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The Role of Strategy Use Instruction in Improving EFL Learners' Integrated Writing Ability and Their Affective State: A Mixed-Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

The integration of reading and writing has recently been of interest to researchers. This study investigated the effectiveness of instructing integrated writing (IW) strategies to EFL learners. In addition, the changes in writing self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation were examined. To gain a deep understanding of the issues, a convergent mixed-methods design was employed. A convenient sample of 30 students of English Literature studying in an EFL context participated in an IW course and their performances before and after instruction were compared using a rubric. Interviews and think-aloud protocols were also conducted to find themes regarding the effectiveness of the course. Moreover, the changes in the learners' self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation were measured through questionnaires administered at the beginning and the end of the course, and the interviews and think-aloud protocol themes regarding the changes were examined. The results of the analysis of the quantitative data by paired-samples t-tests and Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests indicated an improvement in the learners' IW ability and strategy use, especially in source use. The qualitative data also revealed that the learners found the instruction and strategies effective. However, while the learners' self-efficacy improved and their anxiety diminished largely due to learning, their motivation remained statistically stable. The results were interpreted from an activity theory perspective. The implications of the study for the theory, pedagogy, and research methodology of IW were also presented.

Keywords: Integrated writing instruction, Writing self-efficacy, Writing anxiety, Writing motivation, Activity theory.

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1. Introduction

One possible combination of language skills, writing integrated with reading, also called integrated writing (hence IW), or source-based writing, reading-to-write, has attracted the attention of many researchers (Golparvar & Khafi, 2021; Homayounzadeh et al., 2019; Plakans et al., 2019, to name a few). To accomplish IW tasks, learners have to struggle with a lot of challenges. As Yang and Plakans (2012) note, integrated tasks generally "require not only comprehension and production abilities, but also regulation skills for managing reading, listening, and writing interactions" (p. 80). Instruction has mostly been found to lead to improvement in various aspects of IW quality (e.g., Machili et al., 2019; Segev-Miller, 2004; Wilby, 2020; C. Zhang, 2013). However, IW instruction is still an under-researched area (Machili et al., 2019), particularly among EFL learners, who, as Longcope (2009) notes, may have fewer language learning opportunities compared to ESL learners.

Additionally, as McLeod (1987) commented, affective factors have a tremendous effect on all writing processes. Several researchers have underlined the importance of affective factors when it comes to L2 writing (e.g., Cheng, 2002; Zabihi, 2018), especially when the writing task is complex (Rahimi, 2016), with IW being an illustrative example. For instance, writing anxiety has been shown to be associated with poor writing (e.g., Cheng, 2004). Writing self-efficacy (Bruning et al., 2013) and writing motivation (Payne, 2012), nonetheless, are believed to correlate with better writing performance.

Although the factors associated with IW, some of which were briefly mentioned above—i.e., IW learning (or instruction) and affective factors—may seem not to be entangled with each other, activity theory, a theory recently used to describe and explain various phenomena including L2 writing (e.g., Nelson & Kim, 2001), suggests that the mentioned factors are indeed related. The theory proposes that an individual's activity is mediated by diverse factors, explained further below, in order for the person to achieve their goal (Johnson, 2009). In the same vein, writing activity, Lei (2008) believes, is mediated by interconnected factors including other individuals. Therefore, in the activity system of mastering IW, many factors such as the learners' psychological state and the instruction they receive work together.

Studies on IW instruction have largely reported its success (e.g., Wette, 2010; Wilby, 2020), but only a few have been conducted in EFL contexts (e.g., Machili, et al., 2019). In fact, the need for further research is highlighted when, as Wilby (2020) rightly emphasises, the role of educational context in this area is taken into consideration. Furthermore, Bruning and Kauffman (2016) persuasively argue that the way context and the challenges writers face influence affective factors has not received adequate attention. In fact, as noted by Rahimi (2016), demanding writing tasks should receive even more attention with respect to affective factors. Nevertheless, as the following literature review

reveals, IW tasks and the affective variables involved have received insufficient attention in the literature. In addition, to the knowledge of the researchers, no studies have yet looked at IW learning activity through the lens of activity theory. The overarching benefit of the theory is that "[R]ather than exploring learning and development by isolating a single factor and controlling for all others, an activity theoretical perspective attempts to construct a holistic view of human activities as well as human agency within these activities" (Johnson, 2009; p. 78).

Therefore, in line with the gaps identified and benefitting from activity theory as its main lens, this study raises the following research questions:

1. Does IW strategy instruction affect EFL learners' IW performance? How?
2. Are EFL learners' writing self-efficacy, writing anxiety, and writing motivation influenced as a result of receiving IW strategy instruction? How?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Integrated Writing Strategies and Instruction

Wette (2019) sets forth the prevalent difficulties learners face with IW tasks: deciding what to cite, how and when; understanding and assessing content; integrating content from multiple sources; linguistic requirements of summarising and paraphrasing; imparting authorial voice; and reference formatting issues. To overcome such difficulties, various strategies are employed, including categories such as organising, selecting, connecting (Spivey, 1990), and borrowing strategies (Homayounzadeh et al., 2019). Therefore, faced with such a difficult task, learners need help from the instructors to surmount the problems and use the techniques that improve the quality of their IW products (C. Zhang, 2013).

Such instructional interventions have taken various forms: teaching strategies for selection, connection, and self-evaluation (Segev-Miller, 2004); providing technical information on the rules of citation and having students discuss and practise them through activities (Wette, 2010); and feedback and revision (Wilby, 2020). In addition, assessment of the effect of instruction has taken different forms including analysing the quality of learners' authentic writing tasks (literature reviews) (Segev-Miller, 2004); measuring students' declarative knowledge about IW conventions (Wette, 2010); and comparing learners' quality of IW pretest and posttest using rubrics (Wette, 2010; Wilby, 2020). Finally, instructional intervention has been found to lead to improvement in various aspects of IW quality such as organisation, cohesion, the inclusion of information from source texts, text structure, citation, and linguistic change to the original expressions (Boscolo et al., 2007; Kirkpatrick

& Klein, 2009; Machili et al., 2019; Segev-Miller, 2004; Wilby, 2020; C. Zhang, 2013). However, IW instruction still merits more investigation (Grabe & Zhang, 2013), for instance, by exploring it in different contexts (Wilby, 2020) or by using multiple sources for gathering data on strategy use such as interviews, think-aloud protocols, and computer keystroke records (Yang & Plakans, 2012).

2.2 Affective Factors

2.2.1. Writing Self-Efficacy

Affective factors can play a significant role in L2 writing (Narimani Vahedi et al., 2018). One of the most widely discussed affective factors pertaining to writing is self-efficacy, which is defined as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). Indeed, self-efficacy is held to correlate with better writing performance (Bruning et al., 2013) and is even claimed to determine performance to a greater degree than ability (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (1997) classifies factors that can raise self-efficacy: Mastery experiences, i.e., seeing one's success; vicarious experiences, i.e., seeing others' success; verbal persuasions, i.e., encouragement or positive feedback from others; and emotional indicators, i.e., positive emotions.

Furthermore, studies in academic environments have mostly reported positive results with respect to improving writing self-efficacy (e.g., Ruegg, 2018; Wilby, 2020; Y. Zhang, 2018). However, no studies, except Wilby's (2020), have researched how learners' self-efficacy may undergo changes in an IW course. Wilby's (2020) study, nonetheless, was conducted in an ESL setting, not an EFL context. In addition, the findings of the study pertaining to the learners' self-efficacy were not based on data gathered from a questionnaire specifically measuring the construct. In fact, he measured self-efficacy based on several items included in a questionnaire mainly addressing learners' motivational and self-regulatory conditions.

2.2.2. Writing Anxiety

Anxiety is defined as "an emotion characterized by apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe, or misfortune" (VandenBos, 2009, p. 31). Negatively correlated with writing self-efficacy (Zabihi, 2018), writing anxiety may have facilitating effects on L2 writing (Kleinmann, 1977); however, learners with a high degree of writing anxiety usually consider writing to be an unfulfilling experience and avoid situations where their writing might be judged (Daly & Miller, 1975). Commenting on the significance of writing anxiety, Holladay

(1981) states, "if [learners] believe they will do poorly or if they do not want to take courses that stress writing, then their skills or capabilities matter little" (para. 1). Writing anxiety is known to arise particularly due to the complexity of writing (Kara, 2013). Factors that may increase anxiety include a lack of writing skills (Daud et al., 2005), poor self-confidence, issues in the teaching procedure, and lack of topical knowledge (H. Zhang, 2011). By contrast, positive feedback (Hyland, 2003) and learners' positive attitudes to feedback (Di Loreto & McDonough, 2013) may alleviate learners' anxiety. In addition, academic writing courses have been found to diminish learners' anxiety (e.g., Mitchell et al, 2017). Nevertheless, Kara (2013) believes that L2 writing anxiety and the reasons behind it deserve further investigation. In addition, although it is acknowledged that IW tasks are especially anxiety-provoking due to their complexity (Di Loreto & McDonough, 2013), anxiety has not received due attention in this regard.

2.2.3. Writing Motivation

Motivation is defined as "the process by which goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained" (Schunk et al., 2014, p. 5). According to Oxford and Shearin (1994), motivation plays a significant role in L2 strategy use, interacting with native speakers, receiving L2 input, doing well on achievement tests, ultimate proficiency attainment, perseverance, and the maintenance of L2 skills after instruction. Furthermore, high motivation is reported to have a positive effect on L2 writing (Payne, 2012). Bruning and Horn (2000) believe that motivation may be raised by "nurturing functional beliefs about writing, fostering engagement using authentic writing tasks, providing a supportive context for writing, and creating a positive emotional environment" (p. 25).

Research about motivational change during an academic writing course has not produced consistent results. For instance, a recent study by Wilby (2020) focusing on IW instruction revealed that motivational variables – excluding self-efficacy – remained stable. Nevertheless, some other studies indicated that academic writing courses improved motivation (e.g., Fathi et al., 2019; H. Zhang, et al., 2014). Wilby (2020), having studied motivation in an ESL context, suggests that studies must heed motivation in writing in various contexts.

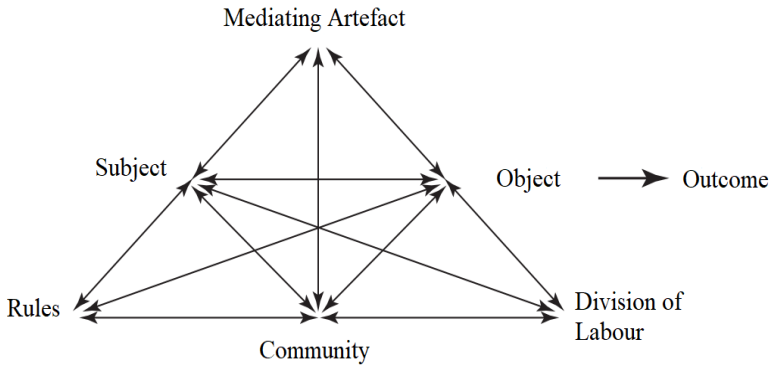
2.3. The Theoretical Framework

To conceptualise different variables involved in L2 writing, researchers have recently employed Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (e.g., Abbaspour, et al., 2021). The principles of the sociocultural theory, according to Bazerman (2016), can deepen our understanding of writing, why it is done, and how it is learnt. The sociocultural theory maintains that learners move from needing others to help them with a task (other-regulation) towards doing the

task on their own (self-regulation) (Ellis, 2015). Activity theory, an offshoot of the sociocultural theory, suggests that human activity (1) is dependent on mediation – tools that help one with the task – and (2) is goal-oriented, i.e., it is done in pursuit of a target (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). A model of activity theory is depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

An Activity Theory Model (adopted from Johnson, 2009, p. 78)



The components of an activity system are described by Johnson (2009). The subject is the individual whose point of view is selected for analysis. The object is what the activity is directed at. The mediating artefacts (physical or symbolic) are what subjects use on their way to achieving the object and can affect what the system leads to, i.e., the outcome. The community is a group who has a general object in common and is different from other communities. The division of labour decides what is done by whom and who has power. Finally, rules are the norms that affect the substance of interaction within the system. It may follow that, in the activity system of IW learning, the subject is the learner with their affective state; the object is learning to produce IW texts; the mediating artefacts are instruction, possible feedback and practice, as well as the media for writing; the community includes the learners learning together and the teacher; the division of labour concerns how duties in the class are distributed; and the rules include IW conventions such as citation rules.

In addition to learning, affective factors may be regarded as essential parts of activity systems (Tolman, as cited in Roth & Lee, 2007). Shirvan et al. (2016) believe that considering the community learners are in, the rules, and the division of responsibilities can pave the way for understanding learners' anxiety. An activity theory approach can also be used to investigate motivation for learning (Ushioda, 2007). Indeed, the likelihood of success affects how the subject participates in the activity (Roth & Lee, 2007). However, although self-efficacy plays an important role in writing, as yet, no studies have employed activity theory to examine writing self-efficacy; neither have more than one

affective factor at a time been looked into, as called for by Y. Zhang (2018), to provide an explanation of how they work in tandem in the activity of L2 (integrated) writing. Given the features outlined above, this study adopted an activity theory approach to investigate the research questions because to understand how students learn to write in a second language requires an analysis of the activity systems in which they are embedded and an analysis of the contradictions inherent within activities and between them. (Nelson & Kim, 2001, p. 57)

3. Method

The present study employed a convergent mixed methods design in that quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed separately; however, the results were compared where needed. Further, the results complemented each other at times (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study used IW task data, questionnaires, interviews, and think-aloud protocols to answer the research questions posed.

3.1. Context and Participants

This study was conducted in a state university in Iran, an EFL context, during a course lasting 16 sessions whose objectives were to introduce and help the students practise expository essays and IW as very common writing tasks encountered in academic contexts.

A convenient sample of 30 BA sophomores of English Literature who had registered for the course participated in the study. The number is considered sufficient for the analyses done in the qualitative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and the quantitative (Altunışık et al., as cited in Delice, 2010) parts of the study. Furthermore, for the think-aloud protocols, initially, 12 students volunteered; however, since data saturation was reached with data from eight participants, the data from the rest of the volunteers were discarded. The demographic information of the participants in the study is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Information of the Participants

Number	Gender	Age range	Nationality	Education
30	20 Female;10 Male	20-28	Iranian	BA students of English Literature

To ensure the homogeneity of the sample, the data obtained after scoring the pretest using the rubric (see section 3.2.5) were examined: 75% of the participants' scores on average of dimensions fell within the range of the mean ±1 standard deviation. When the scores of the participants on different dimensions of the rubric were probed, it was found that 79% of the participants'

scores on language use lay within the range of the mean ±1 standard deviation. Accordingly, homogeneity of the sample in terms of IW ability, in general, and language use, in particular, before the treatment could be reasonably assumed. Additionally, as the participants had already passed the university entrance exam specifically designed for the applicants of English majors and had passed their basic English courses, such as reading comprehension, grammar, and writing (i.e., paragraph writing) courses, their proficiency could safely be presumed to be at the appropriate level for the treatment. It is worth mentioning that to keep the learners anonymous, they will be referred to using numbers. In addition to the learners, the course instructor participated in the study and provided answers to the interview questions. A PhD holder in TEFL, she had already taught several undergraduate and graduate writing courses and had supervised a good number of theses; hence, she knew the principles of academic writing and IW and had sufficient relevant experience.

3.2. Materials and Instruments

The materials included four practice IW tasks written by the learners during the treatment. The instruments used to collect data for this study included a pretest and a posttest of IW, three questionnaires, retrospective think-aloud, and semi-structured interviews.

3.2.1. The Tasks and the Pretest and Posttest

The study employed four practice in-class IW tasks assigned to the students and also a pretest and a posttest of IW to compare the learners' IW performance before and after the instruction. To establish the construct validity of the tests and the tasks, Weigle's (2002) recommendations concerning construct validity in testing writing were strictly followed. Weigle mentions three ways to display validity as follows. 1) The task should measure the writing type we wish to test: the pretest and the posttest as well as the practice IW tasks in the present study did so because the learners did IW tasks when presented with writing and reading tasks together. 2) The criteria employed to score the writing task should be directly relevant to the writing components that are used to define the construct: the scoring rubric utilised in the current study was an IW rubric adopted from Plakans and Gebril (2015). 3) While rating the writing task, raters should precisely observe the criteria mentioned in the scoring rubric: the raters in this study were mindful of the criteria while scoring. In order to ensure the appropriateness of the tasks and the tests for the research purpose, the following measures were also taken. For all the tasks as well as the tests, the learners were provided with two reading passages, each time on a different topic, serving as the source. The reading passages were all expository and within the learners' assumed background knowledge (e.g., anxiety and music). Moreover, care was exercised to choose reading texts that were comparable in terms of length and difficulty level. The word count was 186.1 on average with

a standard deviation of 10.7; in addition, the Flesch reading ease was 48.7 on average (which fits college level according to Heydari, 2012) with a standard deviation of 10.5. As for the prompts, the students were required to support a given statement on the topic by writing about 500 words with an introduction, body, and conclusion in one hour. It should be mentioned that two of the students' instructors who were experts in TEFL also approved of the suitability of the topics, texts, and prompts for the learners' level and the research purpose.

3.2.2. Questionnaires

To measure writing self-efficacy, the Self-Efficacy for Writing Scale (SEWS) developed by Bruning et al. (2013) was employed. This questionnaire incorporates questions about writing conventions, making it suitable for the current study in which conventions such as plagiarism rules were emphasised. Furthermore, to measure writing anxiety, Cheng's (2004) Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), and to measure writing motivation, Payne's (2012) academic writing motivation questionnaire (AWMQ) were employed. The construct validity of the three questionnaires had already been established by their respective developers through factor analyses and the questionnaires have been widely used by researchers when studying affective factors (e.g., Rasouli & Ahmadi, 2021; Zabihi, 2018). The internal consistency of the questionnaires was measured through Cronbach's alpha. The results, tabulated in Table 2, indicated that the questionnaires were highly reliable for the purpose of the study.

Table 2

Internal-Consistency Reliability of the Questionnaires

SEWS (self-efficacy)		SLWAI (anxiety)		AWMQ (motivation)	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
.87	.92	.91	.91	.92	.89

3.2.3. Think-Aloud Protocols

In line with Charters' (2003) idea that think-aloud cases may not be chosen deliberately, retrospective think-aloud data were used from eight volunteers from the same group of participants after the pretest and the posttest. This method was preferred over the simultaneous method because the latter would have interfered with the normal accomplishment of the tasks, which were done under a time restriction. The data were to provide information about the learners' strategy use and any traces of how their affective state may have been influenced by features pertinent to the tasks or the course. It is worth mentioning that prior to the tests, the researchers provided the learners with training on verbalisation. The students were asked to record their protocols in Persian or English – whichever they preferred.

3.2.4. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held at the end of the term with all the learners and the instructor. Interviews were done with all the learners' right after the term was over because of two reasons: 1) Access to the learners might have been limited later, and 2) Attempts were made to benefit from the information provided by all the learners so as not to lose any potential themes. The questions revolved around their views and experiences about IW and the strategies, the effectiveness of the treatment, and how it was influenced by the characteristics of the course. Additionally, the interviews enquired whether and how the learners' writing self-efficacy, writing anxiety, and writing motivation changed during the course. The interviews were conducted via telephone in Persian; however, in the case of the instructor, the interview was held in English, with which she was more comfortable.

3.2.5. Integrated Writing Scoring Rubric

The rubric used to score the pretest and the posttest was a multi-trait scale developed by Plakans and Gebril (2015). This rubric consists of five dimensions, including source use (accuracy and appropriateness of source use, and correct citation); organisation (having a clear and logical organisation); development of ideas (full development of ideas using various details); language use (correctness and variety of vocabulary and structures); and authorial voice (the writer's ideas being differentiable from the ideas in the sources), with each dimension scored from 1 to 5.

3.3. Procedure

As mentioned before, the course lasted 16 weeks with one two-hour session each week. However, the first seven sessions prepared the learners for the general structure of an expository essay, while the rest were devoted to the treatment, i.e., IW instruction. Due to the COVID pandemic, the main media were Adobe Connect for instruction and communication; and Google Drive and Google Docs for doing IW tasks, receiving on-the-spot feedback, storing the essays, and receiving delayed feedback. Following the administration of the pretest and the three questionnaires, instructional treatment was offered in three phases consisting of the instructor's elaboration on what IW is, the concept of plagiarism, and the importance of citing sources. The strategies expounded by the instructor were selected from the literature, particularly Yang and Plakan's (2012) Strategy Inventory for Integrated Writing (SIIW), which consists of strategies used before, during, and after writing the essay, and Spivey's (1990) organising, selecting, and connecting. Each of the instructional sessions was followed by a practice IW task. Moreover, after the three instructional sessions and the following practice tasks, the students were asked to write another IW essay to further practise all the strategies taught. Each of the practice tasks was provided with online and delayed feedback by the instructor. As well as content

and linguistic accuracy, the feedback on each essay was focused on the IW strategies already taught. In addition, the students had to revise their essays accordingly before the next session. In the final session, the posttest and the three questionnaires were administered. An overview of the plan for the study (starting after the first seven sessions) can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Instructional Plan

Session	Plan
1	IW pretest; completing the SEWS, SLWAI, and AWMQ questionnaires
2	Instructional phase 1: introduction to the concept of IW; the difference between original and borrowed ideas; selection strategies such as skimming a passage for the gist, summarising ideas in mind, and taking notes while reading
3	IW task 1 with online feedback
4	Instructional phase 2: introduction to the concepts of plagiarism, borrowing, and paraphrase; reporting verbs; introducing and practising borrowing strategies such as using synonyms, derivatives, and pronouns instead of the words in the original source, restructuring the original structures, checking similarity with the original wording, and combining paraphrasing techniques; introduction to very common (and simple) APA and MLA citation conventions
5	IW task 2 with online feedback
6	Instructional phase 3: APA and MLA citation conventions continued; types of organisation; organisation strategies such as making a writing plan and trying to understand the organisation of the source text; connection types and connection strategies such as using transition words, checking for smooth connection, and identifying common themes and links across source texts
7	IW task 3 with online feedback
8	IW task 4 with online feedback
9	IW posttest; completing the SEWS, SLWAI, and AWMQ questionnaires

In addition, the eight volunteers recorded their voices within a few hours after doing the pretest and posttest and shared the files with the researchers via Google Drive. Finally, at the end of the term, interviews with all the learners and the instructor were conducted and recorded for later analysis. The students were assured that their quotes would remain anonymous and would be merely used for research purposes.

3.4. Data Analysis

To establish the effectiveness of the course, the students' overall scores as well as their scores on each dimension of the IW scoring rubric were determined at the pretest and the posttest stages and compared using paired-samples t-test, or where, due to the presence of outliers and non-normality of differences, statistical assumptions required (Pallant, 2020), the equivalent Wilcoxon signed-rank test. To ensure the reliability of the ratings, the inter-rater and intra-rater indexes (Cronbach's alpha= .84 and .82, respectively) were

estimated based on 25% of the essays. Moreover, because of the same reasons mentioned above, the data collected through the pre- and post-questionnaires were analysed by Wilcoxon signed-rank tests to determine any significant changes. In addition, the effect sizes for the t-tests were computed through Cohen's d and were interpreted using Cohen's (1977) guideline: 0.2= small; 0.5= medium; 0.8= large. However, for Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, the effect sizes were calculated by the formula $r=z/\sqrt{N}$ and were interpreted using another guideline by Cohen (as cited in Pallant, 2020): 0.1= small, 0.3= medium, 0.5= large. Furthermore, the think-aloud protocols and the interviews were transcribed, translated into English where required, and inputted into NVivo 12 Pro. In addition, in the think-aloud data, the selection, organisation, and connection strategies used by the learners were counted to determine the frequency of usage of strategies in the pretest and posttest.

To address the credibility of the findings, the qualitative data were analysed to augment the quantitative data and help to answer the research questions. Then a summary of the results and the translations of the interviews were returned to the learners for member checking (Ary et al., 2019). All 14 learners taking part in member checking confirmed the accuracy of the translations. Furthermore, these learners' comments about the results were treated as further qualitative data (Ary et al., 2019).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results Concerning the Effectiveness of the Course

4.1.1. Results of Comparison between Pretest and Posttest

To investigate the effectiveness of the instruction in improving the learners' IW ability, the scores obtained from rating the pretest and the posttest were compared.

Table 4

Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results

Rubric dimension	N	Mean		Std deviation		Min		Max		Sig	Eff. Size [a]
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Source use	30	1.4	4.00	0.5	1.02	1.00	1.0	2.00	5.00	.00	0.61

Organization	30	3.4	3.83	1.0	0.79	1.00	2.0	5.00	5.00	.02	0.28
Development of ideas	30	3.8	4.07	0.8	0.74	2.00	2.0	5.00	5.00	.218	0.15
Language use	30	4.1	3.8	0.61	0.65	3.00	3.0	5.0	5.00	.040	-0.26
Authorial voice	30	3.0	3.0	0.18	0.18	3.00	3.0	4.0	4.00	1.00	0.00
Average of dimensions	30	3.2	3.7	0.44	0.50	2.40	2.8	4.0	4.60	.008	1.15

[a] For the average of dimensions, the effect size is Cohen's d; for individual dimensions, the effect size is calculated by $r=z/\sqrt{N}$.

The statistics show that, on average, the IW ability of the learners improved in a statistically significant way ($p < .01$) and with a large effect size ($d = 1.15$). Source use also significantly improved with a large effect size ($p < .001$, $r = 0.61$), and rather similarly, organisation improved with a medium effect size ($p < .05$, $r = 0.28$), while the development of ideas ($p > .05$) and authorial voice ($p > .05$) did not change significantly. It is noteworthy that language use declined with a medium effect size ($p < .05$, $r = -0.26$). The member-checks mostly corroborated the findings, but six cases reported that their language use also improved.

4.1.2. Think-Aloud Results

The think-aloud data revealed a total of 48 strategies used in the pretest and 83 strategies in the posttest. As Table 5 illustrates, a comparison between the number of strategies reported in the pretest and those in the posttest protocols indicated that selection (pre= 22; post= 19) and organisation (pre=

12; post= 11) strategies did not increase due to the treatment. However, connection strategies showed an increase (pre= 10; post= 14). The most noticeable change in strategy use was the dramatic rise in the use of borrowing strategies (pre= 4; post= 39).

Table 5

Number of Strategies Used in the Pretest and Posttest in Think-Aloud Data

Selection		Organisation		Connection		Borrowing	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
22	19	12	11	10	14	4	39

4.1.3. Interview Results

The interviews revealed the learners' and the instructor's views with respect to the effectiveness of the course and whether they encountered any problems. The majority of the learners (n= 28) deemed the course and the strategies useful, particularly for making them familiar with IW. For instance, Learner 18 said, "It was really useful for us at least, learning how to avoid plagiarism no matter intentional or unintentional, how to write something with references or paraphrase. … It helps with academic activities". However, although the strategies were found quite useful, many students (n= 15) found citation strategies difficult, and a few deemed paraphrasing (n= 4), connection (n= 3), and organisation strategies (n=2) challenging. According to Learner 20, "Also [difficult was] making sure my paraphrasing is strong enough not to be counted as plagiarism". Furthermore, Learner 17 stated, "Connecting ideas was difficult for me, especially with the organisation we must observe in the body paragraph".

The role of the instructor, particularly her corrections through feedback (n= 11) and encouragement (n= 4) was referred to as essential to the students' learning. To illustrate the point, Learner 9 stated, "The feedback I received exactly and precisely pointed to the problems that I would only realise after reading my essays later. Many of them wouldn't have occurred to me even if I'd read them two or three times".

Moreover, the instructor commented that the course was effective but she thought that mastery of the strategies needed extended work. The students, their need for learning, and their goal of acquiring IW skills were considered to play a major role in this regard. Specifically, she contended, teaching borrowing strategies is more challenging, and students' acculturation to the norms of IW requires a good amount of time. This is, in her view, partly due to the lack of familiarity with IW concepts such as the gravity of plagiarism. She stated,

> Since they had rarely heard of or practised such strategies and conventions, it was difficult for them, or even some of them found it useless, to learn and apply them. For instance, they wondered why they

needed to acknowledge the source of the idea if they assumed that the idea was part of their background knowledge or common sense.

She believed that one solution could be for other courses to draw students' attention to the significance of IW. The instructor also pointed to the problem of limited time for instruction and suggested that learners should look for instances of IW in various texts such as articles themselves or be given various assignments requiring IW. Finally, to complement the IW skills introduced in the course, a learner suggested, students should become familiar with how to examine and choose sources that are useful for developing the essay, a proposition the instructor endorsed but deemed useful in more advanced courses.

4.2. Results Concerning the Affective Factors

4.2.1. Questionnaire Results

As mentioned before, the differences between the responses to the three questionnaires administered before and after the treatment were analysed by Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Affective Factors

Questionnaire		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Sig.	Effect size [a]
Writing self-efficacy	Pre	30	55.10	9.63	33.00	76.00	.000	0.47
	Post	30	60.67	11.01	40.00	80.00		
Writing anxiety	Pre	30	57.67	14.31	27.00	81.00	.016	-0.31
	Post	30	53.73	12.67	26.00	74.00		
Writing motivation	Pre	30	127.50	23.31	70.00	169.00	.249	0.15
	Post	30	132.70	23.38	103.00	173.00		

[a] As Wilcoxon tests have been used, effect size is calculated by $r = z/\sqrt{N}$

According to the table, writing self-efficacy significantly increased with a large effect size ($p < .00$, $r = 0.47$). In addition, writing anxiety decreased significantly with a medium effect size ($p < .05$, $r = -0.31$). However, writing motivation did not change significantly ($p > .05$). It is noteworthy that a few of the participants in member-checks (4 out of 14) believed their writing motivation to have improved as well.

4.2.2. Interview and Think-aloud Results

The results of the interviews with the learners were not unanimous with respect to the affective factors; Table 7 summarises how many learners considered their self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation to have increased, not changed, or decreased. As can be seen, the results of the analysis of the participants' answers to the interview questions corroborate the findings of the analysis of the questionnaire data to a great extent in that they show that a greater number of the participants admitted an increase in their self-efficacy and a decrease in their anxiety. However, unlike the questionnaire data, the interviews evidence a greater number of students' reporting an increase in their motivation.

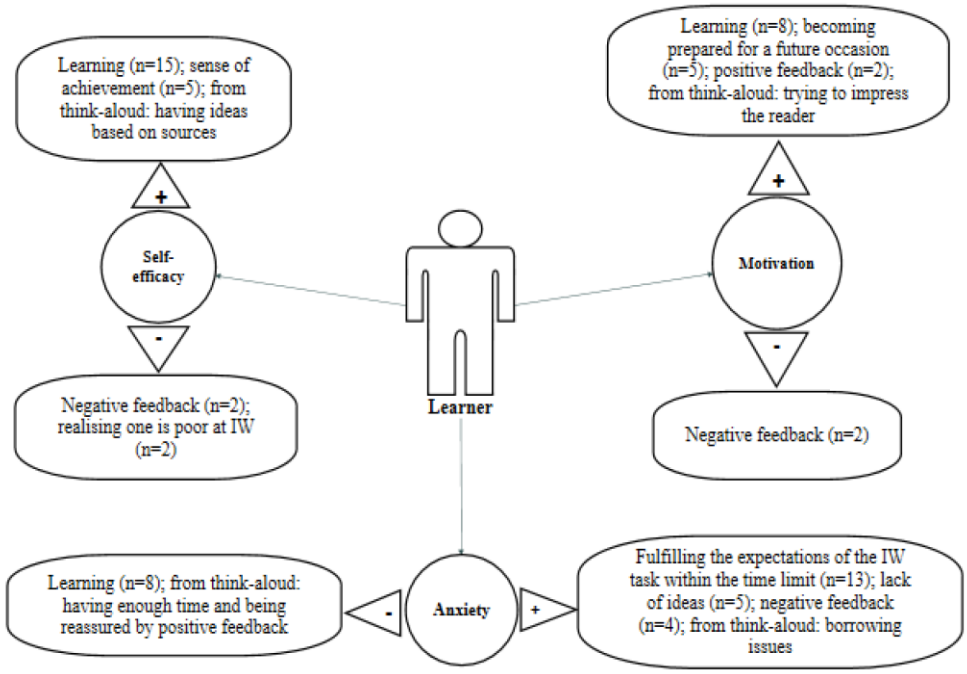
Table 7
Changes in Affective Factors Reported in the Interviews with the Students

Affective variable	Increased	Unchanged	Decreased
Self-efficacy	21	3	6
Anxiety	5	10	15
Motivation	14	9	7

In the instructor's view, similarly, as the students learnt and used the strategies, their anxiety subsided and their self-efficacy and motivation improved. Additionally, the interviews with the learners and the think-aloud data revealed causes for the increase or decrease in their affective factors although no obvious reasons were mentioned by the learners who reported no change in these factors. The relevant themes are summarised in Figure 2, which was created by using NVivo's concept map feature. It is noteworthy that all themes were derived from the interviews unless explicitly mentioned in the figure. In this figure, *n* denotes the number of times the reasons were mentioned by the learners; however, since some learners did not explicate the reasons and some referred to two or more, the numbers may not add up to the ones mentioned in Table 7.

Figure 2

Causes for Changes in Affective Factors



As briefly noted in the figure, many learners believed that learning how to deal with various aspects of IW increased their self-efficacy. Furthermore, a few learners maintained that their sense of achievement in the course was helpful in increasing their self-efficacy. For instance, Learner 18 said, "If I compare my first essay with my last, I can see it has changed a lot. This progress itself brings about self-efficacy". Gleaning ideas from source texts also created a sense of self-efficacy in the learners while writing. However, receiving negative feedback and realising they did poorly at IW tasks worked to the detriment of their self-efficacy. As an instance, Learner 23 believed, "[My self-efficacy] has decreased a little bit. I mean I realised that … what I write is not perfect. This made me doubt [my writing ability]".

As for changes in anxiety, learners believed they felt anxious owing to the limited time for satisfying IW task requirements and the possibility of lacking ideas to write, in addition to receiving unwelcome feedback. Finally, borrowing issues seemed to make some learners concerned while writing. For instance, Learner 14 thought, "When it comes to paraphrasing the sentences of the source text, we have to be really exact in order not to add to … or omit anything from it". By contrast, some learners stated, in their interviews, that learning reduced their anxiety. In addition, while writing, having sufficient time available and receiving encouraging feedback eased their anxiety.

As regards motivation, in addition to learning about IW and positive feedback, becoming prepared for doing potential tasks in academia such as

writing essays and articles was held beneficial. For example, Learner 6 stated, "knowing that [such writing] helps me in my academic future strengthened my motivation". In addition, while composing, some tried to impress the reader, a goal which was motivating to them. Learner 14 said, "I certainly try to use quotes for my attention getter in the first paragraph … because it is really impressive and attractive and useful, and I myself am attracted to those essays". Finally, negative feedback was demotivating to some learners. To illustrate the point, Learner 30 commented, "no matter how much I wrote, the feedback I received showed that I still made mistakes and my writing wasn't good or perfect".

4.3. Discussion

In this section, the findings related to the research questions are discussed in view of the relevant literature.

4.3.1. Effectiveness of the Course

The overall improvement in IW ability accords with Machili et al.'s (2019) and Wilby's (2020) studies who met success at IW instruction. The think-aloud protocols (see Table 5) suggest that the frequency of the use of borrowing strategies was affected most, while the other strategies were largely unaffected. However, this finding must not be over-interpreted since, as Charters (2003) advises, one should not look for mathematical patterns among think-aloud data from a few participants. Furthermore, it should be admitted that the quantity of strategy use does not equal its quality. The fact that source use skills were affected the most, as suggested by both the comparison between the pretest and posttest rating data (see Table 4) and the think-aloud data (see Table 5), can be ascribed to the course introducing these skills for the first time to most students. In terms of activity theory and in line with Nelson and Kim's (2001) observation about learning in activity systems, the findings indicate that the sociohistorical setting had not emphasised IW; therefore, the contradictions the learners felt between their knowledge about IW considerations and the content of the course was considerable. Moreover, because most students perceived the need to transfer their learning to activities such as writing assignments or papers in their future courses, they were motivated to learn the content of the course. Thus, the findings indicate that through mediation mainly by instruction and feedback, in Ellis' (2015) words, the learners moved from other-regulation towards self-regulation. This argument may be supported by the fact that the results of the comparison between the pretest and posttest scores (see Table 4) indicated that the learners succeeded in writing better essays on the posttest, when they did not receive any online feedback. However, how well the learners can transfer the skills elsewhere is uncertain.

4.3.2. Writing Self-Efficacy

Results of the analysis of the writing self-efficacy questionnaires (see Table 6) indicated a substantial increase in the students' self-efficacy, which is in line with previous studies (e.g., Ruegg, 2018; Wilby, 2020; Y. Zhang, 2018). The increase – also confirmed by the instructor's comments in the interview and the students (see Table 7) – could be interpreted in light of the results of interviews with the learners (see Figure 2). The results indicate that self-efficacy strengthened chiefly due to the learners' acquisition of IW skills and strategies and because of their sense of progress through the course, although negative feedback and lack of tangible progress for a few students worked in the opposite direction. These factors correspond to mastery experiences and verbal persuasion in Bandura's (1997) classification of factors underlying self-efficacy. Furthermore, the decrease in writing anxiety (see Table 6) corresponds with affective indicators in Bandura's classification and may be another reason why the learners' writing self-efficacy improved. Looking at these results through Bandura's factors and with an activity theory lens, one can understand that the learners' self-efficacy improved in two ways: first, they reached the object of writing better IW essays in the activity system more and more favourably, which corresponds to Bandura's mastery experiences. Secondly, they were mainly mediated by positive feedback which aligns with Bandura's concept of verbal persuasion. In addition, for the minority of the students whose self-efficacy did not improve, the inverses of virtually the same factors were responsible.

4.3.3. Writing Anxiety

The writing anxiety questionnaire results (see Table 6) indicated a moderate reduction in the students' writing anxiety. According to the results of the interviews (see Figure 2), this reduction was mainly due to the learning of writing skills during the course, which is in agreement with Daud et al.'s (2005) finding that anxiety and writing skills are inversely related. The fact that the most frequently reported reason for the increase in self-efficacy and the most often cited reason for the decrease in anxiety were the same shows the two constructs are related in some way. This finding is in line with Bandura's (1997) belief that self-efficacy increases as negative emotions diminish. It is also in line with Zabihi's (2018) finding that self-efficacy and anxiety are inversely correlated. In addition, the majority of learners' view that feedback was crucial to their learning shows that feedback was a key mediator in the activity system of learning. This finding corroborates Di Loreto and McDonough's (2013) results, i.e., that less anxiety and positive regard for feedback are correlated. However, the interview results also indicated that the inherent difficulty of IW tasks caused some level of anxiety among the learners, a finding which is the same as Di Loreto and McDonough's (2013) view about why IW tasks may be

anxiety-provoking. The learners' reports (see Figure 2) indicate that the IW rules, especially when observed under a time constraint, are the main cause of anxiety. This factor is followed by a lack of ideas to write about, which is related to the students' great share of the division of labour in the activity system. Another anxiety-inducing factor, negative feedback, came from the mediation by the instructor. The learners may interpret negative feedback as an unwelcome signal from the community of academic people, leading to their feelings of unease. Finally, learning was found to ease the students' anxiety. Following Shirvan et al.'s (2016) guideline about looking at the interrelatedness of elements in an activity system for examining anxiety, this finding may mean that when learners feel confident about their skills, they feel less pressure from the community; hence, they will be less anxious.

4.3.4. Writing Motivation

The findings related to the writing motivation questionnaire data (see Table 6) show that the course did not significantly affect the learners' motivation, a finding which is in opposition to the perception of almost half of the learners (see Table 7) and that of the instructor, but partially agrees with Wilby's (2020). In the interviews (see Figure 2), the learners mentioned both intrinsically motivating factors such as learning and extrinsically motivating factors such as the necessity to write in the future and positive feedback. Moreover, if feedback, which is an important part of mediation in the activity system, is positive, motivation improves and vice versa. One demotivating factor which was extrinsic was negative feedback. From an activity theory perspective, using IW skills elsewhere is the expansion of the learning into new contexts. This shows the necessity of positive prospects in the activity system to promote learners' motivation (Roth & Lee, 2007). Moreover, as the statistical tests showed that motivation remained unchanged, it could be assumed that the motivating and demotivating factors counterbalanced each other. Other reasons for the lack of significant change in motivation may be understood by considering two of Bruning and Horn's (2000) motivating factors: it is possible that the belief in the functionality of IW could take more time to develop or that the emotional support provided by the feedback was inadequate.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study intended to investigate the effectiveness of IW instruction in an EFL context and how the learners' affective state may change in the process. The findings indicated significant improvement in IW ability by mediation from the instructor and IW concepts. Moreover, the lack of sufficient previous knowledge about borrowing issues in the learners' sociohistorical setting was the primary challenge in the way of instruction. In addition, self-efficacy improved primarily because the learners reached the object in an increasingly better way and received more positive mediation through feedback. In addition,

anxiety in the course somewhat subsided mainly due to the learners' gaining knowledge by the mediating artefacts. Finally, motivation was found to remain statistically stable due to counterbalancing factors such as learning and negative feedback.

As for the theoretical implication of the study, research on IW through the lens of activity theory highlights the elements particularly involved in the activity of learning IW. In this study, how the learners' affective states developed in the process was seen as part of the activity system of IW learning. As such, the elements in the activity system of IW learning which have proven important are the subject, the mediating artefacts, and the object. For anxiety, however, the rules play a crucial role as well. In fact, rules may work both for creating an acceptable product and, in contrast, create anxiety in some learners, which may be detrimental to the activity system. In addition, from the perspective of Bandura's (1997) model for self-efficacy, all factors but vicarious experience played a noticeable role in the setting of EFL learners learning individually. Pedagogically, the success of the course indicates that instructors can rely on a course of IW skills and strategy instruction to improve IW ability even with students who lack sufficient familiarity with the subject. Such an improvement in itself results in better self-efficacy and reduced anxiety. However, in order to create a better affective environment, and particularly to make learners more motivated, teachers should abstain from too much negative feedback and underline the value of IW in potentially relevant contexts. Methodologically, future researchers in the area of second language writing are advised to employ a qualitative perspective obtained by interview and think-aloud data – the latter being used quite rarely in the literature on IW – as many intricacies involved may be best revealed through a qualitative lens.

This study was limited in a few respects. First, the limited number of participants and the fact that the sample was chosen conveniently mean that the results must be treated with caution in terms of generalisability (Ary et al., 2019). In fact, the findings may be best generalisable to similar situations, for instance, to only EFL learners, particularly those with above-intermediate proficiency and with little background education on IW principles. Moreover, the interview and think-aloud data are considered to be self-report data, which, according to Labaree (n.d.), potentially suffer from at least three issues: learners failing to remember past events; learners attributing positive events to themselves and negative ones to outside factors; and learners representing events in a way that is different from what is otherwise suggested.

Future researchers may replicate this study in an ESL context, employ more participants, or use an experimental design to add to the reliability of the findings. Extending the duration can also reveal new issues and may result in more profound effects on affective factors. Moreover, future scholars could explore the details of instances of plagiarism in students' writings and how they evolve during the study. Finally, future research may deal with a wider variety of affective factors as advised by Papi et al. (2022).

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