

Empowering Grade 6 Pupils Through Digital Portfolio: A Pathway to Enhanced Reflective Writing Skills

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Abstract— This study examined how digital portfolios, using Google Docs and Canva, can empower Grade 6 pupils to enhance their reflective writing skills in English at Sumagdang Elementary School during School Year 2025–2026. Guided by a convergent parallel mixed method design, the study involved 26 Grade VI pupils as quantitative respondents through total enumeration and 10 purposively selected pupils for the qualitative phase. Quantitative data were gathered through pretest and posttest reflective writing tasks assessed with a researcher-made rubric, and a survey measuring the perceived impact of Google Docs and Canva on pupils' reflective writing. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysis of portfolio entries, and were treated using thematic analysis. Results of the pretest revealed that most pupils were at Emerging and Beginning levels of reflection, indicating limited ability to explain experiences and draw insights. After a 4-week digital portfolio intervention, the posttest showed a marked improvement, with the majority of pupils reaching Proficient and Advanced levels, demonstrating more organized, insightful, and meaningful reflections. The impact survey yielded high to very high mean scores (overall $M = 4.24$), indicating that Google Docs and Canva significantly increased pupils' interest, excitement, focus, effort, and enjoyment in reflective writing. Qualitative findings, however, highlighted persistent challenges, including technical and access-related difficulties, limited digital literacy and writing skills, and issues with organization, focus, and feelings of shyness or embarrassment. Overall, the study concludes that digital portfolios using Google Docs and Canva are an effective tool for improving reflective writing skills and fostering engagement among Grade 6 pupils, provided that adequate infrastructural support, digital skills training, and clear portfolio management routines are in place.

Keywords— Digital Portfolio, Reflective Writing, Google Docs, Canva, Grade 6 Pupils.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid integration of digital tools into basic education has reshaped how learners produce, share, and reflect on their work. In language education, technology-enhanced approaches have been shown to support writing development, collaboration, and self-regulation, particularly when they encourage learners to revisit and refine their work over time (Bentley, 2022; Chu, 2020). Reflective writing, which requires learners to think critically about their experiences, decisions, and learning processes, is considered essential for developing higher-order thinking and metacognitive skills at the elementary level. However, many Grade 6 pupils still struggle to articulate their thoughts coherently, evaluate their own work, and make purposeful revisions in English writing tasks

(Nazri et al., 2020). These challenges highlight the need for instructional approaches that not only focus on linguistic accuracy but also foster ongoing reflection and learner autonomy.

Digital portfolios have emerged as a promising tool for supporting reflective writing, as they allow students to collect, organize, and revisit their work across time, providing a tangible record of growth and learning (Tur & Castañeda, 2021). Unlike traditional paper-based portfolios, digital portfolios can easily integrate text, images, and multimedia, and they can be shared with teachers and peers for feedback, thus enriching the reflection process (Buyarski et al., 2020). Research in various educational contexts suggests that e-portfolios can enhance students' ability to monitor their own progress, set goals, and engage more deeply with their learning products (Alexiou & Paraskeva, 2019; Tur & Hafner, 2020). For Grade 6 pupils, who are at a transitional stage preparing for secondary education, digital portfolios may provide a structured yet flexible space to practice reflective writing in English while developing digital literacy skills aligned with 21st-century learning.

Specific digital platforms such as Google Docs and design tools like Canva have further expanded possibilities for implementing digital portfolios in the classroom. Google Docs supports real-time collaboration, commenting, and revision history, enabling learners to receive immediate feedback and to see how their writing evolves over time (Yuliani & Fitriani, 2022). Canva, on the other hand, offers user-friendly templates and visual design features that may increase students' interest, creativity, and sense of ownership over their work (Almusharraf, 2021). Studies have indicated that visually oriented and interactive tools can boost engagement and motivation, especially among younger learners, who may be more inclined to participate actively when tasks are aesthetically appealing and allow for personalization (Cahyono & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). Yet, despite the growing popularity of these tools, there is still a need for more context-specific research on how they influence reflective writing skills and engagement in basic education.

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education's initiatives on ICT integration emphasize the use of digital tools to support learner-centered instruction and to enhance language learning outcomes. However, much of the existing research on digital portfolios and technology integration has

focused on secondary and tertiary levels, leaving a gap in the literature concerning elementary pupils, particularly those in public schools and in non-urban settings. For schools like Sumagdang Elementary School, understanding how digital portfolios, supported by platforms such as Google Docs and Canva, affect Grade 6 pupils' reflective writing in English is essential for designing effective, sustainable classroom practices. Moreover, learners may face specific challenges related to access to devices and connectivity, limited digital skills, and difficulties in managing and organizing digital artifacts, which can influence both the quality of their reflective writing and their overall engagement. Thus, this study sought to examine how the implementation of digital portfolios can impact the reflective writing skills of Grade VI learners at Sumagdang Elementary School for the school year 2025–2026.

Statement of the Problem

This study explores the use of digital portfolios in reflective writing skills in English of Grade VI – learners of Sumagdang Elementary School for school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during pre-test?
2. How does the implementation of digital portfolios - Google Docs and Canva impact the reflective writing skill of Grade 6 pupils?
3. What is the level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during post-test?
4. What challenges do Grade 6 pupils face when using digital portfolios for reflective writing?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed method research design to comprehensively examine the use of digital portfolios in enhancing the reflective writing skills of Grade 6 pupils at Sumagdang Elementary School. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data will be collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then merged during interpretation.

The quantitative component involved pretest and posttest measures of pupils' reflective writing skills using a researcher-made rubric, as well as a survey on the impact of Google Docs and Canva for reflective writing.

Parallel to this, the qualitative component will gather in-depth data through semi-structured interviews, along with an analysis of their digital portfolio entries, to explore their experiences, and challenges in using digital portfolios for reflective writing. The qualitative data will be subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and issues.

B. Research Respondents

The respondents for the quantitative data of this study were the 26 Grade VI students of Sumagdang Elementary

School School Year 2025 – 2026. The researcher used the total enumeration sampling.

On the other hand, for the qualitative data, the researcher employed purposive sampling with 10 respondents.

C. Data Analysis

Data gathering procedure

The researcher secured approval from the school head of Sumagdang Elementary School and obtained informed consent from parents or guardians, as well as assent from the Grade 6 pupils who participated in the study. After orienting the pupils about the purpose of the research and the use of digital portfolios, the quantitative pretest was administered, in which pupils completed an initial reflective writing task in English that was rated using a validated reflective writing rubric.

Following the pretest, the intervention phase began, during which pupils were guided to create and develop their digital portfolios using Google Docs and Canva over 4 weeks. They regularly wrote reflective entries in English, uploaded or updated their work, and received feedback from the teacher as part of normal instructional activities. After the intervention period, the posttest reflective writing task was administered under similar conditions to the pretest, and pupils answered a structured engagement and motivation survey related to their use of Google Docs, Canva, and digital portfolios for reflective writing.

Parallel to the quantitative data collection, qualitative data gathered from a purposive sample of pupils representing varied levels of performance and engagement. After the intervention and posttest, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to elicit pupils' challenges in using digital portfolios for reflective writing. All interviews or discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and anonymized. Once data collection was completed, the quantitative data were encoded and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, while the qualitative data was coded and subjected to thematic analysis.

Statistical treatment of the data

To determine the level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during pre-test, frequency and percentage were utilized.

To know the impact on the implementation of digital portfolios particularly the Google Docs and Canva on reflective writing skill of Grade VI pupils, mean was employed.

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To identify the challenges that Grade 6 pupils face when using digital portfolios for reflective writing, thematic analysis was used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during pre-test

Table 1 shows that most Grade VI students started with relatively low reflective writing skills during the pre-test.

Only 1 student (3%) reached Level 4 – Advanced Reflection, and 3 students (12%) were at Level 3 – Proficient Reflection. The majority, 15 students (58%), were at Level 2 – Emerging Reflection, indicating that they could describe experiences but had limited explanation, analysis, or connection to learning.

TABLE 1. Level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during pre-test

Reflective Writing Skill Level	Frequency	Percentage
Level 4 – Advanced Reflection	1	3%
Level 3 – Proficient Reflection	3	12%
Level 2 – Emerging Reflection	15	58%
Level 1 – Beginning Reflection	7	27%
Total	26	100%

Additionally, 7 students (27%) were at Level 1 – Beginning Reflection, mostly narrating events with little or no reflection. Overall, these results suggest that before the intervention, most students had not yet developed strong reflective writing skills and needed support in deepening their reflection, organizing their ideas, and expressing insights in writing.

B. Impact on the implementation of digital portfolios - Google Docs and Canva on the reflective writing skill of Grade 6 pupils

TABLE 2. Mean of Impact on the implementation of digital portfolios - Google Docs and Canva on the reflective writing skill of Grade 6 pupils

Statement	M	Descriptive Interpretation
Using Google Docs or Canva makes me more interested in doing my reflective writing.	4.19	High Impact
I feel more excited to write reflections when I can design them using Google Docs or Canva.	4.35	Very High Impact
Using Google Docs or Canva helps me stay focused while I am doing my reflective writing.	4.15	High Impact
I try harder to do my best in reflective writing when I use Google Docs or Canva.	4.15	High Impact
Google Docs and Canva make reflective writing more enjoyable for me.	4.35	Very High Impact
Experimental Post test	4.24	Very High Impact

Table 2 indicates that the implementation of digital portfolios using Google Docs and Canva has a generally high to very high impact on the reflective writing of Grade 6 pupils. The highest mean scores are seen in statements about excitement and enjoyment (M = 4.35, Very High Impact), suggesting that these tools make reflective writing more appealing and enjoyable for learners. Statements related to increased interest, focus, and effort also obtained high mean scores (M = 4.15–4.19, High Impact), indicating that pupils are more engaged, attentive, and motivated to do their best when using Google Docs and Canva. The overall experimental post-test mean of 4.24, interpreted as Very High Impact, shows that the use of digital portfolios through these platforms substantially enhances pupils’ motivation and engagement in reflective writing activities.

These findings imply that the integration of Google Docs and Canva as digital portfolio tools does not merely support the technical presentation of pupils’ work but also contributes

meaningfully to the learning environment by fostering positive attitudes toward reflective writing. The consistently high and very high impact ratings across all statements suggest that when pupils are given opportunities to personalize and visually enhance their written outputs, they become more invested in the reflective process. This heightened engagement can, in turn, create more favorable conditions for improving the depth and quality of their reflections, supporting the overall goal of empowering Grade 6 pupils to become more thoughtful, self-aware, and motivated writers.

C. Level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during pre-test

TABLE 3. Level of reflective writing skill of the Grade VI students during pre-test

Reflective Writing Skill Level	Frequency	Percentage
Level 4 – Advanced Reflection	9	35%
Level 3 – Proficient Reflection	13	50%
Level 2 – Emerging Reflection	3	12%
Level 1 – Beginning Reflection	1	3%
Total	26	100%

Table 3 shows that, at this stage, most Grade VI students demonstrate relatively high levels of reflective writing skill. Half of the class (13 pupils or 50%) are at Level 3 – Proficient Reflection, and 9 pupils (35%) have already reached Level 4 – Advanced Reflection, indicating that a large majority (85%) are able to explain experiences, express insights, and make meaningful connections in their writing. Only 3 pupils (12%) remain at Level 2 – Emerging Reflection and just 1 pupil (3%) at Level 1 – Beginning Reflection, suggesting that very few students are limited to simple description or event narration. Overall, the distribution implies that the class, as a whole, has developed strong reflective writing skills, with most learners capable of producing organized, insightful, and thoughtful reflections in English.

D. Challenges that Grade 6 pupils face when using digital portfolios for reflective writing

Theme 1: Technical and Access-Related Difficulties

This theme shows that many challenges are caused by technology and access issues. Pupils struggle with slow or unreliable internet, frozen apps, and unsaved work (“Sometimes the internet is slow...”, “Sometimes the app or website freezes...”). Others lack devices at home to continue working (“I don’t have a phone, tablet, or computer at home...”), or have trouble with basic account access (“I forget my password or how to log in.”). These factors limit consistent use of digital portfolios.

Theme 2: Limited Digital Literacy and Writing Skills

Several pupils find it hard to use digital tools and to produce written reflections. They report difficulty with operating the computer and navigating buttons (“I’m not very good with computers...”), typing slowly and making many errors (“Typing takes me a long time...”), and struggling with what to say in their reflections (“I don’t always know what to write in my reflection.”). This indicates a need for more support in both ICT skills and guided reflective writing.

Theme 3: Organization, Focus, and Affective Barriers

Some challenges relate to managing work, staying focused, and feeling comfortable with visibility of their writing. Pupils find it hard to organize and locate past reflections (“It’s hard for me to organize my work and find old reflections.”), and they get distracted by other online content (“I get distracted by other websites or apps...”). Others feel shy or embarrassed that teachers or classmates can see all their work (“I feel shy or embarrassed...”). These issues point to difficulties in self-management and confidence when working with digital portfolios.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the implementation of digital portfolios using Google Docs and Canva effectively empowered the Grade 6 pupils to enhance their reflective writing skills. The pre-test results revealed that most learners initially demonstrated low to emerging levels of reflection, with the majority clustered at Level 2 – Emerging Reflection and Level 1 – Beginning Reflection. After the intervention, however, there was a clear upward shift in performance, with most pupils reaching Proficient and Advanced levels of reflective writing. This indicates that sustained engagement with digital portfolios provided meaningful opportunities for learners to deepen their reflections, better organize their ideas, and articulate more thoughtful insights in English.

The quantitative results on impact further confirmed that the use of Google Docs and Canva had a high to very high positive influence on pupils’ motivation, interest, focus, effort, and enjoyment in reflective writing. Pupils strongly perceived that these tools made writing more exciting and enjoyable, and encouraged them to try harder and stay engaged in the task. This suggests that integrating visually appealing and interactive digital platforms into portfolio work does not only improve the product of writing but also significantly enhances the process by fostering positive attitudes and higher levels of engagement.

However, the qualitative findings also highlighted important challenges that need to be addressed for digital portfolios to be fully effective and sustainable. Pupils reported technical and access-related issues, such as unstable internet, device limitations, and login problems; limited digital literacy and writing skills, including difficulty navigating tools, typing, and generating reflective content; and organization, focus, and affective barriers, such as trouble managing files, distractions online, and feelings of shyness or embarrassment about their work being seen. These challenges underscore the necessity of providing structured ICT support, explicit instruction in reflective writing, and clear guidelines and routines for managing digital portfolios.

Overall, the study concludes that digital portfolios using Google Docs and Canva are a powerful tool for improving reflective writing skills and enhancing learner engagement among Grade 6 pupils, provided that schools and teachers also respond to the technical, skill-based, and emotional challenges that learners encounter. With appropriate scaffolding, infrastructure, and continuous guidance, digital portfolios can

serve as an effective pathway to developing more independent, reflective, and motivated young writers.

Recommendations

Based from the findings and conclusion of this study, the following has been recommended:

1. Administrator may ensure reliable internet connectivity, sufficient devices (computers/tablets), and updated software so teachers can consistently implement digital portfolios without frequent technical disruptions.
2. Include digital portfolios in the school improvement plan, English program, and assessment framework so they are sustained beyond a single project or school year.
3. Teachers may use Google Docs and Canva not as occasional projects but as ongoing tools for reflective journals, weekly reflections, and end-of-unit summaries so pupils regularly practice reflective writing.
4. Researchers can compare Google Docs and Canva with other tools (e.g., Seesaw, Google Sites, Microsoft OneNote) to determine which features most effectively promote reflection, engagement, and writing quality among elementary learners.
5. Future studies should look into how access to devices, internet connectivity, and home support affect the effectiveness of digital portfolios, particularly in rural or resource-constrained schools, and identify strategies to reduce digital inequities.

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