



## Learner Perspectives on PIM-Supported Dilemma-based EFL Writing

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### Abstract

Thai undergraduate EFL learners are increasingly expected to write texts that are not only grammatically accurate but also analytically developed, logically organized, and adequately supported. This article explores learners' perceptions of PIM-supported dilemma-based EFL writing instruction, with particular attention to dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance. Although previous research has shown that task-based learning, collaborative learning, process-oriented L2 writing pedagogy, and teacher scaffolding can support writing development, less is known about how learners experience an instructional model that integrates these elements within a staged writing process. This article reports the qualitative, process-oriented strand of a broader mixed-methods classroom intervention involving nine Thai undergraduate English majors enrolled in a writing course. Data were drawn from post-questionnaire responses and a group reflection discussion. The findings indicate that learners perceived the instructional process positively. Dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks encouraged deeper thinking before writing, student collaboration helped learners clarify prompts and expand ideas, and teacher guidance supported planning, organization, revision, and editing. However, several learners still found the transition from collaborative preparation to individual writing challenging, particularly in selecting ideas, organizing support, and composing with confidence. The findings suggest that PIM may be strengthened by adding more explicit transitional scaffolding between collaborative planning and individual composition in EFL writing instruction.

**Keywords:** dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, EFL writing, learner perceptions, student collaboration, teacher guidance

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## Introduction

Thai undergraduate EFL writing requires learners to produce grammatically accurate English while also generating ideas, organizing arguments, justifying positions, and communicating reasoned responses in academically appropriate ways. Many learners experience difficulty with coherence, organization, idea development, and support for claims in academic writing (Arihasta, 2023; Chaisuriya & Luengalongkot, 2025; Ghanbari & Salari, 2022; Laohasawad & Somphong, 2025). These difficulties suggest that EFL writing should not be treated only as a linguistic problem. It also involves using English as a medium for analysis, judgment, and sustained reasoning. From this perspective, writing in higher education is a process of meaning-making through which learners develop and communicate ideas, not merely a product to be corrected (Bean, 2011; Hyland, 2003).

One response to this challenge is to design writing instruction that combines meaningful engagement with problem situations, student collaboration, and teacher guidance. The present study used the PIMPORN Instructional Model (PIM), a researcher-developed model designed for the broader doctoral classroom intervention from which this article is drawn. PIM was developed by adapting principles from Task-Based Language Teaching, process-oriented L2 writing pedagogy, and instructional scaffolding (Ellis, 2003; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2023; Hyland, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978; Willis & Willis, 2007; Wood et al., 1976). In this article, PIM is conceptualized as a structured sequence that organizes dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, teacher guidance, feedback, and reflection.

To maintain conceptual clarity, the article distinguishes the instructional task from the scaffolding approaches used in the model. Dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks refer to tasks in which learners respond to a problem situation, consider alternative perspectives or solutions, justify a position, and produce an individual written response. Student collaboration allows learners to discuss the issue, exchange viewpoints, clarify ideas, and prepare content before writing. Teacher guidance supports learners by clarifying task expectations, helping them organize ideas, providing language and writing support, offering feedback, and prompting reflection. These three elements are therefore not treated as identical theoretical categories; rather, they play different roles within PIM.

The model consists of seven instructional phases: Prompting the Dilemma, Identification, Motivation, Planning, Operating, Reporting, and Nurturing. This sequence moves learners from problem engagement and idea generation to collaborative planning, individual drafting, feedback, and reflection. Previous research has shown the value of task-based learning, collaboration, and teacher guidance in EFL writing (Storch, 2005; Suthipiyapathra, 2021; Thongchalerms & Jarunthawatchai, 2020). However, less is known about how learners perceive an instructional model that integrates these elements across different phases of the writing process, especially at the transition from collaborative preparation to individual composition. Therefore, this article examines EFL learners' perceptions of dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance within PIM. It does not make broad

causal claims about instructional effectiveness. Instead, it focuses on learners' reported experiences of the instructional process and the perceived contribution of each component to their writing. One research question guides the article: How do learners perceive dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance within the PIMPORN Instructional Model as supporting their EFL writing process?

## Literature Review

### *1. Writing as Reasoning in EFL Contexts*

In EFL higher education, writing is increasingly understood as more than the accurate production of sentences. It is a complex academic activity requiring learners to generate ideas, connect claims, organize evidence, and communicate positions in rhetorically effective ways. Bean (2011) views writing as a mode of inquiry, while Hyland (2003) emphasizes its rhetorical and communicative nature in academic settings. Ferris and Hedgcock (2023) similarly stress that L2 writing pedagogy should connect task design, composing processes, feedback, and classroom support. These views support the position that EFL writing is a reasoning-based practice rather than a narrow exercise in correctness.

This broader understanding is important in university settings, where learners are expected to respond analytically, justify views, and construct sustained written arguments. Studies in Thai EFL contexts have identified persistent difficulties in organization, coherence, idea development, and argument support (Arihastha, 2023; Chaisuriya & Luengalongkot, 2025; Laohasawad & Somphong, 2025). Similar patterns have also been reported in other EFL contexts, where problems with argumentative writing reflect not only linguistic limitations but also difficulties in sustaining reasoning and integrating supporting evidence (Ghanbari & Salari, 2022). Thus, weak writing may reflect difficulty in using language to think through and express complex ideas.

### *2. Dilemma-Based Problem-Solving Tasks and Scaffolding*

If writing is partly a matter of reasoning, task design becomes crucial. In this article, dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks are treated as instructional tasks grounded in Task-Based Language Teaching, which organizes language learning around meaningful tasks and purposeful outcomes rather than isolated language practice (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Willis & Willis, 2007). These tasks provide opportunities for learners to use English for analysis, decision-making, justification, and written communication.

However, such tasks alone may not sufficiently support learners throughout the writing process. Student collaboration and teacher guidance are therefore treated as scaffolding approaches. Collaboration allows learners to discuss dilemmas, compare viewpoints, clarify meanings, and prepare ideas before writing. Teacher guidance provides support through task clarification, prompts for idea development, organizational guidance, language support, feedback, and reflection. This distinction is consistent with sociocultural and scaffolding perspectives, in which interaction and temporary support help learners complete tasks and gradually develop greater control (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976).

Collaboration is particularly relevant because peer interaction can help learners test interpretations, compare viewpoints, and refine ideas before composing individually. Storch (2005) argues that collaborative writing matters because interaction shapes how ideas and texts are developed. More recent studies show that collaborative writing can support collective scaffolding and become more effective when learners are supported in monitoring and regulating the writing process (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). Teacher guidance is also essential because learners often need explicit help in transforming ideas into coherent written texts. In Thai EFL writing contexts, teacher-student conferences and scaffolding have been found to support idea development, revision planning, and learner confidence (Piamsai, 2020; Suthipiyapathra, 2021).

### *3. The PIMPORN Instructional Model as a Structured Writing Process*

PIM provides the instructional structure through which the task, collaboration, guidance, feedback, and reflection are organized in the present study. It was developed by a researcher for broader doctoral classroom intervention and was not treated as a previously published model. The model synthesizes principles from Task-Based Language Teaching, process-oriented L2 writing pedagogy, and classroom scaffolding (Ellis, 2003; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2023; Hyland, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007; Wood et al., 1976).

The seven stages are Prompting the Dilemma, Identification, Motivation, Planning, Operating, Reporting, and Nurturing. Prompting the Dilemma introduces the problem situation and expected written response. Identification helps learners recognize the issue, relevant facts, possible viewpoints, and potential responses. Motivation encourages active participation and prepares learners to share ideas. Planning provides space for collaborative brainstorming, idea selection, and outline preparation. Operating requires learners to produce individual written responses. Reporting supports sharing, feedback, and possible revision. Nurturing encourages reflection on learning, writing processes, and remaining difficulties. Together, these stages guide learners from problem engagement and preparation to individual writing, feedback, and reflection.

Because this article focuses on learner perspectives, perception data are central. Performance outcomes may show whether writing scores change, but they do not fully explain how learners experience the instructional process. Perception-focused research helps clarify what learners find useful, what remains difficult, and how they understand the support they receive during writing instruction. This is especially important because PIM combines several forms of support and requires learners to move from collaborative preparation to individual written production.

At the same time, support and individual control do not always develop at the same pace. Collaborative writing and scaffolding may help learners complete classroom tasks, but they do not necessarily guarantee that learners can immediately apply the same reasoning and composing processes individually. Wang et al. (2025) suggest that collaborative writing

becomes more effective when paired with metacognitive instruction, while Piamsai (2020) emphasizes scaffolding as a gradual movement toward greater self-regulation. This issue is directly relevant to the present study because the Operating stage requires learners to transform shared preparation into individually controlled writing.

#### *4. Conceptual Focus of the Present Article*

The literature supports the article's conceptual focus in four ways. First, EFL writing is understood as a reasoning-based academic practice. Second, dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks provide the instructional task through which learners analyze issues, consider alternatives, justify positions, and write reasoned responses. Third, student collaboration and teacher guidance serve as scaffolding approaches that support learners in completing the task. Fourth, PIM provides a structured sequence that organizes these elements. The review, therefore, establishes the theoretical and pedagogical basis for examining how learners perceive the instructional process, including the support they receive and the challenges they encounter as they move toward individual writing.

### **Research Objective**

This study aimed to examine Thai undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions of dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance within the PIMPORN Instructional Model.

### **Methodology**

#### *1. Research Design*

This article reports on the qualitative, process-oriented strand of a broader one-group pre-test-post-test mixed-methods classroom study. Although the broader project also included performance data, the present article focuses on learner perspectives on dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance. The analysis centers on how participants experienced the instructional process, particularly the movement from collaborative preparation to individual writing, rather than making causal claims about instructional effectiveness. This reporting strategy is consistent with mixed-methods research practice, in which a specific strand of a broader project may be reported separately when its purpose, data sources, and claims are clearly delimited (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This design was appropriate because the research question required an interpretive understanding of participants' reported experiences. Descriptive questionnaire results were used only to provide background patterns, while open-ended questionnaire responses and group reflection discussion data served as the main qualitative evidence.

#### *2. Research Context and Participants*

The study was conducted in English Reading and Writing 3, a writing-related university course offered to English major undergraduates at a university in northern Thailand. The course required participants to read, analyze, critique, and summarize academic or semi-academic

texts and produce written responses using basic citation principles. The instructional context, therefore, matched the article's focus on EFL writing tasks that required idea development, organization, justification, and reasoned response.

The participants were nine Thai undergraduate English majors enrolled in the course. They were recruited through voluntary convenience sampling because they were members of the intact class in which the instructional treatment was implemented and had direct experience of all stages of the PIM sequence. Although the number of participants was limited, it was appropriate for the qualitative, process-focused purpose of this article, which aimed to examine learners' reported experiences rather than to generalize statistically. The small group allowed close analysis of how learners perceived the dilemma-based tasks, student collaboration, teacher guidance, and the transition from collaborative preparation to individual writing.

For instructional grouping, the participants' pre-test writing scores were used to classify them into three writing-performance bands: high, moderate, and low. Three heterogeneous groups were then formed, with each group including one participant from each band. This grouping procedure was used to support peer explanation, idea exchange, and collaborative preparation before individual writing. It was not treated as an analytical variable.

### *3. Instructional Treatment and Classroom Procedure*

The instructional treatment was implemented through PIM, which was developed by the researcher for this study. In the present article, PIM is treated as the overall instructional model, dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks as the instructional tasks, and student collaboration and teacher guidance as scaffolding approaches. This distinction maintains conceptual consistency across the manuscript.

The model was implemented across six class meetings, totaling approximately 17 instructional hours. Meeting 1 introduced the study, administered the pre-test and pre-questionnaire, and oriented learners to the PIM sequence. Meetings 2 to 5 implemented repeated cycles of dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks through the seven stages. Meeting 6 focused on final reporting, reflection, the post-questionnaire, and the group reflection discussion. The treatment was examined as an integrated instructional process rather than as isolated techniques.

### *4. Data Sources and Instruments*

The article drew on four data sources from the broader study. The pre-questionnaire was used only in the contextual background. The post-questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items rated on a five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions addressing learners' perceptions of the tasks, collaboration, teacher guidance, and individual writing. The group reflection discussion was guided by semi-structured prompts focusing on what learners found useful, what remained difficult, and what support they needed when moving from group preparation to individual writing. The questions were reviewed for clarity and alignment with the research

objective before data collection. Where Thai responses were used, they were translated into English for reporting, and the translations were checked against the original meaning.

Pre-test writing scores were used only for instructional grouping and were not used as evidence of outcomes in this article. The group reflection discussion was conducted after the intervention to obtain richer accounts of how participants experienced the instructional process. Responses were recorded, transcribed, anonymized, and analyzed together with open-ended questionnaire responses.

### *5. Data Collection*

Data collection followed the classroom intervention sequence. Participants first completed the pre-test writing task, and their scores were used to inform instructional grouping. They then completed the pre-questionnaire. The intervention was implemented through six class meetings using lesson plans based on the seven stages of PIM. During the intervention, participants engaged in dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, discussed ideas collaboratively, received teacher guidance, composed individual written responses, received feedback, and reflected on their learning. After the intervention, they completed the post-questionnaire and participated in the group reflection discussion.

### *6. Data Analysis*

The analysis combined descriptive and qualitative procedures. Closed-ended post-questionnaire responses were summarized descriptively to identify broad perception patterns, but they were not treated as the main findings. The main analysis was thematic. Open-ended questionnaire responses and group reflection discussion transcripts were repeatedly read to identify recurring patterns in task engagement, collaboration, teacher guidance, feedback, reflection, and the transition to individual writing. Thematic analysis followed the logic of identifying, reviewing, and interpreting recurring patterns of meaning in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding was guided by the article's research focus but remained open to recurring patterns in the data.

The qualitative analysis produced themes concerning dilemma-based tasks as preparation for deeper thinking, collaboration as a means of clarifying and expanding ideas, teacher guidance as process support, and ongoing difficulty in transferring shared preparation into individual written production. These themes were interpreted in relation to the seven-stage PIM sequence.

### *7. Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations*

Several steps were taken to strengthen the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis. Credibility was supported by using multiple data sources, including open-ended questionnaire responses and group reflection discussion data. These sources were compared to identify recurring, complementary, and less consistent patterns in learners' perceptions. The qualitative analysis followed a recursive thematic process. The researcher first read the open-ended responses and group reflection transcript repeatedly to become familiar with the data. Initial

codes were then generated from meaningful units related to task engagement, student collaboration, teacher guidance, feedback, reflection, and the transition from group preparation to individual writing. Related codes were grouped into broader categories and then reviewed against the raw data before being developed into final themes.

Dependability was supported through systematic transcription, coding, and theme development. Coding decisions and analytic notes were kept during the analysis to support confirmability. Representative participant statements were selected to illustrate the themes, while contradictory or less positive comments were also retained to ensure the findings did not present the instructional process as uniformly positive. For example, although many learners value collaboration and teacher guidance, some comments indicated ongoing difficulty with selecting ideas, organizing support, and writing independently after group discussion. This helped ensure that the findings reflected both supportive and challenging aspects of learners' experiences. Transferability was supported by providing clear information about the research context, participants, instructional setting, data sources, and classroom procedure. The article also limits its claims to learner perceptions in a single classroom-based EFL writing context and does not make broad statistical generalizations.

Ethical procedures were followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the types of data to be collected, and their right to decline or withdraw without academic penalty. Participants were also informed that participation or non-participation would not affect course grades. Names and identifying information were replaced with participant codes before analysis and reporting. Audio files, transcripts, questionnaire files, and score records were stored in password-protected digital folders accessible only to the research team. Reported quotations were anonymized. Because the researcher also facilitated the instructional process, care was taken to reduce any perception that participation was compulsory or that participation would affect course standing.

**Table 1**

*Implementation of the PIMPORN Instructional Model in the Present Study*

| PIM stage             | Teacher role                                                                                              | Participant role                                                                             | Instructional focus                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Prompting the Dilemma | Introduced the dilemma-based problem-solving writing task and clarified vocabulary and expected response. | Listened to the situation, asked clarification questions, and considered possible responses. | Problem engagement and task understanding |

**Table 1 (Continued)**

| <b>PIM stage</b>      | <b>Teacher role</b>                                                                                       | <b>Participant role</b>                                                                      | <b>Instructional focus</b>                     |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Identification        | Guided participants to identify the issue, relevant details, possible choices, and competing viewpoints.  | Discussed the dilemma and identified possible positions or solutions.                        | Problem analysis and shared understanding      |
| Prompting the Dilemma | Introduced the dilemma-based problem-solving writing task and clarified vocabulary and expected response. | Listened to the situation, asked clarification questions, and considered possible responses. | Problem engagement and task understanding      |
| Identification        | Guided participants to identify the issue, relevant details, possible choices, and competing viewpoints.  | Discussed the dilemma and identified possible positions or solutions.                        | Problem analysis and shared understanding      |
| Motivation            | Encouraged participation and emphasized that more than one defensible answer was possible.                | Expressed ideas, tested viewpoints, and participated in discussions.                         | Readiness for collaborative reasoning          |
| Planning              | Helped participants organize ideas, select support, and prepare a response plan.                          | Worked collaboratively to compare viewpoints, select stronger ideas, and arrange support.    | Collaborative prewriting and response planning |
| Operating             | Monitored progress and provided limited guidance when needed.                                             | Produced individual written responses based on their own understanding and planned ideas.    | Individual writing                             |
| Reporting             | Facilitated sharing, review, and feedback on written responses.                                           | Shared or discussed writing and considered comments from the teacher and peers.              | Feedback and possible revision                 |

**Table 1 (Continued)**

| PIM stage | Teacher role                                                                   | Participant role                                                                               | Instructional focus      |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nurturing | Prompted reflection on learning, writing difficulties, and future improvement. | Reflected on what helped them, what remained difficult, and how to improve individual writing. | Metacognitive reflection |

## Results

This section reports how learners perceived the instructional process. To remain aligned with the title, abstract, introduction, and literature review, the findings are organized around the article's three central elements: dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance. The results also support PIM as a seven-stage writing-process sequence that moves learners from problem engagement and shared preparation toward individual writing, feedback, and reflection. The section draws primarily on post-questionnaire responses and group reflection discussion data, with the pre-questionnaire used only as a brief contextual background.

### *1. Brief Contextual Readiness before the Intervention*

Before the intervention, learners reported relatively lower confidence in English writing background and task readiness ( $M = 2.56$ ) and individual writing, confidence, and critical thinking ( $M = 3.11$ ). They reported more positive views of collaboration and group work ( $M = 3.58$ ) and teacher guidance and the writing process ( $M = 3.91$ ). This pattern suggests that learners entered the study with some uncertainty about writing-related reasoning and individual composition while already recognizing the possible value of peer and teacher support.

### *2. Overall Post-Intervention Perception Pattern*

After the intervention, the post-questionnaire showed a highly positive overall perception of the instructional process. All four categories received high mean scores: task value and clarity ( $M = 4.69$ ), student collaboration and participation ( $M = 4.69$ ), teacher guidance and the writing process ( $M = 4.68$ ), and transfer to individual writing ( $M = 4.56$ ). The close grouping of these scores suggests that learners did not view only one element as useful. Rather, they perceived the model as a connected process in which tasks, collaboration, and teacher guidance supported different parts of writing preparation and production. However, the slightly lower means for transfer to individual writing suggest a point of tension: learners valued the supported stages strongly, but individual writing remained relatively more challenging.

**Table 2**

*Category Means from the Post-questionnaire*

| Category                                 | Number of items | Mean |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------|------|
| Task value and clarity                   | 4               | 4.69 |
| Collaboration and participation          | 8               | 4.69 |
| Teacher guidance and the writing process | 7               | 4.68 |
| Transfer to individual writing           | 5               | 4.56 |

*Note.* Scores were based on a five-point scale. The post-questionnaire was used descriptively to support the qualitative interpretation of learner perceptions.

### *3. Dilemma-Based Problem-Solving Writing Tasks Supported Deeper Thinking*

Learners consistently reported that the dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks helped them think more carefully before writing. In the group reflection discussion, several learners explained that the tasks prevented them from giving quick answers because the prompts required them to consider multiple possible responses. Student 1 stated, “We could not just answer quickly. We had to think about the situation first.” Student 3 added that the task encouraged critical thought because “there was no single correct answer” and learners had to examine “the reasons behind each choice.” These responses show that learners perceived the tasks as more than topics for writing. They served as instructional tasks that required analysis, comparison, justification, and decision-making before composing.

This finding aligns with the article’s conceptual focus on writing as reasoning. Learners described the task as a process of considering alternatives, weighing consequences, and preparing reasons before writing, rather than simply completing grammar practice or an essay product.

### *4. Student Collaboration Clarified Tasks, Expanded Perspectives, and Supported Organization*

Student collaboration was another strongly positive theme. Learners reported that peer discussion helped them understand the problem more clearly, check their interpretation of the prompt, and prepare ideas for individual writing. Student 2 explained that when the group discussed the prompt, “my friends explained the topic in simpler words, so it became clearer.” Student 8 similarly reported feeling “more ready to write after the discussion” because the group clarified both the topic and the task’s purpose.

The reflection data also showed that collaboration expanded the range of perspectives available to learners. Student 6 described “hearing reasons I did not think of by myself,” while Student 9 stated that the group’s ideas became stronger because they came from “many perspectives, not just one person.” Learners also reported that discussion helped them separate main ideas from supporting details, remove less relevant ideas, and build clearer outlines before writing. Therefore, collaboration supported both meaning-making and rhetorical preparation.

### *5. Teacher Guidance Supported Learners across the Writing Process*

Teacher guidance was perceived as a major source of support. Learners did not describe it as limited to error correction after writing. Instead, they connected teacher guidance with understanding the task, developing ideas, improving organization, revising weaknesses, and gaining confidence. Student 7 stated that the teacher “guided us step by step, from understanding the task to revising the essay.” Student 8 added that the teacher’s comments “helped me avoid mistakes and improve the quality of my writing.” These comments indicate that teacher guidance served as process-oriented support from understanding the task to planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

### *6. Learners Perceived PIM as a Connected Instructional Sequence*

Learners’ comments corresponded to the full seven-stage sequence rather than only the early prewriting stages. Prompting the Dilemma and Identification appeared in learners’ reports as requiring an understanding of the situation and identification of the issue before writing. Motivation and Planning appeared in comments about group brainstorming, comparing alternatives, selecting reasons, and preparing outlines. Operating appeared in their individual writing experiences after group preparation. Reporting appeared in feedback and revision comments, while Nurturing appeared in reflections on what they learned and what support they still needed.

In this way, the results show that learners did not experience PIM as a set of disconnected techniques. They experienced it as a structured sequence moving from dilemma engagement to collaborative idea exploration, individual writing, feedback, and reflection. Individual writing was not outside the model; it appeared most directly in the Operating stage.

### *7. Individual Writing Remained the Main Challenge*

Although learners viewed the process positively, some still found it difficult to move from group discussion to individual writing. Student 1 noted that “sometimes we had too many ideas, so it was difficult to choose the best ones.” Student 3 identified “turning group ideas into an individual essay” as a difficulty, and Student 4 stated that organizing ideas clearly after discussion remained challenging. These comments suggest that collaboration helped learners generate and clarify ideas, but it did not automatically guarantee individual control over the selection, organization, and written expression of ideas.

This finding prevents the results from becoming a uniformly positive account. A more accurate interpretation is that learners perceived the model as helpful for preparation, reasoning, and organization while still needing stronger support at the transition point between discussion and individual composition. Learners’ suggestions confirmed this need. Several requested more time for brainstorming, revision, and individual writing, while others suggested an additional model essay, a short outline, and more support after group discussion.

## Discussion

### *1. Dilemma-Based Tasks Position Writing as Reasoning*

The first major finding is that learners perceived the dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks as helping them think more deeply before writing. This finding supports the article's view of writing as a reasoning-based activity in which learners analyze a situation, compare possible responses, justify a position, and then communicate that reasoning in written form. Learners reported that the tasks prevented quick answers and encouraged them to consider alternatives, consequences, and reasons before drafting.

This finding is consistent with Bean's (2011) view of writing as a mode of inquiry and Hyland's (2003) view of L2 writing as a rhetorical and meaning-making practice. It also responds to literature showing that EFL writing difficulties often involve coherence, idea development, and support for claims, not only language accuracy (Arihata, 2023; Ghanbari & Salari, 2022; Laohasawad & Somphong, 2025). However, the interpretation should remain cautious. The data do not prove that the tasks improved writing ability or general critical thinking; they show that learners perceived the tasks as useful preparation for thinking, comparing, and justifying before composing.

### *2. Collaboration Functioned as Preparatory Scaffolding*

The second finding is that learners perceived collaboration as useful for clarifying prompts, expanding ideas, and preparing for individual writing. This finding clarifies the conceptual distinction between the instructional task and the support used to complete it. The task defined what learners were asked to do, whereas collaboration described how they were supported in doing it. Learners experienced collaboration as cognitive and rhetorical preparation because it helped them restate prompts, share examples, compare viewpoints, and organize possible content.

This pattern supports Storch's (2005) argument that collaborative writing is valuable because interaction can shape how ideas and texts are developed. It is also consistent with recent research showing that collaborative writing can provide mutual support and collective scaffolding when learners plan, regulate, and construct texts together (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2023; Wang et al., 2025).

### *3. Teacher Guidance Supported the Movement from Ideas to Written Response*

The third finding is that learners perceived teacher guidance as important across the writing process. They valued it for clarifying task expectations, helping them organize ideas, identifying weak points, supporting revision, and increasing confidence. This suggests that teacher guidance was not limited to post-writing correction; it operated throughout the sequence as learners moved from understanding the dilemma to preparing, drafting, revising, and reflecting.

This finding is consistent with studies showing that Thai EFL learners benefit from explicit scaffolding and teacher-student conferencing in developing ideas, planning revisions, and

understanding writing strengths and weaknesses (Piamsai, 2020; Suthipiyapathra, 2021; Wood et al., 1976). It also clarifies the relationship between collaboration and teacher guidance. Peer discussion helped learners generate and clarify ideas, while teacher guidance helped them shape those ideas into more coherent written responses.

#### *4. PIM Sequenced Task Engagement, Collaboration, Writing, Feedback, and Reflection*

The findings also clarify how learners perceived PIM's role. They did not experience it as a single technique but as a sequence that organized several forms of support into a single process. The early stages introduced the dilemma, helped learners identify issues, and encouraged participation. Planning created space for collaboration, brainstorming, and outline preparation. Operating required learners to write individually, while Reporting and Nurturing supported feedback, revision, and reflection.

Seen in this way, the findings cluster around three related areas: deeper reasoning before writing, collaborative preparation, and teacher guidance. These areas correspond to different points in the PIM sequence. At the same time, learner comments identify a point for refinement: the Operating stage, where learners had to transform group-generated ideas into individual essays. Thus, the study's contribution is not simply that PIM was perceived positively, but that learner perceptions help identify where stronger transitional scaffolding is needed.

#### *5. Individual Writing as the Main Point of Difficulty*

The strongest tension concerns the shift from collaborative preparation to individual writing. Learners appreciated the tasks, peer discussion, and teacher guidance, but some still found it difficult to select the strongest ideas, organize support, and write confidently on their own. This point prevents the discussion from being reduced to a positive report of learner satisfaction. Instead, it shows that support during discussion did not automatically become individual control over writing decisions.

This finding is consistent with research suggesting that scaffolding and individual control do not always develop at the same pace. Wang et al. (2025) indicate that collaboration may become more effective when paired with metacognitive or regulatory support, while Piamsai (2020) suggests that scaffolding should gradually support learners toward greater individual control. The present findings add a more specific insight: the problem may occur at the handoff point between group reasoning and individual composition.

#### *6. Pedagogical Implications*

The findings suggest that EFL writing instruction using PIM should include more explicit transitional scaffolding between the Planning and Operating stages. Such support may include idea-selection checklists, short outline frames, individual consolidation time after group discussion, teacher prompts for choosing the strongest support, and mini-conferences before drafting. These strategies would help learners convert shared reasoning into individually controlled text production.

A second implication is that learner perceptions should be treated as meaningful pedagogical evidence. The perception data did more than show that learners liked the instructional process. They revealed where the model appeared strongest and where support remained incomplete. Positive responses to collaboration should not be interpreted as evidence that learners are ready to write individually without further support.

## Conclusion

This article examined Thai undergraduate EFL learners' perceptions of dilemma-based problem-solving writing tasks, student collaboration, and teacher guidance within PIM. Learners perceived the instructional process positively. They viewed the tasks as encouraging deeper thinking before writing, collaboration as helpful for clarifying prompts and expanding ideas, and teacher guidance as useful across the writing process. These findings align with the article's framing of EFL writing as a reasoning-based process supported by task engagement, collaboration, and instructional scaffolding.

These findings should also be understood in relation to PIM as a structured model. Learners' accounts suggest that the model organized learning into a sequence that moved from dilemma engagement and problem identification to motivation, collaborative planning, individual writing, reporting, feedback, and reflection. At the same time, the Operating stage remained a point of difficulty for some learners. Therefore, learners perceived the model as useful for reasoning and preparation, but stronger transitional support is needed to help them move more confidently from shared discussion to individual composition.

Within the limits of a small-scale, qualitative, process-focused study, the article contributes a focused insight to EFL writing pedagogy. Its main pedagogical value lies not only in showing that learners valued dilemma-based tasks, collaboration, and teacher guidance, but also in identifying the transition from collaboratively supported reasoning to individual text production as the key pressure point for future refinement.

## Recommendations

For classroom practice, teachers who use PIM in EFL writing should make the transition from group discussion to individual writing more explicit. After the Planning stage, learners should be given time to select the strongest ideas, discard less relevant points, and create an individual outline before drafting. Tools such as idea-selection checklists, outline frames, thesis-and-support templates, and short individual planning sheets may help learners convert group discussion into their own written structure.

Teachers should also maintain the balance between student collaboration and teacher guidance. Collaboration should help learners clarify prompts, compare viewpoints, and generate possible support. Teacher guidance should then help learners evaluate which ideas are most relevant, how to organize them, and how to revise them into clearer written responses. This staged support may reduce learners' uncertainty when they move into individual writing.

For instructional design, future implementations should provide more time for brainstorming, outlining, revising, and individual composition. Additional model essays, sample outlines, or short teacher-led demonstrations may also be useful, especially before learners are asked to write individually. More varied dilemma topics may further sustain engagement, provided that the tasks still require analysis, comparison, justification, and written response.

For future research, larger, more diverse samples should be used to examine whether similar perceptual patterns occur in other EFL writing contexts. Comparative or quasi-experimental designs could also help clarify how PIM compares with other writing approaches. Future studies should investigate the transition from collaborative planning to individual writing more directly by examining learners' outlines, drafts, revisions, reflection logs, and interviews. Finally, future research should continue to distinguish between the instructional task and the scaffolding approaches used to support it.

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