

The Implementation and Impact of Mindful Learning on Students' Writing Skills at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the implementation and impact of mindful learning on senior high school students' English writing skills and affective engagement in an Indonesian EFL context. The study was grounded in the mindful learning principles proposed by Langer (1989, 1997, 2000) and further developed for EFL contexts by Piscayanti (2018, 2021). A mixed-methods perspective was used to connect classroom implementation with students' writing development and learning experiences. The qualitative strand examined mindful awareness, mindful engagement, reflective writing, emotional regulation, self-acceptance, and confidence through classroom observations and reflective activities. The quantitative strand examined students' writing performance through pre-test and post-test scores. The quantitative data involved 35 students and were assessed using five writing components such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Furthermore, qualitative findings indicated increased awareness of learning processes, stronger engagement, better emotional regulation, and greater self-acceptance and confidence. Therefore, mindful learning can support both the cognitive and affective dimensions of EFL writing and provides a practical pedagogical connection to the meaningful, mindful, and joyful learning principles associated with Indonesia's deep learning orientation.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Saputra et al. (2020), writing is consequently not simply a final product but a complex process involving cognition, language, reflection, decision making, and personal expression. In the senior high school context, these demands may become more challenging because students are simultaneously developing academic identities and managing social and emotional changes associated with adolescence. The development of writing skills can be influenced by factors beyond students' linguistic knowledge (Saputra et al., 2020). Students' concentration, confidence, anxiety, willingness to participate, and perception of mistakes may shape the way they approach writing tasks. When students are afraid of making errors or comparing their performance with peers, they may produce limited ideas, avoid experimentation, or become passive during classroom activities. Therefore, writing instruction requires not only attention to language form but also a learning environment that supports awareness, engagement,

reflection, and confidence.

Mindful learning provides one possible pedagogical response to these challenges. Langer (1989) describes mindfulness in learning in terms of active awareness, openness to novelty, flexibility, and sensitivity to context. Rather than learning through automatic repetition, mindful learners attend to differences, consider alternative perspectives, and remain actively involved in constructing meaning. Langer (1997, 2000) argues that mindful learning can help learners approach familiar situations in new ways and become more flexible in their thinking. These characteristics are highly relevant to writing because writing requires learners to make choices about ideas, organization, language, and perspective. The theoretical orientation of mindful learning in this study is also connected with the work of Piscayanti. In Indonesian EFL contexts, Piscayanti (2018, 2021) has developed mindful learning as a pedagogical approach that encourages learners to become present in learning, reflect on their experiences, develop creativity, and become more productive writers. The approach does not treat students merely as recipients of language input. Instead, learners are encouraged to discover ideas, connect learning with experience, reflect on their work, and accept themselves during the learning process. This dimension is important because students' willingness to express ideas may be influenced by how safely and confidently, they perceive the writing classroom.

The concept of self-acceptance is therefore relevant to the present study. Self-acceptance refers to students' ability to recognize and accept their strengths and limitations without excessive comparison with others. The instrument developed in the study includes acceptance of strengths and weaknesses, comfort with one's identity, forgiveness of mistakes, recognition of personal uniqueness, and confidence in acknowledging one's identity. These dimensions complement the cognitive focus of writing assessment by considering the affective conditions that accompany writing development. Previous studies have provided evidence for the educational relevance of mindfulness. Fallah (2017) examined mindfulness in relation to coping self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety, while Lin and Mai (2018) reported the potential of mindfulness meditation to support academic performance. Lin (2020) also investigated relationships among psychological capital, mindful learning, and English learning engagement. In EFL writing, Saputra et al. (2020) reported a positive effect of mindful learning on writing competency, while Piscayanti (2021) emphasized the potential of mindful learning to cultivate creative and productive writers. Research has also suggested that mindfulness-related approaches may support concentration, emotional regulation, self-esteem, and engagement. These outcomes are especially relevant in adolescence, a developmental period characterized by identity construction, sensitivity to peer evaluation, and emotional fluctuation.

Nevertheless, an important research gap remains. Piscayanti's (2021) work provides a strong foundation for understanding mindful learning in EFL contexts, but there is comparatively limited empirical evidence concerning its implementation with senior high school learners. High school students differ from university learners in terms of developmental stage, classroom dependence, emotional needs, and social pressures. The effectiveness and classroom feasibility of mindful learning need to be examined within the secondary-school context rather than assumed from university findings. The present study addresses this gap by examining mindful learning in a senior high school EFL writing classroom. Its novelty lies in extending the discussion of mindful learning from higher education to adolescent learners and in considering writing achievement together with affective engagement and self-acceptance. The study also connects mindful learning with the current Indonesian educational emphasis on deep learning. The deep learning orientation described in the research emphasizes learning that is meaningful, mindful, and joyful, encouraging students to think deeply, reflect on learning, apply knowledge in meaningful situations, and participate actively rather than merely memorize information.

The connection between mindful learning and deep learning is particularly relevant to EFL writing. Writing can become a meaningful learning activity when students connect topics with personal experience, reflect on their ideas, consider alternative perspectives, and revise their

language based on feedback. Mindful learning can therefore operate as a classroom-level pedagogical strategy that supports broader curricular aspirations without replacing the core objectives of English instruction. Based on this rationale, the study focuses on two research questions:

1. How is mindful learning implemented in classroom practices at the senior high school level? and
2. Is there a significant difference in students' writing skills before and after the implementation of mindful learning?

METHOD

The study employed a mixed-methods perspective in which qualitative and quantitative evidence were considered together to develop an in-depth understanding of mindful learning implementation and its relationship with writing development. The qualitative component focused on the classroom process and students' learning experiences, while the quantitative component examined changes in writing performance which consist of writing scores collected from the same 35 students before and after the implementation of mindful learning. Also, the statistical analysis uses a paired-samples t-test. Furthermore, this research was situated in a senior high school in Buleleng, Bali. Because the study is context-specific, its findings should be interpreted as evidence from the classroom context rather than as a basis for broad generalization to all Indonesian senior high schools.

The classroom implementation followed stages adapted from Langer (1989) and Piscayanti (2021). The first stage was mindful awareness, the second stage was mindful engagement, the third stage was reflective writing, and the fourth stage was self-acceptance. The qualitative instruments included classroom observation notes and reflective activities. The observation focus followed the implementation of the mindful learning stages, including calming or awareness activities, mindful engagement, reflection, and acceptance. It also describes interview and reflective-journal instruments designed to capture students' experiences in relation to novelty sensitivity, perspective flexibility, contextual connection, reflection, and self-acceptance. Meanwhile, the quantitative instrument was a writing assessment based on five components such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar/language use, and mechanics. Each component was rated using a five-point rubric. The maximum rubric score was 25. The category criteria in the research materials classify scores from 20–25 as Highly Developed, 10–19 as Fairly Developed, and 5–9 as Early Developed. Also, the self-acceptance instrument consisted of five statements addressing acceptance of strengths and weaknesses, comfort with personal identity without comparison, forgiveness of mistakes as learning opportunities, recognition of uniqueness, and confidence in acknowledging identity. These items were designed in relation to the mindful learning principles developed by Piscayanti.

Data collection involved the implementation of mindful learning in writing instruction, observation of classroom activities, reflective activities, and administration of writing assessments. The pre-test was administered before the implementation and the post-test after the learning period. Students' writing was scored according to the five-component rubric. Qualitative observations and reflections were used to identify changes in awareness, participation, emotional regulation, self-acceptance, and confidence. In addition, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including minimum score, maximum score, mean, and standard deviation. A paired-samples t-test was used to compare pre-test and post-test writing scores from the same students. The significance level was set at .05. Cohen's *d* was calculated to estimate the practical magnitude of the observed change. Meanwhile, qualitative evidence was analyzed thematically by identifying recurring patterns related to mindful awareness, engagement, reflection, emotional regulation, self-acceptance, and confidence. The two strands were then integrated in interpretation. In addition, for qualitative evidence, the research design identifies credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as important trustworthiness principles.

Triangulation of observation, interview/reflection, and writing evidence was intended to reduce reliance on a single data source and to strengthen interpretation of the implementation process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Implementation of Mindful Learning

The first research question concerned how mindful learning was implemented in the writing classroom. The findings show four interconnected stages: mindful awareness, mindful engagement, reflective writing, and self-acceptance. The stages were not presented as isolated activities. Instead, they formed a sequence in which students first prepared attention, then engaged with the writing topic, reflected on ideas and experiences, and finally evaluated their learning in a supportive environment. During the mindful awareness stage, students participated in short breathing exercises. The observation notes indicated that students appeared calmer and more focused after the exercises. This observation is consistent with the purpose of mindful awareness: bringing attention to the present learning situation before students engage in cognitively demanding activities. In a writing classroom, this transition can be important because writing requires sustained attention and decision making. Meanwhile, during mindful engagement, students were encouraged to connect writing topics with personal experiences. This practice increased participation because students were not required to begin from abstract linguistic structures alone. Instead, they could use experiences and familiar contexts as resources for idea generation. The process is consistent with Langer's (1989, 1997, 2000) emphasis on contextual sensitivity and active meaning making.

Reflective writing provided another layer of engagement. Students were asked to examine their experiences, thoughts, and feelings before or during the writing process. Reflection can help learners notice what they want to say and how they want to organize it. In this sense, reflection operates as a metacognitive support for writing because students become more aware of their own thinking and composing process. In addition, self-acceptance was the final major dimension. Students were encouraged to appreciate the learning process and to regard mistakes as opportunities for improvement. The findings suggest that this approach reduced anxiety and supported confidence during writing activities. The result is important because adolescent learners may be particularly sensitive to comparison with peers. A classroom environment that normalizes mistakes can provide greater freedom for students to experiment with language and express ideas. Thus, four qualitative themes emerged from the implementation increased awareness of learning processes, improved engagement in writing activities, better emotional regulation, and increased self-acceptance and confidence. These themes show that the implementation was not limited to a cognitive intervention. Mindful learning affected how students approached the classroom activity, how they responded emotionally, and how they viewed themselves as learners.

Quantitative Improvement in Writing Performance

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Writing Scores

Test	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Pre-test	35	70.00	79.00	73.94	2.93
Post-test	35	78.00	89.00	83.29	3.21

The descriptive results show a clear increase in writing performance. The mean score increased from 73.94 in the pre-test to 83.29 in the post-test, an improvement of 9.35 points. The minimum score increased from 70 to 78, while the maximum score increased from 79 to 89. The standard deviation changed from 2.93 to 3.21, indicating that the post-test scores remained relatively concentrated while moving upward. The change in the minimum score is particularly relevant because it suggests that improvement was not limited to students who already had the strongest performance. Students at the lower end of the pre-test distribution also moved upward.

Although the design and available data do not establish causality as strongly as a randomized controlled experiment would, the pattern is consistent with the interpretation that the mindful learning period coincided with substantial improvement in the participating students' writing performance.

Writing Component Analysis

Table 2. Improvement in Writing Components

Component	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement
Content	3.20	4.23	+1.03
Organization	3.00	3.91	+0.91
Vocabulary	3.06	4.00	+0.94
Grammar	2.89	4.00	+1.11
Mechanics	3.20	3.69	+0.49

All five components improved after the implementation. Grammar showed the largest improvement, increasing by 1.11 points. Content increased by 1.03 points, vocabulary by 0.94, organization by 0.91, and mechanics by 0.49. The pattern indicates that the intervention was accompanied by improvement in both higher-level idea development and language accuracy. The grammar result can be interpreted in relation to mindful awareness. Students who become more attentive to their language choices may be more likely to notice grammatical forms while composing and revising. The content improvement, meanwhile, is consistent with the reflective and contextual aspects of mindful learning. When students connect a writing topic with personal experience, they have more opportunities to generate ideas rather than focusing only on sentence-level correctness.

Organization and vocabulary also showed substantial gains. Mindful engagement can encourage students to consider how ideas relate to each other and what words best communicate intended meanings. Mechanics showed the smallest increase, although it still improved. This difference is reasonable because mechanics may require repeated editing and explicit language practice in addition to increased awareness.

Category Distribution

Table 3. Distribution of Writing Performance Categories

Test	Fairly Developed	Highly Developed
Pre-test	35 students (100%)	0 students (0%)
Post-test	13 students (37.14%)	22 students (62.86%)

The category distribution demonstrates a substantial shift. Before the implementation, all 35 students were classified as Fairly Developed. After the implementation, 22 students, or 62.86%, reached the Highly Developed category, while 13 students, or 37.14%, remained in the Fairly Developed category. No students were reported in the Early Developed category in the distribution presented in the findings. This categorical movement provides a useful complement to the mean-score analysis. A higher mean alone could result from relatively small changes across many students or large changes among a few students. In this dataset, however, the movement of 22 students into the Highly Developed category indicates that the improvement was also visible in the level of writing performance defined by the rubric.

Statistical Test and Effect Size

Table 4. Paired-Samples T-Test

Comparison	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test – Pre-test	9.34	17.13	34	.000

The paired-samples t-test produced a t value of 17.13 with 34 degrees of freedom and a significance value of .000 as reported in the research document. Because $p < .05$, the difference

between pre-test and post-test writing scores is statistically significant. The null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two measurements is therefore rejected in the context of this analysis. The effect-size analysis produced Cohen's $d = 2.90$. The research document interprets this as a very large effect. The effect size is important because statistical significance alone does not describe the practical magnitude of a change. In this case, the very large effect indicates that the observed difference between the two measurements is substantial relative to the variability in the paired scores.

The statistical findings should nevertheless be interpreted in accordance with the actual research design. Because the reported dataset is a single-group pre-test and post-test dataset, the results establish a statistically significant change over the two measurement occasions but do not, by themselves, eliminate alternative explanations such as maturation, repeated testing, classroom factors, or other concurrent influences. The qualitative evidence and theoretical alignment provide contextual support for the interpretation that mindful learning contributed to the observed development, while future studies using a clearly implemented comparison group could provide stronger causal evidence.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The mixed-methods interpretation shows that the quantitative improvement in writing performance occurred alongside changes in students' learning experiences. The quantitative data demonstrate that writing scores increased, while the qualitative findings provide an account of the classroom processes associated with that improvement. Increased awareness, engagement, emotional regulation, and self-acceptance were identified as important themes. These themes can help explain why students became more willing and able to engage with writing tasks.

The integration is particularly visible in the relationship between awareness and writing accuracy. Students who are more attentive to their composing process may notice grammatical choices, vocabulary use, and organizational problems more effectively. Similarly, reflection and contextual connection can provide richer content for writing. Self-acceptance can support the willingness to experiment, revise, and tolerate mistakes, which are essential parts of developing writing proficiency. The findings therefore suggest that cognitive and affective development occurred simultaneously. Mindful learning did not function only as a concentration technique. It created a learning process in which attention, reflection, emotional regulation, and language production were connected. This integrated interpretation is consistent with the theoretical foundation of mindful learning used in the study.

Discussion

The findings support the central principles of Langer's (1989, 1997, 2000) mindful learning theory. First, students were encouraged to become aware of the present learning situation through short focusing activities. Second, students were exposed to opportunities to consider writing topics from personal and contextual perspectives rather than simply reproduce predetermined responses. Third, reflective writing encouraged students to recognize differences in their own experiences and ideas. These practices correspond to the broader principles of active awareness, novelty, flexibility, and contextual sensitivity. From a theoretical perspective, writing is a suitable domain for mindful learning because composing is inherently a process of selection. Students choose what to say, how to organize it, which words to use, and how to communicate relationships among ideas. When learners approach these choices mindfully, they may become less dependent on automatic patterns and more attentive to the meaning they intend to communicate.

The results also demonstrate the importance of moving beyond a narrow understanding of mindfulness as simply sitting quietly or breathing. In this study, breathing was only an entry activity. The broader intervention involved engagement, reflection, contextual connection, feedback, and self-acceptance. This interpretation is consistent with Langer's (1989, 1997, 2000)

view of mindfulness as a way of approaching learning rather than a single classroom exercise. On the other hand, the findings are strongly aligned with Piscayanti's (2018, 2021) EFL-oriented development of mindful learning. Piscayanti (2018) emphasizes the potential of mindful learning in professional development, while Piscayanti (2021) specifically discusses cultivating mindful learning in EFL poetry classes as a way to support creative and productive writers. The present findings extend this pedagogical perspective to senior high school writing learners.

The improvement in content and vocabulary is particularly compatible with a creative view of writing. Students were not only asked to produce grammatically correct sentences but were encouraged to connect topics with experiences and develop meaningful ideas. The improvement in grammar demonstrates that reflective and meaningful learning does not necessarily conflict with language accuracy. Instead, attention to meaning can coexist with attention to form when students are given opportunities to reflect and revise. The self-acceptance dimension also strengthens the connection with Piscayanti's (2021) humanistic orientation. A learner who accepts mistakes as part of learning may be more willing to participate and revise. In adolescent classrooms, where peer comparison can influence confidence, this affective dimension may be particularly valuable. The qualitative findings of increased confidence and reduced anxiety therefore complement the quantitative evidence of writing improvement.

Furthermore, the results are consistent with Saputra et al. (2020), who examined the effect of mindful learning on students' writing competency. The current study similarly identifies writing improvement after mindful learning, but it contributes a different educational context by focusing on senior high school learners rather than relying primarily on university-level evidence. This extension is important because developmental context can influence how students respond to reflective and affective pedagogies. The findings also relate to Piscayanti (2021), who emphasizes creativity, productivity, reflection, and self-awareness in EFL writing. The present study's improvement in content suggests that students may have benefited from opportunities to generate and develop ideas. The increase in grammar further suggests that mindful learning can be combined with explicit attention to language quality rather than functioning as an alternative to conventional writing instruction.

The qualitative themes are also broadly consistent with studies examining mindfulness and academic engagement. Fallah (2017) connected mindfulness with coping self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety, while Lin and Mai (2018) examined mindfulness meditation in relation to academic performance. Lin (2020) highlighted relationships among mindful learning, psychological capital, and English learning engagement. These studies provide a wider conceptual basis for interpreting the present findings on attention, confidence, and engagement. At the school level, the findings are relevant to recent Indonesian discussions of mindfulness and deep learning. Karmini et al. (2025) discuss learning awareness and mindful learning strategies in curriculum implementation, while Siswanto and Afandi (2024) examine mindfulness implementation among senior high school students. The present study contributes specifically to EFL writing and provides quantitative evidence of writing-score change together with qualitative evidence concerning students' learning experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the implementation and impact of mindful learning on senior high school students' English writing skills and affective engagement. Classroom evidence indicated that students became more focused, participated more actively, connected writing topics with personal experiences, reflected on their ideas, and demonstrated greater confidence in approaching mistakes as learning opportunities. The study also highlights the relevance of mindful learning to deep learning in Indonesian education. Meaningful engagement, reflection, awareness, emotional regulation, and self-directed learning are compatible with the educational orientation described in the research documents. Mindful learning can therefore be used as a practical pedagogical strategy within EFL writing lessons while maintaining the language-learning objectives of the curriculum.

The findings are limited to 35 students in one school and need further testing with comparison groups. Meanwhile, the implication of this study is mindful learning can be conceptualized as an integrated pedagogical process involving attention, engagement, reflection, and self-acceptance rather than as a single technique.

Furthermore, English teachers are encouraged to integrate brief awareness activities, contextual writing prompts, reflective writing, self-assessment, and supportive feedback into writing instruction. Students should be encouraged to recognize both strengths and limitations and to treat mistakes as opportunities for revision. Future researchers should conduct studies with larger samples, clearly implemented comparison groups, multiple measurement points, and validated quantitative measures of affective variables such as self-acceptance and anxiety. Such designs would provide stronger evidence concerning the causal mechanisms through which mindful learning may influence EFL writing development.

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