

A proposed model for teaching methods in essay writing for high school students

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Abstract

An essay is one of the most relevant and widely used public communication genres. However, there is no standardized system for teaching and assessing essay writing in high schools, leading to inconsistencies in student proficiency. This study examines the factors influencing persuasive essay writing among high school students to develop a structured model that enhances instruction for tenth and eleventh graders. An experiment involving 56 students was conducted, with an experimental group of 28 and a control group of 28. The model's effectiveness was assessed by comparing the writing performance of both groups. The results indicate that students in the experimental group demonstrated significant improvement in essay writing compared to those in the control group. Evaluation of essay quality revealed that students in the experimental group developed essential communicative, analytical, and writing skills necessary for persuasive writing. The study develops and tests a model based on the communicative activity approach to establish both theoretical and practical foundations for teaching essay writing. The findings contribute to improving instructional strategies, offering educators an effective framework for fostering students' writing competencies. This research highlights the importance of structured essay writing training in high school curricula.

Keywords: Assessment; essay; experiential learning; high school; language; teaching methodology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The essay is known as one of the most relevant and popular genres of public communication used in telecommunications and other communication forms (De La Paz et al., 2014; Huttner, 2008; Vassileva, 1998). In recent years, researchers and practitioners have paid immense attention to essay writing due to its relevance across all socio-cultural spheres (Block, 2000; Kim, 2020; Latifi et al., 2023; Noroozi et al., 2016). Kim (2020) assert that individuals engage in four communicative activities: speaking; listening, writing, and reading. Of the four, speaking is considered superior to writing because it allows individuals to grasp the truth (Clark, 1990; Kim, 2020). However, proponents of the communicative activity approach (Raimes, 1998; Taylor, 1981) describe writing as a crucial communicative activity. Taylor (1981), a proponent of essay writing, stated that writing is a two-way street, thereby advocating for reciprocity, that is, writing as an intended interaction with an audience. For high school students, essay writing is essential. It can reveal the student's inner "I", enhance their self-awareness, reveal the scope of student interest, activate critical thinking, develop associative thinking, and build speech (Aitken & Halkowski 2024; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Arnold et al., 2017; Kim, 2020; Latifi et al., 2023). Despite significant development in essay writing tools, there is no unified system of teaching and examining essay writing in high schools.

All eleventh graders are expected to be proficient in their essay writing abilities, encompassing the ability to competently express their personal experience, independently find an original way to solve a social and moral problem, and answer problematic questions through writing (Barbot et al., 2012). However, research shows that high school graduates have difficulties creating coherent written statements in the final and unified state exams. They cannot use language tools for their communicative expediency and arguments (Ramankulov et al., 2019; Ramankulov et al., 2020). These findings have prompted us to examine the factors influencing essay writing among high school students.

To improve essay writing in high school, we adopt experiential learning as our educational platform. Experiential learning arose from the communicative activity approach and the reciprocity perspective (Taylor, 1981). According to Taylor (1981), essay writing must be in a reciprocal setting to be a communicative activity. Hence, in this context, essay writing can be conceptualized as students' engaging in writing to correspond with a target audience. Therefore, as a communicative activity, essay writing incorporates both the language rules (e.g. grammar, correctness) and performative ability i.e. undertaking meaningful communication; (Arnold et al., 2017; Taylor, 1981). Experiential learning has gained widespread acceptance in the twenty-first century (e.g. Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012), especially in learning practices such as service-learning (Bielefeldt et al., 2011; Breunig, 2017), problem-based learning (Kablan & Uğur, 2021), action-based learning (Nguyen et al., 2020), and adventure-based learning (Harper & Webster, 2017). Experiential learning emphasizes developing an individual's communicative personality, essays, and creativity elements (Ackerman, 1993; Kolb, 2014). Through experiential learning, we argue that students become familiarized with the language rules and later graduate to writing essays with a target audience in mind. This process helps them communicate within and without the classroom (Kolb, 2014; Wolfe et al., 1998).

We specifically focus on the essay writing model. This model has been shown to enhance students' personalities, allowing them to abandon the template to adopt their style and instead search for new, original genre models for reasoning. (Block, 2000; Rascaroli, 2008). We posit that high school graduates must effectively master the four communication activities in their unity and understand their relationship. (Sokalskiy & Chernikova, 2020). Essay writing provides an avenue for reciprocity. It combines different speech types within the same text and allows the students to introduce a whole complex of similar genres, such as essays, poems, conversations, and letters (Sokalskiy & Chernikova, 2020). Therefore, the purpose of our research is to develop and experimentally test the effectiveness of a methodological system for teaching high school students to write essays based on a communicative activity approach.

The current study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it builds on the literature on the communicative activity approach by developing a model that tests experiential learning (see Figure 1). Second, the study tests the effectiveness of reciprocity in essay writing among high school students. Most

studies that have used this approach have focused on intermediary college and university students (Latifi et al., 2023). Albrechtsen (1997) used high school student samples in their studies, although research has shown that introducing these concepts in the formative years improves communication in all life spheres (Corbett, 1996; Widdowson, 2007). Finally, by testing the experiential learning model, the current study identifies the tasks used when teaching essay writing among high schoolers. The model encompasses modern educational and methodological features that are practical and effective in teaching. The model is developed by the communicative and creative needs of the high school students. The current study considers the benefits of experiential learning as a communicative activity approach to test the research questions.

1.1. Literature review

1.1.1. Communicative activity approach

Raimes (1998) listed five emerging traditions in essay writing in academic institutions: recognition of the complexity of composing essays, student diversity, learners' processes, the politics of pedagogy, and the value of practice. Previous research has shown that teachers often instruct students to translate text in another language word by word by following grammatical rules. This mode of training barely suffices for the conceptualization of academic writing as it borders heavily on translation (Zhang, 2023). Instead, the communicative activity approach encompasses both the language rules (grammar, correctness) and performative ability (i.e. undertaking meaningful communication; Widdowson, 2007). Specifically, the communicative activity approach differentiates the use and usage of writing. For example, a student will re-write sentences in a language class but be encouraged to compose an essay outside the class. A student can compose journals, essays, and academic writings; however, if they do so without a target audience in mind, these written materials are irrelevant. In other words, for writing to be a communicative activity, these modes of communication must be in a reciprocal setting, addressed to specific readers or listeners (Widdowson, 2007). In the context of essay writing, the readers are the target audience. The need for reciprocity is in line with Aristotle's view of writing, who stated that "it is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with his speech and reason." (Craig & Muller, 2007).

Undertaking essay writing requires both teachers and institutions to change. (Huttner, 2008; Zhao, 2017). Various external proficiency tests such as the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Society for Teaching English Proficiency (STEP test) now include an essay writing section. This section is set to measure one's essay writing ability in a particular context; therefore, the format of writing questions varies (Zhao, 2017). Since these tests are undertaken by high school graduates, we can assume that essay writing is becoming one of the most relevant communicative activities in high school. (Venables & Summit, 2003; Zhao, 2017). Teachers must acknowledge that for students to excel in essay writing in any native language, they must adhere to specific guidelines. This includes following the linear process of essay writing, encompassing the introduction, the main body, and the conclusion (Widdowson, 2007; Zhao, 2017). This example neither advocates for adopting the linear process nor the inclusion of English proficiency tests in the curriculum. Instead, teachers need to acknowledge a gap between the level of writing they are teaching and students' external expectations (Huttner, 2008; Zhao, 2017; Nguyen & Le 2022). Therefore, we propose that experiential learning will enable students to compose persuasive essays.

Ramankulov et al., (2020) suggested that writing could be the most challenging skill to teach among the four activities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students produce multiple essays that require countless revisions, while teachers are expected to consider the essays' technical accuracy and artistic fluency. Both essay writing and evaluation can be time-consuming for teachers and students alike. The students spend lots of time composing essays, while teachers have to invest their resources in correcting, giving feedback, and holding one-on-one sessions with students (Kolb, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2020; Huynh-Cam et al., 2024). However, by adopting an experiential learning model, teaching essay writing can be transformed into a remarkable activity both for teachers and students.

1.1.2. Experiential learning

Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) stated that experiential learning “provides students with an opportunity to experience concepts first-hand and, as such, give students a richer, more meaningful understanding of course concepts and of how they operate in the real world”. In their study of graduate students, Bradberry and De Maio (2019) found that experiential learning distinguished successful students from failed students. Specifically, experiential learning enables students to apply knowledge from other classes to real-world situations while simultaneously honing their communication skills, as well as their ability to analyze and synthesize information (Bradberry & De Maio, 2019).

Teachers must adopt a holistic system to create an encouraging environment for essay writing across disciplines because it is a never-ending recursive process (Block, 2000; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). As Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) assert, the teacher can implement experiential learning while teaching essay writing. Experiential learning is based on co-operation between teacher and students (co-creation) when communicating (Bradberry & De Maio, 2019; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). The content of experiential learning is based on three provisions. First, this approach emphasizes the importance of a communicative personality, which encompasses individual properties and characteristics. The teacher finds ways and means of developing students’ communicative abilities through methodological support for the work. The teacher focuses on the student’s personality and the prospects for his or her development. Such communication is essential for forming a value-oriented internal position concerning a high school student, which arises precisely due to joint activities with the teacher (Latifi et al., 2023). Second, experiential learning propagates the idea of modern essays (Wolfe et al., 1998) as an active principle manifested in the relationship between the author and the reader. The teachers model real speech situations in which high school students can reciprocate the interactions (Warburton, 2020).

As a communicative activity, the students can independently determine the goals of an essay and make plans for activities; independently implement, control, and adjust activities; use all possible resources to achieve the goals and implement plans for activities; and choose successful strategies in various situations (Almashour & Davies 2023; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Widdowson, 2007). Finally, it develops the understanding that essays combine reasoning, creativity, and personal experience (Gilliland, 2015; Herppich et al., 2018). Experiential learning creates a conducive writing environment as students and teachers are part of the co-creation process. Johnson (2015) and Leonard (2010) believe that co-creation is necessary for developing students’ communicative and creative abilities.

As shown in Figure 1, the current study develops the experiential learning model of teaching essay writing in high school. The model comprises five components: target, content, procedural, diagnostic, and performance. The experiential model provides methodological support for forming general communicative and genre-stylistic skills in teaching essay writing among high school students. These are the primary targets of the model. The model has been strengthened as much as possible using a set of methods and techniques to activate high school students’ personal communication experience and develop their creative potential. The model enhances associative thinking and co-creation using the students’ native language to enhance diversity.

For the successful implementation of the model, the content component must be followed. Teachers and students must: work together to develop the content of the program; justify the planned results of training; determine methods, techniques, and means of training to form essay writing skills; select and systematize didactic material in the process of preparing students for the essay; and check the effectiveness of the proposed method. This component aligns with Long’s (2005) reflections on the benefits attached to needs analysis: “Just as no medical intervention would be prescribed before a thorough analysis of what ails the patient, so no language teaching program should be designed without a thorough needs analysis”. The main content and methodological components of the model are in line with the communicative activity approach. They enhance communication (integrating various forms of writing), speech writing (activities that develop active speech and cognitive abilities of students), textuality (activities that develop cultural values through reading texts), and reflexivity (activities that reflect personal life and communication experiences). Just as

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Davies' (1981) detailed model focused on learners' target needs, this component of the experiential model considers what the learners' needs and requirements. This component also considers students' previous knowledge and proficiency (Davies, 1981; Malicka et al., 2019).

The procedural component comprises four stages. In the preparatory stage, programs and textbooks on literature and the Kazakh language are analysed. Also, topics and lessons (for tenth and eleventh graders) are identified to prepare tools for creating essays or other personality-oriented genres. According to Huttner (2008), any possible writing models require the close analysis of student genres and the actual productions of student authors. Through this analysis, students will be involved in essay writing as well as being enabled to develop their authorship skills. Therefore, at the second stage, the various genres of essays are considered. A scientific definition is introduced, the history of its development is traced, the main genre features are explained, the varieties are introduced, and knowledge is consolidated. At the third stage of training, the literature is compared to similar genres (essays, prose poems, letters, words, conversations). Finally, the transition is made from preparatory exercises and reviewing writing sketches and independent creative works in the essay genre.

Under the diagnostic component, various didactic learning conditions have to be met. For instance, the introduction to the essay genre is an essential aspect to consider. The content must indicate the origin and development of the genre. When analyzing literature, the teachers and students must identify the specifics of the essay as a genre. This process involves identifying the genre-forming features, highlighting the essay's character, and clarifying the essay's varieties (literary-critical, artistic, artistic-journalistic, historical, and philosophical). The literary genre forms (speech, letter, word, diary, moral sermon, confession, lyrical miniature, note, or review) must be identified. Later, task and methodological support are offered by organizing students' independent work according to their history, genre, and reference basis.

Finally, the performance component provides guidelines for writing an essay and essay evaluation criteria. A compelling essay must reflect the author's understanding of the purpose of writing, their position on the proposed topic, their emotionality, and their ability to provide a wide range of reasoned arguments and judgments (Hart et al., 2024). Despite the free form of the composition's organization, the essay structure assumes such parts as an introduction, main body, and conclusion. In the introduction, the author must include a maximum of two paragraphs, which will attract the reader's attention and identify the problem at hand. To attract attention, one can use rhetorical questions or comparative allegories. The main body consists of a thesis and several arguments. The thesis must be in the form of finished thoughts that the author wants to convey to the reader. The author may include supplementary words and phrases relevant to the essay. In conclusion, the author sums up the thoughts and ideas from the introduction and the main body.

1.2. Purpose of study

This study examines the factors influencing persuasive essay writing among high school students to develop a structured model that enhances instruction for tenth and eleventh graders. To test the experiential learning model among high school students, the researchers addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there any relationship between high school students' essay writing skills and experiential learning techniques?

RQ2: Is there a difference between the numbers of correctly solved problems in the control and experimental groups?

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

2.1. Participants

A questionnaire was sent to 204 high school students from five large high schools in Turkestan. Of the 204, a total of 56 students met the study criteria. Before distributing the questionnaire, respondents were informed that the study's purpose was to understand the learning process for the Kazakh language. They

were also informed that the process was confidential and voluntary; they could opt-out at any stage. The teachers signed consent forms, while the parents were asked to sign consent forms on behalf of the students.

2.2. Data collection instruments

Data was collected with experiments and a questionnaire. The study experiment was carried out in three stages. First, the researchers sent a baseline survey questionnaire to the students to establish their essay writing proficiency. Table 1 shows the results of the baseline survey. The students were asked to choose ten essay topics (five literary topics and five free topics) and then write an essay in their native language. The essay was expected to take a maximum of three hours, and the recommended number of words was 250 to 300. Exam participants were allowed to use anthologies, texts of works, spelling tools, explanatory dictionaries, encyclopedias, and dictionaries. The students also participated in practical tasks (text analysis essay plan, writing essays for citation, and writing essays on the subject).

The students were randomly assigned to the experimental group ($N = 28$) or the control group ($N = 28$). In the second stage, the teachers in the experimental group were required to: develop the content of the essay writing program, including the necessary theoretical information and a system of educational tasks; specify the expected outcomes of essay writing; determine methods, techniques, and means of teaching students on how to write essays; participate in teaching students essay writing using the didactic materials provided; and check the effectiveness of the proposed method. In the third stage, the teachers were trained using the experiential learning model. All the students ($N = 56$) were subsequently asked to re-write the same essay (as in the first stage). The essays were then graded to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed model.

The study used ten teachers to rate the study tasks. The teachers responded to a baseline survey to establish their essay teaching capabilities. The training familiarized the teachers with the rating criteria (see Table 2) and the conversion scale (see Table 3). A norming session then followed, during which teachers rated dummy essays prepared for training purposes. Teachers and researchers discussed the ratings provided and the criteria used. This session concluded once the researchers ascertained that the teachers could work independently; the actual rating was not done in the group. The first set of five teachers were randomly assigned a set of written essays to work on independently. The general instructions were that the teachers could take a break after rating an essay to avoid the potential influence of fatigue. They were also provided with the rating criteria and the conversation table for reference. Once a teacher completed an essay, it was transferred to the second set of five teachers for a double rating.

2.3. Analysis

A one-way ANOVA was then conducted using SPSS version 23.0 to examine the extent to which experiential learning influenced essay writing. Using one-way ANOVA, the pre- and post-experiment figures were compared. Also, the Kramer–Welch test was used for multiple comparisons. The measures were all significant ($p < 0.05$); the critical value of the Kramer–Welch test was $t_{crit} = 1.96$. We had two independent samples: the experimental group and the control group.

3. RESULTS

This study aimed to answer two research questions. The first concerns whether there is a relationship between high school students' essay writing skills and experiential learning. The second question concerns whether there is a difference between the numbers of correctly solved problems in the control and experimental groups.

The results of the baseline student survey (Table 1) highlight the initial knowledge and perceptions of students regarding essay writing. A significant majority (81%) were unfamiliar with the definition of the word "essay," and an even higher percentage (98%) did not know its origin. Despite this, 81% of the students reported having previously written an essay, yet 79% acknowledged experiencing difficulties during the writing process. Furthermore, while 67% of students believed essay writing remains relevant in modern journalism, 21% disagreed, and 12% were unsure. Notably, 91% of students expressed interest in learning how to write an essay.

Table 1

Results of the baseline student survey

No.	Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Other option (%)
1	Do you know the definition of the word "essay"?	19	81	
2	Do you know the origin of the word "essay"?	2	98	
3	Have you ever written an essay?	81	19	
4	When writing an essay, did you encounter any difficulties?	79	21	
5	Do you think essay writing is relevant in modern journalism? Why?	67	21	12
6	Would you like to learn how to write an essay?	91	4	5

N = 56.

Following the intervention, the effectiveness of the training program was assessed by comparing the pre- and post-experiment survey results between the control group (CG) and the experimental group (EG) (Table 4). The data reveal substantial improvements in the experimental group across all assessed areas. Initially, only 19% of students in the EG could define the term "essay," whereas post-training, this figure rose to 81%, compared to a marginal increase in the CG (30% to 39%). Similarly, knowledge of the origin of the word "essay" increased dramatically in the EG from 2% to 71%, while the CG only saw a minor improvement (5% to 11%).

Students in the EG also demonstrated a significantly enhanced ability to list and describe different types of essays, increasing from 21% before the experiment to 68% afterward, while the CG showed minimal improvement (6% to 7%). Additionally, the percentage of students in the EG who reported being able to write an essay rose from 18% to 70%, compared to a minor increase in the CG (40% to 43%).

Despite these improvements, challenges in essay writing persisted, as reflected in the responses regarding difficulties in the writing process. Before the intervention, 10% of EG students reported no difficulties in essay writing, which declined to 54% after the experiment. This suggests that while the training program enhanced students' essay-writing abilities, some difficulties remained, possibly due to the complexity of writing mechanics or unfamiliarity with structuring arguments effectively.

The assessment of essay content, based on predefined evaluation criteria (Table 2), further confirmed these findings. The experimental group demonstrated notable progress in areas such as depth of topic disclosure, argumentation, compositional integrity, and speech culture. When converted to a grading scale (Table 3), the majority of essays from the EG received higher marks, reflecting the impact of the training intervention.

Table 2

Criteria for evaluating the essay content

Criteria	Descriptors	Points
Depth of topic disclosure and persuasiveness of judgments (2 points)	Good understanding of the proposed topic	1
	The essay does not correspond to the main topic	0
	Selecting a problem	1
Argument (3 points)	Incorrectly highlighted problem or missing problem	0
	The presence of an argument (s) from a literary work that corresponds to the subject of the essay	1
	The argument(s) emerges from other sources confirming the author's position	1
Compositional integrity and consistency (3 points)	Availability of individual author's position	1
	With the presence of compositional integrity, the parts of the essay are logically connected, the thought develops consistently	1
	The presence of internal logic	1
	The ability to go from private to general (and vice versa)	1
Speech culture (2 points)	Originality (interesting clutches, unexpected turns), the novelty of conclusions	1
	Use of artistic and visual means and stylistic figures	1
	Emotionality, the liveliness of speech	1
Maximum score		10

Table 3

Scale for converting points to a mark

Points	Mark
9–10	5
7–8	4
4–6	3

The analysis used percentages provided by teachers to define the ratings of the written essays. As shown in Table 4 and Figure 1, the percentages were compared based on the number of correctly solved student tasks in the control and experimental groups to assess the effectiveness of the experiential learning model. The experimental group students showed improvement compared to those in the control group, which shows the training's effectiveness, therefore answering *RQ1*. Evaluating the quality of essays based on the selected criteria, we found that most experimental group students (high level = 36%, average level = 43%) formed the necessary communicative and speech skills associated with writing. Most of the experimental group's written statements corresponded to the essay's content and structure. These findings answer *RQ2*. The number of students with a high level of independence in writing essays also increased (from 14% to 36%). These results thus answer both research questions. Figure 1 shows the model of the methodological system for teaching essay writing to high school students

Table 4

Results of the student survey

Question	Answer	Before the experiment (%)		After the experiment (%)	
		CG	EG	CG	EG
Can you define the term essay?	Yes	30	19	39	81
	No	70	81	61	19
Do you know the origin of the word essay?	Yes	5	2	11	71
	No	95	98	89	29
Can you list and describe the types of essays in terms of content?	Yes	6	21	7	68
	No	94	79	93	32
Can you write an essay?	Yes	40	18	43	70
	No	60	82	57	30
When writing an essay, have you ever experienced any difficulties in the writing process?	Yes	60	10	61	54
	No	40	90	39	46

N = 56

CG = control group

EG = experimental group

Figure 1

Results of the Pre-experiment and Post-experiment Student Survey (CG = Control Group; EG = Experimental Group)

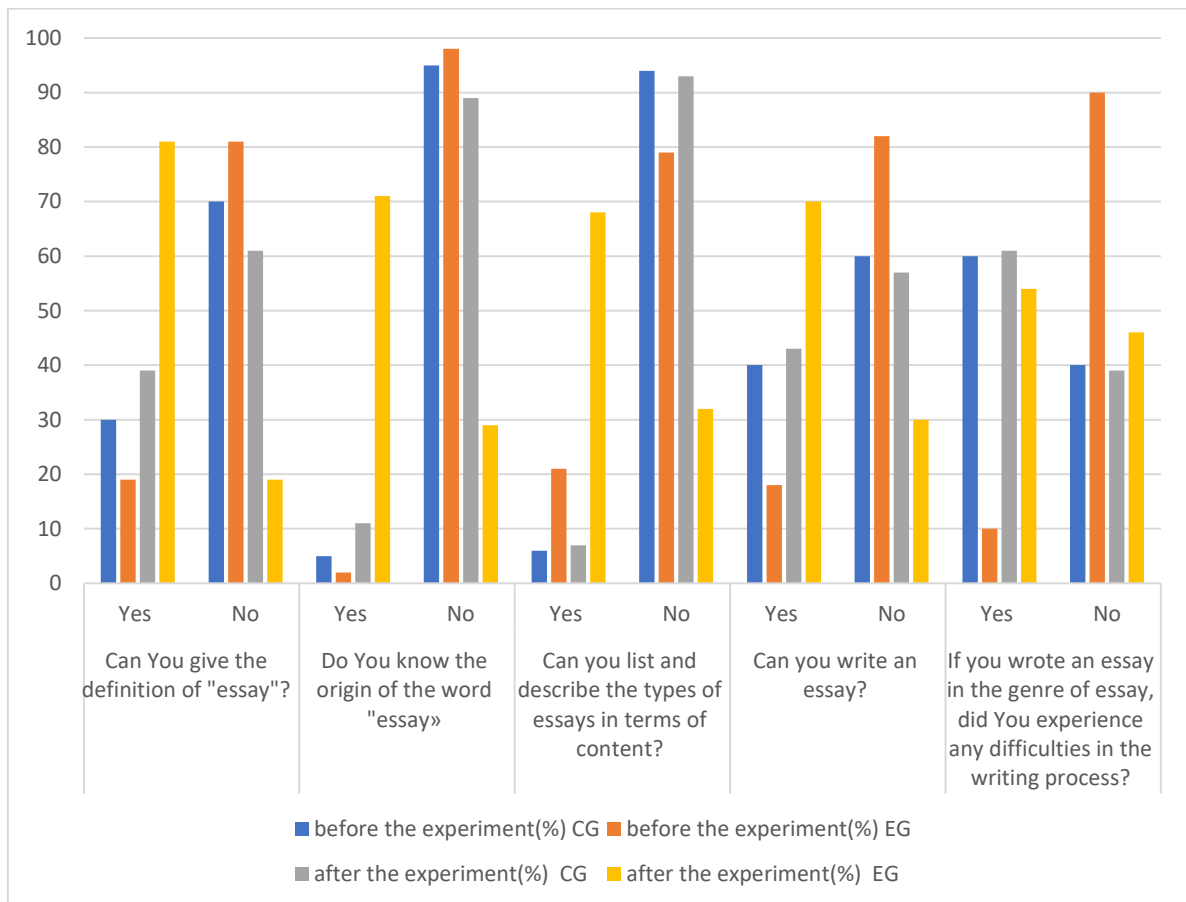
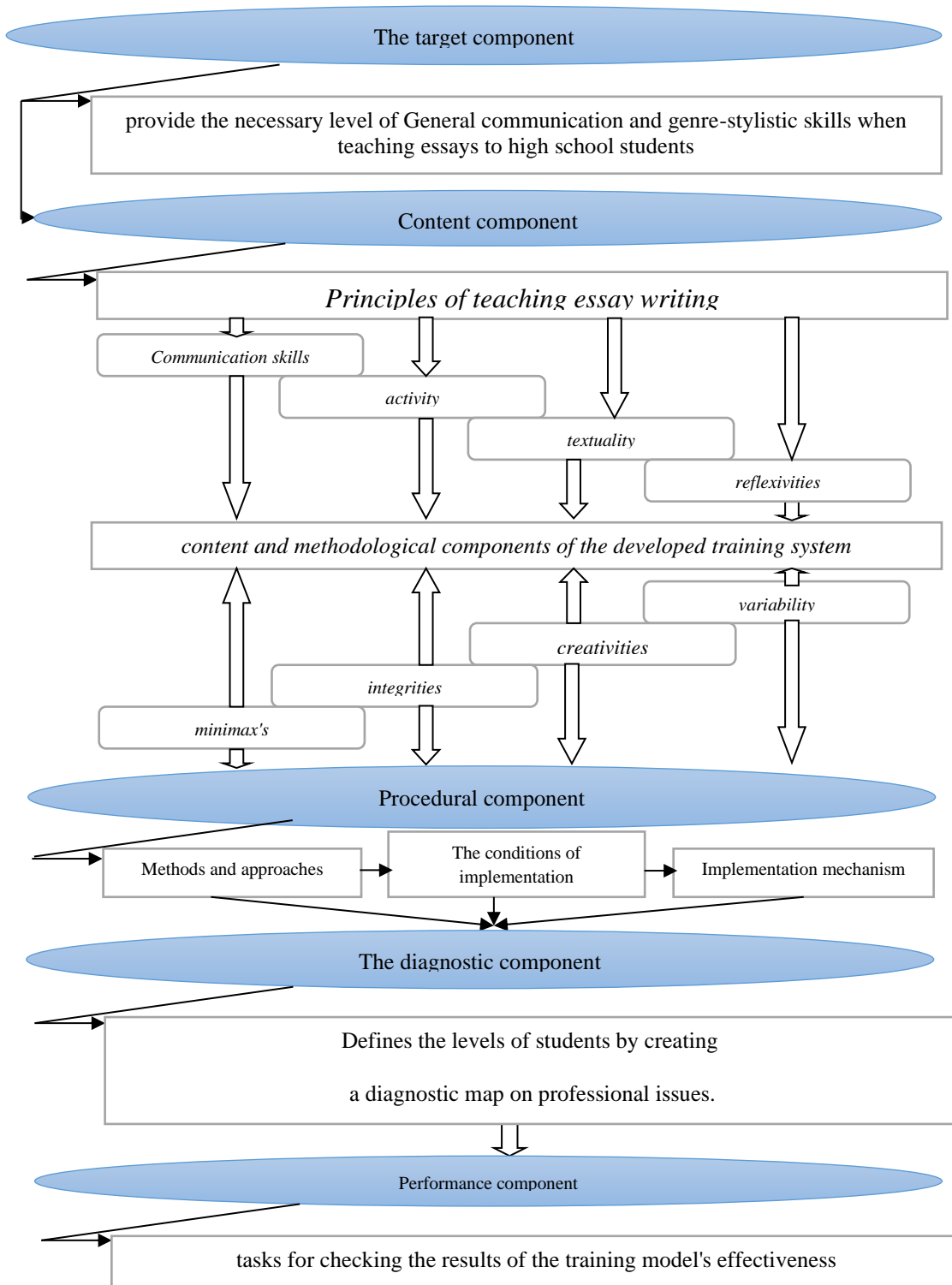


Figure 2

Model of the methodological system for teaching essay writing to high school students



Overall, the findings indicate that structured training programs significantly enhance students' understanding of essays, their ability to write them, and their confidence in the writing process. However, continued reinforcement may be necessary to address lingering difficulties and further refine students' writing skills.

4. DISCUSSION

This study first contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it has developed and tested a model based on the communicative activity approach. Based on a review of the literature, we ascertained that theoretical and practical foundations for teaching writing essays are critical for high school students and teachers (Albrechtsen, 1997). Second, the study tested the effectiveness of reciprocity in essay writing among high school students. The preliminary survey of the study established the level of essay writing among the students. The teachers and students then underwent training and answered the same questions. By analyzing the feedback and training, the study revealed that essay writing is a process that relies on reciprocity (Corbett, 1996; Huttner, 2008). The high school students' involvement in testing the model was necessary to understand essay writing development and improvement.

Finally, by testing the experiential learning model, the study identified the tasks used when teaching essay writing to high schoolers. The model encompassed modern educational and methodological features that are practical and effective in teaching and learning. These findings are in line with those of Kolb (2014) on the impact of experiential learning. The model considered high school students' communicative and creative needs, thereby developing a specific methodological approach comprising tasks with medium and high complexity levels. Analysis of the results showed improved performance, which shows that experiential learning is a feasible and effective methodological approach to essay writing.

5. CONCLUSION

The present work aims to develop and test a teaching model of essay writing for high school students. Essay writing creates self-awareness in high school students, reveals their scope of interest, activates their cognitive processes, and builds their speech. Therefore, an understanding of factors that influence essay writing contributes to the literature. The present study also extends previous study findings focusing on the communicative activity approach and experiential learning and develops a comprehensive model. More importantly, the study tested the model using high school student samples to increase the generalizability of the research.

The study evaluated writing quality based on specific criteria and a scale. The results from other studies may have been influenced by their evaluation of writing quality, thus representing a potential bone of contention. Other studies using other variables or measures of writing quality may observe divergent relationships in the model. However, adopting the model developed in this study may minimize these divergent views as it follows a specific procedure. Although the study sample and procedure are specific to particular topics and genres, future studies may use the proposed model in other contexts to enhance the study's generalizability.

The experimental study comprised two groups (experimental and control groups). Other studies have used similar research methodologies; however, the benefits of experiential learning cannot be established in a single study. Essay writing is a never-ending recursive process and is based on teacher and students' cooperation. Future research can use longitudinal data to enhance the accuracy of the phenomena under study. The study also highlighted the level of complexity (e.g., medium and high) but did not outline the importance of these levels. While enhancing essay writing considers the levels of student proficiency, care should be taken in interpreting the findings of this study. Although proficiency can be evaluated quantitatively, qualitative research must examine the reasons behind these levels of complexity. While the data sample was in line with previous studies, future research may seek larger samples to develop a comprehensive model. Finally, we hope that future research will develop study variables that can be easily validated through well-established analysis methods. The current study provides a model that can be explored further in developing techniques for assessing essay writing in high school and beyond.

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Conflict of interest: All the authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethics declarations: All procedures performed in the study followed the national research committee's ethical standards and the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. It consisted of the following elements: the purpose of the study, a statement regarding confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and a statement regarding the participant's right to withdraw their consent at any time.

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