

Research Article

**Portfolio Assessment-Led Engagement, Study, and Activation (ESA)
Mechanism in Writing Class: Focus on Emotive Dimensions**

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Abstract

An appropriate and dynamic teaching method in English as Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is crucial for engaging, attracting, and supporting students. This study utilized a mixed-method approach of triangulation multilevel design to explore the effectiveness of synthesizing Engagement, Study, and Activation (ESA) with portfolio assessment on Iranian female students' emotive dimensions in writing skills. A total of 177 students participated in the experimental study, completing think-aloud protocols, questionnaires, and interviews. Quantitative analysis through MANOVA and qualitative analysis using NVivo demonstrated significant results. The synthesis of ESA with portfolio assessment yielded the highest mean scores in emotive dimensions related to writing skills, followed by pure ESA application and the control group. Additionally, pure ESA application outperformed conventional instructional methods in overall emotive dimensions. However, the synthetic approach proved to be more effective than pure ESA across all emotive dimensions. Qualitative data from think-aloud protocols and interviews further elucidated the impact of synthetic mechanisms on boredom, hopelessness, anxiety, anger, enjoyment, pride, motivation, motivation and relief. The main implication for the stakeholders might be the feasibility, usefulness and applicability of dynamic assessment in accommodating emotive dimensions in the process of both instruction and assessment of language.

Keywords: emotion, ESA method, portfolio-assessment, writing skill

Introduction

Applying or implementing an appropriate and a dynamic method in educational settings is a delicate challenge for English teachers to make students enthusiastic for learning. For years, teachers could not have come up with a suitable, solid, and commonplace method based on which they can involve their students in learning settings and motivate them. In consequence, shifting paradigms, changing methods, and approving or rejecting foreign or second language teaching-learning approaches and methods have turned out to be an inevitable trend. According to Harmer (2007), these changes caused the re-examination of past assumptions about teaching. Several approaches have been proposed and applied during the decades, such as Grammar-Translation, Direct, Audiolingualism, Cognitive, and Communicative, which have been offered over the years, and amongst them, some trends have had - and continued to have - a significant impact on how languages are taught today.

Most current language teaching trend tends to mingle the above-mentioned ideas and approaches. Harmer (2007) believes that most teaching sequences need to have certain characteristics or elements, which he identifies them as engage, study and activate (ESA), through which students know their exposure, motivation and opportunities for language use, and acknowledging that different students may respond more or less well to different stimuli, whether they take place over a few minutes, half an hour, a lesson or a sequence of lessons. According to Tomlinson (2013, p.238) “ESA is a method of how to build students’ interest in a topic considered problematic by a teacher in learning. The teacher should know to build and control it too”. Thus, the role of teacher becomes salient on the one hand, in that as Ayiz says “ESA teaching sequence may benefit the teacher since it helps the teacher try to design the best teaching sequence for a particular purpose of teaching so that the students become more interested in learning and participating” (2014, p.87). And on the other hand, if learners engage actively with what they are studying, as Fithria and Ratmanida (2019, p.161) say, they “tend to understand more, learn more, remember more, enjoy it more and be able to appreciate the relevance of what they have learned”. Such developments in learners is justified on the grounds that ESA aims to arouse learners’ interest and motivation. The three stages involve learners mentally and emotionally first through engagement stage, then in the course of

study stage they are actively taught, and during the activation stage they use language not only to practice specifically and grammatically but use it communicatively (in a role-play, game, discussion, drawing, story...).

Furthermore, and in the same vein, Vikasari (2019, p.79) concluded that “ESA is an effective way for both (teacher and learner), and it was useful for teachers to assess how good the class is progressing it”. However, any teaching-learning procedure demands an alternative assessment. One of the most popular alternatives in assessment is portfolio which is defined by Genesee and Upshur (1996, p.83) as “a purposeful collection of students’ work that demonstrates their efforts, progress and achievements in given area”. O’Malley and Pierce (1996) claimed that successful teachers have found that portfolios increase the quantity as well as quality of writing and contribute to students’ emotive development; portfolios provide a multidimensional perspective on students’ growth over the time. But, due to being time consuming, portfolios have got low practicality rating. Nevertheless, according to Brown (2000), the reliability, the washback effect, the authenticity, and the face validity of portfolios remain exceedingly high. Portfolio seems much more feasible, practical, and a user-friendly mechanism with ESA. Consequently, portfolio-based assessment initiatives, according to Shohamy, Or, and May (2017, p.135), “.... have become increasingly used in language teaching and learning contexts, and their potential benefits have been widely promoted”.

Focusing on writing skills in language learning, portfolio is considered more practical and pedagogical. Additionally, it is a purposeful and systematic way of storing students’ coursework. As Lam (2018, p.3) mentioned, thereby “students are encouraged to keep their notes, quizzes, corrections, homework assignments and examination papers for review and reflection throughout a study period. They are used in English proficiency courses and academic writing program for various disciplines to serve its learning, grading or reporting purposes”.

Given the emotive contributions of ESA in skill (e.g., writing) acquisition on one hand and relating it to the integration of emotive side with the assessment mechanism may refer Caswell (2011) where he expressed that emotion plays a critical role in writing assessment because according to him it “can help teachers revamp their pedagogical assessment practices, strengthen their assessment proposals, understand their positive and negative emotions, and

then use that understanding to empower themselves for change” (2011, p.57). Similarly, Hargreaves (1998) determined assessment as an “emotive practice” and he acknowledged “emotions are at the heart of teaching”, additionally, he explained good teachers as “emotive, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy” (Hargreaves, 1998, p.835). However, what would happen if the hypothesis of adaptation of ESA principles with portfolio-based assessment in a bid to focus on the emotive aspects of EFL learners is tested is still a great gap in the literature.

Following the Social Constructivism as the theoretical framework behind this study on the grounds that issues like assessment and engagement are alike align with and originate mainly from Social Constructivism on one hand, and importance of learners’ active engagement is highlighted in the process of constructing their own understanding and knowledge on the other, this study attempted to incorporate the learner’s as a whole in the process of learning. In this respect, Honebein (1996) delineates the constructivist philosophical paradigm as a framework that posits individuals as active constructors of their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiential learning and reflection. This paradigm is founded on the premise that individuals largely form or construct their learning through their experiences (as cited in Adom et al., 2016). Actually constructivist philosophers advocate for the optimal approach of fully engagement the student in both the teaching and learning processes, allowing for personal discovery of knowledge or "truth" (Adom, Yeboah & Ankrah, 2016). This approach is considered the most effective by proponents of constructivist philosophy. That could be a logical reason aligned with ESA, the implemented method in current study.

Therefore, the main goal of this study was to study synthesizing ESA as a dynamic and attractive method with portfolio assessment in an attempt to investigate its effect on emotive dimensions of writing skills among high school students. The parameters like ESA, emotion, portfolio-based assessment, teaching and developing language skills, e.g., writing skills, and the like, have separately and individually received prime attention in applied linguistics research; however, what seems left intact is, in fact, to approach teaching and developing language skills in an innovative manner; synergizing teaching

method and assessment alternative on one hand, and approaching these issues under unique circumstances and through unique educational channel on the other. In other words, to realize this approach, incorporation of ESA principles into those of portfolio assessment seems to open new insights and horizons in second language acquisition (SLA) research. To cast some empirical lights on these issues, this multi-dimensional study investigated the effectiveness of pure ESA and ESA-synthesized with portfolio assessment in relation to emotive dimensions of EFL learners (in developing writing ability). All these points are expressed in the form of the following research questions:

1. Does synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment in EFL classes have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' emotive dimensions? If so, how?
2. Does pure ESA in EFL classes have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' emotive dimensions? If so, how?
3. Is there any significant difference between the effect of synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment and pure ESA on Iranian EFL learners' emotive dimensions? If so, how?

Review of Related Literature

Jeremy Harmer (2007), the founder of the ESA mechanism, shed light on the importance of language exposure through comprehensive input. In order to achieve this, he advocated for the integration of various approaches and ideas. This approach provides learners with the opportunity to not only understand how grammar functions, but also how it is applied in communicative activities. Harmer also emphasized the need for "principled eclecticism" to avoid the pitfalls of disorganized activities that lack coherence, which can occur when educators select and use fragments from different theories or methods. Furthermore, Harmer highlighted the significance of incorporating certain characteristics or elements in teaching sequences, regardless of their duration. These elements, known as Engage, Study, and Activate, are essential for effective language instruction (Harmer, 2007, p.52).

The utilization of this approach has proven to be beneficial for researchers who have carried out extensive studies utilizing it. In a study conducted by Arifani, Setiadi, and Darmawangsa (2020), ESA was utilized as a solution for addressing challenges in foreign language writing. The researchers employed this mechanism to combat learner disinterest and enhance engagement in writing tasks, thereby encouraging active participation in learning activities (Arifani et al., 2020, p.208). In this current research, ESA was integrated with portfolio assessment to address writing issues from a cognitive perspective.

Several studies were investigated ESA as a living method in diverse ways. Some were conducted on other skills such as Fithria and Ratmanida (2019), worked on effect of ESA on speaking skills, Giang Huong (2019) evaluated ESA with grammar and Vikasari (2019) had to do with learning vocabularies and ESA. The present study had a comprehensive investigation, exclusively, synthesizing ESA with an assessment, namely, portfolio, which enriched the research to identify cognitive dimensions of learning.

Implementing a method of language teaching without assessment is considered incomplete, as Brown and Lee (2015) defined assessment as the joint effort of teachers and students to draw conclusions on their performance. Portfolio, identified by Genesee and Upshur (1996) as a purposeful collection of students' work showcasing their efforts, progress, and achievements in a given area, is one of the most popular alternative assessment methods. Portfolios are valuable tools in evaluating student achievement, as many scholars have noted that they help students track their progress and share ideas (Farrah, 2018). In the current study, portfolios encompass various forms of student work, such as writing, drawings related to writing, think-alouds, and compositions. Throughout an academic year, progress and setbacks can be observed by assessing these portfolios.

Effective teaching is imbued with a sense of positivity. It goes beyond mere knowledge of the subject matter, efficiency, competence, or mastery of techniques. Exceptional educators are not mere automatons, but rather individuals who are emotionally invested and passionate. They establish connections with their students and infuse their work and classes with delight, innovation, stimulation, and happiness. According to Fried (2001), teaching is a

profession that requires passion. He argues that good teachers are enthusiastic about ideas, learning, and their interactions with students.

According to Caswell (2011), it can be argued with confidence that the process of writing assessment fosters an atmosphere that elicits both favorable and unfavorable emotions from all parties involved, including students, teachers, and stakeholders, whether intentionally or unintentionally. However, the majority of studies conducted on the connection between emotions and writing assessment have primarily focused on the emotional experiences of students, particularly in relation to test anxiety.

Understanding students' emotions is crucial, but teachers must also acknowledge their own emotions to enhance their teaching practices in writing assessment. This is because assessment decisions are influenced by teachers' emotions, which are connected to their beliefs. If emotions are linked to power, status, and beliefs, teachers should comprehend the role of emotions in their professional duties, such as providing feedback on student writing.

Method

Participants

The study involved a sample of 177 female students at the age range of 15 to 16 in the 9th grade of Iranian public high schools in Tehran District 15 Education Office, who were selected through convenience sampling and then randomly assigned to one of three groups: two experimental groups and one control group. One experimental group utilized ESA-embedded portfolio assessment, another experimental group received pure ESA instruction, and the control group followed the conventional teacher-directed writing instruction curriculum. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1
Demographic Information

Participants	Age		Iranian	Afghan
	15	16		
177	86	91	152	25

Research Design

This mixed method study was Qual-Quan such that the quantitative side was quasi-experimental while the qualitative side was exploratory and descriptive in design, which provided use of multiple instruments in order to answer the research questions. As far as the procedure for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting the data was concerned, this study demanded the triangulation design, in which the data were obtained differently on the same topic.

Instruments

Three instruments were utilized in order to accomplish the goals of the study: think-aloud protocol, questionnaire, and interview. The think-aloud protocol allowed students to articulate and document their thoughts and emotions before and after completing tasks. Throughout the research, the think-aloud protocol was carried out in six stages, approximately once a month. The first five protocols were completed as part of their homework assignments, while the final one was conducted following an examination. Subsequently, all data collected was translated into English.

Following this, a questionnaire was developed based on the codes extracted from the think-aloud protocol. The entire questions were in line with the research variables to achieve the results. So, validation was assured through the expert judgment of the three sets of the data including the think-aloud protocol, the questionnaire, and the interview on one hand, and the items modification based on Farahian's (2015) writing metacognitive awareness on the other. In other words, the expert judgement of the concordance among the three types of the data was the measure of the validity. The respondents were instructed to complete the questionnaire accurately, honestly, and correctly (Cohen, 2011, p.209). To ensure its validity, some adjustments were made to the items in alignment with Farahian's (2015) writing scale alongside an expert judgment described in details as follows. Interview questions were formulated by identifying common themes between the think-aloud protocol and questionnaire. Ultimately, five questions were crafted to guide the open-ended interview structure. The interview with each was carried out approximately in twenty minutes.

The instrument measuring emotive dimensions was checked in terms validity and reliability measures. As far as the latter is concerned, respective to the reliability aspects, the Cronbach's alpha reliability estimation was run as to the indices for emotive dimensions and its components as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Statistics for Emotive Dimensions and its Components

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Boredom	.626	4
Hopelessness	.755	3
Anger	.597	4
Anxiety	.776	4
Enjoyment	.812	4
Pride	.723	5
Motivation	.190	2
Relief	.637	4
Emotion	.950	30

Procedure

In a bid to observe the research ethical considerations, the study with both groups was done in the course of the mainstream semester education such that it could look as natural as possible. At the commencement of the academic year, the ESA approach was implemented as the targeted mechanism. Each session involved the creation of a specific engagement activity that aligned with the content of the lesson. During the study phase, target verbs were taught using PowerPoint presentations, incorporating relevant images and displaying the spelling in a step-by-step manner. This involved completing the word based on its corresponding picture, omitting certain letters to prompt students to fill in the blanks, and utilizing the words in simple sentences. In the activation phase, some homework tasks were assigned and collected through student portfolios. The researcher then analyzed and assessed the respective papers, extracting key points to provide feedback to the group. Portfolio assessment was employed in this process.

The experimental groups received education and guidance on how to express their thoughts and record their feelings using the think-aloud protocol.

Gradually, after one month of instruction, they were required to write their first think-aloud. Through a step-by-step approach, they became more familiar with the think-aloud technique, resulting in an improvement in the quality of their assigned papers. On the other side, the control group members were just exposed to the same instruction of writing skill devoid of think-aloud protocol. The students across three distinct groups initially lacked awareness regarding the programs and uncertain about the presence of upcoming exams.

In addition to collecting the think-aloud papers, they were translated into English and the contents were entered into NVivo. Subsequently, certain codes were extracted from the translated papers, which served as the foundational elements for the questionnaire. Drawing inspiration from Farahian's (2015) writing metacognitive awareness questionnaire, a total of thirty-two questions were derived and used as the content for the questionnaire. This questionnaire was then distributed among the students. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using Multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) techniques.

Qualitative Phase

Task-based Think-Aloud Protocol Data Analysis

This action research, as Ebbutt (1998) puts it, is “a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice” (cited in Cohen, 2011, p.345). For the purpose of this research, a couple of think aloud phases defined as: *post-exam think-aloud protocol*, *whilst-learning*, and *post-task* types were conducted. In each phase, the contents of the texts were analyzed entirely; the common points were extracted as well. These extracted contents were entered to NVivo software and were codified.

After giving tasks in the classroom or assigning them as a homework, the researcher-teacher asked the students to write their thoughts and feelings through think- aloud protocol. The note papers were collected during several sessions. As the papers were originally in Persian, they were translated in English. Then, the contents were analyzed in terms of arriving at common points. They were alter entered into NVivo software to extract the codes. As “coding enables the researcher to identify similar information” (Cohen, 2011, p.559), this coding

process was done in three levels, according to Tabibi (2015), the coding was categorized as follows: free coding, axial coding and selective coding.

In the first phase, six tasks were given to the students as homework during the academic year. All tasks were revolved around writing skills, i.e., write sentences under the textbook topics. Students were justified to record their think-aloud in advance. The first two tasks encompassed writing about family members and travelling; they were asked to write their think-aloud under their emotions and feelings. One hundred sixty-eight acceptable papers were collected. Ultimately, five questions were established based on the extracted data. Twenty students were selected randomly to attend as interviewee. Their speeches were recorded and after that all recordings were transcribed. NVivo software exported the common codes to analyze and achieve the results.

Results

To fulfill the objectives of this study, the research questions were examined within the framework of the mixed method research (MMR) design.

Quantitative phase

Multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was employed to examine the impact of integrating ESA with portfolio assessment, pure ESA, and the conventional method on the cognitive dimensions and their components of Iranian EFL learners. In order to conduct this analysis, certain assumptions were made by the statistical method of MANOVA. These assumptions include the homogeneity of variances among groups and the homogeneity of covariance matrices, as well as the normality of the data. Table 3 shows the skewedness and kurtosis indices of normality.

Table 3
Skewedness and Kurtosis Indices of Normality

Group		N	Skewedness		Kurtosis	
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
ESA & Portfolio Assessment	Boredom	50	-.478	.337	.295	.662
	Hopelessness	50	-1.011	.337	.316	.662
	Anger	50	-.715	.337	.200	.662
	Anxiety	50	-.384	.337	-.625	.662

Pure ESA	Enjoyment	50	-.779	.337	.677	.662
	Pride	50	-.372	.337	-1.073	.662
	Motivation	50	-1.091	.337	.379	.662
	Relief	50	-.407	.337	-.680	.662
	Emotion	50	-.506	.337	-.575	.662
	Boredom	57	.299	.316	.018	.623
	Hopelessness	57	-.478	.316	-.492	.623
	Anger	57	-.962	.316	.194	.623
	Anxiety	57	.243	.316	-.491	.623
	Enjoyment	57	-.647	.316	.458	.623
	Pride	57	-.512	.316	-.577	.623
	Motivation	57	-.696	.316	-.897	.623
	Relief	57	-.173	.316	-.755	.623
	Emotion	57	-.109	.316	-.397	.623
Control	Boredom	27	-.033	.448	-1.189	.872
	Hopelessness	27	-.587	.448	-.346	.872
	Anger	27	-1.228	.448	1.943	.872
	Anxiety	27	-.282	.448	.217	.872
	Enjoyment	27	-1.163	.448	1.259	.872
	Pride	27	-.791	.448	.914	.872
	Motivation	27	-1.402	.448	.838	.872
Relief	27	-.187	.448	-.349	.872	
Emotion	27	-1.098	.448	.653	.872	

Since all values in Table 3 were within the ranges of ± 2 , it was concluded that the present data did not show any significant deviation from normality. It should be noted that the criteria of ± 2 were proposed by Bachman, (2005), Bae and Bachman, (2010), George and Mallery, (2020). It should also be noted that Zhu et al, (2019) suggested the criteria of ± 3 . However, Watkins (2021) suggested different criteria for skewedness and kurtosis. He believed that skewedness values should be less than ± 2 while kurtosis indices should be evaluated against the criteria of ± 7 .

Addressing Research Questions (respective Null-Hypotheses)

The first research question trying to see ‘if synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment in EFL classes has any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners’

emotive dimensions or not and if so, how', was addressed on the basis of the Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) to compare the three groups' means on the emotive dimensions. The main results were followed by the post-hoc Scheffe's tests in order to probe the first three null-hypotheses. Before discussing the results, it should be noted that MANOVA, besides the assumption of normality which was reported in Table 4, has two more assumptions: homogeneity of variances of groups, and homogeneity of covariance matrices.

Table 4
Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances for Emotive Dimensions

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Emotion	Based on Mean	7.951	2	131	.001
	Based on Median	6.965	2	131	.001
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	6.965	2	107.947	.001
	Based on trimmed mean	7.918	2	131	.001

Table 4 shows the Levene's tests of homogeneity of variances. The results indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not retained on emotive dimensions ($F(2, 131) = 6.96, p < .05$).

Table 5
Box's Test of Homogeneity of Covariance Matrices for Emotive Dimensions

Box's M	23.658
F	1.897
df1	12
df2	35324.839
Sig.	.030

Table 5 shows the results of the Box's test of homogeneity of covariance matrices. Before discussing the results, it is worth mentioning that the Box's tests should be reported at .001 levels; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Pallant, 2016; and Field, 2018. The results indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices was retained, $Box' M = 23.65, p > .001$.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics for Emotive Dimensions by Group

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Emotion	ESA + Portfolio	22.637	.560	21.530	23.745
	Pure ESA	17.137	.524	16.100	18.175
	Control	14.151	.762	12.643	15.658

Table 6 shows the synthesizing ESA with the portfolio assessment, pure ESA, and control groups' means on total emotive dimensions. The results showed that the synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment had the highest means on the emotive dimensions. These were followed by the pure ESA, and control groups.

Table 7
Multivariate Tests for Emotive Dimensions by Group

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.952	853.043	3	129	.000	.952	
	Wilks' Lambda	.048	853.043	3	129	.000	.952	
	Hotelling's Trace	19.838	853.043	3	129	.000	.952	
	Roy's Largest Root	19.838	853.043	3	129	.000	.952	
Group	Pillai's Trace	.474	13.467	6	260	.000	.237	
	Wilks' Lambda	.537	15.673	6	258	.000	.267	
	Hotelling's Trace	.841	17.937	6	256	.000	.296	
	Roy's Largest Root	.815	35.316	3	130	.000	.449	

Table 7 shows the results of MANOVA. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the three groups' overall means on emotive dimensions, $F(6, 260) = 13.46, p < .01, \eta^2 = .237$, representing a large effect size¹. Table 8 shows the results of Between-Subjects Effects.

¹ Partial Eta Squared should be interpreted using the following criteria; .01 = Weak, .06 = Moderate, and .14 = Large (Gray and Kinnear 2012, p 323; and Pallant 2016, p 285).

Table 8
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Emotive Dimensions by Group

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta Squared
Group	Emotion	1471.480	2	735.740	46.927	.000	.417	
Error	Emotion	2053.852	131	15.678				
Total	Emotion	49822.613	134					

It should be noted that Table 6 compared the three groups' overall means on the writing skill, and emotive dimensions; however, Table 8 compares three groups' means on the dependent variable, i.e., the emotive dimensions. Based on these results it can be concluded that there were significant differences between the three groups' means on the emotive dimensions, $F(2, 131) = 46.92, p < .01, \eta^2 = .417$, representing a large effect size. And finally, Table 9 shows the results of the post-hoc Scheffe's tests.

Table 9
Post-Hoc Scheffe's Tests for Emotive Dimensions by Group

Dependent Variable	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Emotion	ESA Portfolio	Pure ESA	5.50*	.767	.000	3.60	7.40
		Control	8.49*	.946	.000	6.15	10.83
	Pure ESA	Control	2.99*	.925	.007	.70	5.28

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Based on the results in Table 9, considering the means, the three null-hypothesis can be probed. The synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment group ($M = 22.63$) had a significantly higher mean than the control group ($M = 14.15$) on overall emotive dimensions, $MD = 8.49, p < .01$. Thus, it can be concluded that the first null-hypothesis as “synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment in EFL classes did not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' emotive dimension” was rejected.

The pure ESA group ($M = 17.13$) had a significantly higher mean than the control group ($M = 14.15$) on overall emotive dimensions ($MD = 2.99$, $p < .01$). Thus, it can be concluded that the second null-hypothesis as “pure ESA in EFL classes did not have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners’ emotive dimension” was rejected.

The synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment group ($M = 22.63$) had a significantly higher mean than the pure ESA group ($M = 17.13$) on overall cognitive dimensions ($MD = 5.49$, $p < .01$). Thus, it can be concluded that the third null-hypothesis stating that “there was not any significant difference between the effect of synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment and pure ESA on Iranian EFL learners’ emotive dimension” was rejected.

The second null-hypothesis stated that there were not any significant differences between synthesizing ESA with the portfolio assessment, pure ESA, and control groups’ means on the emotive dimensions, i.e. boredom, hopelessness, anger, anxiety, enjoyment, pride, motivation and relief. The Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) was run to compare the three groups’ means on eight emotive dimensions. Before discussing the results, the assumptions of homogeneity of variances among groups, and homogeneity of covariance matrices will be addressed.

Table 10 shows the synthesizing ESA with the portfolio assessment, pure ESA, and control groups’ means on the emotive dimensions.

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics for Emotive Dimensions by Group

Dependent Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Boredom	ESA + Portfolio	2.475	.076	2.324	2.626
	Pure ESA	1.798	.071	1.657	1.940
	Control	1.694	.104	1.489	1.900
Hopelessness	ESA + Portfolio	3.993	.107	3.782	4.205
	Pure ESA	3.047	.100	2.849	3.245
	Control	2.358	.145	2.071	2.645
Anger	ESA + Portfolio	2.045	.064	1.919	2.171
	Pure ESA	1.654	.060	1.535	1.772

	Control	1.426	.087	1.254	1.598
Anxiety	ESA + Portfolio	2.715	.090	2.536	2.894
	Pure ESA	2.031	.085	1.863	2.198
	Control	1.500	.123	1.257	1.743
Enjoyment	ESA + Portfolio	3.555	.114	3.329	3.781
	Pure ESA	2.684	.107	2.472	2.896
	Control	2.065	.156	1.757	2.372
Pride	ESA + Portfolio	2.624	.076	2.473	2.775
	Pure ESA	1.989	.071	1.848	2.131
	Control	1.719	.104	1.513	1.924
Motivation	ESA + Portfolio	2.780	.081	2.620	2.940
	Pure ESA	1.982	.076	1.833	2.132
	Control	1.722	.110	1.505	1.940
Relief	ESA + Portfolio	2.450	.082	2.288	2.612
	Pure ESA	1.952	.077	1.800	2.103
	Control	1.667	.111	1.446	1.887

The results in Table 10 showed that synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment had the highest means on the emotive dimensions. These were followed by pure ESA, and control groups.

Table 11
Multivariate Tests for Emotive Dimensions by Group

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.955	328.827	8	124	.000	.955
	Wilks' Lambda	.045	328.827	8	124	.000	.955
	Hotelling's Trace	21.215	328.827	8	124	.000	.955
	Roy's Largest Root	21.215	328.827	8	124	.000	.955
Group	Pillai's Trace	.611	6.866	16	250	.000	.305
	Wilks' Lambda	.444	7.762	16	248	.000	.334
	Hotelling's Trace	1.129	8.682	16	246	.000	.361
	Roy's Largest Root	1.007	15.739	8	125	.000	.502

Table 11 shows the results of MANOVA. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the three groups' means on the emotive dimensions, $F(16, 250) = 6.86, p < .01, \eta^2 = .305$, representing a large effect size. Thus, the second null-hypothesis stating that "there were not any significant differences between synthesizing ESA with portfolio assessment, pure ESA, and control groups' means on emotive dimensions" was rejected.

Unlike Table 11 that compared the three groups' overall means on the emotive dimensions, Table 12, which shows the results of Between-Subjects Effects, compares the three groups' means on each of the eight cognitive dimensions.

Table 12
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Emotive Dimensions by Group

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta Squared
Group	Boredom	16.003	2	8.001	27.491	.000	.296	
	Hopelessness	51.446	2	25.723	45.150	.000	.408	
	Anger	7.716	2	3.858	18.870	.000	.224	
	Anxiety	28.066	2	14.033	34.436	.000	.345	
	Enjoyment	42.906	2	21.453	32.850	.000	.334	
	Pride	17.667	2	8.833	30.367	.000	.317	
	Motivation	25.579	2	12.789	39.210	.000	.374	
	Relief	12.395	2	6.198	18.482	.000	.220	
Error	Boredom	38.128	131	.291				
	Hopelessness	74.634	131	.570				
	Anger	26.782	131	.204				
	Anxiety	53.385	131	.408				
	Enjoyment	85.551	131	.653				
	Pride	38.106	131	.291				
	Motivation	42.729	131	.326				
	Relief	43.930	131	.335				
Total	Boredom	606.250	134					
	Hopelessness	1551.222	134					
	Anger	446.625	134					
	Anxiety	717.750	134					
	Enjoyment	1243.250	134					

Pride	687.720	134
Motivation	733.250	134
Relief	636.188	134

Qualitative Data Analysis

This action research as Ebbutt (1998) notes is “a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice” (cited in Cohen, 2011, p.345). In other words, it is a link between research and practice. Conducting this research, think aloud protocol expressed the so-called link. If think aloud protocol, a type of qualitative data, is considered as “human verbal response” (Leighton, 2017), it should clarify how to codify and quantify the responses.

In this action research, there exist a couple of think aloud phases, which are defined as: think aloud protocol after exam and the one which was written in the class during or after a task. The contents of the texts were analyzed entirely and the common points were extracted. These extracted contents were entered into NVivo software and were codified. These process are explained in details in the following section.

Think Aloud Protocol Based on Tasks

After giving tasks in the classroom or homework, the researcher asked the students to write their thoughts and feelings using think aloud protocol while completing the tasks. The note papers were collected during several sessions. As the papers were written in Persian, in the first step all sentences were translated in English by the researcher. Then, the contents were analyzed to identify common points. The next stage was to enter the derived ideas into NVivo software to extract the codes. The numerous codes were extracted. As “coding enables the researcher to identify similar information” (Cohen, 2011, p.559), this coding process was done at three levels, according to Tabibi (2015), including free coding, axial coding and selective coding.

In the first phase, six tasks were given to the students as homework during an academic year. All tasks revolved around writing skills. The students were justified to record their think-aloud in advance. At the beginning, it seemed to

be odd but they became familiar gradually. In the first two tasks, they were asked to write their think-aloud regarding their emotions and feelings. One hundred sixty-eight acceptable paper were collected. They attempted to write frankly. The most frequent code was *anxiety about writing* and *be responsible for doing their best*. For example, Student 1 mentioned: “I become stressful while writing or thinking about doing tasks because I’m not very good at English and I want to be a good student, that makes me nervous and I try to do homework but I’m not sure whether I’ve written correctly or not” (translated from pieces of think-aloud written by the students). Notwithstanding the calm atmosphere in the classes, the students were initially nervous about any assigned task or activity, as well as their exams. After one month, they were acquainted with the method, and recording thoughts became desirable

The next most frequent code was *boredom*; they recorded that laziness and insomnia – as the result of their life style – caused boredom. Literally speaking, some external factors, such as anemia, malnutrition, insomnia or hard labor, contributed to their feeling of boredom.

The subsequent code served as a source of *motivation*, with thirty-three percent of the students acknowledging that they were motivated by some reasons such as learning well, being able to do the tasks, teacher’s guidance, relying on future and gaining good scores. Student 8 noted that “when I imagine a hopeful future and learn English well I become motivated” (translated from a piece of think-aloud written by the student).

Enjoyment was the fourth code in which the participants mostly expressed their eagerness to learn the language. This is why they approached the tasks with enthusiasm. On the other hand, *hopelessness* revealed regressing while a lack of knowledge led to weakness in language learning. The codes, i.e., *anger*, *pride* and *relief* overlapped with the others.

Table 13 presents the codes derived from the think-aloud protocol, which were based on the class tasks and homework that students documented during the activation phase.

Table 13

Think Aloud Protocol Based on Class Tasks and Homework

Free Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Being unable to do the tasks	Anxiety	Emotive Dimensions of Language Learning
Repeating the mistakes		
Gaining good position as well as scores		
Being lazy to do homework	Boredom	
Insomnia		
Being able to do the tasks	Motivation	
Teacher's guidance		
Thinking about future		
Gaining high scores		
Being unable to deal with the tasks		
Regressing	Hopelessness	
Weak language background		
Difficulty and amount of the tasks		
Shortage of time	Anger	
Realizing the lack of their knowledge		
Interested in English		
Knowing how to deal with the tasks	Enjoyment	
Ease of tasks		
Variety of the tasks		
Forcing to use creativity		
Enriching knowledge	Pride	
Attending in English classes		
Being comfortable after doing homework	Relief	

The data indicates that anxiety and boredom are the most commonly experienced emotions, whereas pride and relief are the least commonly reported.

Think Aloud Protocol after Exam

After seven months, an exam was held, immediately after which the students were asked to write their thoughts. All the participants attended this phase and wrote their think-alouds. It was requested to write about their feelings and

emotions. Table 14 shows the common codes based on their feelings and emotions before, during and after the exam.

Table 14

Think Aloud Protocol Based on Examination

Free Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
Being weak in English Having insufficient studying Worrying about scores for acceptance in new high school	Anxiety (stress)	Emotive Dimensions of Language Learning
Participating in extra classes after school time Insomnia Hunger	Boredom	
Regret not spending more time for study Avoiding carelessness Attempting to make a fruitful future	Motivation	
Being aware of their scores Realizing their lack of knowledge	Hopelessness	
Being careless Difficulty of exam Behavior of invigilators	Anger	
Enjoying language learning Clarifying the vague issues during study for exam	Enjoyment	
Attending in English classes Knowing more English than other students Answering exam completely and correctly	Pride	

Identical to previous think-alouds, *anxiety* was the most frequent code which showed the students' stressful manner before, during and after the exam. Being weak in English, due to the lack of knowledge and practice, was the most common reason to become anxious. The next code was *boredom* which included mostly physical reasons, such as insomnia or hunger. In this phase of analyzing the papers, emotive reasons gradually faded into boredom month by month.

Comparing to think-aloud based on tasks, *blaming* and *regretting* in the exam-based protocol were common points that led to common points *motivation*. For some reasons they blamed themselves and became motivated to study hard. *Hopelessness* was a code overshadowed by the scores. The students' acceptance into high-level schools were influenced by their averages and scores. For this purpose, they studied and worked hard; however, when they did not gain high scores, they became hopeless. Generally, taking an exam is an unpleasant process in teaching; almost all students are dissatisfied with the exams. Therefore, *anger* was a common theme in their think-alouds, leading them to react accordingly.

The next common code was *enjoyment* which occurred before and after the exam. The participant students claimed when they were studying for the exam, they learned thoroughly, which is why they enjoyed studying. As a result, they answered the exam questions correctly and thus, they became joyful. Finally, most of the students whose background knowledge was rich and were studious, mentioned the word "*pride*" repeatedly. They became proud when they passed the exam with high scores, compared to other students.

Interview – driven codes

Interviews were recorded after analyzing think-aloud protocols as well as questionnaires. The questions of interview were posed based on the questionnaire items and the extracted codes of think – alouds. It included six questions that encompassed cognitive and emotive dimensions of writing, in class, at home and during examination. After transcribing the mentioned interviews, the texts were fed into NVivo software to extract codes. The common codes overlapped with the think-aloud ones. Twenty students were randomly selected to participate in the interview. Since they had already written several think alouds, they were familiar with the questions, answered them smartly.

Discussion

In the present study, it was found that the synthesis of ESA with portfolio assessment in EFL classes has been found to have a positive effect on the emotive dimensions of Iranian EFL learners. The quantitative results and qualitative findings indicate that implementing ESA as a teaching method

throughout an academic year significantly enhances the emotive dimensions of writing skills. This study is grounded in constructivism, which underpins the Learner-Centered Approach, emphasizing a transition from traditional teacher-led instruction to activities that center on the learner. It is essential to illustrate how Engage-Study-Activate (ESA) activities can be crafted to foster active student engagement with the content, promote in-depth exploration, and stimulate the activation of prior knowledge. Reflective Practice underscores the significance of reflection within the constructivist framework. It is important to elucidate how portfolio assessments can serve as a tool for students to contemplate their learning journey, recognize their strengths and areas for growth, and establish objectives for future improvement. Furthermore, Collaborative Learning examines how the principles of constructivism facilitate environments conducive to collaboration. It is pertinent to describe how ESA activities can be organized to incorporate group work, peer feedback, and collaborative projects, all of which can be documented within student portfolios. Many researches have proven the role of emotions in educational setting e.g. Shao, Pekrun and Nicholson (2019), Pekrun (2014), Pishghadam, Zabetipour and Aminzadeh (2016). In the process of this research, positive and negative emotions were extracted and determined through the data analysis. Anxiety was the common emotion among the tasks in the classroom or at home as well as the examination setting. It seems to be the dominant emotion, as Shao et al. (2019) described anxiety as a rich variety of emotion with which the classroom was filled. This aligns the findings of this study. Steinberg (2008) conceded that anxiety is a prevalent emotion experienced in educational environments, whether one is the individual being evaluated or the one conducting the assessment. During the conduct of the present study, anxiety decreased at the end of academic year because of knowledge augmentation in the shadow of teaching method and teacher's consciousness and behavior.

The next component is boredom which appeared clearly during doing tasks and homework or in classroom. According to Pishghadam et al. (2016), emotions, such as boredom, are the emotions encountered within an academic environment, connected to the students' educational progress, classroom teaching, and success. As it was mentioned, the think-aloud papers highlighted that one's lifestyle could serve as a significant factor contributing to feelings of boredom during class. ESA is a method that captures students' attention,

especially in the engagement stage; as a result this emotion disappeared in most cases. Therefore, the findings support those of Pishghadam et al. (2016).

The findings from the investigation into the three research questions indicated that portfolio assessment has a significant impact, which is influenced by the duration of the study. The students demonstrated gradual improvement in their writing skills, as evidenced by their completed tasks and think-aloud recordings. This aligns with the explanation provided by Farrah (2018) in his scholarly paper, which highlights how assessing students' portfolios helps them gauge the extent of their progress. Initially, the students displayed a passive attitude towards writing their tasks and recording their think-aloud. However, as the instruction progressed, they became more motivated to write and continued to record their think-aloud. The majority of the students expressed that this method appealed to them and empowered them, fostering motivation to enhance their language learning abilities.

The current research supports the conclusions drawn in previous studies conducted by Ben-elياهو, Moore, Dorph, and Schuun (2018), Vikasari (2019), Deane (2011), Shohamy, Or, and May (2017), and Harmer (2007). While the first three authors characterized engagement as "the intensity of productive involvement with an activity" (Ben-elياهو et al., 2018, p.87), this study viewed engagement as the initiation of activity production. They emphasized the use of the ESA mechanism as a crucial instructional approach that influenced researchers' efforts in developing a specific skill. However, the current study not only focused on ESA as the primary mechanism for teaching writing skills but also incorporated portfolio assessment into the instructional process. Vikasari (2019) utilized ESA as an alternative strategy for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. In this study, ESA was employed as the primary mechanism for teaching writing skills in alignment with the cognitive aspects of language learning. This approach helped students become more aware of their grammar and vocabulary knowledge, enabling them to enhance their writing abilities. Deane (2011) characterized writing as a complex cognitive skill and discussed various assessment methods, excluding portfolio assessment, which was the primary assessment tool in the present study.

Conclusion

The primary finding of the current study suggests that there is a lack of dynamic teaching methods for English as a foreign language in our high schools. The participants consistently expressed their enjoyment of the mechanism and their willingness to continue using it to enhance their English learning. They found the teaching approach to be pleasant, and they did not find the assigned homework tasks to be difficult, but rather enjoyable. In fact, this mechanism has proven to be effective, leading to the question of why the ESA mechanism is not being implemented as a central approach in the educational system. It is recommended that this mechanism be applied across all subjects in schools. Consequently, the Ministry of Education should consider implementing ESA as a suggested mechanism in all classes. Although the process of gathering portfolios can be tiring, the benefits of assessing them over the course of several weeks can be valuable in providing feedback to both teachers and students, ultimately enhancing and enriching the learning experience.

Moreover, teachers hold the key to shaping the destiny of a classroom, as they possess the ability to nurture or destroy the spirit of their students. Before embarking on the journey of imparting knowledge, teachers must first understand their own capabilities and strengths. Only then can they effectively engage in the act of teaching. It is crucial for teachers to remain open-minded and adaptable, as changes in their perspectives, approaches, and ideologies are inevitable. By regarding their students as their own offspring, teachers can establish a profound connection. Just as children mirror the behavior and values of their parents, students too respond to the treatment they receive. Hence, if a teacher pays meticulous attention to every aspect of their role, including their conduct, teaching methods, and professional growth, the students will wholeheartedly embrace the process of learning.

ESA asserts that there exists no divide between teacher and student, teaching and learning, classroom and home. The more engaging the interaction, the more productive the learning process. Furthermore, this research recognizes that the portfolio serves as a supplement to the traditional teaching method, as evidenced by the impact of portfolio assessment on the emotive aspects of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Therefore, it is advisable for educators to combine these approaches.

This research has implications for all stakeholders involved in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Primarily, teachers who aim to enhance the learning process, particularly those working in public high schools, can utilize the Engage-Study-Activate (ESA) approach as a dynamic teaching method. In addition, the Ministry of Education can significantly contribute by training supervisors and educators on implementing dynamic teaching methods, such as ESA.

The study conducted on high school students can serve as a basis for future research in various educational settings. For instance, researchers may consider applying the same method to university students as well as young children to explore its effectiveness across different age groups. Moreover, portfolio assessment, as discussed in this study, can be further examined by future researchers in terms of peer or group assessment. By delving into this aspect, researchers can determine whether the dynamics of giving and receiving feedback are altered within the context of portfolio assessment. Furthermore, researchers are encouraged to explore fields beyond language learning to ascertain whether the method, assessment techniques, and emotive dimensions yield consistent results across diverse disciplines.

Conflict of interest: None

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مکانیسم تعامل، مطالعه و فعال‌سازی (ESA) در کلاس نوشتن: تمرکز بر ابعاد احساسی

یک روش تدریس مناسب و پویا در آموزش زبان انگلیسی برای بکارگیری، جذب و حمایت از دانش آموزان بسیار مهم است. در این مطالعه از رویکرد ترکیبی برای بررسی تاثیر ترکیب روش بکارگیری، بررسی و فعالسازی (ESA) با ارزیابی پوشه ای بر ابعاد احساسی دانش آموزان دختر ایرانی در مهارت‌های نوشتاری استفاده شده است. برای این منظور، 177 دانش آموز دختر ایرانی از یک دبیرستان دولتی در یک مطالعه تجربی شرکت کردند و داده ها بواسطه سه ابزار شاکل بیان تفکر درونی، پرسشنامه و مصاحبه گردآوری شد. داده های کمی بر اساس تجزیه و تحلیل واریانس چند گانه و داده های کیفی مبتنی بر NVivo مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت. نتایج حاصله داده های کمی نشان داد که ترکیب روش تدریس فوق با ارزیابی پوشه ای دارای بالاترین میانگین در ابعاد احساسی مهارت نوشتاری در مقایسه با دستاورد گروه بدون ارزیابی پوشه ای و گروه کنترل است. علاوه بر این، گروه بدون ارزیابی پوشه ای در مقایسه با آموزش متعارف گروه کنترل در بعد احساسی میانگین بالاتری داشت. نتایج حاصل از داده های کیفی مویده نقش موثر رویکرد ترکیبی هم در ماهیت و هم فرآیند ابعاد احساسی دانش آموزان در حوزه های بی حوصلگی، ناامیدی، اضطراب، خشم، لذت، غرور، انگیزه، و آرامش با ابعاد خاص می باشد. بر این اساس، روش به کارگیری، بررسی و فعال سازی (ESA)، و ترکیب آن با ارزیابی پوشه ای به عنوان سازوکار تاثیر گذار بر جنبه های احساسی زبان آموزان در تقویت مهارت نوشتاری محسوب می شود. پیامد اصلی برای ذینفعان امکان سنجی، سودمندی و کاربرد ارزیابی پویا در تطبیق ابعاد احساسی در فرآیند آموزش و ارزیابی زبان است.

کلمات کلیدی: احساس روش ESA؛ ارزیابی پورتفولیو؛ مهارت نوشتاری