

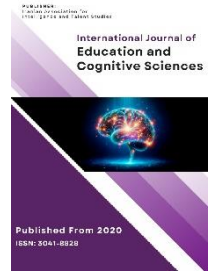


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## Experienced-based Instruction of Writing Skill to Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The current study examines the effectiveness of the EI model in improving Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing ability.

**Methodology:** The research method was quasi-experimental with a pretest-treatment-posttest design. To this end, forty-eight learners, taking English course at Shokoh English Language Institute, in Rasht, Iran, were selected as intermediate homogeneous participants based on Solutions Placement Test. Next, they were assigned to one experimental and one control group. During the treatment that lasted for 12 sessions, the researchers applied pre-teaching activities and teaching activities including observing, questioning, exploring/experimenting, associating, and communicating for the experimental group, which was followed by asking them to do some reflection on their work and think how they experienced the participation. In the control group, however, was exposed to conventional mainstream of teaching writing. The respective post-test results analyzed based on independent and paired samples t-tests.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that EI had statistically significant effect on the learners' writing ability. So the EI model is suggested over the common teaching methods of writing skill but the generalizability of the results to other skills has to wait for further research.

**Conclusion:** According to the results of this study, the role of the EI model in improving writing skill has important pedagogical implications.

**Keywords:** Experienced-based Instruction, Writing Skill, EFL learners

### 1. Introduction

The relationship between development and learning, despite its relatively long and complex history, is still a central theme in theories of development and learning, including those relating to adults (Fatehi Rad et al., 2024; Hwang et al., 2024). The theoretical understanding which

has the longest tradition in attempting to explain this relationship is the one which promotes the idea that development is a function of external stimuli, primarily learning (Huang & Wang, 2025; Yao & Zhu, 2024). According to (Piaget, 1972), cognitive structures, at the center of which are the processes of imparting meaning to and the construction and transformation of experience, are

invariants which function independently of the domain to which they relate and the content of the knowledge which they are processing. Likewise, in (Vygotsky, 1987) understanding of the roots of intellectual development, one should not so much seek within a man, but in his socio-cultural environment and the supports and stimuli this imposes on him and provides him with.

One of the curricular and instructional models that addresses cognitive development is experiential learning. Experiential education is a method of action-based training traditionally used in the workplace ((Kolb, 2015); (Murphy et al., 2014)), and educators have adopted the method to teach adult students ((Fenwick, 2000). Education researchers have identified the concept of experiential education, or experiential learning, as a system to improve civic and global engagement, increasingly important gaps in traditional education practices ((Education, 2012); (Kolb, 2015).

(Kolb, 1984) argues that learning appears through equilibration of the rational either logical process of connecting and combining new experiences into existing concepts as well as associating existing concepts to new experience. Kolb adds that EL is known as a learning which helps students to construct their own understanding towards a material through experiencing it by themselves. The strength of using EL in language teaching and learning has already been proven in the literature. For example, the results of the study carried out by (Komalasari, 2013) and (McManus & Thiamwong, 2015) confirmed that students' express their ideas easily into a writing when they were given opportunity to write a topic which they wanted to create and understand the topic by their own selves.

EL values experiences as the learning sources. Hence, the central role in the learning process is students' experiences (Safriani, 2015). As explained by the (Education, 2012), experiential education is a process through which the students learn to reflect on their learning process, construct knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences. EL gives students a real experience by doing some tasks.

Thus, reflective learning is an integral component of EL theory. EL enables learners to engage the creative portions of their brain and seek their own unique solution to the problem or task. This creative problem-solving initiative and the variety of results produced, enriches the classroom as a whole (McManus & Thiamwong, 2015). Therefore, it is also hoped that by incorporating concrete experiences with abstract concepts and reflecting on the outcome, the Iranian EFL learners engage more regions of their brains and make

personal connections with the materials so that they would be able to analyze how their actions affected the outcome and how their outcome may have differed from those of other students. This analysis helps the learners better understand how the concepts they've learned can be applied to other circumstances. Furthermore, the EFL teachers would be able to incorporate varied teaching methods, differentiate and help confirm understanding among L2 learners so that, a transfer of knowledge would occur as the learners apply learning to the real word. Pedagogically, this brings a reflection on the experience followed by an understanding of what the new learning means to the individual and a conceptualization of how it can be used in the future.

More importantly, the role of the teacher/educator is of great significance. The role is to enable the learner to integrate the experiences of interacting with other learners, providing the link to the curriculum that makes it relevant and purposeful. The teacher would also take a non-traditional role in that the S/he is a facilitator, a helper or guide, and the learners' role in the experienced-based instruction and learning is not just as a passive learner but an active learner who directly participates in the learning process.

According to (Wang, 2007), teachers should develop their teaching styles by incorporating those theories of EL that will lead their in-classroom presentation of life sciences. However, EFL teachers are not cognizant of the EL principles, and they do not fully understand the context of EL (Pherson-Geyser et al., 2020). Moreover, education research extensively focuses on childhood, adolescent, and young adult development. While we know adults continue developing cognitively, socially, and emotionally past young adulthood, there is a lack of research in this area (Murphy et al., 2014). Experiential-based learning is a growing and ample area for studying adult development.

Innovative teaching strategies should be able to create an effective and interesting teaching and learning process. EL is one the strategies that enables students to build their interest on L2 skills by seeing their needs, purposes, and desire along with allowing the them to build their own knowledge, ideas and perspective through experiencing it by themselves which might, in turn, help students express their ideas easily. In addition, EL and English as a second language can both be applicable and effective when certain principles are followed. EL is a method of teaching that allows learners to learn while "Do, Reflect, and Tink and Apply" (Butler et al., 2019), p. 12).

EL is a successful teaching method facilitating active learning through providing real-world experiences in which learners interact and critically evaluate course materials, and become involved with a topic is taught (Boggu & Sundarsingh, 2019). To make sure that the learners gain the required knowledge and get the factual training, it is equally important to give them time to develop their ability to use their knowledge and apply those skills in real-world situations to resolve problems that are relevant to their careers (Huang & Jiang, 2021).

It is a strong instrument for bringing about positive modifications in academic education which allow learners to apply what they have learned in school to real-world problems (Guo et al., 2016). This way of learning entails giving learners more authority and responsibility, as well as involving them directly in their learning process within the learning atmosphere (Kong, 2021). Furthermore, it encourages learners to be flexible learners, incorporate all possible ways of learning into full-cycle learning, and bring about effective skills and meta-learning abilities (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

The ability to teach writing effectively is one of the vital skills among English language teachers. The skill of writing is a major component in the teaching of English. The teaching of writing has been conducted as early as in the early years where students start to learn how to form letters correctly. Writing is one of the skills that requires learners' full attention and is one of the difficult skills must be mastered (Fahmi & Rachmijati, 2021). Writing is the most difficult skill for second or foreign language learners to master. Some students can speak English fluently and confidently, although they have difficulties in conveying their writing skills (Diaz & Gardner, 2016).

Writing is the most important skill in learning a language. Though writing is a way to express student's ideas, most students are still deeply mistaken in spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation (Fahmi & Rachmijati, 2021). Teaching writing to EFL students is considered as one of the most challenging teaching practices. Students usually lack motivation or are easily discouraged with writing (Karyuatry, 2018).

Students have to struggle significantly with writing, and if they do not write well, they will find difficulties in the process of learning, education, and work (Parmawati et al., 2020). However, writing is an important skill because writing is the way to share and deliver ideas into writing language, and it is a tool of communication indirectly to express what is thought and felt (Ruhama & Purwaningsih,

2018). According to Rizky (2018), in writing, students have difficulties to deliver their idea into written form. Some students are not confident and lazy to write and also have to understand vocabulary, diction, punctuation, and grammar which are the most important elements in writing.

What the present study aimed to express was that EL is not only just putting the students together in groups and asking them to work on the task given based on sharing their experience, but its principles at the same time help students and teachers understand on what is involved in helping the students to succeed. The study also intended to engage students in hands-on experiences and reflection so that they might be able to connect theories and knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world situations. Therefore, the main aim of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of the EL model especially with regard to the enhancement of the intermediate learners' ability to write. It was all done in an environment where rote learning, teacher centered classroom situations are prevalent leaving no space for face-to-face discussion and group work. Based on these facts, the current study sought for knowing whether the EL model can improve the learners' English writing skills. Altogether, the current study sought to compare the effectiveness of the traditional vs. experiential model of teaching writing on improving the Iranian EFL intermediate EFL learners' writing ability by posing the following question.

*Does experiential learning model have any statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL university learners' writing ability?*

The foundation of EL can be traced back to (Dewey, 1938) Progressive Approach, (Lewin, 1947) Social Psychology, (Piaget, 1979) work on Developmental Cognitive Psychology, Kelly's Cognitive Theory of Personality, and to Humanistic Psychology of Maslow and Rogers as cited in Kohonen (1992). EL is an educational method whose roots go a long way down history (Kolb, 2015). The interest in learning by experience or constant practice repeatedly gained and lost its influence gradually in educational theories.

(Kolb, 1984) notes that "another reason the theory is called experiential is its intellectual origins in the experiential works of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget" (p.21). Taken together, (Dewey, 1938) philosophical pragmatism, (Lewin, 1947) social psychology, and Piaget's cognitive-developmental genetic epistemology form a unique perspective on learning and development (Kolb, 2000).

(Kolb, 1984) provides "a comprehensive theory which offers the foundation for an style to education and learning

as a lifelong process and which is soundly based in intellectual traditions of philosophy and cognitive and social psychology" (Akpan & Beard, 2016); (Vizeshfar & Torabizadeh, 2018); (Yousafzai et al., 2018). Kolb's model can be used as a description of the learning process in general (Henry, 1989), but his emphasis on reflection places it firmly in the experience-based learning camp. The importance of reflection is emphasized by Boreham (cited in (Biabani & Izadpanah, 2019), p. 8), who notes that the term "learning from experience" really means learning from reflection on experience".

Various terms have been used to label the process of learning from experience. (Dewey, 1938) discussed "learning by doing," while (Wolfe, 1975) used the term "experience-based learning." The term "trial and error" learning is used to explain inductive learning processes. EL is also referred to as experiential teaching, or experiential training and development, experience-based learning, problem-based learning (PBL) or experiential activities, and other variations of these terms.

Additionally, EL, as defined by (Luckmann, 1996), is "a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experience" (p. 7). (Dewey, 1938) philosophized "everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had" (p. 27). True learning is the result of students' experiences, and the evaluation and reflection of these experiences. New thoughts and ideas are formed as a result of the reflection of these experiences, thus building new concepts based upon past experiences (Arnold et al., 2006).

Building on previous experiences is a key idea in this cooperatively engaged classroom where students reflect on their experiences leading to motivation and preparation. In the next phase of internalization, reflection is facilitated by the teacher (Cabral, 2019). Through demonstration of adaptability, the teacher helps students reflect on their participation. The teacher incorporates varied teaching methods, differentiates and helps confirm understanding among students. In the dissemination phase, a transfer of knowledge occurs as the students apply learning to the real world. (Kolb, 1984) states that in order to learn, one must go through a series of steps after the initial experience. There must be a reflection on the experience followed by an understanding of what the new learning means to the individual and a conceptualization of how it can be used in the future.

EL provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development, both of which are

consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop (Philominraj et al., 2020). The theory is called EL to emphasize the central role that experience plays in the learning process, an emphasis that distinguishes EL theory from other learning theories. According to the authors, the term experiential is used, therefore, to differentiate EL theory both from cognitive learning theories, which emphasize cognition over affect, and behavioral learning theories, which deny any role for subjective experience in the learning process.

Experience, which is a basis of fundamental and natural learning, is available to everyone. It does not require software or technological equipment to support learning. It is not expensive either (Philominraj et al., 2020). All that is required is the opportunity to reflect and think, either alone or in the company of other persons. The metacognitive process involved and the creation of a meaningful learning experience make this form of learning more effective and deep-rooted.

Kolb's EL theory defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). In Kolb's EL Cycle (see Figure 1), the learner utilizes two strategies for grasping experiences-Concrete Experience (CE) and Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and the learner utilizes two strategies for transforming experiences-Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE) (Kolb, 2000), p. 22).

The advantage of the EL method is that it enriches the learning of a second language due to the underlying fact of the specific approach of motivation and psychological contribution. An individual learns through subjective experiences and personal involvement, which are more easily remembered than neglected (Pherson-Geysler et al., 2020).

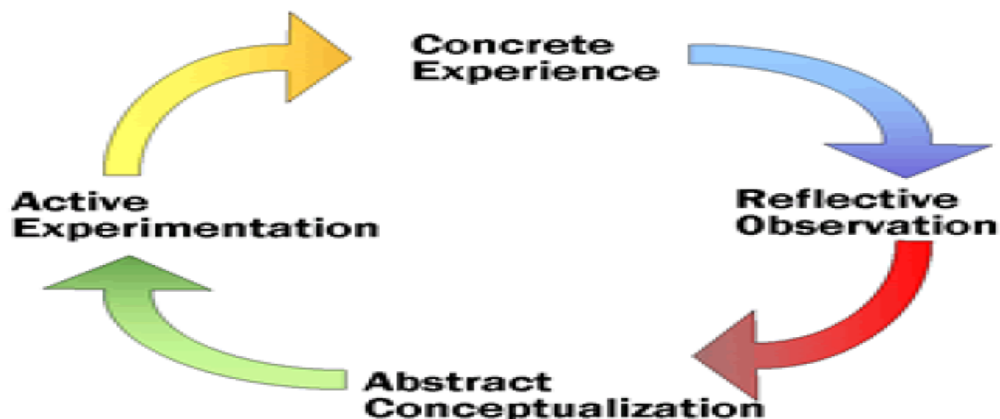
In the below model, (Kolb, 2015) refers to CE as experiencing, RO as reflecting, AC as thinking, and AE as acting. According to him, learning arises from "the resolution of creative tension among these four learning modes". The aim of cyclic advances from an impulse to judgment and knowledge to observations is that it makes a distinction between experiences such as composed interaction and reflective thought (Pherson-Geysler et al., 2020). Kolb uses the term "reflective thought" to describe the process through which people learn from their observations and personal experiences (Roberts, 2018). According to the four-stage learning cycle depicted in Figure

2.1 above, immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. These

implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences.

**Figure 1**

*Kolb's cycle of EL model*



According to (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), learning involves a series of human activities, including sensation, reflex, thinking and doing. Based on Kolb's model, the four main learning abilities are reflection observation, concrete experiences, active experiment and abstract conceptualization. A person's preference for using any one of these four items will develop a different learning style. Thus, the four learning styles are divergent, convergent, assimilative and accommodative. Each of the learning styles has weak points and positive points; the perfect learner is someone who uses different styles in different situations appropriately (Kolb & Kolb, 2005); (Ruhama & Purwaningsih, 2018).

Learning styles are a vortex of exclusive methods for learners in the process of acquiring knowledge. As a way of experiencing life and the strains of the environment in which learners exist, EL is a preferred way of developing four learning modes (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012). EL places the attention on the learners. EL also encourages teaching that diverges from the traditional approach to pragmatic learning (Pittaway & Cope, 2007).

A study using Kolb's learning style inventory on performance of students in an English course indicated similar results. In a study using Kolb's learning style inventory conducted by (Chermahini et al., 2013) showed that there was a significant relationship between students learning style and the academic performance in an English test. The researchers measured the learning styles of 83

students using Kolb's learning style inventory, out of which 16 were native speakers of American English. The study aimed to examine whether learning styles differed depending on the duration of English learning or on the age at which English was learned. Findings indicated that students displayed diverse patterns of learning styles that affected their perceptual patterns of English. Significant variation was found in the length of learning English and perceptual English patterns, but age at which English is studied was insignificant.

EL model has also been employed by instructors to design online courses. One study by (Ikuta, 2008) examined the effect of Kolb's learning style in designing online instruction. Kolb's learning style was included to make the activity more learner centered. The findings revealed that creating an awareness among designers regarding their own learning styles, increased the use of learner centered activities in the online course which resulted in a rise in learner participation in the course trace the relationship between Kolb learning styles and online learning behaviors and outcomes.

In Iranian context, (Mohammadzadeh, 2012), on the other hand, investigated the associations between the EL styles and the immediate and delayed retention of English collocations among EFL Learners. To this end, 75 EFL students were selected as the participants of the study who took a learning style inventory along with the pretest on collocation knowledge. After that the subjects went under

instruction in terms of some English collocations. The researcher found that there are significant differences among the students due to their dominant learning styles in terms of delayed and immediate learning with the outperformance of the group with the dominant diverged learning style.

(Biabani & Izadpanah, 2019) investigated the relationship between Kolb's learning styles and learning slang among Iranian EFL students with a gender-based focus. They reported a high, significant and positive regression of Kolb's learning style. The highest correlation between Kolb's learning styles and learning American slang was related to the Concrete Experience (CE) and the weakest one was related to the Abstract Conceptualization (AC). The results of the correlation demonstrated positive, significant and high correlation between the (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) learning styles and slang learning. Likewise, the study showed the highest correlation between the EL styles (Concrete Experience, CE) and the slang learning. Meanwhile, their study showed non-significant correlation either between gender and slang learning or between gender and learning styles.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study categorized as a quasi-experiment used quantitative paradigm to recognize whether utilizing EL model would have any effect on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. Since the participants were chosen from intact classes, and no randomization was inevitably done, equivalent groups, pretest-treatment-posttest design was used to assess the related hypothesis of the study. The sample population of the current study consisted of 48 male and female EFL learners, selected from a total population of 59 English language learners at the intermediate level of language proficiency, with the age range of 13 to 18, divided in two groups. All the participants were native speakers of Persian who were taking English course at Shokooh English Language Institute in Rasht, Iran.

### 2.2. Materials

The materials used for the purpose of this study included a placement test called Oxford Solutions Placement Test known as SPT, a pretest and a posttest, and rubric for scoring students' writing papers.

#### 2.2.1 The Pretest and Posttest of L2 Writing Ability

The writing pretest and posttest were administered to measure the participants' writing ability before and after the experiment. The writing tests were taken from the IELTS writing topics which are already validated. They were taken from 50 IELTS writing topics. The writing topics for the pretest were on different topics such as sports and Nature. To avoid familiarity effect, the topics for the posttest were also on different topics such as education and Art. It is worth mentioning that due to the subjectivity quality of writing test, two raters, the teachers at Shokooh English Language Institute, scored the participants' answers to the writing questions in order to preserve the inter-rater reliability of the scoring the test.

#### 2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

In order to homogenize the participants in terms of general English proficiency, a sample copy of SPT was administered to the prospective participants after they were selected from intact classes and before assigning them to two groups. According to the results of SPT, 48 participants, were selected to participate in the study. The participants were assigned to one experimental and one control group each of which included 24 learners.

As the objective of the present study was to investigate the effect of EL model on Iranian Intermediate EFL learners' writing ability, a pretest of writing was administered to the groups to know their initial writing ability and to make sure that they are approximately at the same level of writing ability.

The researchers applied EL for experimental group for 12 sessions, by working on 10 writing topics. For each topic the researcher applied pre-teaching activities, whilst teaching activities that included observing, questioning, exploring/experimenting, associating, and communicating. The researcher followed the EL stages in which the learners in the experimental group actively participated in the learning and reflection process of writing on the topics. Before they start their writing, the researcher introduced the topic, build enthusiasm, and used realia. The learners' participated through communication and peer guidance. Next, they were told to do some reflection on their work, which was assisted by the teacher and to think how they experienced the participation. Finally, they were asked to associates their learning experience with the real-world outside the class. In the control class, the researcher applied the traditional method of teaching writing practiced generally in teaching writing in the English language institutes.

At the end of the treatment sessions, a posttest of English writing was administered to the both groups. It is worth mentioning that the subjective nature of the variable required the researcher to use a scoring rubric based on which the writing ability of the learners could be reliably scored. In so doing, a scoring rubric developed by Brown (2007) was used to score the learners' writing in the pretest and posttest. The rubric includes five parts devoted to criteria of focus, elaboration, organization/support, conventions (spelling, grammar and punctuation), and vocabulary. Each criterion consists of five descriptors by which the learners are judged and measured by the scores given to each descriptor.

Besides, it is worth pointing out that in order to ensure the inter-reliability of the assigned scores to the learners' writings, a colleague of the researcher, who was an expert in writing assessment, was also asked to score the participants' exam papers. The average of the two scores for each writing considered as the learners' final score. The correlation between the two ratings was computed through Pearson Product Moment correlation.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Using version 23 of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software, the estimated reliability for the tests was run by inter-rater reliability to assess the consistency

between the ratings provided by the two raters and the degree of the agreement between the two raters who made the independent ratings for the learners' writings.

### 3. Findings and Results

To answer the research questions of the study and to find if there were any statistically significant difference between the effects of independent variables, both descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated and accounted. The descriptive statistics was applied to indicate the mean scores of the participants on the writing test. The inferential statistics, independent and paired samples t-tests, was run to know the degree of the effect and the difference between the variables.

With regard to the issue of homogeneity of the participants concerning their general English language proficiency, and in order to select homogeneous sample of participants, 59 participants sat for SPT, but 48 participants were selected. Table 1 presents descriptive data for the learners with regard to their performance on SPT. The main goal was to select a homogeneous sample. The participants took three sections that included structure, vocabulary, and reading comprehension with a maximum possible score of (60) points.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for QPT Scores of the Main Population*

N	Valid	59
	Missing	0
Mean		34.7500
Median		31.0000
Mode		29.00
Std. Deviation		5.11105
Variance		26.123
Skewness		1.497
Std. Error of Skewness		.309
Kurtosis		2.222
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.608
Range		25.00
Minimum		26.00
Maximum		51.00
Sum		1965.00

Table 1 displays the findings of group statistics for the SPT scores that was administered to select uniform participants with regard to their general foreign language proficiency. Measures of central tendency including mean, median, and the mode together with measures of dispersion such as range, variance, and standard deviation as well as

measures of distribution (i.e., Skewness and Kurtosis) were computed for the SPT. Thus, the cut-point of  $(34.75 + 5.11)$  was set, and 48 EFL learners whose proficiency scores were within the range of 28 to 36 were selected intermediate EFL learner as the main participants of the present study.

Inter-rater reliability (IRR) was run to evaluate the uniformity between the ratings assigned by the two raters and the extent of the agreement between two raters who made the independent ratings for the writing test was measured. In fact, two different scorers who were experienced foreign language teachers did the ratings for the oral production of the participants. The consistency of the

two raters' judgments was examined using interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) analysis that showed a comparatively high level of inter-rater reliability for the writing test scores given in two administrations in the pretest and posttest. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the scores given by the raters.

**Table 2***Item Statistics for the Scores Given By the Two Raters*

Item Statistics	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Rater A pretest scores	14.0250	1.83258	48
Rater B pretest scores	14.9750	1.74661	48
Rater A posttest scores	15.8500	1.29199	48
Rater B posttest scores	16.7000	1.30482	48

Table 2 displays the information relating to the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) calculations and some of the results of the reliability analysis, showing the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the data from each rater for the pretest and posttest. Overall, it appeared that rater (B) measured writing scores slightly higher than rater (A) both in the pretest and posttest. Additionally, the scores assigned by rater B were less variable than scores given by rater (A)

for the pretest scores. However, the variation of scores assigned by raters (A) and (B) were almost identical as displayed in Table 2. After computing the means and standard deviation for the scores given by the two raters for both pretest and posttest, "Single Measures" were computed separately for the tests of writing. The results are available in Table 3 below.

**Table 3***Intra- Class Correlation Coefficients for the Scores Given by Two Raters for Pretest and Posttest Writing Tests*

	Intra- class Correlation	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Mean Measures (pretests)	.889	.790	.941	9.018	39	39	.000
Average Measures (posttests)	.825	.670	.908	5.726	39	39	.000

The estimated inter-rater reliability between the two raters for the pretest scores was ( $r_1=.889$ ), with 95% CI (.790, .941), which was quite wide. Furthermore, the estimated reliability between the two raters for the posttest scores came to ( $r_2=.825$ ), with 95% CI (.670, .908). Therefore, the reliability of this measurement for the pretests and posttests of writing between the two raters was established.

After assigning the participants into two groups of experimental and control groups, they were given a writing test to examine the possible initial differences between the two groups regarding their writing ability before introducing

the specific treatment for the groups. Pretest of writing was administered to the both groups at the beginning of the study. After the treatment, both groups attended the writing posttest. The data were gathered through the pretest and posttest of writing to assess the possible improvements in writing abilities of the two groups. In addition, after introducing the treatment that was EL model for the experimental group and conventional method for the control group, both groups attended the posttest of writing. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the participants' writing pretest and posttest scores.



**Table 4**

*The Results of Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Pretest and Posttest Scores*

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total Pretest Scores	Control	24	14.6000	1.80351	.40328
	Experimental	24	14.4000	1.62707	.36382
Total Posttest Scores	Control	24	15.8000	1.08094	.24170
	Experimental	24	17.7500	1.14133	.25521

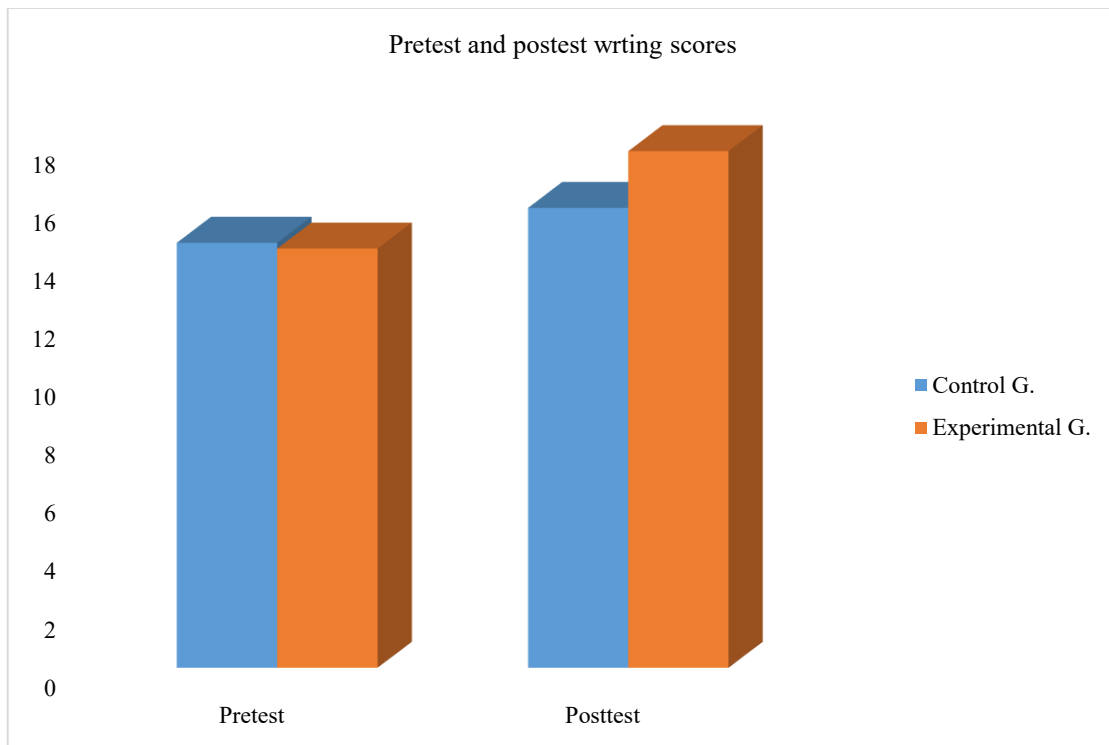
For the writing test that was administered at the beginning of the study, the mean scores for the control and experimental group were ( $M_{control} = 14.60$ ) and ( $M_{experimental} = 14.40$ ), respectively. Furthermore, the degree of the dispersion of scores for the control group was slightly higher than that of the experimental group ( $SD_{control} = 1.80$ ;  $SD_{Experimental} = 1.62$ ).

When it comes to the writing test directed to the participants of the two groups at the end of the study, the

mean scores for the control and experimental groups were ( $M_{control} = 15.80$ ) and ( $M_{experimental} = 17.75$ ), respectively. The degree of the deviation of writing scores around the mean score for the control group was simply (.06) points smaller than that of the experimental group ( $SD_{Experimental\ group} = 1.14$ ,  $SD_{control\ group} = 1.08$ ). Figure 4.1 illustrates the comparison between the two groups on the pretest and posttest of writing at the beginning and the end of the treatment sessions.

**Figure 2**

*The comparison between the means of the two groups on pretest of writing*



To see if the differences between the mean scores of the two groups were statistically significant at the beginning and at the end of the study, independent samples t- tests were run

to the findings of the writing tests. The results of the analyses are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Independent Samples- T- Test for the Pretest and Posttest of Writing Scores*

		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest scores	Equal variances assumed	.24	.62	.36	38	.715	.20	.54	-.89	1.29
	Equal variances not assumed		.61	.36	37.6	.715	.20	.54	-.89	1.29
posttest scores	Equal variances assumed	.25	.37	-2.70	38	.010	-.95	.35	-1.66	-.23
	Equal variances not assumed		.36	-2.70	37.88	.010	-.95	.35	-1.66	-.23

The independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the performance on pretest and posttest of writing for the two groups. The independent samples t-test presented the results of Levene’s test for the equality of variances. This tested whether the variances (variation) of scores for the two groups were the same for the writing tests. The outcome of this test determined the correct t-value that SPSS provided for use. Since the Sig. values for the Levene’s test for both pretest and posttest were larger than (.05), the first lines in the table, which referred to “*Equal variances assumed,*” were used.

For the pretest of writing, there was no significant difference in scores for the *control* ( $M = 14.60, SD = 1.80$ ) and *experimental group* ( $M = 14.40, SD = 1.60; t(38) = .36, p = .715$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .54, 95% CI: -.89 to 1.29) was small (Eta squared = .0033). In other words, the two groups were approximately at the same level of proficiency in terms

of their writing ability in the administered test at the beginning of the study.

Based on the findings of independent samples t-test for the posttest represented in Table 5, since the value in the Sig. (2-tailed) column was less than (.05), there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores on the dependent variable (posttest scores of writings) for the two groups. For the posttest of writing, there was a significant difference in scores for the *control* ( $M = 15.80, SD = 1.08$ ) and *Experimental group* ( $M = 17.75, SD = 1.14; t(38) = -2.70, p = .010$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = .95, 95% CI: -1.66 to -.23) was small (Eta squared = .1609). As it was reported, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the posttest of writing. In order to investigate the participants’ progress within groups, two paired samples t-tests were also run, which showed the learners’ progress in the pretest and posttest of writing that are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Paired Samples Statistics for the Pretest and Posttest Scores of Writing for the Two Groups*

Groups			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	Pair 1	Pretest scores	14.6000	14	1.80351	.40328
		posttest scores	15.8000	14	1.08094	.24170
Experimental	Pair 2	Pretest scores	14.4000	14	1.62707	.36382
		posttest scores	17.7500	14	1.14133	.25521

The mean score of the control group progressed from ( $M = 14.60$ ) in pretest to ( $M = 15.80$ ) in posttest; that of the experimental group for the writing test improved from ( $M =$

14.40) in pretest to ( $M = 17.75$ ) in posttest. In order to investigate if these differences between pretest and posttest scores of the writing were statistically significant, the

statistical paired samples t-tests were run to the results of pretest and posttest of writing for the two groups. The results are represented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

*Paired Samples T- Test for the Pretest and Posttest of Writing for the Two Groups (Paired Differences)*

Groups		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mea	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Con.	Pretest scores - posttest scores	-1.20	1.37	.306	-1.84	-.55	-3.91	19	.001
	Ex.	Pretest scores - posttest scores	-3.35	1.77	.395	-3.17	-1.52	-5.93	19

As depicted in the Tables 6 and 7, both groups had progressed in the posttest of writing. Based on the results of paired samples t-tests, this improvement was statistically significant for both the control and experimental group ( $P \leq .05$ ). In other words, the experimental and control groups made an advancement in the posttest of writing. However, the mean difference between pretest and posttests for the experimental group was (3.35) points that was highly noticeable for the writing test. In contrast, the mean difference between pretest and posttests for the control group amounted to (1.20) that was not noticeable compared to the advancement of the experimental group.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the effects of the EL model on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing ability. The analysis of the results of independent-samples t-test in comparing two groups of the study in posttest of writing showed a statistically significant difference between the two groups. It was found that EL model had statistically significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability. In addition, based on the results of paired samples t-test both groups progressed in the posttest of writing. This improvement was, however, statistically significant for the experimental group that received EL model of writing instruction ( $P \leq .05$ ).

Therefore, the research null hypothesis was rejected suggesting that EL had statistically significant effect on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing ability. In fact, statistically significant differences were found between the control and experimental groups. Since the two groups were homogeneous in terms of their writing ability at the

beginning of the study, these differences between the two groups at the end of the study must be due to the specific treatment (i.e., EL) to the experimental group. In other words, the findings suggested that the experimental group who received EL model outperformed the control group who received conventional instruction of the writing skill in posttest and the progress within the group for the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. The findings emphasized the advantage of providing EFL learners with EL rather than conventional method of writing instruction for improving their writing ability.

The study done by (Mohammadzadeh, 2012) who investigated the associations between the EL styles and the immediate and delayed retention of English collocations among EFL learners supports the finding of the current study since both studies report the significant effect of EL on learning L2 language skills. The findings support the idea proposed by (Kolb & Kolb, 2009) that EL positions learning as a continuous process in which learners bring their own knowledge, ideas, beliefs and practices to their understanding and interpretation of new information.

The findings of the current study are also supported by the study carried out by (Philominraj et al., 2020), who found that the use of EL is significantly effective in EFL learners' learning achievement. According to (Ng et al., 2009), EL involves the students in working things through for themselves and developing their own understanding, but facilitating and coaching is necessary during the process.

The findings are also in harmony with findings of the study done by (Biabani & Izadpanah, 2019) who investigated the relationship between (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) learning styles and learning slang among Iranian EFL

students with a gender-based focus. The results of the correlation demonstrated positive, significant and high correlation between the Kolb's learning styles and slang learning. The findings signify the importance of employing EL styles in enhancing L2 learners' improvement of language skills. The implication is that the teacher trainers may include fostering the beneficial learning styles in their lesson plan in order to improve the teachers' teaching.

Supporting the findings of the current study in which EL proved to be significantly effective on the learners' writing ability, (Cormany & Feinstein, 2008) support EL because each participant has a specific role to serve with the need for him or her to develop specific tasks for that role by the end of their tasks. (Celio, 2011), p. 19) also supports the point that EL provides information on more than just the outcomes of service experiences, reflection, and level of engagement and interest. In line with findings of the current study, the study done by (Pherson-Geyser et al., 2020), on the effect of EL on the teaching and learning of Life Sciences, showed that teachers need to understand the context of EL since it enables teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, which is highly beneficial for quality teaching.

Supporting the findings of the current study, (McManus & Thiamwong, 2015) confirmed that students' express their ideas easily into a writing when they were given opportunity to write a topic which they wanted to create and understand the topic by their own selves. All in all, the findings of the current study are supported by the theory underlying (Dewey, 1938) Progressive Approach and (Kolb, 1984) theory of EL according to which, everything depends upon the quality of the experience and knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.

The theories underpinning EL contain a common element of learning from immediate experience by engaging the learners in the process as whole persons, both intellectually and emotionally. The L2 learners in EL is aware of the processes which are taking place, and which are enabling learning to occur. The language learners is involved in a reflective experience which enables him/ her to relate current learning to past, present and future, even if these relationships are felt rather than thought. Therefore, there is an involvement of the whole self; body, thoughts, feelings and actions, not just of the mind. In other words, the language learners is engaged as a whole person.

When noting the elements of EL that impact L2 learners' learning, experiential applications such as studying abroad, service learning, project-based learning, and internships should be considered as activities that have significant

impact on L2 learners' overall success. It needs to be mentioned that in the modern time of virtual world and virtual education, delivering experiential teaching/learning in the virtual environment develops the knowledge and skills needed in a digital age, but as always, it needs to be done well, following best practices associated with the design models. Together with critical analyses and synthesis, reflection leads to the learners' engagement through initiative, relationship building, personal accountability, and opportunities for both language learners and instructors to explore their own values.

Therefore, it is generally recommended that teachers and learners build new learnings on previous experiences that is a key idea in the cooperatively engaged classes where language learners reflect on their experiences leading to motivation and preparation. Pedagogically, teachers and education official need to recognize that the use of EL brings about a challenge is balancing traditional ways of teaching such as using seminars, lectures, passive learning and replaces these styles with more experiential approaches like active learning, collaborative research, project work, internships and applied work.

EL may also help teacher to let the learners integrate experiences of interacting with other learners causing them to share their experiences and reflect upon their experiences, which is a gradual progression to higher-order thinking and thus encourage more critical thinking and reflection on learning. The present study also provides insights into the potential of EL cycle in promoting language learning strategies through an integrated skills-based curriculum through which the learners interact with the world and integrate new learning into old constructs, which in turn leads them to have a deeper and more insightful understanding of their subject matters.

The present study suffered from some limitations as no academic research is perfectly done without limitations or delimitations. Concerning the present study, it is worth mentioning that the findings of the current study are limited to the participants under the study and should not be generalized to other settings with different participants without further research. Thus, one of the major limitations of this study was that participants were only from one level, i.e., intermediate. This study did not include participants from other levels. Moreover, as with the number of participants, they were selected only from one English language institute.

In addition, the study had to be conducted in a limited time period; the treatment lasted only for seven sessions.

Although some developments were observed in both groups, a four-week period was not enough for sufficient development of learners' learning of English writing ability through the use of EL. This study is also limited because it had no constrain or control over the participants' internal feelings such as fatigue, anxiety, and irritation, if any, during the experiment, which might have influenced the result of the investigation.

### Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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### Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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