

The Effects of Pre-Planning Time Task and Critical Thinking Task on English Language Learners' Writing Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of integrating critical thinking exercises into EFL writing instruction by comparing traditional methods with an adapted approach that incorporates pre-writing discussions. Sixty senior English students participated, divided equally into experimental and control groups. While both groups demonstrated similar overall improvements in writing proficiency, the experimental group showed a statistically significant enhancement in the quality of essay content, suggesting that structured critical thinking activities—such as debate and collaborative analysis—help learners generate more original and well-supported arguments. However, no notable differences were observed in other writing aspects, including focus, organization, grammar, or word usage, indicating that critical thinking interventions primarily enrich content rather than technical writing skills. The results highlight the importance of pre-writing cognitive engagement, where students analyze, evaluate, and refine their ideas before drafting, leading to deeper topic understanding and more persuasive argumentation. Despite the lack of broad writing gains, the study underscores the value of critical thinking in fostering richer content development, particularly in argumentative writing. These results suggest that while conventional writing instruction remains effective for overall proficiency, supplementing it with critical thinking strategies can significantly enhance the depth and persuasiveness of students' written work. For educators, this implies a need to balance foundational writing skills with targeted critical thinking exercises to optimize both content quality and linguistic accuracy in EFL writing instruction.

KEY WORDS: Argumentative Essays, Critical Thinking, Writing Process, Pre-Writing Discussions, Essay Content Development

1. INTRODUCTION¹

Prominent figures like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky highlighted that knowledge is constructed through learners' experiences and social interactions. They both saw learning as an active process where Students do not merely acquire knowledge; rather, they actively develop their own comprehension. While Piaget focused on personal experiences shaping knowledge, Vygotsky emphasized the role of social interaction and collaboration. Both believed that true learning happens through engagement, exploration, and meaningful connections.

The primary goal of education is increasing learners'

autonomy, helping them to determine and set their goals, guiding them to decide on strategies to achieve desirable goals, and finally assisting them to think deeply about their learning and their achievement (Cotterall, 2000). Likewise, Lipman (1988) states that education is not merely about learning and assimilating fact, but rather helping students think critically and correctly to gather well-founded knowledge. Norby and Ronning (2004) also believe that students need to be instructed in "how to think rather than what to think".

Widely recognized as an essential competency in modern academia, critical thinking influences how students interpret, assess, and interact with information (Moon, 2008). Rather than being an inherent trait, it is a

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skill that can be developed and refined over time through deliberate instruction and meaningful learning experiences (Paul & Elder, 2008). When integrated into the curriculum, critical thinking fosters deeper understanding, enhances problem-solving abilities, and encourages students to approach complex issues with greater independence and confidence (Moon, 2008). It has been affirmed that all learners with any intellectuality level can learn critical thinking (Ennis, 2011). Similarly, Halpern (1999, p.71) claims that "critical thinking skills need to be deliberately and repeatedly taught in college and earlier".

Facione (2015) asserts that critical thinking emerges from the act of questioning and cannot be considered as a series of separate skills. In a similar way, Paul and Elder (2008) believe that critical thinking involves evaluating and reflecting on one's thought processes to improve it. Bell (1991) maintains that critical thinking contains reflecting on a problem, finding evidence, organizing the obtained data, setting argument and counter arguments to evaluate whether a given claim is true or false. In other words, critical thinking involves a thoughtful and intentional process of evaluating whether to approve, dismiss, or defer judgment on a given claim (Moore & Parker, 2009).

Mehta and Al-Mahrooqi (2015) emphasized the necessity of fostering critical thinking in learners and ensuring its application across diverse contexts. This study also aimed to investigate its impact on enhancing argumentative writing through the instruction of different critical thinking strategies. Through years of experience in teaching, the researcher has observed that mastering academic writing poses a significant challenge for language learners. Many students struggle with effectively initiating, structuring, developing, and expressing their ideas (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). These challenges are further exacerbated by writing anxiety, which hinders their progress (Kucuk, 2023). However, Kucuk's study also notes that students experience less anxiety when writing about topics they are familiar with and enjoy.

As writing proficiency is an unquestioned necessary skill in an academic setting (Fareed et al., 2016) and academic Kurdish EFL learners need writing skill mastery to follow their higher education studies or publish their works in English journals, focusing on how to help learners write effectively is vital. Therefore, the important question the researcher wanted to pose in this study is what teachers can specifically do to help EFL students write an argumentative essay effectively.

Although critical thinking has received significant attention in educational research (Facione, 2015; Fasko, 2003; Moon, 2008), there is a notable gap in studies focusing on its impact within English language education in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq. To the best of the

researcher's knowledge, few studies have explored how critical thinking influences the improvement of writing skills in this region. This gap motivated the researcher to undertake the present study, which aims to investigate the role of critical thinking in enhancing the writing skills and sub-skills of EFL learners, such as focus, content, organization, grammar, and word usage. Specifically, the study examined the effect of integrating critical thinking with the process approach to writing.

The goal of this study is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the relationship between argumentative writing and critical thinking. To examine the case in detail, this paper argued upon the usefulness of critical thinking to help EFL learners brainstorm more ideas and strengthen argumentative writing. Based on these findings, this study offers suggestions for English writing teachers to help learners improve essay content. This study hypothesizes that critical thinking is essential for English learners when starting the writing process. Thus, it investigates the following questions:

1. To what extent does critical thinking affect the construction of persuasive arguments in writing?
2. By practicing critical thinking, which aspects of argumentative writing (focus, content, organization, grammar and word usage) demonstrate greater improvement?

A hypothesis suggests that pre-writing peer discussions may improve essay content and argument strength. Such discussions could also aid language production.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing presents a significant challenge for individuals studying a foreign language since it involves more than just mastering linguistic competence—it demands the ability to organize thoughts, construct coherent arguments, and engage critically with ideas (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 2006). Traditionally, writing instruction has prioritized grammatical accuracy and the final written product, with some studies demonstrating this approach's effectiveness for improving textual coherence and grammatical precision (Abdulrahman & Kara, 2022). However, contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasize the writing process itself, underscoring the crucial role of organizing ideas, creating drafts, refining content, and making revisions in developing strong writing skills (Lincoln & Idris, 2015). This shift acknowledges that writing is an evolving process, where clarity and coherence emerge through continuous refinement.

Moreover, writing is not a purely mechanical activity but a multidimensional cognitive process that integrates critical thinking, emotional engagement, social interaction, and metacognitive awareness (Tsai, 2009). To

develop as proficient writers, students must be encouraged to analyze complex issues, evaluate multiple perspectives, and construct well-supported arguments. Ackerman (1993) emphasizes that exposure to various forms of argumentation enhances students' analytical and rhetorical abilities, equipping them with the skills necessary for academic discourse. Additionally, research indicates that engaging in argumentative discussions not only refines students' reasoning abilities but also deepens their understanding of the topic, fostering cognitive growth (Ferguson & Bubikova, 2019; Zohar & Nemet, 2002).

The process-oriented approach offers a flexible framework fostering creativity and critical thinking. Instead of prioritizing grammar, it guides students through brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. This helps refine ideas and arguments before addressing linguistic precision. Zamel (1982) highlights that this iterative process helps students articulate their thoughts effectively while building confidence through continuous revision. Similarly, Muncie (2000) argues that revising drafts cultivates critical thinking, yielding more coherent and persuasive texts. Additionally, this method shifts the focus from rigid grammatical correctness to a more holistic, meaning-making process. McGarrell and Verbeem (2007) emphasize that prioritizing fluency and content development in early stages allows students to express ideas freely before addressing surface-level concerns, reducing writing anxiety and fostering a learning environment that encourages students to embrace cognitive challenges.

The significance of critical thinking has been widely recognized by educational experts, and Bloom's taxonomy is often referenced as a key framework for educators. The taxonomy encompasses lower-order thinking skills like knowledge, comprehension, and application, and higher-order skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. From a pedagogic perspective, a higher order of thinking is a concept which requires more cognitive process and students need to think critically. According to Bloom's taxonomy of educational goals, the aim is to engage learners in intellectual tasks to move their thinking to a higher level of thinking quality. (Bloom, 1956).

Recent pedagogical research demonstrates that structured engagement with complex topics—whether through collaborative brainstorming (Kucuk & Dayan, 2025) or project-based inquiry (Kara, 2025)—operationalizes these higher-order thinking skills by sharpening students' ability to analyze multifaceted issues, synthesize evidence, and defend positions persuasively. For instance, when learners confront global problems collectively, they not only deepen their subject-matter awareness but also produce writing with richer content, as they “learn to face [issues] and devise

strategies” (Kucuk & Dayan, 2025, p. 506). Similarly, inquiry-based methods like PBL require students to evaluate topics from diverse perspectives, mirroring the cognitive demands of argumentation (Kara, 2025, p. 474). These findings align with process-oriented writing approaches (Zamel, 1982; Muncie, 2000), where critical thinking activities (e.g., pre-writing debates) enhance argumentative essay content by bridging theory and practice.

Fasko (2003) highlights that defining critical thinking directly poses a challenge. Given its broad nature and the varied interpretations put forth by scholars across different disciplines, there is no universally accepted single definition for critical thinking. Dewey (1933) who introduced critical thinking into education describes it as “reflective thinking”. Facione (2015, p.27), a leading figure in critical thinking research, describes critical thinking as “purposeful, self-regulatory judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference.” Similarly, critical thinking is characterized as thought that is purposeful, logical, and directed toward objectives (Halpern, 1999).

Critical thinking, a recognized approach for directing one's thoughts and behaviours, is primarily concerned with making decisions about what to believe or how to act (Ennis, 2011). Critical thinkers evaluate and analyze information and they think and re-think their views based on new knowledge. The importance of critical thinking in making optimal choices and effective decisions is unquestionable. Critical thinking is a fundamental academic skill (Murawski, 2014), aligning with Dewey's (1933) view that the primary goal of education is to teach students how to think.

Bowell and Kemp (2002, p.2) describe arguments as “to attempt to persuade by giving good reasons”. It is accepted that a crucial element of an argumentative essay is analyzing the content that is going to be included in the essay (Wu, 2006). In other words, the necessity of writing an argumentative essay is providing convincing reasons for personal viewpoints to be persuasive enough for readers of an essay (Cottrell, 2005).

The researcher believes that in an EFL context like Kurdistan, developing argumentative essays is challenging for students, yet during their study and for further education they need to learn and write such type of essays. Moreover, the challenge lays in responding to well-written, grammatically correct essays that convey poorly reasoned contents. To learn to write, language learners, first, need to think. They should be taught to evaluate their own thoughts and those of others, make reasoned and convincing judgments, and logically progress toward a conclusion.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

This study was carried out with a group of 60 senior undergraduate students majoring in English at Salahaddin University in Erbil, Iraq. The participants were native Kurdish speakers learning English as a foreign language. For the purposes of this research, factors such as age, gender, and prior knowledge were not considered in the analysis.

To assess participants' English proficiency and ensure consistency, Class Placement Test B was administered. The test contained 60 multiple-choice questions evaluating grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, with gradually increasing difficulty. Each correct answer was awarded one point, and students were given 45 minutes to complete as much of the test as possible. To determine the test's reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was applied, resulting in a coefficient of 0.87, which was considered acceptable for the study's purpose. Based on their performance, intermediate-level learners were identified and evenly split into two groups of similar proficiency: the Experimental Group (EG) and the Control Group (CG). This process ensured that all participants, regardless of gender, had a comparable level of linguistic competence.

3.2. Research Design

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design to examine the impact of the intervention. Participants first took a pretest to evaluate writing skills. They wrote a structured 4-5 paragraph essay on a given topic. After completing the program, a post-test was administered to reassess their writing proficiency and measure any progress made.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results, two independent evaluators assessed the essays from both the pre-test and post-test. Essays were graded using Wang and Liao's (2008) rubric, assessing focus, content, organization, grammar, and word usage. Each of these components was scored on a scale of 1 to 10, resulting in a total possible score of 50 for each essay.

The rubric's coherence and reliability were assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, resulting in a value of 0.87, which reflects a high level of reliability. In terms of validity, both face and content validity were carefully examined. Face validity was confirmed by expert instructors, who verified the rubric's alignment with writing proficiency fundamentals. Content validity was achieved by adhering to academic writing standards, ensuring comprehensive assessment coverage. To examine changes in performance, independent t-tests were carried out to compare pre-test and post-test scores of both groups.

3.3. Procedure

Novice writers are recommended to begin writing by the simplest type of essay, descriptive, then move toward narrative, expository, and argumentative types of essays, the most complex one (Richards and Schmidt, 2010). The participants of this study had practiced writing different types of essays during the three past years of their study at the university and were supposed to improve their ability to write a persuasive composition in their Academic Writing Course.

The CG teacher assigned a topic and had students brainstorm individually (listing, freewriting, or mapping). After outlining, students wrote and submitted a first draft. A Process-oriented approach to writing emphasizes giving feedback to learners during the process of writing rather than after completing the task (Zamel, 1982). To do so, the learners were given no scores at this step. The instructor provided written feedback, enabling students to identify errors, self-reflect, and avoid repeating mistakes in later tasks. They edited their first draft in response to the instructor's feedback and submit their last draft. This process continued the whole course.

Regarding the Experimental Group, the participants also followed the writing process. Additionally, they were taught how to think critically through class work discussions to brainstorm ideas before beginning to write. Participants in EG discussed every given topic for about 30 minutes as a pre-writing activity.

Table 1
Stages of the Study for Each Group

Stage	Control Group	Experimental Group
Step 1: Topic Selection & Explanation	Instructor selects and explains the topic.	Instructor selects and explains the topic.
Step 2: Pre-writing Activity	Individual brainstorming (listing, freewriting, mapping).	30-minute class discussion followed by individual brainstorming.
Step 3: Drafting	Write and submit first draft.	Write and submit first draft.
Step 4: Feedback	Instructor provides feedback (no grades).	Instructor provides feedback (no grades).
Step 5: Revision	Revise the draft after feedback then submit final.	Revise the draft after feedback then submit final.
Step 6: Repeat	Process repeats for each assignment.	Process repeats for each assignment.

First, they were given high-interest and controversial topics to debate on it. Controversial issues can be the best choice for discussion as it gives the chance to English learners to present contrasting viewpoints and support them with compelling reasons (Wood, 2001). The writing instructor started the discussion by asking questions to involve students in the discussion. The most important thing for the instructor was to be sure students had the opportunity to think profoundly and critically and share

their ideas. The participants exchanged their views and explained why they were standing in that position. They had enough evidence to support their positions. The learners were asked to write down the notes as phrases to be used later for summarizing the discussion. Upon its conclusion, each student provided their final position statement on the topic discussed and began writing their first draft, which was then submitted to the researcher for feedback. The researcher corrected the papers or gave suggestions for each essay. Like CG, the learners rewrote their second and last drafts and then submitted them.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

To evaluate the effects of two distinct instructional approaches on improving students' writing skills, both the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG) completed two IELTS writing tasks. These tasks, derived from official IELTS Writing Test samples, were used as both pre-tests and post-tests. The gathered data were then analysed using SPSS software (version 27).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

The essays from both the pre-test and post-test of both groups of participants were analyzed, and the results are presented in the tables that follow. Tables 2 and 3 provide a statistical overview of the students' writing performance at the beginning and conclusion of the study. Initially, the mean scores of both groups were quite similar, with the control group averaging 19.43 and the experimental group 19. By the end of the course, these scores had increased to 31.70 and 37.78, respectively.

The summarized numerical data indicate that mean scores across both post-tests surpass those recorded in the

pre-test (see Table 2). While there are clear variations in participants' performance prior to and following the intervention, conducting a paired samples t-test is necessary to assess if these differences hold statistical significance.

Table 2
Paired Samples Statistics/ Control Group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair1 Pretest	19.4333	30	1.01483	.18528
Posttest	31.7000	30	1.63791	.29904

For the group receiving the treatment, the results indicate that the mean scores on the post-test exceed those on the pre-test (see Table 3). While a noticeable difference is observed in participants' performance prior to and following the instructional approach, a comparative statistical analysis must be conducted for this group to determine if these differences are statistically meaningful.

Table 3
Paired Samples Statistics/ Experimental Group

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair1 Pretest	19.0000	30	2.00431	.36593
Posttest	37.7833	30	2.14429	.39149

To assess whether there was an improvement in participants' writing skills, a comparative statistical analysis was performed to examine differences between pre-test and post-test scores in both groups. The results from this analysis for the control group are displayed in the following table.

Table 4
Paired samples t-tests for control group

		Mean	Paired Differences Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest score for focus - post-test score for focus	.16667	.83391	.15225	1.095	29	.283
Pair 2	Pretest score for content- post-test score for content	-.06667	.69149	.12625	-.528	29	.601
Pair 3	Pretest score for organization- post-test score for organization	-.33333	.88409	.16141	-2.065	29	.048
Pair 4	Pretest score for grammar - post-test score for grammar	-.03333	.80872	.14765	-.226	29	.823
Pair 5	Pretest score for word usage - post-test score for word usage	-.10000	.88474	.16153	-.619	29	.541
Pair 6	Pretest total scores - post-test total scores	-12.26667	1.29810	.23700	-51.758	29	.000

In the control group, the p-values for most of the five aspects of writing are greater than 0.05, showing no significant difference. However, the p-value for

organization is 0.048, indicating a significant improvement in this aspect. Nevertheless, since the p-value for the overall writing score is less than 0.05, it can

be inferred that there was a general progression in writing in this group.

Table 5 displays the results of the Paired Samples t-tests performed for the experimental group. The analysis indicates that this group did not exhibit any meaningful statistical differences when comparing pre-test and post-

test scores across four criteria, i.e. focus, organization, grammar, and word usage, but for the item of content the significant difference was meaningful, and it was .037. The following table provides information on the significance of this difference for experimental group.

Table 5
Paired samples t-tests for experimental group

		Mean	Paired Differences Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest score for focus - post-test score for focus	.03333	.92786	.16940	.197	29	.845
Pair 2	Pretest score for content - post-test score for content	-.25000	.62629	.11434	-2.186	29	.037
Pair 3	Pretest score for organization - post-test score for organization	-.03333	.85029	.15524	-.215	29	.831
Pair 4	Pretest score for grammar - post-test score for grammar	.16667	.98553	.17993	.926	29	.362
Pair 5	Pretest score for word usage - post-test score for word usage	-.16667	.69893	.12761	-1.306	29	.202
Pair 6	Pretest total scores - post-test total scores	-18.7833	1.8785	.34298	-54.765	29	.000

As shown in Table 5, the p-values for the total writing score are below 0.05, suggesting a notable difference between the pretest and post-test scores in the experimental group.

As shown in Table 6, the overall scores resulted in p-values lower than 0.05, suggesting that there were

statistically meaningful differences in the post-test performance across the groups. While both the control and experimental groups showed noticeable improvement in their essay writing, neither group demonstrated a distinct superiority over the other.

Table 6
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Treatment	Equal variances assumed	3.331	.073	12.349	58	.000	6.08333	.49264	5.09721 7.06945
	Equal variances not assumed			12.349	54.246	.000	6.08333	.49264	5.09576 7.07091

4.2. Discussion

The increasing demand for graduate students to enhance their academic writing skills, whether for advancing their studies or publishing articles in English, motivated the researcher to explore the integration of critical thinking practices into writing instruction. This approach aims to stimulate students' ability to generate diverse and original ideas through classroom discussions.

According to Ong (2011), writing essays presents a significant challenge for individuals acquiring English as a second or foreign language, as it goes beyond a straightforward process and involves higher order

thinking (see also Dulger, 2011). Writing an argumentative essay presents a significant challenge for second language learners, as it requires more advanced cognitive skills compared to other types of essays (Allen et al., 2019). The essence of teaching argumentative writing is to help language learners to organize their ideas, give compelling reasons, and write with the goal of convincing readers to consider their arguments.

Ennis (2011) maintained that fostering students' ability to think analytically should be viewed as a fundamental educational goal. He further emphasized the growing importance of critical thinking in modern education,

calling for its deliberate integration into school curricula. Such an approach, he argued, prepares students to evaluate information rigorously, solve problems effectively, and make sound, reasoned decisions—skills that are indispensable in an increasingly complex world. Practicing critical thinking demands learners to think deeply and engage fully with their beliefs and the common belief in society. Thus, the significance of critical thinking in foreign language teaching makes it a growing concept among researchers and teachers.

Keeping in mind the significance of teaching argumentative writing to EFL learners, the researcher assumed that there is a need to take critical thinking into account in teaching argumentative writing besides the teaching process writing to EFL learners. Therefore, this study aimed to examine how critical thinking skills can help students improve their argumentative essay writing. Although Camacho and Paulus (1995) argue that group discussions could hinder language learners' progress, as they may be hesitant to engage with others, the results of this research revealed that learners' collaboration in analyzing ideas and exchanging thoughts had a positive impact specifically on the content of their essays. Collaboration among learners develops their cognition although it demands some conditions such as giving background knowledge, outlining some background knowledge, raising complex thought-provoking questions, and providing learners with different roles to get involved entirely. Providing these conditions for learners enhance their critical thinking skill (Loes & Pascarella, 2017).

This study aimed to develop learners' skills in composing argumentative essays within an educational setting. Concerning the first research question, the students showed acceptable improvement in their writing abilities. However, the control group attained a similar level of improvement, implying that thinking critically and practicing group discussion before writing was not the influential factor in developing a better writing among EFL learners. Both groups followed a process approach to write an essay and they learnt how to consider the steps to compose a piece of writing.

Regarding the second research question, the results suggested incorporating critical thinking in the pre-writing stage significantly improved the content quality of EFL learners' argumentative essays, with no noticeable impact on other writing subskills. Malmir and Shoorcheh (2012) believe that practicing critical thinking skills besides other skills leads to language learning in a profound and motivating way. In a different study, the positive effect of using critical thinking on learning more vocabularies has approved (Paul & Elder, 2005). The kind of training the experimental group of this study had received resulted in improving only the content of their argumentative essays, but not the other sub skills of

writing. Similarly, Seyyedi, et.al. (2013) in their study on Malaysian English learners found that the amount of time spent on planning before starting a task did not impact the learners' writing accuracy, but it positively affected the fluency and complexity of the written essays produced by English language learners. It can be concluded that the treatment the students receive may not affect the whole essay but rather one or two aspects of writing skill.

Unlike Fink (2003) who believes that language learners gain more knowledge when they are actively involved in educational activities, EG of this study who received additional training in their process of writing did not outperform CG. Providing learners with background information on essay topics and activating their prior knowledge encourage them to generate more ideas which consequently improve content of the written essay (Bransford et.al., 2000). Similarly, this study found that heated discussions, student involvement, background formation, and increased autonomy enhanced writing content specifically, but not other writing aspects.

The findings partially support the hypothesis that critical thinking and writing training improve writing performance. While the experimental group showed stronger essay content—consistent with prior research (Malmir & Shoorcheh, 2012; Paul & Elder, 2005)—other writing aspects (e.g., accuracy, structure) did not significantly improve. This aligns with Seyyedi et al. (2013), in which planning boosted fluency but not accuracy. Unlike Fink's (2003) claim that active engagement broadly enhances learning, this study suggests such training selectively strengthens content over overall proficiency. Thus, the hypothesis is justified for content development but not holistic writing gains.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined how critical thinking activities, specifically pre-writing discussions, affect EFL learners' argumentative writing skills. The results show that while critical thinking exercises didn't significantly improve overall writing scores compared to traditional methods, they did enhance the quality of essay content ($p = 0.037$). This indicates that activities like brainstorming and debating ideas help students develop more original and well-supported arguments, even if they don't immediately improve technical writing elements like grammar or structure.

Interestingly, both groups showed similar overall improvement in writing skills, suggesting that the process-writing approach benefited all participants equally. While critical thinking exercises alone may not transform writing ability, they clearly play an important role in helping students generate better content. Teachers should consider incorporating these activities into their

writing instruction while continuing to address mechanical writing skills through other methods.

Future studies might investigate whether combining critical thinking exercises with focused grammar and organization instruction over a longer period could lead to broader writing improvements. Researchers could also examine how individual factors like language proficiency or cultural background influence students' responses to critical thinking interventions.

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