been detected as stemming from an individual's writing ability, the degree of preparation to complete the writing task, the fear of being assessed and judged on the basis of writing tasks, and the mixed messages students receive from their teachers (Daly & Miller, 1975a, 1975b; Fox, 1980; Leki, 1999; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Raisman, 1982; Smith, 1984). These sources are of high importance to achieve a better understanding of writing anxiety. It is a possibility stated in the literature that students who suffer from writing anxiety are not skillful writers and their anxiety level reflects their awareness of this problem. These students may avoid writing and writing instruction, thus neglecting chances to improve

their writing skills. They may be less risk-taker in their writing and less straightforward and clear when they write (Smith, 1984). In the opposite line of the argument, Daly (1979) argues that more studies on this relationship needs to be conducted. Considering writing anxiety experienced also by highly skilled writers, he puts forward a reciprocal interaction between skills and anxiety.

Another major source of writing anxiety mentioned in the literature is the fear of being evaluated and judged on the basis of writing ability and proficiency. A great deal of educational testing that students experience takes place via writing (Leki, 1999). Students are judged on the basis of the elaboration of the ideas they express, the arguments they develop, the range of vocabulary they use, the aesthetic quality of their texts. In addition to all the aforementioned criteria, students are also evaluated and judged on the basis of their accuracy i.e., spelling, morphology, syntax, and mechanics (Raisman, 1982). It would be a failure not to note that L2 students are more challenged in the writing process. Naturally, they will shoulder the difficulty writing creates for them along with the fear of making mistakes due to their limited L2 knowledge and capacity or the dissatisfaction of expressing themselves in the target language. Expression of thought is so limited that students may never be satisfied with their writing product on the basis of not expressing what they really think. Their limited knowledge and capacity in L2 hinder the sophistication and complexity of their thoughts and push them to reflect simplistic and flat understandings below their current intellectual capacity (Silva, 1993).

Taking a closer look at the sources of anxiety reveals that the problems are rooted in the classroom practices. However, the cure also lies in the same place. Focusing mainly on the correctness of language shadows the process experienced in writing which is a highly valuable period to decrease the level of anxiety. As a solution to this problem, Leki (1999) suggests a nonpunitive, nonjudgemental, and non-mixed message process approach to teaching L2 writing. Acting on this suggestion, the current study examines the use of portfolio keeping, which has a focus on process by its nature, as an instrument to achieve the expected outcome that is reducing writing anxiety of EFL students.

1.2. Portfolio Keeping in Foreign Language Education

With the realization of the fact that portfolios provide authentic evidence of what students know, believe, and are able to achieve, portfolios have become a desired tool

for language education. There is a strong link between portfolios and Constructivism as a teaching/learning orientation and human development (Jones & Shelton, 2006). The core of Constructivism is authentic learning. It gives us an awareness of what we know and how we happen to know it, what it is to know something, and how developmental stages in our capacity to learn things change from one to another. By fostering the necessary conditions that encourage an active stance toward learning, Constructivism represents a means of observing the learning process itself. From an educational angle, looking at development is embedded in Constructivism which asks for the students' exact, conscious, purposeful engagement with the world surrounding them (Daloz, 1999; Fosnot, 1996; Jones & Selton, 2006).

By definition, portfolios embody a representation of Constructivist practice. There are several definitions of portfolios in the related literature (Campbell, Cignetti, Melenyz, Nettles, & Wyman, 2004; Wolf & Dietz, 1998). Primarily, a portfolio is simply a collection of work that has been compiled over time (Johnson, Mims-Cox, & Doyle-Nichols, 2006). With a more education based definition, portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' works that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievements in given areas (Genesee & Upshur, 1996).

There is comprehensive literature on the knowledge of portfolio and its development and evaluation but there is constrained information on instructional issues (Meadows & Dyal, 1999; Wyatt & Looper, 1999). Research demonstrates that portfolios have been used mainly for two purposes in education; namely, for alternative assessment (Ballard, 1992; Barootchi & Keshavaraz, 2002; Coombe & Barlow, 2004) and self-growth (Ersin, 2005; Henkin 1993; Yang, 2003). In second language education, portfolios have become popular particularly in recent years (Ballard, 1992; Barootchi & Keshavaraz, 2002; Coombe & Barlow, 2004; Ersin, 2005, Saglam, 2005; Yang, 2003). There are also studies conducted on pre-service and in-service teachers in second language education. These studies explore portfolios as a means of professional development (Altieri, Winzer, & Larsson, 2000; Banfi, 2003; Lyons, 1998; Yoo, 2001).

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

A total of fifteen participants from the preparatory class of English Language Teaching Department of a foundation university, in İstanbul, Turkey, participated in this

study. Out of fifteen, there were nine female and six male participants. Their age range was 17-20. They all had studied English in secondary school as a compulsory foreign language for 3-6 years prior to enrolling to the programme. They were all native speakers of Turkish and none of them had lived in an English speaking country before. Because they could not score higher than 213 on the TOEFL exam or pass the proficiency exam prepared by the testing office of the university, they had to take preparatory courses for a year in order to begin their undergraduate programme. The university where the study was conducted is a Turkish medium university. However, all preparatory courses are lectured in English. The preparatory programme consists of 28 hours of English instruction. The hours of instruction is distributed as follows: 10 hours as main course; 10 hours as integrated skills; 8 hours as academic writing.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) measures the degree to which an individual feels anxious when writing in an L2. It contains 22 items that are answered on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The SLWAI has good internal consistency with a reported Cronbach alpha coefficient of .91 (Cheng, 2004).

The background questionnaire developed for this study consists of four open-ended questions. These questions investigate the students' previous experiences and their knowledge on the use of portfolio. Additionally, two reflective sessions were held in order to get students' feedback on the effectiveness of portfolio keeping and its effects on writing anxiety. With the aim of preventing any language blockage, sessions were held in the native language; Turkish. They were audiotaped by one of the instructors but transcribed by both of them.

To ensure methodological triangulation, data collection and analysis were done with regard to both qualitative and quantitative procedures (Denzin, 1978; Lynch, 1991). The SLWAI was analysed by summing up the subjects' ratings of the 22 items. For the negatively worded statements, responses were reversed and recorded. Thus, in all instances, a high score represented high anxiety. Data gathered from the background questionnaire and the two reflective sessions were analysed by means of pattern coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Weiner, 1997).

2.3. The Procedure

The study took place in the first term of the 2006–2007 academic year, in the spring term. In the first month of the term, we observed the writing anxiety of our students and wanted to support our observation with empirical data. To achieve this, the SLWAI was given to the students. As the scale supported our observation, a need to take an action to help our students to overcome their writing anxiety emerged. As we read the literature, we came up with the use of portfolio for several positive outcomes in second language learning. In line with the literature, we aimed to implement portfolio into our integrated skills course.

A background questionnaire was given to explore the students' previous experiences and their knowledge on the use of portfolio. That is how the portfolio adventure began. The portfolio required students to take part in five familiar writing tasks, which they use to develop portfolios and which organized the writing component of the integrated skills course. The students were asked to write (1) a personal essay (2) a problem-possible solution essay (3) an argument/persuasive essay (4) a travel narrative and (5) an analytical essay. There were two stipulations (1) students must choose their own topics and (2) non-fiction is allowed. Students shared up to three drafts of each piece in both large and small group workshops. In the small group workshops, two students shared copies of their writing and commented on them. In the large group workshops, the copies of students' writing were shared with the entire class. The small group workshops were held twice a week whereas the large ones were held each week. Students brought copies of their writing for their group members and their course teachers. In this way, each student had the opportunity to receive weekly responses on their writing-in-process.

After the portfolio process, to support the quantitative data with qualitative data, the instructors scheduled two special meetings known as reflective sessions for students to talk about their personal responses to the effectiveness of the portfolio process and its effects on their writing anxiety level. Students remained as the whole class without having small discussion groups. During these sessions, the instructor let the students' responses guide her questions but she provided a focus for the talk since the two sessions had different key subjects. The first session aimed to reveal students' reflections on the use of the portfolio whereas the second one attempted to glean data on the effects of portfolio keeping on writing anxiety.

Initially, only one reflective session was scheduled but on the basis of the first session's findings, a complementary one was held. Both of the reflective sessions were audiotaped, and later transcribed so that there would be an accurate record of the students' responses. When the first session was analysed, some patterns were noticed. The responses were categorised based on those patterns. Those categories were related to 1) feelings about the portfolio process 2) the effects of portfolio keeping 3) evaluation of the portfolio tasks and 4) portfolio as a future teaching practice. For the second session, the categories were limited to the effects of portfolio keeping on writing as it had been the most significant improvement revealed in the first session.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Results of the Inventory

Based on their scores on the SLWAI, students were grouped into three anxiety levels; one or more standard deviations below the mean were judged to be low-anxious i.e., equal to or smaller than 56 (27%); those whose mean scores were one or more standard deviations above the mean were judged to be high-anxious i.e., equal to or higher than 80 (40%). The rest were considered to have average writing anxiety (33%).

Table 1: Numbers and Percentages of Students in Three Anxiety Levels

Anxiety levels	male	female	total	percentage*
High anxiety	2	4	6	40
Average anxiety	1	4	5	33
Low anxiety	3	1	4	27

*rounded off to nearest number

3.2. Results of the Background Questionnaire

Results of the background questionnaire revealed that none of the participants had ever been involved in a portfolio task in their previous learning experiences. When they were asked to state what they understood from portfolio keeping, it was obvious that none of them really knew what it was.

3.3. Results of the First Reflective Session

The aim of first reflective session was to give students an opportunity to promote their reflection and ownership of the portfolio process in general. When the transcribed data were analysed, four categories emerged. These four categories are 1) feelings about the portfolio process 2) the effects of portfolio keeping 3) evaluation of portfolio tasks and 4) portfolio as a future teaching practice. Results of each category are documented as follows:

The students' feelings about the portfolio process were somewhat contradictory. 55% of the students announced that they found the process very demanding and boring. The following quotation reveals the common underlying reason for finding the process boring:

- *This was the first time I did such a thing. I found it very challenging. I think it was boring to write step by step.*

The rest of the students (45%) showed engagement to the process by revealing that they found it very enjoyable. This student's response describes these positive feelings:

- *It was enjoyable. Doing something step by step was pleasure-giving. Other way (here she refers to the traditional way), it would be boring and pointless.*

Students listed the effects of portfolio keeping as follows: improvement of writing skills, overcoming writing anxiety, learning ownership, vocabulary expansion, critical thinking and creativity. Two of the students illuminated the effects of portfolio keeping in their reflections as follows:

- *I learned a lot of words. I remember all the words I learned while doing the tasks.*

- *I really tried hard to stick to the deadlines. For the first time, I didn't sleep at nights just to hand in the tasks on time. But at the end, I felt happy. I guess this is what responsibility is.*

In terms of evaluation of the portfolio tasks, some of the students (35%) were highly critical. They criticized the tasks on the basis of their length, difficulty, and lack of fun. On the contrary, the majority of the students (45%) referred to the tasks positively. They appreciated the tasks on the basis of triggering their critical thinking ability, generating fun and enthusiasm, promoting research, and improving their language skills. The rest of the students (20%) did not share their ideas and feelings about the tasks. To show the two sides of the coin, an exemplary quotation is given from each group:

- Portfolio keeping is not for me. It only helped me to improve my writing. I could have improved my writing by doing more enjoyable tasks.

- I think the tasks were very useful. Why? Because they improve critical thinking. In a way, they trigger your mind.

The most promising finding of the first session is that all of the participants (100%) declared that they would use portfolio in their own classes when they become language teachers. They claimed that as a teaching practice, portfolio will have a place of its own among their teaching practices in the future.

- I would make my future students keep portfolios. And, thanks to portfolios, if they have any problems with writing, they can see and correct their own mistakes in time

3.4. Results of the Second Reflective Session

The real aim of the study was to find out the effects of portfolio keeping on the writing anxiety of the students. Thus, the results of the second session are of high importance as they are directly related to the aim of the study. The students' responses are grouped as follows: 1) the improvement in writing skills 2) changes in the emotional state.

Students shared several positive outcomes of the process and to our astonishment the majority of them were related to writing skills and anxiety. 80% of the students shared that they experienced self-improvement in terms of writing. The interesting thing is that among the students (55%) who found the process demanding and boring, 35% of them declared that they benefited from it in terms of sharpening their writing skills and overcoming their writing anxiety. An example from the responses of the students may clarify what statistics shows:

- At first, I had difficulty because I avoided writing in English but I started to write easily with the help of portfolio. My ability in writing paragraphs has improved. Actually, my writing ability has incredibly improved so no more running away from writing in English.

- There are drastic differences between my first and last writings. Nowadays, while I am writing in English I write more fluently.

- Sure I make less grammar mistakes. I don't make the mistakes that had attracted my attention during portfolio tasks. It is as if an inner voice warns me all the time. For example; I pay more attention to third person singular –s.

- Now I can make connections between my sentences more comfortably.

More frequent than the responses related to the improvement in writing, all of the students who were found to be high or average anxious reflected some kind of emotional change related to writing as a result of portfolio keeping.

- It helped me to write in English better. I used to worry about what to write. Plus expressing myself. Now, while I'm writing I'm not anxious anymore.

- To me, it was boring but I need to tell that before beginning to write, I used to have trouble. Nothing used to come to my mind. I did not want to grab the pen. I believe portfolio taught me the pleasure of writing.

- At the beginning, I was scared of writing in English because I wasn't confident. I was very sensitive about making mistakes. Now, I know all mistakes can be corrected only if you spend enough time and effort.

- I can show my compositions to my teachers and friends comfortably. I don't worry about being laughed at or labelled as unsuccessful.

To summarize, based on the results of SLWAI, 40% of the participants had high writing anxiety level and 33% of them had average anxiety level. As the two reflective sessions documented, the students not only mentioned the benefits of portfolio keeping in terms of language improvement but also asserted its positive effects on overcoming their writing anxiety.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to find out the effects of portfolio keeping on the writing anxiety of EFL students. The students' beliefs, feelings, and experiences on portfolio keeping were also focused in order to uncover their own conceptualisation of the process.

The results of the study have shown that participating students who had no prior experience in keeping a portfolio claimed that they highly benefited from the process in terms of learning ownership, vocabulary expansion, critical thinking, and creativity. This finding is consistent with the related literature (Butler, 1997; Ersin, 2005; Genesee & Upshur, 1996; Kennedy, 1997; Williams, 1997). Most of the students reflected that they benefited from portfolio keeping in terms of overcoming their writing anxiety during the two reflective sessions. Their responses revealed portfolio keeping improved their writing skills and caused some positive changes in their emotional states.

The question of testing the effects of process orientation in a product-oriented educational setting, as argued by Canagarajah (1999), is the first pillar of our discussion.

The Turkish context might be bridging the process and product strands by standing in the middle. Though the participating students had never experienced keeping a portfolio in their learning experiences before, the majority of them were highly satisfied with the end result i.e., the product. Yet, they labelled it as something boring when they were asked to evaluate it as a process. The contradictory nature of these reflections may seem understandable if we take into consideration the unique nature of the Turkish culture-somehow mingling the tastes and methods of the East and the West. In the Turkish context that embraces both values of process and product, portfolios take a different value on the needs and interests of the students by accommodating a process spice into the writing skill which is primarily concerned as a product in general in Turkey contrary to the Western stance.

The second pillar of the discussion rests on the use of portfolio as a means of overcoming writing anxiety. Looking through a reverse lens, solutions for the detected sources of writing anxiety emerged out of the qualitative data of this study i.e., the benefits of portfolio listed by the students. Portfolio keeping creates more instances of writing practice and it is a well-known fact that practice makes things better. Thus, it is not misleading to conclude that keeping portfolio improves writing skills as it makes the students practice writing in the target language. The more they practice, the more they feel themselves as better writers. It is highly possible that feeling a better writer reduces writing anxiety. In this respect one of the reasons of writing anxiety mentioned in the literature i.e. poor writing skills successfully loses its strength.

In line with this argument, portfolios create a dynamic educational environment and accordingly another source of writing anxiety that is the degree of preparation to complete the writing task diminishes. The time allocated in the process of portfolio gives them a chance to get prepared and accumulate their ideas and arguments while reflecting on their accurate use of L2. Similarly, writing anxiety stemming from the fear of being assessed and judged on the basis of writing tasks decreases. Since portfolios are not primarily used as a means of practicing grammar, more importance is given to the expression of ideas both by the teachers and students. With the support of portfolios, the pressure of accuracy is minimized if not completely released.

With the help of portfolios, students see the quality of their own work and this leads to a strong sense of accomplishment. They see how they progress with an evidence to compare their first and last samples of writing. This record of improvement helps the emergence of self-confidence. With the help of this record and arising self-

confidence, students begin to feel secure, safe, and appreciated for their written work before they take risks to write something new.

After orienting the relation between benefits that are offered by portfolio keeping and writing anxiety, we will introduce the link between the quality of teacher-student collaboration that portfolio keeping initiates and writing anxiety. Teacher-student collaboration reduces anxiety and triggers communication between two parties by giving an ongoing opportunity to share reflections about the learning that takes place (Barton & Collins, 1997). Thus, it creates a supportive environment to correct the mistakes. Becoming aware of their mistakes and having another chance to correct them frees the students from the pressure and anxiety of being labelled as unsuccessful writers in the target language.

In addition to the teacher-student collaboration created in the portfolio process, another ground is cleared that is the disguised nature of channel between two parties, namely; teachers and students. The disguised nature of this channel projects itself as mixed messages exchanged between teachers and students. The argument of mixed messages is mentioned in the literature as one of the major sources of writing anxiety. Portfolios always create a ground for communication. The students are there to reflect on their written products. Similarly, the teachers are able to inform their students about what they really expect from them. The reflective nature of the portfolio process which is exercised both by teachers and students enable two parties to understand each other. Meaning is negotiated by two active parties rather than interpreted only by teachers. Thus, the issue of getting mixed messages vanishes as the two parties are actively involved in reflection. That is how the reflective nature of portfolio process arms students with the power of negotiating meaning along with overcoming their writing anxiety.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has offered a new insight into the positive effects of portfolio keeping i.e. reducing writing anxiety in L2. The causes of writing anxiety are resolved through the nature of portfolio. Portfolio as an instructional practice far away from being a traditional, punitive, and judgemental approach to teaching L2 writing creates the melting pot in which the affective variables related to writing anxiety melt. When Asian educational contexts are taken into consideration, it would be a failure not to note that

the implementation of portfolios into the education programmes is also promising in terms of its potential to change traditional and product-oriented teaching practices.

Considering the department of the participating students, the study highlights significant implications with respect to teacher education programmes in EFL settings. Regarding their future roles, prospective teachers should be provided with the opportunity to reflect on their feelings and attitudes towards writing in the target language. Implementing portfolios into their programmes may create an opportunity for such reflections. Portfolio keeping may affect their future teaching practices. Developing an awareness of portfolios and their positive effects on writing anxiety will arm prospective teachers with an instrument that their future students will benefit from.

In conclusion, portfolios provide evidence of knowledge, dispositions, and skills. They offer authentic information about the progress of students. In addition to these aforementioned benefits, the findings of this study suggest that portfolios can be used as a means of helping students to overcome their writing anxiety in L2.

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Research Assistant Hande ÖZTÜRK

Maltepe University

Faculty of Education

Istanbul, Turkey

E-mail address: mhande78@yahoo.com

Second author: Research Assistant Sevdeğer ÇEÇEN

Maltepe University

Faculty of Education

Istanbul, Turkey

E-mail address: sevdeger@hotmail.com