JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Enhancing Narrative Writing through the 4C's to WRITE Module: A Mixed-methods Study in Malaysian ESL Classrooms

Raganeswari Ramasamy[1]*, Hooi Chee Mei[2]

[1]Centre for Instructional Technology and Multimedia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia
[2]Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: raganes_87mr@yahoo.com; ORCID iD: 0000-0001-8435-2713

ABSTRACT

There are four language skills that learners acquire when learning, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, learners often face a barrier in writing skills compared to the other three language skills. Therefore, the 4C's to WRITE Module was created in this study. Moreover, this Module emphasises the amalgamation of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking (4C's) based on the Online Collaborative Learning Theory (OLC). The learners use this Module to practise their narrative writing elements. The ASSURE Model, comprising six steps, was used in the development and assessment phases of the Module. Fifty-five Form 4 English as a Second Language (ESL) learners from two upper secondary schools in Malaysia participated in the study. Pre-test, post-test, and interviews were conducted to assess the effectiveness of the Module in developing narrative writing skills. The findings showed that the Module could assist learners in constructing main ideas, organising these ideas into a few paragraphs, and applying appropriate grammar and vocabulary features to write a story. Moreover, the findings showed that the t-value was 21.64 and a partial Eta squared was .875, indicating that 87.5 per cent of the variation in the overall scores for the post-test is attributed to the 4C's to WRITE Module. The participants also disclosed that they would need more grammar and vocabulary practices according to their language proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers design more grammar and vocabulary assessments aligned with learners' ability levels. Overall, this study presents a novel framework that integrates 4C's skills with narrative writing instruction, demonstrating effectiveness in enhancing ESL learners' writing competence and higher-order thinking skills.

Keywords: ASSURE Model, ESL learners, narrative writing skills, 4C's, 4C's to WRITE Module

Received: 9 March 2025, **Accepted:** 24 June 2025, **Published:** 29 December 2025

1.0 Introduction

English Language has been extensively used and spoken by Malaysians for many years. Therefore, it is recognised as an important language and has become the country's second most significant language (Mara & Mohamad, 2021). Generally, everyone in this country uses the English language in his or her daily life to carry out his or her daily routine effectively. Moreover, the world is becoming smaller due

Journal of Communication, Language and Culture
doi: https://doi.org/10.33093/jclc.2026.6.1.1
© Universiti Telekom Sdn Bhd. This article is licensed under Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License.
Published by MMU Press. URL: https://journals.mmupress.com/jclc

to technological advancements and globalisation. Thus, the English language plays a greater role as an international language in many aspects (Mosiur & Mehar, 2021). People around the world are increasingly attached to technology, enabling them to engage globally. To achieve international stature, it is essential to learn the English language effectively among people in Malaysia, as it serves as the lingua franca of the Internet in this digital era (Jabali & Walker, 2021).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Malaysia plays a crucial role in helping English as a Second Language (ESL) students use the English language correctly through various programmes. The most recent two major changes were outlined in the National Educational Blueprint (2013-2025) and the English Language Education Roadmap for Malaysia (2015-2025) (Khair & Shah, 2021). The National Educational Blueprint has introduced a significant advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the advancement of teaching and learning within the curriculum structure. Going forward, Shift 7 of the National Education Blueprint emphasises the importance of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in improving the quality of education in Malaysia, encompassing Internet access and a virtual learning environment for ESL learners (Yaakob et al., 2020).

In line with this trend, the English Language Education Roadmap aims to serve as a guide for curriculum designers and English language educators in Malaysia. Its goal is to enable ESL learners to achieve the proficiency level aligned with international standards. The standard utilised to assess the advancement of learners' proficiency is referred to as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This benchmark includes six levels of language proficiency that correspond to the five skills: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing. These levels span from A1 to C2, where A1 is the lowest and C2 is the highest. The aim of utilising this benchmark as a reference is to guarantee that students attain a minimum B1 proficiency level prior to commencing their higher education courses (Khair & Shah, 2021).

Although the English Language Education Roadmap and CEFR have been introduced, ESL learners in Malaysia still face several issues with their writing skills. These issues arise from their selection of writing skills and their inability to apply cognitive and linguistic approaches to construct a well-written piece (Rahman et al., 2020). Consequently, learners need to learn to formulate sound main ideas, arrange these concepts into paragraphs, and utilise suitable grammar and vocabulary to create an effective essay. After identifying the writing difficulties faced by ESL learners, the researcher has created a writing module called the 4C's to WRITE Module. This Module is specifically designed to help upper secondary learners in Malaysian secondary schools practise their narrative writing skills.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This present study is underpinned by the Online Collaborative Learning Theory (OLC) to enable ESL learners to practise narrative writing activities from the 4C's to WRITE Module using the Google Classroom platform. It is believed that learners need continuous writing practice after classroom activities to develop their writing skills. Several past studies have shown that incorporating an online learning platform to develop writing skills among learners is beneficial (Hassan et al., 2021; Jong & Tan, 2021; Rahman et al., 2020).

This theory pertains to the current study as it validates the evidential role of the online learning environment, which provides a space for students to engage in discussions and collaborations with peers to accomplish their writing tasks. Online Collaborative Learning (OCL) emphasises the three principles of idea generating, idea organising, and intellectual convergence. It claims that incorporating an online learning platform allows learners to brainstorm and engage in divergent thinking in a group (idea organising). Learners are also able to compare, analyse, and categorise different ideas or thoughts (idea organising). Finally, learners will be able to reach the stage of synthesising, understanding, and evaluating to write their own products (intellectual convergence). In this study, when the ESL learners utilised Google Classroom, it allowed them to brainstorm, analyse and evaluate in order to write a narrative essay.

Subsequently, this study aimed to improve ESL learners' narrative writing by implementing Online Collaborative Learning Theory (OCL) together with ASSURE Model in the development of the

Module. This theory is significant because it enables both teachers and learners to engage in after-school sessions to discuss and exchange knowledge through an online platform, specifically Google Classroom, in this study. Moreover, this current study provided chances for students to collaborate with their group members in order to finish the narrative writing tasks from the 4C's to WRITE Module. Using an online learning platform enables learners to discuss and collaborate, honing their narrative writing elements as they can explicitly and implicitly provide comments and opinions. Hence, the amalgamation of OCL and the ASSURE Model provided both the pedagogical foundation and the structural framework for the Module. Learners were not only engaged in meaningful, technology-supported writing tasks but also given opportunities to co-construct knowledge with friends. This blended approach fostered both cognitive engagement and writing skill development, making the incorporation of theory into practice determined and educationally comprehensible.

3.0 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Development of 4C's to WRITE Module Using ASSURE Model

The ASSURE Model served as a framework for developing the 4C's to WRITE Module, which instructs in narrative writing skills in this research. This model, created by Heinich et al. (1999), aims to assist educators in incorporating and utilising technology during the teaching and learning process with students. The framework integrates multimedia and technology to establish an efficient educational setting for students (Lefebvre, 2006). The goal of this model is to ensure that instructional resources play a crucial role in achieving specific learning objectives and to enable learners to be actively engaged in their learning journey. This model encompasses a six-step instructional system design process: (1) analyse learners, (2) state standards and objectives, (3) select strategies, technology, and instructional resources, (4) utilise resources, (5) require learner participation, and (6) evaluate and revise.

Utilisation of the ASSURE Model (Heinich et al., 1999) was fundamental in explaining the creation of the Module to improve learners' narrative writing skills for Form 4 learners in Malaysia. The Module, known as the 4C's to WRITE Module for narrative writing skills, was appropriately designed by using the steps of the ASSURE Model. The primary objective of creating the Module was to assist upper secondary learners in Form 4 in learning how to write narratives step-by-step through activities within the Module, which were conducted via Google Classroom. The selection of the ASSURE Model was imperative because it provided a practical guide for scheduling and implementing instructions that incorporated technology and media into the teaching and learning process. It also provided a methodical approach to writing lesson plans that assisted teachers in organising instructional procedures during the teaching process.

3.1.1 Analyse Learners

Prior to undertaking the current study, preliminary studies were conducted to identify the writing challenges faced by upper secondary Malaysian National learners, based on previous research. Following the identification of the issues, upper secondary Malaysian National learners were selected as the study's target learners. The participants in this study were the ESL learners from two states in Malaysia: Penang (School 1) and Kedah (School 2).

3.1.2 State Objectives

After choosing the participants, the researcher decided to teach narrative writing skills to the chosen participants. The lessons and activities from the 4C's to WRITE Module were created based on the latest Standard of Secondary School Curriculum (Form 4 English Language Syllabus). The lesson plans in the 4C's to WRITE Module were based on the learning standards to articulate learning objectives.

3.1.3 Select Methods, Media and Materials

Choosing strategies, technology and instructional resources is the third step in the ASSURE Model. This step emphasises the choice of strategies, technology, and instructional guidelines. After identifying the learners' characteristics, the researcher deliberated on teaching narrative writing skills to them using appropriate approaches. In this study, the teaching approach selected was based on the 4C's of 21st-

century learning skills. The medium incorporated to carry out the treatment was Google Classroom, and the writing materials were from the 4C's to WRITE Module.

3.1.4 Utilise Technology, Media and Materials

The fourth step is utilising methods, media, and materials. This step involves implementing the methods, media, and materials that were planned for this study. Therefore, Google Classroom was used to administer the treatment to the learners. Then, the worksheets from the 4C's to WRITE Module were uploaded to Google Classroom, enabling learners to complete the worksheets and develop their narrative writing skills by communicating, collaborating, and applying their creativity and critical thinking.

3.1.5 Require Learner Participation

From the preliminary studies evaluated by the researcher before conducting this treatment, it was found that learners would need additional writing practice to improve their narrative writing skills. Accordingly, the participants were divided into small groups, which enabled them to work with their group members to complete the narrative writing materials from the 4C's to WRITE Module.

3.1.6 Evaluate and Revise

The last step of the ASSURE Model is to evaluate and revise. In this study, the instruments were created to enable the language teachers from both schools to evaluate their learners' performance by using Google Classroom to complete their worksheets. Scoring rubrics and interview questions were implemented accordingly. After the evaluation process, the weaknesses of the treatment were reviewed and acknowledged, so that future researchers could design better writing treatments for Malaysian secondary school learners, which are suggested as recommendations in this study. Additionally, the 4C's to WRITE Module is a writing programme that emphasises developing narrative writing abilities through the integration of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity via an online learning platform. In this research, Google Classroom was utilised. The purpose of this Module was to help ESL students enhance their narrative writing skills through enjoyable activities, teamwork and a focus on student-centred learning. By the conclusion of this treatment, students were expected to compose a story independently, featuring pertinent main ideas, structuring their thoughts into several paragraphs, and employing suitable grammar and vocabulary to create a narrative of approximately 250 words. Furthermore, they would need to compose their narrative with both critical and creative approaches.

The activities in the Module were divided into a few parts. Firstly, learners were divided into small groups. Learners were requested to do their assignments or worksheets daily from Monday to Friday. Throughout the week, a structured series of learning activities guided the students through various stages of narrative writing using the 4C's to WRITE Module. On Monday, learners were introduced to a sample narrative essay. They were tasked with analysing it to identify its main ideas, the different types of sensory details (such as sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell), and the central themes entrenched in the writing. This activity helped students understand how writers used expressive language and thematic focus to convey meaning and engage the readers.

On Tuesday, the focus moved to literary analysis. Students completed a worksheet designed to help them break down and understand the key elements of plot, including the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. In addition, they identified the main and minor characters, described the setting, and explored the moral values presented in the story. An important part of this exercise involved examining how the title of the essay would relate to its overall message or moral, encouraging learners to draw thoughtful conclusions about the narrative.

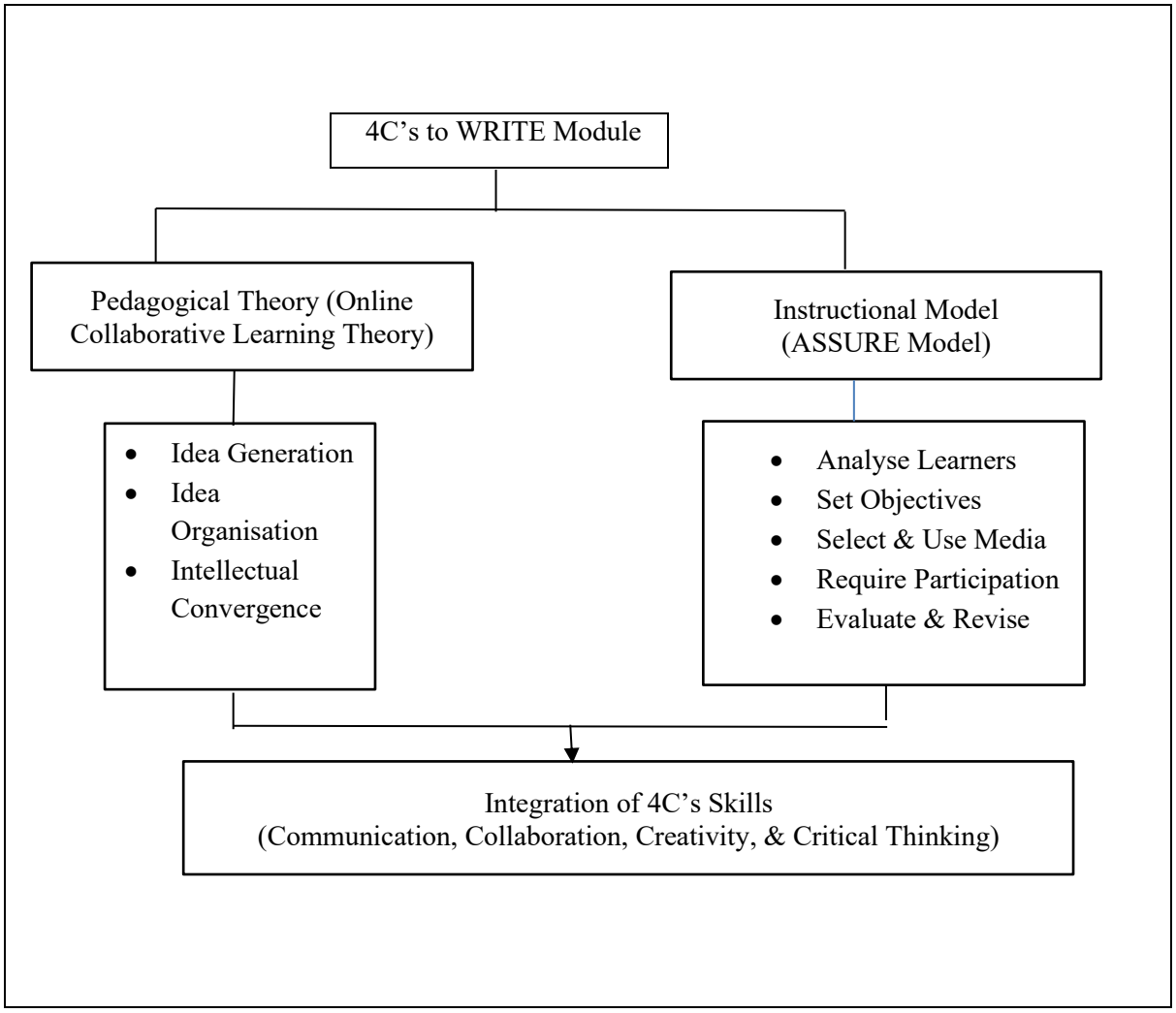
On Wednesday and Thursday, the attention turned to language mechanics. On Wednesday, learners worked on targeted grammar exercises, reinforcing their understanding of sentence structure, verb tenses, punctuation, and cohesive devices. This would be pivotal for writing clear and effective

narratives. On Thursday, they expanded the vocabulary through context-based tasks that equipped them with more expressive and varied word choices for use in their own writing.

On Friday, students brought together everything that they had learnt throughout the week. They wrote their own individual narrative essays, about 250 words in length. The final task required them to upload their completed essays to Google Classroom, providing an opportunity for assessment, feedback and reflection on their writing development. The integration of the OCL Theory and ASSURE Model forms the theoretical foundation of the *4C's to WRITE* Module. To clarify how these frameworks and the 4C's skills interact in promoting narrative writing development, the conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

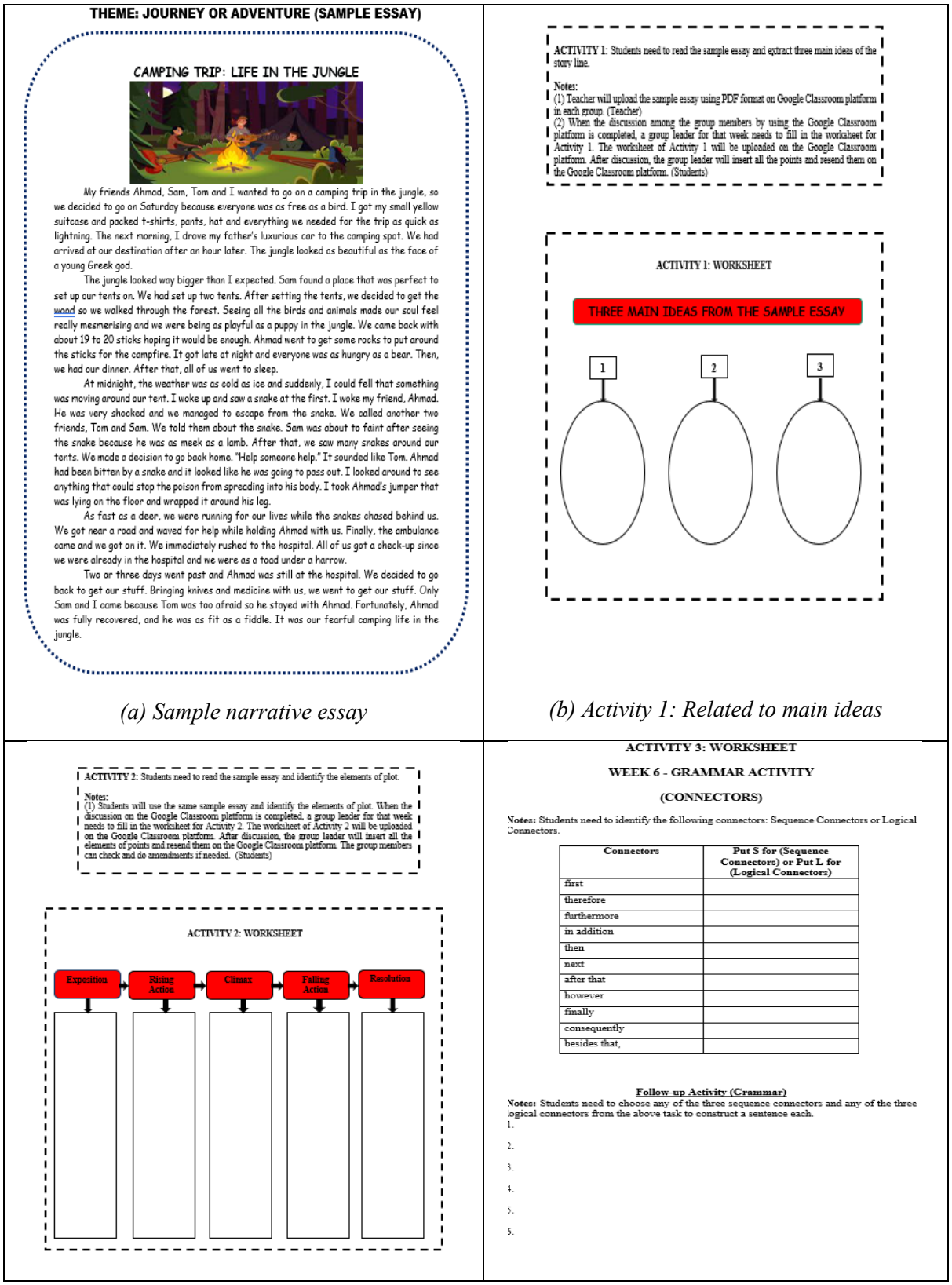
Conceptual Framework Integrating 4C's, OCL Theory, and ASSURE Model

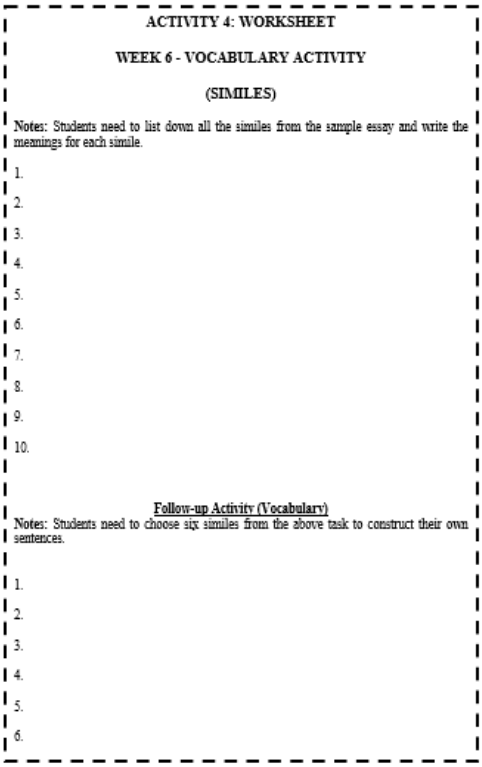
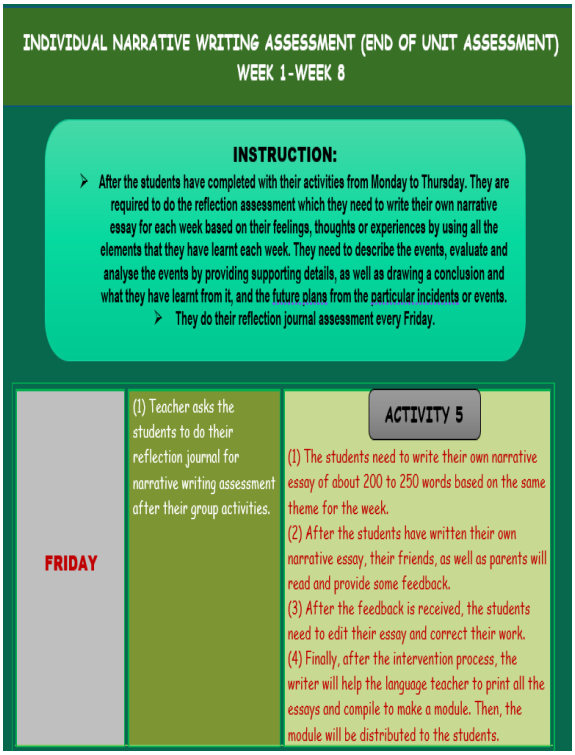


These scaffolded activities, demonstrated in the 4C's to WRITE Module, as shown in Figure 2, are designed to enhance learners' writing skills holistically by integrating creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication throughout the writing process. Some sample activities from the 4C's to WRITE Module are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Activities from the 4C's to WRITE Module



(c) Activity 2: Related to plot identification	*(d) Activity 3: Grammar*
 ACTIVITY 4: WORKSHEET WEEK 6 - VOCABULARY ACTIVITY (SIMILES) Notes: Students need to list down all the similes from the sample essay and write the meanings for each simile. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. Follow-up Activity (Vocabulary) Notes: Students need to choose six similes from the above task to construct their own sentences. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	 INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVE WRITING ASSESSMENT (END OF UNIT ASSESSMENT) WEEK 1-WEEK 8 INSTRUCTION: ➢ After the students have completed with their activities from Monday to Thursday. They are required to do the reflection assessment which they need to write their own narrative essay for each week based on their feelings, thoughts or experiences by using all the elements that they have learnt each week. They need to describe the events, evaluate and analyse the events by providing supporting details, as well as drawing a conclusion and what they have learnt from it, and the future plans from the particular incidents or events. ➢ They do their reflection journal assessment every Friday. FRIDAY (1) Teacher asks the students to do their reflection journal for narrative writing assessment after their group activities. ACTIVITY 5 (1) The students need to write their own narrative essay of about 200 to 250 words based on the same theme for the week. (2) After the students have written their own narrative essay, their friends, as well as parents will read and provide some feedback. (3) After the feedback is received, the students need to edit their essay and correct their work. (4) Finally, after the intervention process, the writer will help the language teacher to print all the essays and compile to make a module. Then, the module will be distributed to the students.
(e) Activity 4: Vocabulary	*(f) Activity 5: Individual Narrative Writing Assessment*

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Usefulness of Integrating the Writing Module in Learning Writing Skills

Several studies have highlighted the importance of incorporating writing modules into the teaching and learning of writing skills. Abdelmohsen et al. (2020) investigated the importance of developing a writing module to enhance learners' writing performance. Their findings revealed that students who received the writing module showed significant improvement in their post-test results when compared with those in the control group. Similarly, Zulkarnain et al. (2022) focused on a narrative writing theme to improve students' narrative writing abilities, and their study produced positive outcomes. Eight narrative themes were incorporated, which helped learners to enhance their narrative writing skills. In contrast, learners who lacked appropriate guidelines and thematic direction struggled to improve their writing performance.

In another study, Syam (2020) investigated the need for developing a writing module to enhance learners' writing skills. The Module was developed by using the ADDIE model, and the evaluation results demonstrated that 75 per cent of the students strongly agreed and 25 per cent of the students agreed that the Module's materials were suitable and effective. This indicated that the use of a structured instructional design model ensured that the Module was effectively implemented. Consequently, learners were better able to follow the instructional steps and enhance their writing performance. In the present research, the writing module was designed based on the ASSURE model to guide participants in improving their narrative writing abilities.

In the Malaysian context, Yunus et al. (2020) investigated the effectiveness of incorporating a writing module into the teaching of writing skills to primary school students. Their findings showed that the use of *The Write Stuff* Module fostered enjoyable and engaging learning experiences while increasing learners' cooperative participation and enthusiasm in completing writing tasks. Furthermore, Yunus et al. (2021) emphasised the importance of integrating creativity into writing modules, as many Malaysian ESL learners faced challenges in producing creative writing. Their essays often lacked engaging elements, making them less appealing. Thus, embedding creativity within writing modules can help educators highlight the value of creative expression and encourage students to produce more engaging written work.

Additionally, Sakkir et al. (2021) noted that employing writing modules serves as an effective supplementary activity to improve learners' writing proficiency, particularly when using non-conventional or online learning approaches. The integration of modules allows students to work independently, promoting self-directed learning. It also offers opportunities for learners to engage in varied and stimulating activities that sustain their attention. Furthermore, modular learning encourages gradual skill development, guiding learners from basic to more complex writing tasks.

Although these studies demonstrate the benefits of using writing modules, most have primarily concentrated on improving general writing performance or fostering creativity. Some studies have critically examined specific aspects of writing, including grammar, vocabulary enrichment, and coherence development. Likewise, limited attention has been given to collaborative or technology-enhanced writing, especially in online or blended learning contexts. Moreover, many previous modules focused on general writing improvement without explicitly tailoring content to narrative writing structures or learner autonomy.

Hence, the present study builds on these findings by developing a writing module that not only enhances narrative writing skills but also integrates structured guidance, independent learning activities, and creative elements. The Module employs the ASSURE model to ensure systematic design, incorporates interactive tasks that encourage autonomy, and embeds creative expression to help learners produce more engaging and well-organised narrative texts.

4.2 Research Gap

In the current study, the 4C's to WRITE Module was created to enable learners to practise narrative writing skills. This is because ESL learners still make major mistakes when composing their stories. The stories remain less interesting and lack proper grammar and vocabulary elements, as identified in past studies. Therefore, the Module serves as an accompanying resource that learners could use through an online learning platform (Google Classroom). Moreover, an appropriate instructional model, which was the ASSURE Model (Heinich et al., 1999), was used to develop the Module. For this reason, the present study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the 4C's to WRITE Module in developing narrative writing skills and to examine the perceptions of creating a writing module in overcoming difficulties faced by ESL learners in narrative writing.

Although numerous studies have explored the integration of technology and online platforms in language learning, limited research has focused on combining the 21st-century learning skills (4C's) with the narrative writing instruction among Malaysian ESL secondary learners. Existing studies primarily emphasise writing accuracy or grammatical competence rather than fostering collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking through structured online modules. Moreover, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness of incorporating the Online Collaborative Learning (OCL) Theory and ASSURE Model in developing ESL learners' narrative writing skills. Thus, this study addresses this gap by designing and evaluating the *4C's to WRITE* Module. Accordingly, this study aimed to answer the following research questions as stated below:

(1) Is there any significant difference between learners' writing scores in the pre-test and post-test?

(2) What are the perceptions of the language teachers in incorporating writing module activities by using Google Classroom?

5.0 Methods

5.1 Research Design

This current study employed a mixed-methods approach, focusing on data collection and analysis, and combining both quantitative and qualitative data to present the findings.

5.2 Samples

A total of 55 ESL learners participated in this study. The main aim of the research was not to generalise the findings to a larger population, but rather to explore in depth the implementation and effectiveness of the 4C's to WRITE Module within a specific educational setting. Therefore, the purposive sampling method was employed. This approach enabled the researcher to deliberately select participants who were most closely aligned with the research objectives. Purposive sampling is particularly suitable when the goal is to gain a rich, contextualised understanding from a specific group that shares key characteristics aligned with the research purpose.

The participants were chosen from two national secondary schools that had implemented the Module as part of their writing instruction. Focusing on these schools enabled the researcher to closely monitor the teaching and learning process, collect detailed feedback, and evaluate the impact of the intervention within a consistent instructional environment. A total of 24 male and 31 female Form Four students participated in the study. The selection criteria were: (i) the ability to communicate and write in English, and (ii) access to and ability to use Google Classroom at home.

Additionally, two English language teachers were interviewed because the 4C's to WRITE Module was implemented as a small-scale, focused intervention involving two classrooms, each led by a single teacher. These teachers were directly responsible for implementing the Module and monitoring learners' progress, making them the most appropriate sources for firsthand insights into the process, learner engagement, and instructional challenges. While the number of teacher participants was limited, data saturation was achieved because both teachers consistently highlighted recurring themes related to the Module's implementation and learners' responses. The interviews were also triangulated with learners' feedback and classroom observations, which enhanced the validity and credibility of the qualitative findings.

However, the use of purposive sampling presents certain limitations. Since participants were not selected randomly, there is potential for selection bias, and the findings cannot be generalised to all ESL learners or educational contexts. Furthermore, participants' prior exposure to writing activities or their familiarity with the researcher may have influenced their engagement or responses. Nonetheless, purposive sampling was considered appropriate for this study, as the intention was to obtain in-depth, context-specific insights rather than statistically generalisable outcomes.

5.3 Research Instruments

The information collected from the results of this study was categorised into two groups: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data were collected from the pre-test and post-test scores, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews.

5.3.1 Pre-test and Post-test

The quantitative data for this study were collected through the administration of the pre-test and post-test. The purpose of performing a pre-test and post-test was to examine the impact of the 4C's WRITE Module on enhancing the narrative writing skills of ESL learners. The treatment was preceded and followed by the pre-test and post-test. In the examination, students would need to compose a complete narrative of approximately 250 words. Subsequently, the essays were evaluated by the language instructors utilising a grading rubric developed by the researcher for this research. The revised marking rubric was developed by employing Brown's (2007), Jacobs et al.'s (1981), and Wong's (1989) marking criteria. To safeguard the reliability of the assessment, the rubric underwent an inter-rater reliability process involving two experienced ESL educators. Both raters were trained to use the rubric

consistently, and their evaluations were compared to verify scoring agreement. Therefore, the results from the assessments were used to determine whether the learners achieved any enhancement in the four aspects of narrative writing: main idea, organisation, grammar, and vocabulary, before and after the intervention.

5.3.2 Semi-structured Interview

The results were collected through semi-structured interviews with language teachers to explore the benefits of introducing a writing module to enhance students' narrative writing skills. Ten questions were designed for the two language instructors involved in this research. The summary of the research instruments and data resources is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Research Instruments and Data Sources

Instrument	Participants' Data Source	Purpose	Type of Data	Analysis Method
Pre-test and post-test of writing tasks	55 Form 4 ESL learners	To measure learners' narrative writing performance before and after the implementation of the 4C's to WRITE Module	Quantitative	Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Analysis (comparison of pre-test and post-test scores)
Semi-structured interview	2 English language teachers	To explore teachers' perceptions of the benefits, challenges, and effectiveness of the 4C's to WRITE Module in enhancing students' writing skills	Quantitative	Thematic Analysis

5.4 Procedures

The learners took the pre-test in Week 1 to assess their initial narrative writing skills at the beginning of this study, before the treatment was implemented. The treatment was carried out for eight weeks (from Week 2 to Week 9). The students were asked to finish their worksheets alongside their group members. There was a personal narrative writing evaluation, during which students were required to compose their story on their own. The treatment was conducted from Monday through Friday. At the conclusion of the treatment, a post-test was carried out to assess the participants' improvement in narrative writing abilities following the application of the 4C's to WRITE Module. Furthermore, following the treatment, a semi-structured interview was performed with the language educators. It was conducted by using Google Meet, with each session lasting 20 minutes.

5.5 Data Analysis

The pre-test and post-test data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Concerning the statistical analysis, a paired samples t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the participants' pre-test and post-test outcomes following the treatment. Regarding the interview results, the two language teachers from School 1 and School 2 were questioned. The results were evaluated through thematic analysis, recognising various codes using NVivo version 12, and the interview feedback excerpts were transcribed exactly as spoken.

6.0 Results

6.1 Pre-test and Post-test

6.1.1 Research Question 1: Is there any significant difference between learners' writing scores in the pre-test and post-test?

To address the first research question, pre-test and post-test assessments were carried out with the participants to examine the impact of the 4C's to WRITE Module on enhancing ESL learners' narrative writing abilities. The results from both assessments were analysed according to the four criteria of main idea, organisation, grammar, and vocabulary. The results of both tests were arranged in Microsoft Excel. Subsequently, the results of the pre-test and post-test were analysed by using SPSS to determine the mean value, standard deviation, t-value, and significance level. The results of the paired t-test for the pre-test and post-test are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Paired-samples t-test of Pre-test and Post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pre-test	55	9.036	2.83			
Post-test	55	14.71	2.72			
				-21.639	54	.000

In this research, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test results regarding the narrative writing abilities of ESL learners. A notable difference existed in the scores from the pre-test ($M = 9.036$, $SD = 2.83$) and post-test ($M = 14.71$, $SD = 2.72$). Table 1 shows that the average scores from the pre- and post-tests are statistically significant, (54) = 21.64, $p = .00$. The data indicate a notable difference in averages for the post-test. This indicates that the narrative writing outcomes of the learners improved following their participation in the treatment for eight weeks. The notable value of the paired sample t-test was .000, which was lower than the significance threshold established at .05 ($p = .000 < \alpha = .05$). Thus, it can be concluded that the 4C's within the WRITE Module had a statistically significant impact on students' narrative writing skills.

Additionally, regarding the first research question, the elements of narrative writing skills, which comprised main idea, organisation, grammar, and vocabulary, were evaluated. This was done to determine the learners' progress in each aspect of narrative writing skill, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Learners' Mean Score in the Pre-test and Post-test on Each Aspect of Narrative Writing Skills

Aspect	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain Score
Main Idea	2.52	4.12	1.6
Organisation	2.25	3.95	1.7
Grammar	2.02	3.22	1.2
Vocabulary	2.24	3.44	1.2

According to Table 3, the pre-test outcomes for main idea and organisation showed a significant improvement, with the pre-test mean scores of 2.52 and 2.25, while the post-test mean scores for main idea and organisation were 4.12 and 3.95, respectively. The gain score for each aspect was 1.6 and 1.7,

respectively. The gain scores revealed that following eight weeks of treatment, the students could develop suitable main ideas and arrange their thoughts into several paragraphs to write their narrative. Regarding grammar and vocabulary, both components showed a minor improvement in the learners' performance, with pre-test mean scores of 2.02 and 2.24, respectively. The post-test mean scores, however, reached 3.22 and 3.44, respectively. The gain scores for both factors were similar, registering at 1.2. According to the findings, ESL learners in this research improved more in developing main ideas and organisation than in grammar and vocabulary components. Table 4 illustrates the effect size in this study.

Table 4

Effect Size (Tests of between-subjects Effects)

Dependent Variable: Post-test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.000[a]	0	.	.	.	.000
Intercept	216.384	1	216.384	.	.	.875

a. R Squared = .000 (Adjusted R Squared = .000)

From Table 4, the effect size is obtained from partial Eta squared. This suggests that the effect size is considerable, featuring a partial Eta squared of .875 (Cohen, 1988). It shows that 87.5 per cent of the variation in the overall scores for the post-test is attributed to the 4C's to WRITE Module.

6.2 Interview

6.2.1 Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of the language teachers in incorporating writing module activities by using Google Classroom?

(a) Usefulness of the Writing Module

The language teachers provided feedback indicating that practising writing skills after school using an online learning platform was essential. Moreover, the developed writing module helped carry out the writing learning sessions effectively by using Google Classroom, as it provided sufficient details on the steps and instructions for the narrative writing activities. According to the language teachers,

> *"In my opinion, I would say that the 4C's WRITE Module was very useful as it provided useful instructions to carry out the activities systematically using Google Classroom.*
>
> (Teacher 1)

> *Based on my opinion, the narrative writing module was good as it was easy for me to follow the guidelines to assist my students to do their extra narrative writing activities during the treatment*.
>
> (Teacher 2)

(b) Themes of Narrative Writing Essays

Both teachers were provided with positive feedback on the themes of narrative essays from the 4C's to WRITE Module. By preparing a few themes to write narrative essays, learners gained interest in composing their storylines efficiently.

> *For me, I like the part where the Module was created based on a few themes for writing narrative essays. It was very useful for students to let them know that they are needed to follow the themes to construct their storyline.*
>
> (Teacher 1)

> *In my perceptive, I could observe my students were writing their individual narrative writing essay appropriately as they were informed about the topic or theme before writing. It helped them to construct their essays correctly.*
>
> (Teacher 2)

(c) Contents of Writing Module

The language teachers found that the contents of the 4C's to WRITE Module were well-organised because it provided a step-by-step guideline for learners to practise exercises to construct main ideas, organise the main ideas into a few paragraphs. The Module also helped the learners to revise and recall the grammar and vocabulary aspects one by one before writing a complete storyline.

> *I would say that the 4C's to WRITE Module was created appropriately as students were able to practise each aspect of narrative writing element before writing a story about 250 words on Friday.*
>
> (Teacher 1)

> *I could say that this treatment was provided another revision lessons through the treatment to revise their grammar and vocabulary aspects.*
>
> (Teacher 2)

(d) Needs for Creativity and Critical Thinking

The language teachers also commented on the effectiveness of the Module as it provided an opportunity for learners to practise their grammar and vocabulary skills by using creativity and critical thinking in group settings with their group members. Furthermore, the teachers explained that activities focused on creativity and critical thinking in grammar and vocabulary were crucial. These activities helped students improve their narrative essays, in which they would carefully select appropriate grammar and vocabulary to convey their written message to readers effectively.

> *I would say that students needed more activities which enable them to use their critical thinking and creativity thinking. It helps them to write story critically and creatively to gain attention from the readers.*
>
> (Teacher 1)

> *When these two elements which are critical thinking and creativity thinking included, it would help students to provide the storyline to be interesting, and they know how to create a story which contains the element of suspense which I found from the students' essays during the treatment.*
>
> (Teacher 2)

(e) Benefits of Group Tasks

The teachers were interested in the group activities because they helped learners communicate and collaborate with their group members to complete the tasks. It aided them in gaining more knowledge and served as an extra revision tool to help them recall aspects of narrative writing skills. Moreover, the two teachers noted that group tasks allowed learners to apply their creativity and critical thinking.

> *I could observe clearly that the quiet and shy ones were able to contribute their ideas during the group task. I could say it would help them to write better in future and eliminate their negative perception on writing skills.*
>
> (Teacher 1)

> *This treatment gave an opportunity for students to work in groups via technology platform and through group task, they were able collaborate with each other and apply their creativity and critical thinking for completing their worksheets.*
>
> (Teacher 2)

7.0 Discussion

The analysis of the results revealed that the development of a writing module to improve ESL learners' narrative writing skills produced positive outcomes. Learners demonstrated improvement in constructing main ideas and organising them coherently across paragraphs, as evidenced by the enhanced post-test scores. This aligns with findings from Yunus et al. (2020), who reported that a writing module improved learners' writing elements, including fluency, organisation, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. Similarly, Yunus et al. (2021) found that the use of modules enhanced learners' engagement and creativity in writing.

This study further advanced previous research by demonstrating that the development of a writing module can be guided effectively through the use of an instructional design model. The 4C's to WRITE Module was developed by using the ASSURE Model, which provided a structured framework to align content, learners' needs and delivery strategies. Jais et al. (2022) and Syam (2020) also emphasised the importance of employing instructional design models to ensure the systematic development of modules. In the present study, this approach enabled the creation of structured and scaffolded materials that supported learners in understanding narrative structure and sequencing. The use of thematic topics as a motivating factor further encouraged learners to write more confidently and creatively. As Syam (2020) highlighted, relevant and engaging themes help learners practise writing more meaningfully.

A key contribution of this study lies in the integration of the 4C's skills (communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking) with Online Collaborative Learning (OCL) principles and the ASSURE instructional model. This theoretical combination is relatively underexplored in ESL writing contexts. By integrating these three elements, the Module not only guided the teaching process but also nurtured 21st-century learning skills. When learners communicated and collaborated online via Google Classroom, they exchanged ideas, collectively constructed meaning, and built confidence in their writing. This finding supports Ni et al. (2020) and Yates et al. (2021), who found that collaboration reduces anxiety and increases learner motivation. Moreover, the collaborative tasks fostered creativity and critical thinking, helping learners refine grammar and vocabulary use through peer interaction (Ramasamy et al., 2023).

The use of Google Classroom as an online platform was crucial in supporting continued writing practice beyond school hours. Learners worked in groups asynchronously, contributing ideas and providing peer feedback at their own pace. This flexibility allowed for extended engagement, consistent with Naim et al.'s (2020) findings that online collaboration enhances participation and reduces writing-related anxiety.

However, one unexpected finding emerged, in which learners showed more substantial improvement in organising ideas and developing main points than in grammar and vocabulary. This outcome reflects the cognitive and linguistic demands of writing. Learners concentrated on content organisation and storyline coherence during collaborative writing, which reduced their focus on grammatical accuracy and lexical refinement. Additionally, the intervention period provided limited time for significant linguistic gains to occur. Grammar and vocabulary mastery requires sustained, explicit instruction and repetitive practice, while creative writing tasks emphasise meaning making and idea development.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the need for writing modules to balance creativity with language accuracy. Teachers should integrate focused grammar and vocabulary activities into creative writing lessons, allowing learners to strengthen their linguistic competence while generating ideas. Online platforms such as Google Classroom can further support this process through structured peer feedback and continuous revision opportunities.

Theoretically, this study contributes by illustrating how the integration of the 4C's framework, Online Collaborative Learning (OCL), and the ASSURE instructional model creates a synergistic environment that supports both cognitive engagement and skill mastery. This integrated model provides a practical framework for future ESL writing module design, emphasising creativity, collaboration, and structured pedagogical planning.

8.0 Conclusion

This study explored the importance of adopting innovative and structured teaching methods to improve ESL learners' writing skills in Malaysia. The development and implementation of the 4C's to WRITE Module, designed using the ASSURE instructional design model and embedded with 21st-century learning skills, demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing students' narrative writing development. Learners showed clear improvement in constructing main ideas and organising them into coherent paragraphs, reflecting the positive impact of the Module's structured and interactive design. However, the results also revealed that students required further targeted practice in grammar and vocabulary to strengthen the linguistic accuracy of their writing.

This study contributes to the field of ESL writing instruction by providing an evidence-based framework that integrates the 4C's (communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking) with Online Collaborative Learning (OCL) principles through the ASSURE model. This combination presents a novel pedagogical model that promotes both cognitive and linguistic development, while cultivating 21st-century learning skills. The research adds to the growing body of knowledge on how structured module-based instruction can support creative and collaborative learning in online and blended contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings emphasise that effective writing instruction should not only focus on idea generation and narrative structure but also include explicit and sustained support for grammar and vocabulary development. Future modules should therefore include targeted linguistic reinforcement, such as grammar drills, vocabulary enrichment activities, and self-paced digital exercises embedded within creative writing tasks. Such enhancements would provide balanced support between creativity and accuracy, enabling learners to strengthen both content and language quality.

While the Module produced encouraging outcomes, the study had several limitations. The research was conducted within a limited context involving two schools and 55 participants, which restricts generalisation. The short duration of the intervention also limited the extent of observable linguistic improvement, particularly in grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, access to digital devices and Internet connectivity varied among learners, influencing the level of online collaboration.

Future research could expand the implementation of the 4C's to WRITE Module across different educational contexts and proficiency levels to test its scalability and adaptability. Investigating its integration with low-tech or blended approaches would also address access issues in resource-constrained schools. In addition, incorporating data analytics or automated writing feedback tools could offer real-time formative assessment, deepening learners' reflection and progress tracking.

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of integrating pedagogical structure, technological support, and 21st-century competencies in ESL writing instruction. The 4C's to WRITE Module represents a meaningful step towards creating sustainable, engaging, and skill-balanced writing practices that empower learners to write more creatively, collaboratively, and accurately.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere thankfulness to all those who have contributed to the successful accomplishment of this manuscript. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Universiti Sains Malaysia for providing me with the platform and resources to conduct this research and share my findings. I am immeasurably thankful to my colleagues and mentors, whose supervision, insights, and productive feedback have significantly contributed to the development of my work. Lastly,

I would like to thank my friend, Asst. Prof. Dr. Hooi Chee Mei, for providing additional inputs to complete this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Author Contribution Statement

RR: Literature Search, Conceptualisation, Data Collection, Manuscript Revision. HCM: Literature Search, Conceptualisation, Data Analysis, Manuscript Revision.

Funding

There is no funding associated with the research or writing of this article.

Ethics Statement

This research did not require IRB approval because it involved an anonymous survey with no collection of personal or sensitive data.

Data Access Statement

Research data supporting this publication are available upon request to the corresponding author.

Author Biography

Raganeswari Ramasamy graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy from the Centre of Instructional Technology and Multimedia in Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests include mobile learning, language learning, mobile-assisted language learning, and educational technology.

Hooi Chee Mei is an Assistant Professor at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. Her areas of interest are applied linguistics, pragmatics, the English language, teaching methodology, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

References

Abdelmohsen, M. M., Abdullah, R., & Azam, Y. (2020). The development of writing module on enhancing the writing skills of Omani general foundation program students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *19*(9), 363-381.

Brown, J. D. (2007). Multiple views of L1 writing score reliability. *University of Hawai'i Second Language Studies Paper*, *25*(2), 1-31.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Erlbaum. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587

Hassan, I., Rahman, A. M. A., & Azmi, M. N. L. (2021). Development of English writing skills through blended learning among ESL learners in Malaysia. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, Special Issue on CALL, *7.*

Heinich, R., Molenda, M., Russell, J. D., & Smaldino, S. E. (1999). ASSURE Model. http://ed205.net /assure_model.html

Jabali, M., & Walker, C. (2021). An exploratory cross-sectional study: Flip quiz as a digital tool for learning English vocabulary in language classroom. *International Journal of Technology in Education*, *4*(3), 516-526.

Jacobs, H. L., Zinkgraf, S. A., Wormuth, D. R., Hartfiel, V. F., & Hughey, J. B. (1981). *Testing ESL composition: A practical approach.* Newbury House.

Jais, N. F. M., Ishak, S. A., & Yunus, M. M. (2022). Developing the self-learning interactive module using ADDIE model for Year 5 primary school students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, *11*(1), 615-630.

Jong, B., & Tan, K. H. (2021). Using Padlet as a technological tool for assessment of students' writing skills in online classroom settings. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, *9*(2), 411423.

Khair, A. H. M., & Shah, P. M. (2021). ESL teachers' perceptions on the implementation of CEFR in

Malaysian primary schools: Issues and challenges. *Journal of Advances in Education Research*, *6*(1), 31.

Lefebvre, P. (2006). *Infusion of technology in the classroom: Implementing an instructional technology matrix to help teachers*. [Master's thesis], Concordia University.

Mara, R. R., & Mohamad, M. (2021). The use of authentic materials in teaching reading to secondary school students in Malaysia: A literature review. *Creative* Education, *12*(7), 1692-1701. https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2021.127128

Mosiur, R. M., & Mehar, S. M. K. (2021). English and Malay language policy and planning in Malaysia. *Training, Language and Culture, 5*(4), 36-46.

Naim, I. A. M., Luqman, N. M. A. N., & Matmin, J. (2020). Enhancing students' writing performance in higher learning through Think-Write-Pair-Share: An experimental study. *Asian Journal of University Education*, *16*(3), 255-264. https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v16i3.8396

Ni, C. K., Jong, B., Dison, M. A., Thomas, S. A., Yunus, M. M., & Suliman, A. (2020). Enhancing Malaysian primary pupils' vocabulary skills using Pocable game and Pear Deck. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, *19*(6), 145-160.

Rahman, A. M. A., Azmi, M. N. L., & Hassan, I. (2020). Improvement of English writing skills through blended learning among university students in Malaysia. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *8*(12A), 7694-7701. https://doi.org/10.13189/UJER.2020.082556

Ramasamy, R., Mohamad, M., & Sanmugam, M. (2023). Enhancing the main 4Cs of 21st century learning skills in narrative writing. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching (CPLT), 11*(3), 153-172.

Sakkir, G., Dollah, S., Arsyad, S., & Ahmad, J. (2021). Need analysis for developing writing skill materials using Facebook for English undergraduate students. *International Journal of Language Education*, *5*(1), 542-551.

Syam, A. T. (2020). Developing writing module for the fourth-semester learners of English department at State Islamic Institute of Palopo. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, *5*(1), 17-28.

Wong, H. (1989). *The development of a qualitative writing scale*. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Yaakob, M. F. M., Awang, H., Ismail, M. Z., Zain, F. M., Kasim, M., & Adnan, A. A. Z. (2020). Backward and forward reviews on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Malaysia: The evolution and ICT-driven future prospect. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *8*(6), 2197-2203.

Yates, A., Starkey, L., Egerton, B., & Flueggen, F. (2021). High school students' experience of online learning during Covid-19: The influence of technology and pedagogy. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, *30*(1), 59-73. https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2020.1854337

Yunus, M. M., Haleman, K. N., Junaidi, Y., & and Suliman, A. (2020). Using 'the write stuff' Module to enhance the writing skills of ESL primary school students. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, *9*(4), 315-329. https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.23.2020.94.315.329

Yunus, M. M., Thambirajah, V., Said, N. E. M., & Singh, C. K. S. (2021). Designing a module as a strategic solution to enhance creativity in the teaching of writing. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies, 10*(2), 94-104.

Zulkarnain, N. S., Jamaluddin, U., & Yunus, M. M. (2022). Micro-W: Teaching narrative writing to primary ESL learners in the new normal. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 11*(1), 939–952. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/V11-I1/12208