

The Impact of Exploratory Practice: A Mixed-Methods Study on Writing Motivation and Performance among EFL Undergraduates

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Abstract: The Impact of Exploratory Practice: A Mixed-Methods Study on Writing Motivation and Performance among EFL Undergraduates. Investigating the effects of Exploratory Practice (EP) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' motivation and writing skills can provide new insights into improving writing classes. **Objective:** The objective of the present study is to investigate the impacts of EP on a group of EFL college students' writing motivation and writing skills. **Methods:** This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, implementing reflective discussions and collaborative inquiry through EP. To understand improvements in students' motivation, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were administered to 23 participants. **Findings:** The quantitative results showed some improvements in students' self-efficacy, extrinsic motivation, and writing scores. However, intrinsic motivation and efforts to complete writing tasks did not show statistically significant changes. To better understand these nonsignificant results, qualitative data were used to explore students' experiences during the EP process. Participants reported increased confidence, reduced anxiety, and greater ability to organize ideas through peer discussions and reflective activities. They also described a more meaningful, less mechanical writing process, which may indicate early signs of motivational internalization, even if not reflected quantitatively. **Conclusion:** The outcomes imply that EP can be a feasible approach to enhance students' motivation and writing skills in an EFL context. Despite the apparent success of EP in this study, its successful implementation in writing classrooms depends on students' involvement in the learning and teaching process and teachers' continuous support.

Keywords: exploratory practice, writing motivation, EFL learners, reflective learning, writing performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The mastery of writing skills is imperative for effectively conveying personal ideas and disseminating knowledge in academic contexts.

Nevertheless, writing is considered one of the most challenging skills to be acquired by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The results of several studies show that the reasons

behind these difficulties in the mastery of writing skills among EFL learners are the limited exposure to English outside of the classrooms, an overemphasis on passing language tests, and insufficient writing practices (Akbar, 2015; Ahmad Ghulamuddin et al., 2021; Du, 2020; Iranmehry & Davari, 2018; Jabali, 2018; Karimian Shirenjini & Derakshan, 2020). In addition to the above points, EFL learners might find it difficult to understand lexical choices, grammatical rules, and writing conventions that differ from those of their native languages (Ahmed, 2019; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Alharbi, 2019). Furthermore, many EFL learners, due to cultural differences, may be unfamiliar with Western essay structures (Reichelt et al., 2012), making the mastery of writing skills more elusive. The first author experienced a similar situation while teaching academic reading and writing to a group of EFL college students in Bekasi, Indonesia. The students showed low motivation and minimum writing skills. Against this background, it seems important to provide these students with a teaching approach that can improve their writing skills.

One solution to improve students' writing skills is to enhance their motivation. Besides showing positive attitudes toward writing tasks, willingness to seek feedback, and better engagement with solving challenging writing tasks (Conroy et al., 2009; Hide & Boscolo, 2006; Schrodt et al., 2019; Williams & Takaku, 2011; Wijekumar et al., 2019), motivated students perform better and express more enthusiasm in writing classes (Graham et al., 2018). Thus, motivation has an important role in improving students' writing skills (Alemi et al., 2022; Alzubi & Nazim, 2024; Cahyono & Rahayu, 2020; Han, 2023). Nevertheless, motivated students do not come from an isolated environment. They need to be nurtured by a supportive learning environment and by teachers who foster students' autonomy in selecting writing topics, encourage

collaboration among students, and apply motivating practices (Alzubi & Nazim, 2024; Lee & Lin, 2022; Rahimi, 2024; Wang & Troia, 2023). In this regard, teaching approaches that foster students' autonomy and collaboration seem important to improve students' motivation and writing skills.

Related to the previous paragraph, Exploratory Practice (EP) can be proposed as a promising approach to improve students' motivation and language learning skills. In this view, EP refers to a form of practitioner research that supports teachers and students in collaboratively examining classroom "puzzles" or real-world questions related to their learning and teaching processes (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2016). However, unlike traditional classroom action research, EP posits puzzles as opportunities for both teachers and students to reflect, engage in dialogue, and develop joint inquiries, thereby allowing students to actively participate in the learning process (Wilson, 2025; Miller & Cunha, 2019). In this regard, EP allows students to collaborate with teachers to investigate and address challenges in their learning process (Consoli, 2022; Banister, 2018; Hanks, 2017). From a theoretical perspective, EP aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002), which posits that motivation is supported when learners experience autonomy (control over learning activities), competence (a sense of ability to succeed), and relatedness (connection with peers and teachers). Through reflective discussions and collaborative problem-solving, EP provides opportunities for students to exercise autonomy in selecting and addressing puzzles, develop competence by monitoring and improving their writing, and foster relatedness through peer and teacher interactions.

Numerous studies have applied EP in EFL contexts. Kato and Hanks (2022) found that learner-oriented EP enhanced students' motivation among a group of Japanese college students.

While Ramdani et al. (2023) explored how Indonesian EFL teachers used EP principles to solve technology-integration puzzles, Chen (2020) demonstrated the effects of EP on students' autonomy by examining cultural and intercultural issues during the language-learning process. In addition, Consoli (2022) used EP to solve puzzles experienced by a group of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students in the United Kingdom. Machin (2023) showed the impact of EP on students' motivation in an EFL classroom in Spain, while Hiratsuka and Nall (2023, 2024) demonstrated the benefits of EP on students' short- and long-term motivation in a Japanese EAP classroom. Moreover, EP can enhance writing skill development by promoting metacognitive awareness and strategic learning (Sun et al., 2024; Handayani et al., 2025). The processes of reflection, experimentation with strategies, and collaborative feedback allow students to organize their ideas, revise drafts effectively, and develop autonomy in managing their writing tasks, which are key factors in improving writing proficiency.

Despite the above studies, investigations into the effects of EP on students' motivation and writing skills, especially in the context of EFL learning in Indonesia, remain scarce. This study aims to investigate how EP can enhance EFL learners' motivation and writing skills in a university setting in Bekasi, Indonesia. By fostering collaboration between teachers and students to identify and address their "puzzles" or challenges in writing (Hanks, 2017), this study seeks to contribute both practical solutions for the local context and theoretical insights into the application of EP in EFL writing education. Hence, this research aims to fill a gap in the literature on EP in Indonesian EFL classrooms and to offer strategies to improve writing motivation and performance. Specifically, the study examines how EP mechanisms: dialogue, reflection, and collaborative inquiry, relate to students' psychological constructs of autonomy,

competence, and relatedness, and how these mechanisms support writing skill development and motivation.

■ METHOD

Research Context and Participants

The present study took place in an advanced English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing class at a private university in Bekasi, Indonesia. The first writer served as both lecturer and researcher for this class, having previously taught the same students in their basic and intermediate EFL writing courses. The participants were 23 second-year undergraduate students, comprising 6 males and 17 females. The participants' age range is 20 to 22 years.

Before data collection began, the participants' English proficiency was assessed using the EnglishScore test, indicating that most students were at the B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Additionally, the learning materials and evaluation criteria we used in this study were suited with CEFR descriptors to ensure consistency in instructional and assessment standards. Despite students' performance in the intermediate writing course, the first author noted a decline in their motivation in the advanced writing course, which appeared to stem from a lack of confidence and difficulty engaging with more complex writing tasks. This situation led to the use of EP as both an investigative and pedagogical approach to examine the following puzzles;

1. Why do the participants feel less motivated in the advanced EFL writing class?
2. How can EP improve students' motivation and writing skills?

Research Procedures

This study used a quasi-experimental single-group pretest-posttest design, as it lacked a control group. The treatment lasted for seven

sessions. Before the study began, we obtained ethical clearance from the university's research ethics committee. In addition, the objectives of the study were explained to the participants, and ethical forms were distributed to ensure that their participation would be voluntary, that their responses would be used solely for research purposes, and that their responses would not influence their academic grades. All participants agreed and signed the ethics forms.

This study applied several Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities (PEPA). First, a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to identify the primary challenges participants encountered in the advanced writing class. The FGD was audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to provide insights for subsequent lesson planning. The FGD yielded several key concerns: some students found it difficult to develop clear explanations and examples in their essays, whereas others struggled to organize their essays or understand essay prompts. Additionally, several students felt the writing class duration was insufficient to complete the writing task, especially with longer, more complex texts. These concerns were used to redesign the lesson plan that will accommodate students' needs.

In addition to the FGD, a range of activities was implemented, including classroom discussions, peer feedback, writing tasks, and one-on-one tutorials. Teaching materials were also adjusted to address problems raised by participants in the FGD, such as creating essay introductions, integrating explanations and examples, improving grammatical accuracy, and developing arguments.

Additionally, the academic writing questionnaire was distributed before and after the treatment to facilitate comparison. The first session was a detailed explanation of essay structure, common writing errors, and the rubric assessment to ensure transparency and alignment of expectations. Sessions were conducted twice a week for 90 minutes each over six weeks. Over

the following weeks, the participants engaged in targeted lesson plans designed to build key academic writing skills. Each session included reading model essays, brainstorming ideas, drafting essays, and revising based on feedback, integrating the principles of EP to promote deep engagement with language and content. Additionally, participants were given opportunities to provide peer feedback and receive one-on-one tutorials with the lecturer to discuss their writing progress, enabling guided reflection and reinforcement of learned skills.

Data Collection and Analysis

Three research instruments: a writing motivation questionnaire, student writing samples, and semi-structured interviews, were used to collect data. Quantitative and qualitative findings were used to allow data triangulation and a deeper understanding of the effects of EP on students' motivation and writing skills.

To assess students' motivation for academic writing before and after the treatment, an adapted version of Payne's (2012) Academic Writing Questionnaire was used. This questionnaire consists of 34 items that measure four variables: intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, extrinsic motivation, and effort. A four-response Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" was applied. A pilot study was conducted with a similar student group to assess the reliability of each item. The pilot study results showed Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.70 or higher for all items, indicating good internal consistency. The questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms and analyzed using SPSS version 23. In addition, Descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores and standard deviations, were applied to measure the changes in students' motivation. The results were interpreted through the descriptors proposed by Yusof et al. (2015).

Additionally, students' writing assignments submitted before and after the treatment were collected and assessed to analyze changes in their

writing skills. Students' writing tasks were rated using the IELTS Writing Task 2 Band Descriptors (IELTS, 2023), which focused on task response, coherence and cohesion, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. We also assessed inter-rater reliability using Cohen's Kappa. The results suggested a coefficient of 0.84, indicating a strong agreement between raters.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four participants selected through purposive sampling to complement the quantitative data and gain further insights into students' perceptions of EP. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The semi-structured interviews lasted

about 30 minutes. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was applied to the qualitative data. Thus, codes and themes were created both inductively from the data and deductively based on EP principles and motivational constructs.

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The treatment's effectiveness was evaluated using paired-samples t-tests to compare pre- and post-treatment scores across multiple variables, including essay performance and motivational factors. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, test statistics, effect sizes, and significance levels for these comparisons.

Table 1. Statistical analysis of pre- and post-treatment differences in essay scores and motivational factors (N = 23)

No	Variables	Pre-treatment Mean (SD)	Post-treatment Mean (SD)	Mean Difference (Δ)	t (22)	p-value	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Significant?
1.	Essay Scores	5.80 (assumed 1.00)	6.50 (assumed 1.00)	0.70	0.75	3.36	.003	Yes
2.	Self-efficacy	3.50 (0.70)	3.80 (0.42)	0.30	2.36	.027	0.49	Yes
3.	Extrinsic motivation	3.15 (0.86)	3.62 (0.64)	0.47	2.93	.008	0.61	Yes
4.	Intrinsic motivation	3.23 (0.73)	3.50 (0.75)	0.27	1.75	.094	0.36	No
5.	Efforts to finish the writing task	3.54 (0.66)	3.69 (0.63)	0.15	1.11	.278	0.23	No

Table 1 indicates the results of the questionnaires. The findings indicated that essay scores significantly improved after the treatment (from $M = 5.80$ pre-treatment to $M = 6.50$ post-treatment), $t(22) = 3.36, p = .003$, while Cohen's $d = 0.49$, showing a medium effect. These results show a medium-to-large effect size for the treatment on participants' essay scores. Additionally, participants' self-efficacy levels slightly improved, $t(22) = 2.36, p = 0.27$, Cohen's

$d = 0.49$. The findings also show the improvement in the participants' extrinsic motivation, $t(22) = 2.93, p = .008$, with a medium effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.61$). In contrast, Table 2 shows that participants' intrinsic motivation did not significantly improve ($t(22) = 1.11, p = .278, d = 0.23$). Similarly, participants' efforts to finish the writing task showed a small but significant improvement. Table two shows the mean score of 3.54 (SD = 0.66) pre-treatment to 3.69 (SD

$= 0.63$) post-treatment with the paired-sample t -test result $t(22) = 1.11, p = .278$ with the effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.23$).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that EP can effectively enhance students' writing skills, self-efficacy, and extrinsic motivation. However, changes in intrinsic motivation and efforts to finish writing tasks need to be explored further. In this regard, despite participants' demonstrated minor increases in intrinsic motivation and effort to

complete the writing task, the treatment did not produce a meaningful increase in their effort to finish the task or in their intrinsic motivation.

In addition to the overall comparison, we also tentatively analyzed the individual criteria of students' essays. This supplementary examination may offer further insight into how specific writing skills develop over time, though these findings should be interpreted cautiously due to potential variability among learners.

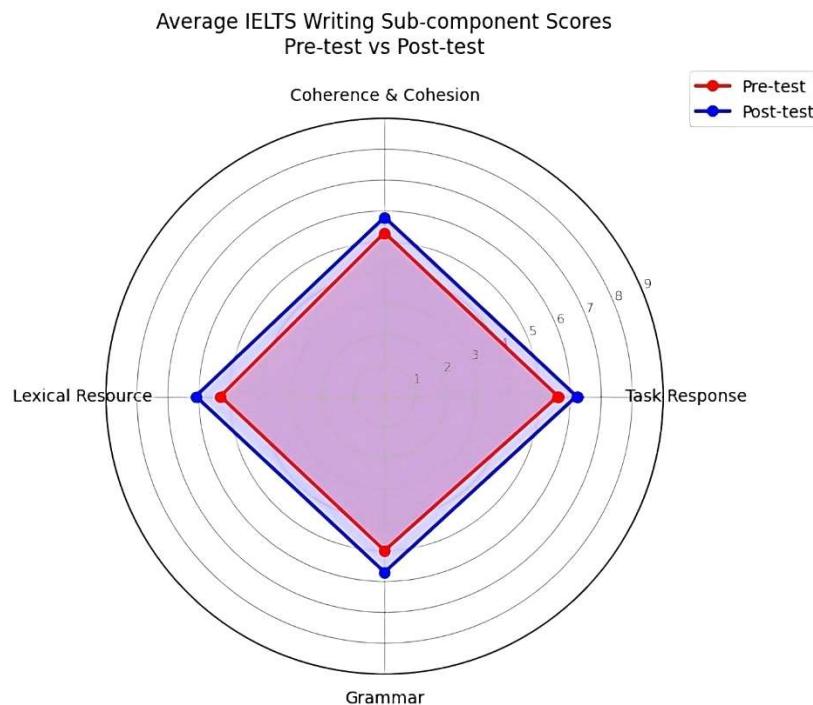


Figure 1. Average IELTS writing sub-component scores pre-test vs post-test

The radar chart compares average IELTS writing sub-component scores between a pre-test and a post-test. It displays four key writing criteria (Task Response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammar) and shows performance for each using red (pre-test) and blue (post-test) lines. Across all four areas, the post-test scores are consistently higher than the pre-test scores, indicating overall improvement. Task Response and Lexical Resource increase from around 5.5 to approximately 6.0, while Coherence and Cohesion, as well as Grammar, rise from about

5.0 to roughly 5.5. The blue shape extends slightly beyond the red shape on each axis, visually highlighting this balanced, moderate progress. Overall, the graph suggests that learners improved across all major writing skill areas following the instructional period.

We also present a bar chart that aims to offer an overview of the n -gain values and the average pre-test and post-test scores for each indicator. This chart may provide additional insight into whether the treatment affected all areas equally or showed stronger effects in certain indicators.

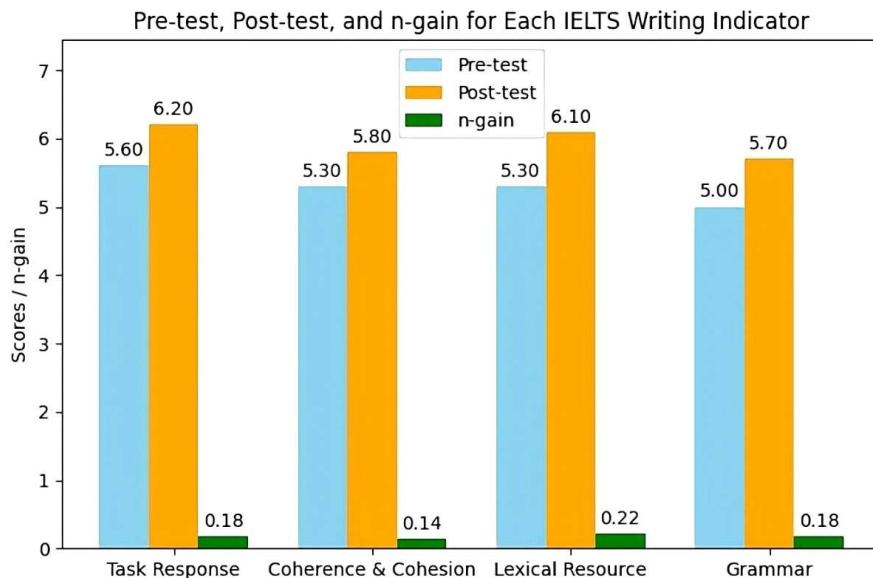


Figure 2. Pre-test, Post-test, and n-gain for Each IELTS writing indicator

The bar chart illustrates pre-test, post-test, and normalized gain (n-gain) scores for four IELTS writing indicators: Task Response, Coherence & Cohesion, Lexical Resource, and Grammar. Each indicator is represented by three bars: a light-blue bar for the pre-test, an orange bar for the post-test, and a small green bar for the n-gain. Across all four indicators, post-test scores are higher than pre-test scores, indicating measurable improvement. Task Response increases from 5.60 to 6.20, yielding an n-gain

of 0.18. Coherence & Cohesion rises from 5.30 to 5.80, with an n-gain of 0.14. Lexical Resource shows one of the most significant improvements, moving from 5.30 to 6.10 and producing the highest n-gain of 0.22. Grammar improves from 5.00 to 5.70, with an n-gain of 0.18. Overall, the chart indicates consistent progress across all writing sub-skills, with the most substantial relative gain occurring in Lexical Resource, suggesting that this area may have benefited the most from the intervention or instruction provided.

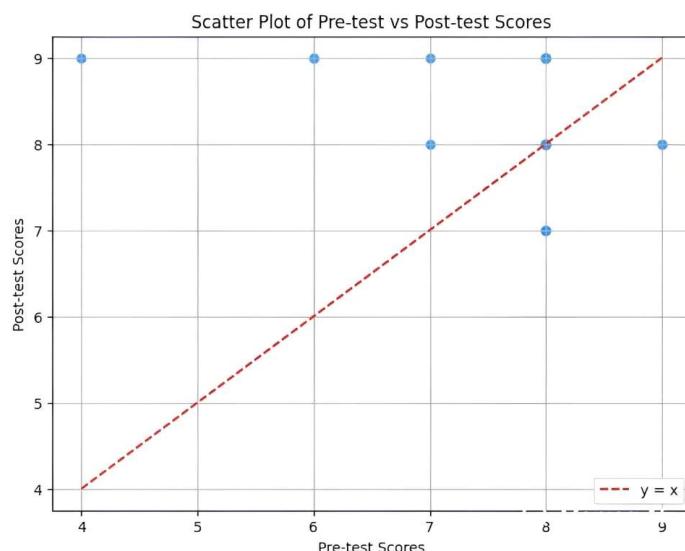


Figure 3. Scatter plot

The scatter plot illustrates the relationship between participants' pre-test and post-test scores. Each point on the graph represents an individual participant, with their pre-test score shown on the x-axis and their post-test score on the y-axis. A red-dashed line labeled $y = x$ serves as a reference line indicating equal performance on both tests. Most points appear above this line,

indicating that participants generally scored higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. Scores are mostly clustered between 6 and 8 on the pre-test and between 8 and 9 on the post-test, indicating an overall upward shift in performance. The visual pattern suggests clear improvement among the participants, as their post-test outcomes tend to exceed their initial scores.

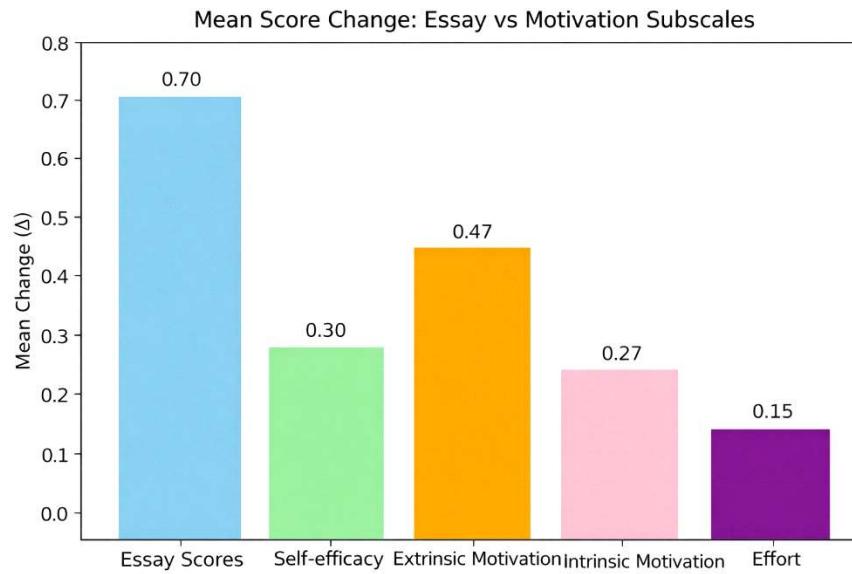


Figure 4. Mean score change

The bar chart shows the mean changes in essay scores and the four motivation sub-scales before and after EP. The essay scores increased by 0.70 points, indicating a noticeable improvement in students' writing performance. Among the motivation sub-scales, extrinsic motivation showed the largest increase ($\Delta = 0.47$), suggesting that external factors such as rewards, feedback, or recognition may have strongly encouraged students to perform better in writing. Self-efficacy also improved moderately ($\Delta = 0.30$), reflecting increased confidence in students' ability to complete writing tasks. In contrast, intrinsic motivation increased slightly ($\Delta = 0.27$), indicating a modest rise in students' internal interest or enjoyment of writing, while effort to finish writing tasks showed the smallest change ($\Delta = 0.15$), suggesting that perceived

effort contributed less to essay improvements. Overall, the pattern indicates that gains in essay scores were most closely associated with increases in extrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. In contrast, intrinsic motivation and effort had a weaker relationship with writing performance. This implies that the intervention was particularly effective in enhancing external motivation and confidence, which in turn supported better essay outcomes.

Self-Efficacy

The quantitative results suggest that self-efficacy is the variable that improves most efficiently after EP. This point aligns with the reflection made by Student 1 after peer discussions, which assisted her in believing that she could write better: "I used to think that I could

not write like my friends, but now I think I can write academic writing." Similarly, Student 2 said he felt more confident, even though he knew his writing was not perfect. However, he thought he could improve step by step. In addition, Student 4 admitted that she initially felt shy during the writing class, but EP encouraged her to write more. He said, "I felt more motivated although I was shy back then." A similar sentiment was expressed by Student 3. Although he felt confident in his skills, he was less motivated to improve his writing. "I did not have any problem with confidence since I understand the materials well, but I used to be less motivated because I did not know why I had to improve my writing skills." He then expressed that since EP fostered collaboration between teachers and students, he was more motivated to develop his writing skills.

Efforts to Finish Writing Tasks

The participants' efforts to solve writing tasks improved after the EP treatment, but the improvement was less significant. Student 1 said, "Before EP, I waited until the last minute to finish writing tasks, but now I try to finish writing tasks earlier." Student 2 added, "I tried to finish writing tasks earlier. It makes me more prepared, so I put more efforts to solve writing tasks on time." Student 3 admitted to ongoing struggles with finishing writing tasks on time but reported positive changes after the EP treatment. Similarly, Student 4 stated that after the EP treatment, she was trying to finish writing tasks earlier, but it was quite hard to change her habits. These comments illustrate that the EP treatment motivated students to finish their writing tasks more quickly and to stop procrastinating, but shifting their habits might be quite challenging.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

As with self-efficacy, extrinsic motivation improved after EP. Student 3 commented, "I am motivated to get good grades. I think that is the only thing that pushes me to write." Student 4

stated, "When I got good feedback from my teacher, I felt proud and wanted to continue improving my writing skills." Although Student 1 and Student 2 said they were intrinsically motivated by their interest in the English language, they still considered good grades and feedback important motivators. The results suggest that, despite the EP treatment promoting improvements in intrinsic motivation, extrinsic factors remain influential, especially as initial catalysts of students' engagement.

The participants also reported a shift from joining writing class as an obligation to a meaningful, self-directed activity, indicating an improvement in intrinsic motivation. Student 1 stated, "Initially, I wrote academic texts just because I had to, but during the EP sessions, I realized that writing can be a way to form my thoughts." Student 2 commented, "I used to write just because I had writing assignments, but after EP, I write because I am motivated." However, it seems important to note that the participants' intrinsic motivation was not significantly improved. It was shown in the reflection of Student 3, "I think I can write well, but I just tend to procrastinate a lot. I am still working on being motivated to write." Nevertheless, it does not mean that the EP has no value. Student 4 expressed that the EP program has made her more interested in learning about writing strategies. These comments show that although EP can improve participants' intrinsic motivation, individual differences persist, indicating that some students are still developing a deeper intrinsic motivation to improve their writing skills.

The findings of this study indicate that the participants' low motivation may stem from their limited confidence in their writing abilities. Anxiety about meeting strict academic writing standards also appeared to contribute to emotional disengagement, leading students to feel less motivated throughout the course. Several participants expressed concerns about making mistakes or being negatively judged for poor

performance. These concerns seemed to intensify at the advanced level compared to the basic or intermediate writing classes. This aligns with Tao et al. (2024), who reported that perfectionism and cultural expectations can reduce writing self-efficacy among Chinese EFL learners. Although the cultural context differs, participants in the present study may have experienced similar pressures. A comparative study involving Indonesian and Chinese EFL learners could offer deeper insights into variations in demotivating factors across cultures.

This study also found that procrastination and avoidance behaviors contributed to students' low motivation. Addressing these behaviors may be essential for improving learners' engagement in advanced writing courses. Prihandoko et al. (2024) similarly observed that students with stronger ideal L2 writing selves and more positive learning attitudes tend to show greater persistence and reduced procrastination. They recommend helping learners develop clear L2 self-images and fostering positive attitudes toward the learning process. Without adequate emotional support, clear guidelines, and scaffolded learning, advanced writing tasks may feel overwhelming—an issue observed in the present study as well. As argued by Dörnyei's (2009) L2 motivational self-system, learners need to perceive themselves as capable and find personal relevance in writing tasks to sustain motivation. These insights suggest that the participants' low motivation may be linked to fear of making mistakes and of being judged; therefore, providing sufficient support and designing relevant writing tasks are crucial.

The outcomes of this study indicate that EP has some merits for improving participants' motivation and writing skills by developing a reflective, collaborative, and feedback-rich environment. This insight is evident in improvements in participants' essay scores and self-efficacy. Similar results were reported by Han (2024), who conducted a 16-week treatment that included lesson planning,

monitoring, and evaluation using the EP approach. The results of his study show that EP was effective in enhancing students' motivation and writing skills among a group of Chinese EFL learners.

In addition to the essay scores and questionnaires, the students' reflections in this study corroborated the benefits of peer discussion and individualized feedback. Participants stated that PEPAs helped them organize their ideas more effectively and monitor their writing progress, thereby reducing the cognitive load in the writing classroom. Similarly, Sun et al. (2024) found that metacognitive awareness, such as planning and revising, is closely related to writing development among EFL learners. As EP emphasizes learners' reflection and strategy experimentation, participants might develop the same metacognitive development observed in the study by Sun et al. (2024). However, this premise needs to be examined better in the next study.

Although the quantitative results did not show a significant improvement in intrinsic motivation, the qualitative data offer a more nuanced interpretation. One participant expressed a desire to write "because he wanted to," suggesting a gradual internalization of motivation, even though the numerical change was not statistically significant. Han (2023) also noted that as learners notice their own progress through reflective practices, they become more engaged in the learning and teaching process. Thus, the combination of metacognitive strategy training, peer collaboration, and reflection in EP may support not only short-term improvements but also long-term motivational and writing development in EFL classrooms.

The findings of this study align with recent ELT studies, emphasizing the connected roles of motivation, metacognition, and self-efficacy in writing development. For instance, Handayani et al. (2025) found that Indonesian undergraduate students who applied pre-writing, writing, and post-writing strategies, such as metacognitive self-regulation, showed improved writing results.

Similarly, numerous studies show that frequent engagement in planning, monitoring, and revision activities leads to improved writing skills (Zhang & Zhang, 2024; Zhao, 2025). Additionally, Shen et al.'s (2024) investigation into the application of metacognitive strategies in a writing class indicates that writing self-efficacy and learners' autonomy are enhanced, corroborating the premise that metacognitive strategies are more influential than supplementary strategies in providing an effective writing approach. These studies reinforce the idea that the EP's comprehensive approach, which combines affective, cognitive, and social dimensions, might offer a potential model for an EFL writing approach.

Implications for EFL Pedagogy

Numerous actionable strategies for EFL teachers and curriculum designers can be derived from this study's findings. First, integrating EP or its key elements, such as focus group discussions, peer feedback, and guided error analysis, seems effective for boosting students' motivation and learning skills. Second, teachers need to give clear explanations of writing materials, continuous feedback, and a supportive learning environment so that students can reduce anxiety and improve their motivation. Thus, as emphasized by Tahir et al. (2025), teacher training should equip pre-service teachers with materials on motivational techniques, such as goal-setting and autonomy. Third, teachers should allow sufficient time for consistent writing practice so that students can internalize those strategies. Against this background, adopting EP principles or closely aligned strategy-based instruction might be beneficial for students' motivation and language skills.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to identify the reasons for students' low motivation in the Advanced EFL writing class and to examine how

EP improved their motivation and writing skills. Participants were 23 undergraduate students who enrolled in an Advanced EFL writing class from a private university in Bekasi, Indonesia. There was no control group involved in this study. This study applied the EP approach by using PEPAs, such as an FGD, to plan subsequent lesson plans, peer discussions, continuous feedback, and one-on-one tutorials. A quasi-experimental design was employed to yield the results. We used questionnaires, writing assessments, and semi-structured interviews to obtain the insights.

The qualitative findings of this study indicate that EP might positively influence several aspects of students' motivation and writing skills. Quantitative results showed significant gains in self-efficacy, extrinsic motivation, and writing scores. Although intrinsic motivation and efforts to finish writing tasks did not significantly improve, qualitative data revealed gradual positive changes. Participants reported increased confidence, greater ability to organize ideas, reduced anxiety toward writing tasks, and enhanced autonomy during the writing process. Although students initially struggled to reflect on their experiences, the EP activities enabled them to identify their challenges, discuss them with peers, and collaboratively explore solutions. This process helped them perceive writing as less mechanical and more meaningful. Overall, the findings suggest that EP can serve as a supportive and reflective framework that fosters both motivational development and writing improvement in advanced EFL writing classrooms.

Some limitations need to be acknowledged. The relatively short study duration and the small number of participants limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, this study is limited to one institution, making it less able to fully capture the diverse realities of EFL classrooms in Indonesia. Students' initial discomfort during the reflective sessions also shows the need for gradual implementation of EP and stronger teacher guidance in future applications of similar studies.

Next studies should include the long-term impact of EP on students' writing skills and motivation across diverse educational levels and contexts. In addition, further research can examine teacher professional development programs that explore how EP could help identify effective strategies for preparing pre-service teachers.

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