

Social-Emotional Learning: Key To Improving Apathetic Efl Students' Social-Emotional Skills And Academic Writing Performance

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Abstract. The swift-growing apathy among students impaired their emotions. Furthermore, the complexities of English AW standards discouraged them from writing. Consequently, they had no interest, enthusiasm, or concern about others and AW's activity. Very few studies, conversely, have documented how SEL improves apathetic TVET students' SE skills and AW performance in ELT settings. Therefore, this qualitative research, utilising observation, structured interviews, and NTA as techniques for collecting and analysing the data, aimed to diagnose SEL's effects on the six apathetic PNP ED students' SE skills and AW performance. Findings indicated that "incorporating" SEL in the Writing 2 course shaped the students' affirmative attitudes and behaviours. They acquired SEL skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and accountable decision-making in productive ways. Moreover, it improved the students' AW performance in writing processes, linguistic competence, and descriptive and critical writing skills. This study benefits FL teachers, researchers, and ELT policymakers by strengthening students' interest, enthusiasm, or concern in Indonesia.

Keywords: apathetic EFL students, improving SEL, SE skills, AW performance

1 Introduction

Why Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)? "I don't care; who cares? What are you? My Dad?" are one's conventional expressions exposed to apathetic attitudes. Likewise, being apathetic was a choice for a small number of indifferent PNP (Politeknik Negeri Padang) and ED (English Department) students. They were fond of using such expressions to show no (a lack of) interest, emotion, enthusiasm, or concern for someone/something. The ways they thought of uttering such expressions were reflected and manifested in their daily behaviour. In addition, the preliminary observations found two indications triggering their apathy, especially in the Writing 2 course emphasising Academic Writing (AW). *Firstly*, the students got few friends, did not care about their own needs, felt numb at responding to someone/something, did not interact with others, showed negative facial expressions: frowning, furrowed brows, pursed lips, flared nostrils, etc., tone of voice: absurd, belligerent, choleric, and body language: turned back to others, folded arms, stared at; preferred getting into trouble when working or learning together with peers; disregarded responsibility for learning or obligations to do something; were

demotivated to set and achieve something; everyday tasks and homework were overlooked; they had no hobbies; and physically, they got tired easily.

The JED Foundation[1] (2023), similarly, found the common signs of apathy. The signs complicate one's abilities to regulate their emotions, establish social relationships, and set and achieve educational goals. The following are signs of apathetic students:

The JED Foundation[1] (2023) addresses 8 signs of apathetic students. The signs are (1) apathetic students usually have "low or no reaction to emotions, like not feeling or expressing emotions, either positive or negative, or feeling indifferent to situations others may have a reaction to. (2) They neglect their responsibilities, like not engaging with work or school—even if there may be negative consequences, like a poor performance

review or bad grades. From the outside, it may look like you are "lazy." (3) They neglect their needs, like self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise, or regular sleep patterns. (4) They have difficulty starting or finishing everyday tasks, like chores or homework. (6) They do not engage with others, including friends, teachers, classmates, or co-workers. From the outside, it may look like you aren't interested in other people's lives. (7) They lack the motivation to complete goals or make changes to their lifestyle, even if they know they would benefit them. (7) They lack interest in hobbies that they once enjoyed and (8) feel fatigued or have low energy. Shortly, a feeling of being uninterested in building relationships with others, unmotivated at work, or uninterested in school/college is a part of apathy (no. p).

Kendziora & Yoder[2] (2016), in contrast, adduced six main foundations of students' social and emotional (SE) success. The foundations stand on the abilities "to (1) make friends, (2) to collaborate (learn and work) with others, (3) to inclusively interact with groups of people with diverse perspectives, cultural backgrounds, etc., (4) to find solutions to problems, (5) to make accountable decisions, and (6) to handle challenging situations constructively (p. 3)."

Secondly, teaching AW to the apathetic ones is overwhelmed with distraction (their apathy), challenges (doubt about their abilities, loss of motivation, etc.), and hurdles. This is because AW's standards take on their own characteristics that are different from spoken texts. The toughest hurdle is that AW is a part of academic work with well-defined standards for particular areas of study, e.g., standards applied in natural or social sciences' empirical reports[3]. *Secondly*, AW is a method of systematic written communication requiring inextricable logical links between mastering writing knowledge, competencies, and insights and Critical Reading skills and Critical Writing skills in an academic context[4][5]. Besides, AW requires not only Descriptive Writing (DW) skills of remembering, understanding, and applying AW's basic concepts but also Critical Reading and Critical Writing skills of analysing and evaluating sundry information, facts, and sources to produce serviceable new ideas, concepts, or knowledge[6][7][8].

In terms of language and linguistics, *lastly*, AW involves neuropsychological efforts, social activities, physical processes, language norms, e.g., grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary/word choice, readability, conciseness, and linguistic competence, e.g., lexicon, register, syntax, morphology, semantic structures, etc. [9][10][11][12][13][14]. Besides, the construction, translation, and interpretation of the source language (L1) into a target one, English, as a representation of a foreign language entails extreme finesse in mastering and/or

meeting the most required AW concepts and standards. Equally important, referencing styles, e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, Turabian, IEEE, etc., are binding parts of AW to give credit to one's intellectual works, avoid plagiarism, and rule for in-text citations and reference lists[15].

Shortly, the complexities of AW's standards essentially aim to produce written texts containing rewarding new knowledge, ideas, facts, information, research findings, etc. to be disseminated or communicated to the larger community and wider academic groups[5]. Rather, the facts shape their apathetic attitude and behaviour to forsake and disengage from WA learning activities.

SEL is the potential solution to puzzle out the aforesaid apathetic students' SE and AW problems. Theoretically, Smith[8] explicates that "SEL is a form of teaching method whose major goal is to build and develop students' SE skills within the (AW learning programme) school curriculum." He further adds that this SEL "assists to improve students' academic achievement, mitigate bullying, downsize dropout rates, and establish positive character[8]." Besides, Smith strongly recommends applying it, one of which is in EFL classrooms, because a number of empirical studies show SEL (encompassing strong learning motivation impulse, problem-solving skills, self-regulated learning skills, emotional control skills, interpersonal skills, empathy, learning skills of the 4Cs: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creative thinking, etc.) has constructive effects on enhancing students' academic achievement in school, diminishing unfavourable social behaviours like lying, bullying, etc., and establishing comfortable learning environments[8]. Beyond school, SEL helps students manage their lives and social interactions successfully, draw good judgements, and become wise citizens.

Historically, Plato, in his article on "Education" in *The Republic*, adduced that a "balance of training in physical education, the arts, math, science, character, and moral judgement is the goal of modern education to generate responsible, productive, caring, and engaged citizens of good character"[16]. Further, in 1994, US experts from various multidisciplinary fields jointly analysed Plato's ideas as a basis to formulate SEL skills for solving the apathetic students' SE and learning problems. The goal is to help them navigate their lives and education. The result of the experts' joint formulation was the SEL approach as a bedrock for apathetic students' success both in the real-life world and in school[17]. The use of SEL in schools and colleges' curricula

facilitates apathetic students' mastery of critical life skills, skills that improve and develop their positive SE traits, academic performance, and self-development (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning[18][19].

Terminologically, SEL refers to "the beliefs, attitudes, personality traits, and behaviours that students need to succeed in school and life[17]." Likewise, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined SEL "as abilities to regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour[20][21]. CASEL, in contrast, has its own specified definition as follows:

"SEL is an integral part of *education and human development*. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the *knowledge, skills, and attitudes* to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions[22][23]."

The aforesaid joint formulation and references/definitions result in five skills to help the apathetic students navigate their lives, create positive SE traits, set their educational goals, and achieve successful academic performance[24][25][26][27][28]. The five SEL core skills are as follows:

1. Self-awareness
This deals with students' ability to recognize their emotions, strengths, and limitations, and their effects on behaviour[23][25][26][27][28].
2. Self-management
This skill enables students to regulate their emotions and behaviours, including setting and achieving goals, persevering, and managing negative emotions[23][24][25][27][28].
3. Social awareness
This enables the student's ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those with diverse backgrounds, and to understand social and ethical norms of behaviour[29][25][27][28].
4. Relationship skills
This competence allows students to develop healthy, meaningful relationships with others (listening, cooperating, seeking and offering help, and resolving conflicts peacefully[29][25][27][25].
5. Responsible decision making
This competence deals with student's ability to make ethical choices about behaviour based on ethical standards and social norms, and an evaluation of the effects on others[22][30][27][25].

The terms indicate that students require the skills to regulate their SE aspects of life, consisting of being aware of their character, feelings, motives, and desires; collaboration; intrapersonal and interpersonal communication skills; empathy for others, etc. Further, growth mindset, self-control, and self-efficacy are three SEL components strongly contributing to solving students' academic, performance, and social-economic outcomes[17]. Likewise, Committee for Children[31] divulges that students with highly developed SE skills have better social interactions, a stronger capacity to puzzle out solutions to conflicts and problems, and a greater focus on completing tasks. Subsequently, mastering these SEL aspects is more influential in learning and respective jobs after graduation[31][27].

Jones et al. and Paolini, likewise, divulge that the core SEL skills are, firstly, *cognitive regulation*. Cognitive regulation is a basic cognitive skill that shapes students' behaviour to achieve their goals[32][27]. The skills deal with the ability to shape good behaviour, make healthy decisions, solve problems, make conscious choices, etc.[33][32]. Secondly, *emotional processes* are the skills helping students manage their emotions and understand other feelings mindfully. *Social and interpersonal* skills are the last core SEL skills, allowing students to have multiple roles and perspectives in communicating their ideas, working together, solving problems, etc. Furthermore, to help students communicate effectively with others, they have to have interpersonal skills. The skills helping them convey their ideas effectively are communication and active listening, conscientiousness, accountability, problem-solving and conflict resolution, empathy, and motivation[31][34][18][35][27]. Others are intrapersonal skills: adaptability, self-regulation, growth mindset, optimism, leadership, creativity, character,

resilience, and time and stress management. These help students recognise their weaknesses, strengths, growth, and self-awareness[18][32][36][27][37].

Other critical SEL skills required by adult learners, although, according to Kankaraš, the skills are also appropriate to analyse and evaluate children's SEL, are taken from the Big Five model proposed by Chernyshenko, Kankaraš, and Drasgow [38][21]. The SEL skills are as follows:

Chernyshenko, Kankaraš, & Drasgow categorise SEL into five skills. These include (a) *Conscientiousness* refers to the individuals' tendency for self-controlled, organised, and cautiously planned behaviour; and on the other, ambitious, persistent and dedicated effort in achieving personal goals. (b) *Extraversion* represents the tendency to seek the company of others, to initiate and maintain connections, and to feel comfortable in the presence of others. They tend to show assertiveness in social situations and provide leadership and often characterised by high levels of energy and zest for life. (c) *agreeableness* refers to their quality. Agreeable individuals tend to be more co-operative, maintaining positive relations and minimising interpersonal conflict. They want to show active concern for the well-being of others and to hold positive beliefs about people in general. (d) *Emotional stability* represents the degree to which individuals are able to control their emotional responses and moods as well as the quality of their emotional states in general. Persons with high degrees of emotional stability will show more resilience in stressful situations, will be less likely to experience anger, irritation or sudden changes of mood, and will tend to have a better view of the world and outlook of the future. (e) *Openness to experience* is reflected in two main aspects. One involves the degree to which individuals are open to intellectual stimulation in general, as reflected in their intellectual curiosity, imagination, creativity, preference for novelty and variation. The other aspect is shown in the degree to which individuals prefer experiential stimulation, as represented in their appreciation of art, aesthetic experiences, self-reflection and self-exploration (p. 11)[21].

Empirical Research on SEL in AW Courses

SEL is a fresh, new concept in AW research in Vocational Higher Education in Indonesia. After evaluating the previous studies, there is no research discussing the same context, title, and content as ours, using a qualitative method whose informants numbered six college students, employing EFL Writing classes, occupying the vocational education of PNP as the locus of the research, and focusing on SEL in improving EFL 1st-year apathetic students' SE and AW Skills in Writing 2 course. However, the previous studies provided benefits to this research in terms of some information about the relevant studies and literature studies. Most of the latest quantitative empirical studies deriving from various education fields and contexts showed that SEL improves children's and adult learners' academic performance and social-emotional skills. The latest research findings are as follows: *Firstly*, Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger experimentally analysed the impact of SEL on the improvement of 270,034 kindergarten school children's SE learning using a Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. The findings showed that this research significantly improved the children's social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, and academic performance when compared to

control classes. Besides, evidence-based SEL programmes are best used to support children's healthy development in standard educational practises[39].

Secondly, Kasikci and Ozhan quantitatively tested the effects of SEL skills as a significant predictor on 337 middle school students from six different middle schools in Erzurum province. The findings showed SEL skills were a significant predictor of academic achievement and happiness in middle school students. Besides, it identified positive and significant correlations between SEL skills and students' academic achievement and happiness[40]. *Thirdly*, in their quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test non-equivalent of an experimental and a control group, Ahmed, Hamzah, and Abdullah found that SEL improved 207 Junior Secondary School students' SE competence compared to those used in the conventional learning method group[41]. *Fourthly*, Esen-Aygun & Sahin-Taskin, in terms of understanding elementary teachers' views of SE skills and their perspectives on SEL programmes, qualitatively explained that most teachers could not clearly explain SEL, though they had heard such a concept through emotional-social Development programmes implemented since 2012 in Turkey. The finding suggested that teachers must be notified about SEL and effectively implement it to develop students' SEL skills[42].

Fifthly, Kim & Hong's research quantitatively showed that US and South Korean teachers assumed that SEL had significant effects on promoting a positive learning environment for students and students' emotions, behaviours, social awareness, and relationship skills[20]. *Lastly*, in Listening skills, Abali and Yazici quantitatively studied 581 6th-grade students from different socioeconomic and demographic classes. They found that SEL showed "significant correlations among listening, communication, problem-solving, stress coping skills, and other skills developing self-respect, which are the base of SEL skills[43]." Shortly, these previous studies focused on kindergarten and primary school children and middle school students, whose findings showed that SEL significantly affects the children's and students' SEL skills and competence, behaviour, academic achievement in general, happiness, primary teachers' perspectives on SEL, a positive learning environment, social awareness, relationship skills, problem-solving skills, self-respect, etc.

This research, therefore, sets out to diagnose the SEL effects on apathetic students' SE and AW skills. The proposed research question is: How do six apathetic students perceive the effects of SEL on improving their SE and AW skills?

2 Research Method

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative case study research design to elicit an in-depth and detailed investigation of the effects of SEL on 6 apathetic PNP ED students' SE skills and AW performance[44].

2.2 Context and Participants

The participants of this research were six apathetic students studying at PNP ED in Kota Padang, Sumatra Barat Province, Indonesia. They were first-year students (freshmen) taking a Writing 2 course whose main focus was to critically write academic essays. These participants had been purposefully selected. The criteria were those (apathetic students) who had no interest in AW

activities, no learning motivation, whose AW performance and achievement were sagging, whose homework and exams were missed, whose attendance rates were problematic, who refused to learn collaboratively and even individually, who had little learning participation or engagement, who had no learning responsibility, who had no self-, social, and emotional awareness, no self-management, lower interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills, and who were completely indifferent to people and things around them. These six students took part in the structured interview, where they received the same predetermined questions.

2.3 Instruments and Data Collection

The researchers themselves were the key instruments in this study. Besides, other instruments used to collect the data were Howell's phases of participant observation (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 2001). The observation was meant to get in-depth insights into the six apathetic students' SEL skill progress and a structured interview to elicit detailed information and positive responses to the effects of SEL on the six apathetic PNP ED students' SE and AW skills. The structured interview questions encompass three aspects. Firstly, changes in attitudes and behaviours from apathetic to energetic or enthusiastic students; the second was the aspect of SE skills and competencies; and the last was the aspect of mastery of basic standards of AW skills. The students were expected to answer the interview questions within the context of these three aspects. Subsequently, researchers worded or drafted questions, listed them in order, set the interview schedules (date, hours, and place), and notified the informants.

2.4 Procedures

Before doing the research, the researchers requested a letter of approval from the campus and informed consent from the participants. The researchers then incorporated SEL skills into Writing learning activities. The SEL activities were (1) to start teaching with a learning check-in: doing greetings, asking each student to briefly explain how they feel when heading into class, etc. (2) Set the zone of flexible class or learning regulations to enforce discipline. (3) After teaching, researchers provided opportunities to create or look for a partner pairing or group learning of 4 to 6 students. This was the moment to flex or adapt to new or different learning atmospheres. This part was crucial because this was the place for the 6 apathetic students to join with other students to play games to build social relationships and friendships; understood diversity; managed conflicts; talked/shared ideas/feelings/emotions with; worked, learned, discussed various problems including difficult learning materials to understand collaboratively; used role-playing to motivate/engage (help) them learn; solved AW problems; ran responsibility; built to express positive self-talks, built solid teamwork; controlled, managed emotions; did lots of AW group activities; promoted not only equality but also equity, learned to communicate ideas, etc[45][46][47].

Subsequently, (4) after doing lots of group learning activities, researchers had all students write their SE words, phrases, and sentences and briefly explain how they felt and why this was so. (5) Researchers specifically held joint class meetings with six apathetic students to diagnose their social, emotional, and learning progress. The meetings were designed only for the six students, carried out separately, and held once a week for approximately 2–3 hours. (6) Researchers had all students make their reflective writing (to monitor or enhance their social-emotional skills and ensure learning progression). (7) Learning reflection was provided after doing AW homework, the midterm test, and the final project. Researchers provided constructive written feedback (to improve learning and assure progression) to help them determine whether they understood the AW materials and what to perform next[45][46][47].

In instructional processes, the students specifically learned the basic standards of AW (Elements of an Essay, Features of Academic Writing, and Features of Critical Writing). In the first four weeks, they were taught elements of an essay; in the fifth to seventh week, they were taught features of AW; in the eighth to twelfth week, they were taught features of critical writing; and in the thirteenth to sixteenth week, they were taught writing activities from drafting to finally producing a 5-paragraph essay. In PNP academic regulations, the instructional process lasted for 18 meetings, of which 16 meetings were for teaching and learning activities and 2 meetings were for mid-term and final exams. AW consisted of 3 credits and lasted 4 hours a week. The topics of the essay were determined by the informants so that they had the flexibility to communicate their ideas. The integration of four language (productive and receptive) skills—grammar and vocabulary—helped researchers and informants produce error-free essay writing.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from participant observation and structured interviews was analysed using narrative thematic analysis (NTA). The NTA process the researchers used consisted of five steps. The steps were (a) “the data were prepared and organised; (b) to elicit general and intended information; (c) the coding process; (d) categories or themes; and (e) the interpretation of the data[48][49].” After the interview, the recording was then transcribed while noting patterns and themes on the right side of the script (transcript margins). Items relating to non-narrative lines (casual talks, etc.) were removed; the six participants were given fictitious names; and participant identifiers (name and location) were also replaced or deleted. Subsequently, the data was manually coded, and this was the second phase of the coding process. The processes were reading the text repeatedly and then identifying, defining, and sorting the words/phrases/sentences (patterns/themes) into small pieces of the data. The last was the list of codes created after finishing the coding process. Those words, phrases, sentences, or ideas reflecting (or best describing) the themes were put into logical categories. The last phase was interpretation. This stage was inseparable from the previous stages, the coding process and categories and themes, because both provided insight for researchers to make meaning from the data.

2.6 Data Verification and Validation

Credibility and auditability/dependability were two of the four aspects often used in qualitative research to measure the validity and consistency of research findings[49]. The procedures were to check for the accuracy of the “true” and “consistent” findings. In measuring the truth value, the steps taken were, firstly, that researchers used a number of qualitative methods (data, theoretical, and methodological triangulations) and data sources (interviews, observation, etc.) to improve our understanding comprehensively. Prolonged time spent with participants, persistent observation, researcher debriefing, analysing negative cases, and member-checking and informant feedback were other steps for validating the findings. To ensure its dependability, the researchers coherently audited all processes of the research, starting from comprehensively re-evaluating the purpose of the study, the participants chosen for the study, the data collection and analysis, the interpretation and presentation of the findings, and the ways credibility was defined[50][51][52][53].

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Findings

The finding sections present stages of integrating SEL in the Writing 2 course, the research findings derived from participant observation reports, and structured interview results. Furthermore, structured interview results are also reported to support the findings from participant observations. This section simply states the finding without any bias/interpretation. Finally, the discussion section is to interpret and describe the significance of the findings. The following are the findings:



The infographic shows the 7 stages of incorporating SEL in the Writing 2 course. Stop: The feeling/emotion checkpoint was the first phase. This phase was when the teacher and students greeted each other and shared experiences and information. Besides, this served to recognise how the six apathetic PNP ED students feel when taking the Writing 2 class. Secondly, upholding and enforcing discipline and rules is paramount to helping them know what is right and wrong, managing the students' attitudes and behaviours, organising teaching-learning processes, etc. Third, lecturers and students simultaneously formed learning groups. The groups helped teachers apply the chosen teaching methods of DI, EI, and Pro-BL as well as aid them in learning and working collaboratively, playing games, building social rapport, managing conflicts, and learning to understand diversity. Furthermore, group learning was a place to talk, share, and discuss ideas; solve psychological problems; discuss and solve writing issues and learning difficulties; take responsibility; build positive self-talk and solid teamwork; establish friendships; promote equity and equality, etc. Besides, the stage stressed the use of scaffolding to break the AW concepts into small units and augment their learning autonomy. Essentially, the strategy applied the rules of "teacher does, teacher-student(s) do(es), and student(s) do(es)" to build their writing passion and master the AW concepts at once.

Building SE words, phrases, and sentences was the fourth stage. The stage was to ask the students to write their personal social-emotional expressions, e.g., "I am down in the mouth," and explain why it happened so. Fifthly, holding apathetic students' class meetings for "talk therapy" was a counselling session. The session focused on discussing the essential values of SEL's skills of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social relationships, responsible decision-making, and academic writing. The sixth is reflective writing. This

monitors the students' SE and writing learning progress. Lastly, learning reflection was the student's reflection upon their learning experiences. This was normally carried out after instructional processes (doing homework, taking tests, etc.). These stages helped build the students' resilience by improving their SE engagement and AW performance and achievement.

The 6 apathetic PNP ED students' viewpoints on SEL in improving their SE Skills

Table 1 The six apathetic PNP ED students' responses to the incorporation of SEL in the Writing 2 course in Improving SE Skills

| No | Social-Emotional Skills observed | Levels of Social-Emotional Performance | | | | | Descriptions/ Indicators/ Cues |
|----|----------------------------------|--|--------------|------------|--------|--------------------|--|
| | | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Good/ Well | Better | Best/ Accomplished | |
| 1 | Self-awareness: | | | | √ | | The six apathetic PNP ED students understand the self: feelings, emotions, weaknesses, and strengths, which affect their positive attitudes. |
| 2 | Self-management | | | | √ | | The six apathetic PNP ED students manage their negative emotions, build positive behaviours, and set goals. |
| 3 | Social awareness | | | | | √ | The six apathetic PNP ED students understand diversity and other perspectives and sympathise with other people. |
| 4 | Relationship skills | | | | | √ | The six apathetic PNP ED students establish good communication and social relationships with others. |
| 5 | Responsible decision-making | | | √ | | | The six apathetic PNP ED students can make responsible decisions to grow constructively based on social norms and ethical standards. |

- (P1): We can understand our thoughts, emotions, our social environment, and other people well. Besides, it helps us understand our own values, strengths, and weaknesses. The understanding of ourselves affects the way we think and behave toward others.
- (P2): We can maximize our potential because we can manage our emotions. We can see and set our life and learning goals. *We can regulate ourselves in a more productive way than before.* This affects our daily (learning) activities
- (P3): *We have sensitivity to others and the social environment. We obey social norms, listen and accept other people's opinions, help friends, get along with anyone without discriminating, and respect differences.*
- (P4): We speak pleasant words. We establish our hospitable communication and cordial friendship with others. This is to avoid causing trouble or engaging in conflicts with anyone. Work together and listen to others to develop meaningful relationships with other people.

(P5): We have a lot of things to learn to make independent, responsible decisions. The abilities to analyse information and offer solutions to problems are two important aspects of making the right decision. Other factors are our attitude, behaviours, trust, and honesty are considerations for making decisions. It is a bit difficult, therefore. In this context, we have to learn a lot and continuously improve ourselves to make the right decision. We think (believe) we can do it. This understanding can help us to improve the way we make responsible decisions.

Table 1 shows that incorporating SEL in the Writing 2 course affected the six apathetic PNP ED students' SE skills. Although SE Skills observed have not yet simultaneously reached the highest levels of SE performance, "best/accomplished," the students have been earnestly trying to get out of their red zone of apathetic behaviours and traits. They were more aware of and in control of themselves. More importantly, they have been able to improve their social awareness and relationship skills. Even if it was at the middle level, they had a good ability to make responsible decisions independently. Likewise, the above excerpts deriving from structured interviews signified similar findings to the participant observation, where each other had the same experience as the others. There were no significant differences in notions (ideas or beliefs) among the six apathetic students. They possessed similar viewpoints about SEL positively affecting their behaviours.

The 6 apathetic PNP ED students' viewpoints on SEL in improving their AW Performance

Table 2 The 6 apathetic PNP ED students' responses to the incorporation of SEL in the Writing 2 course in improving AW Skills

| No | AW skills observed | Levels of AW Performance | | | | | Descriptions/ Indicators/ Cues |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------|---------|------|---|
| | | Excellent | Above Average | Sufficient | Minimal | Poor | |
| 1 | Writing processes | √ | | | | | The six apathetic PNP ED students go through several writing processes, ranging from prewriting, doing research, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. |
| 2 | Essay structures and Writing issues | √ | | | | | The six apathetic PNP ED students can write an introduction (introductory sentences, hook, thesis statement), a body paragraph (main ideas, supporting sentences, unity, coherence, transitions), and a conclusion. Besides, they can eliminate any kinds of writing issues or errors in their English essay. |
| 3 | Writing descriptively | √ | | | | | The six apathetic PNP ED students can describe what something looks like. |
| 4 | Writing critically | | | √ | | | The six apathetic PNP ED students can write their analysis and evaluation based on the multiple sources of information they have in order to develop their critical explanations and arguments. |

- (P1): Before writing our draft and producing a final copy of the essay, we first plan to get the ideas; look for, search for, and read various sources; and write the essay. We revise it, focusing on examples, explanations, main ideas, etc. We discuss it with our peers. We edit and correct the essay's grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc., and discuss it with our peers again. After feeling sure that our essays are correct, we write a final copy and submit it to our lecturer.
- (P2): In this essay, we write our title, introduce the title using sentences that grab the reader's attention, and state the central point of the essay. After finishing the introductory paragraph, we continue to write the body, which consists of 2-3 paragraphs. Each paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentences. The last part is to write a concluding paragraph covering restating the thesis, summarising the argument, a call to action, or a final comment. Also, writing errors are our main concern to correct.
- (P3): Describing objects, people, places, feelings, experiences, emotions, situations, etc. is much more pleasing. This descriptive writing is only based on our real experiences. We report, explain, give examples, state evidence, and list the information we have at hand. If there are any findings, we will state them. We can quote, summarise, or paraphrase other data to support our ideas. If there is a theory, we can just say it and explain it a little. We do not think it is much more than that. This descriptive writing is not too burdensome for us as novice writers.
- (P4): Academic writing is not like descriptive writing. Academic writing means that we have to write critically, and this is very difficult for us to do as novice writers. This is not easy because we must analyse and evaluate various data and information from various sources to have strong arguments. We must be careful not to make assumptions because not all the sources we read are true. We must make an analysis, argue with evidence, make comparisons and contradictions, give accurate and logical explanations, etc. Academic writing takes a lot of

time to produce. We make less effort to write critically. We need more time and assistance from our classmates and lecturers to write critically.

Table 1 shows that integrating SEL in the Writing 2 course affected the six apathetic PNP ED students' AW performance. The 6 apathetic PNP ED students go through good writing processes, starting from the stages of prewriting, doing research, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Likewise, in drafting the essays, they write their introduction (which comprises introductory sentences, a hook, and a thesis statement), followed by the body (main ideas, supporting sentences, unity, coherence, and transitions), and end with a conclusion. In addition, they can eliminate or overcome writing errors in their essays. They can describe objects or scenes when communicating their ideas. These three academic skills are carried out "excellently." Unlike the other four skills observed, writing critically, such as analysing and evaluating multiple sources of information in order to develop their critical explanations, arguments, etc., is at the level of "sufficient." The level signifies that students should try, learn more, and have their peer's or lecturer's assistance to critically write.

3.2 Discussions

The discussion explicates the two SEL's meaningful contributions to the six apathetic PNP ED students' SE skills and AW performance. Firstly, SEL significantly contributes to shaping the students' attitudes from apathetic to sympathetic and empathetic ones. They can become responsible, caring, emotional, and productive individuals for themselves in navigating their life, education, and positive relationships. Similarly, Maurice Elias in George Lucas Educational Foundation (2011) explicates that SEL is a learning process helping apathetic students recognise and regulate feelings and emotions, care about themselves and others, make accountable decisions, behave ethically, and establish positive social relationships. These processes generate responsible, creative, loving, and affianced students possessing virtuous qualities of character. Besides, Allbright, et.al. phrase that the successes of apathetic students either on campus or in the community are inseparable from the impacts of SEL. SEL is related to "*attitudes*" pervading beliefs, values, behaviours, perceptions, emotions, and personality traits[17]. To achieve this success, apathetic students must first be able to control their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours[20][21]. The claim amplifying that SEL is a "fundamental component of human development and education" is indisputably true. The reason is that every human being needs and applies knowledge, skills, and attitudes to sustain life (work for a living), decide something logically, and restrain emotions from living a healthy life, socialising with, interacting with, caring for others, etc.[29].

The SEL, subsequently, helps the students perceive and understand themselves (the self, values, needs, habits, etc.) and others, build their emotions (feelings and affections), and recognise their strengths and weaknesses. This is all specifically related to their ability to improve their self-awareness. Accordingly, the changes have had an objective impact on their attitudes, personal and professional development, and self-assessment. SEL makes them who they are as a person with beliefs, values, attitudes, emotions, and complete personalities. Furthermore, SEL contributes significantly to regulating and controlling their emotions and attitudes. This ability is particularly related to self-management. Consequently, the change affects their mindsets, forcing them to make a lot of effort to define and attain their learning (educational) goals, succeed in regulating negative emotions, and maintain positive emotions. Shortly, attitudes, behaviours, emotions, thoughts, and actions are managed well in productive ways.

The presence of SEL in the Writing 2 course, besides, advocates for them to build a high sense of empathy towards their peers and reduce the occurrence of misunderstandings with those (classmates) coming from various backgrounds. Also, they are free from having or encountering social problems or gaffes (stupid/careless mistakes) caused by the misjudgement of their friends' feelings. They take heed of other people's feelings, understand social tokens, and apply self-awareness in social and college group settings. They appreciate social norms by appropriately behaving in class and society. This shapes their social awareness. Thus, the change leads them to fully realise the importance of socialising and interacting with peers, friends, and other people. Another important contribution of SEL is to encourage them to communicate with peers and other people, listen to others, build trust and maintain it, avoid conflicts, negotiate to resolve problems, and value friendship. This factor, therefore, guides them to realise the meaning of socially establishing relationship skills. Finally, it enables them to objectively analyse and evaluate problems, data, information, and their effects so that they can come up with the right solutions. This analytical ability helps them make responsible and accountable decisions.

Likewise, the significances conform to a number of empirical studies indicating the five SEL competencies contribute to the changes in apathetic students' attitudes. The competencies are, firstly, self-awareness. This competency is closely related to self-knowledge and building a complete personality. Secondly, self-management is the knowledge and skills to control emotions and regularly check and observe attitudes and behaviour. Thirdly, social awareness shapes one's emotional aptitudes for being socially aware of the importance of one's presence in his or her life and appreciating social signals in real-life settings. The fourth is relationship skills. The skills are to establish social rapport and effectively interconnect (socialise with, welcome, talk to, listen to, interact with, etc.) with others. Lastly, responsible decision-making means having the knowledge to deal with any issues, analyse and provide solutions to the problems, and take responsibility for that decision[29][24][30][26][54][19][25].

It should be noted that studies homologated that, firstly, SEL is effectively applied to improve and construct pupils (children) and students' (youth/adult learners) cognitive/mental (knowledge), affective (growth in the domains of favourable attitudes and emotion/feeling) and psychomotor/physical skills, regulate emotions, define positive goals, sense and express empathy for others, and build social rapps and relationships and try to maintain them[22][23][55][56][57][58]. SEL and its skills, secondly, improve pupils' and students' academic learning performance and academic achievements as they stir the students' profound minds and hearts to have a sense of learning responsibility, learning to care, collaboratively learning and working with others, critical roles in groups (family, social communities, etc.), and take heed of full attention to self and others. Thirdly, SEL helps pupils and students' growth to be more socially, emotionally, and academically competent because SEL is able to reduce concerns about pupils' and students' vulnerability to sundry social and psychological problems. Lastly, building and strengthening students' capacities (abilities)—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—make learning more challenging, engaging, and meaningful.

In addition to the aforesaid five SEL competencies, the clinging skills that play crucial and meaningful roles in improving students, according to Diamond and Lee, Jones et al., and Paolini, are cognitive regulation, emotional processes, and social or interpersonal skills. The skill aids them in cognitively designing, defining, and attaining their educational goals, making responsible decisions, providing solutions to problems, making rational preferences, etc. Moreover, the skill emotionally stimulates them to improve and regulate sentiments (emotions) and welcome other people's feelings mindfully[33][57][27]. Socially and interpersonally, this last skill assists them to establish social rapport, build effective communication with others, and create social roles and relationships to interact[31][34][18][35]. This is closely related to *socialisation*, whose function is to prevent others from having social kinks, rustiness, and tension[59]. Correspondingly, Chernyshenko, Kankaraš, and Drasgow affirm that the changes in apathetic students' attitudes are because of being able to control the self, making efforts in defining their learning goals, looking for others to communicate and work or learn together, maintaining positive social relationships, eliminating interpersonal disputes, and regulating sensitive reactions[21]. These short details are linked to conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness to experience[21]. All things considered, the sequences of significance are the keys to the students' success socially and emotionally. SEL improves their social and emotional skills of being self-controlled, self-managed, socially aware, meaningfully socialising, and being able to make accountable decisions.

The important contribution of this study is, lastly, related to the activity or process of writing academically. The findings indicate that SEL significantly affects the students' AW performance. The teaching method of "Direct Instruction (DI)" enables them to write academically. DI is what helps them learn explicitly. In its application, the lecturer focuses on students' behaviours, teaches basic skills of English writing, and provides students with opportunities to practise. Besides, the lecturer uses lectures and demonstrations to transfer academic writing knowledge and construct skills interactively, where the lecturer and the students specifically communicate with each other in an interactive manner. The lecturer provides them with regular meetings to discuss the AW learning materials. The constructive effects of the regular meetings and discussions are that interactive communication between two sides flows naturally. The students' empathetic skills (they listen to their lecturer and other peers so that others feel heard as well), conversational skills (they share their ideas, actively listen to others, look, move, react, etc. using facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and give and take feedback), and social ethics (good personal behaviours) to socialise are well developed. Others are when the lecturer observes the students (care: asking students' feelings about the conditions and their today's learning preparation, attendance-checking, learning motivation, attitudes, etc.), involves them in small-group work, and builds critical thinking, problem-solving, and social skills. Shortly, this method is applied when teaching and learning processes emphasise knowledge transfer, student participation and engagement, small-group discussion, observation, and participatory Writing classes.

Empirical studies show that DI is, likewise, a teaching method that is best used to facilitate SEL and guide apathetic students to learn[60][61][62][63]. Furthermore, Kurt affirms that the DI's model of "I do (teacher), we do (teacher and students), and you do (students discuss, share, practise, etc. with their peers, groups, etc., and the teacher checks and assesses students' learning progress) encourages the teacher to use the tutorial method to transfer knowledge, observe students, encourage students to discuss, and ignite students' learning participation and engagement[64]." More importantly, Adams and Carnine explicate that DI essentially bases its explicit teaching on behaviours, basic skills, corrective feedback, providing chances for structured, guided, and independent practises, and the knowledge in that lesson must be effectively designed[65]. DI is best practised for pupils, elementary grade students, or young, slow, problem students.

Stockard, Wood, Coughlin, and Rasplica Khoury elucidate that DI is assumed to be able to facilitate student learning because, firstly, the instruction is explicitly well-designed. When the students are willing to learn, this signifies that there is nothing wrong with the instruction or the students, and vice versa. The second assumption is that students can learn new learning materials if they have prior knowledge and skills about them and the teaching is clear and obvious. Thirdly, providing carefully chosen and designed examples is more effective for students to enjoy learning and master the concepts. The other critical factor is that new materials cannot be moved forward without a strong belief that students have understood the previous ones. The other is that knowledge and skills should not overlap each other to prevent students from learning the same material or materials that have been mastered. These assumptions confirm that the students are logical-thinking beings. DI stresses mastery learning through the application of these assumptions, therefore[66].

Explicit Instruction (EI) and Project-Based Learning (Pro-bL) are the teaching methods providing SEL's significant contributions to improving the apathetic students' AW. This study

specifically uses explicit instruction to facilitate the lecturer's ability to guide the students' learning activities using understandable expressions and sentences to explain the materials, provide learning assistance perennially, give feedback, and monitor students' learning progress and engagement. The use of this method is in line with Rosenshine's and Archer and Hughes' theoretical views, underscoring that "an effective and efficient method of instruction with a focus on commencing small aspects of teaching and learning, observing students' comprehension, and attaining favourable and effective students' learning participation and engagement[67][68]."

Pro-bL is utilised to guide the students to actively learn Writing knowledge and skills to subsequently relate them to real-world life and to learn and write their writing for a certain period of time to explore and answer complex writing issues. Besides, the method helps the students to share or communicate their ideas, solve writing problems (issues or errors), learn collaboratively to construct Writing skills and knowledge, and write (think) in original and creative ways of producing good academic writing. Correspondingly, "Pro-BL has been intensively and extensively exploited at various levels of education and learning contexts. The reason is that Pro-BL shapes student-centred instruction, autonomy-based learning, knowledge and skills are acquired through active investigations, the learning objective is clearly set, learning focuses on real-life settings and applications, and is oriented to the 21st-century learning paradigm of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity skills, which are known as the 4Cs[29][69][70]."

4 Conclusion

Incorporating SEL in the Writing 2 course evocatively contributes to developing the six apathetic EFL students' SE skills and improving AW performance or achievement. The meaningful contributions of SEL, socially and emotionally, are to change undesirable deleterious attitudes and behaviours to constructive or optimistic ones (from being indifferent to caring, from apathy to sympathy and empathy for others, from being an individual person to a social one (from being mutually exclusive to all-inclusive), from being unemotional to having feelings or emotions, from being irresponsible to responsible, etc.). The students' SE changes are because they have understood and internalised the essential values of self-awareness: recognising their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses; self-management: controlling emotions, building positive attitudes, and setting educational goals; social awareness (emotional processes): empathising with others; social relationships (interpersonal skills): establishing healthy rapport; and responsible decision-making (cognitive regulation) skills: building a logical conclusion after critically examining the situations and information (data and facts) and proposing practical solutions to problems. These SEL skills help them create constructive SE traits.

The teaching methods, DI, EI, and Pro-BL are subsequently, the crucial points that can shift the less friendly learning environment or atmosphere and processes to become home-like, more conducive, and convivial so that they are more comfortable learning to socialise (communicate and share) and improve their writing skills and achievement. The three selected methods help the lecturer use fathomable language to explicate the materials; provide scaffolding; encourage the lecturer to demonstrate the learning materials closer and repetitively to the students; provide feedback and observe students' learning progress and engagement; assess learning; underscore interactive communication between two sides; build students' empathetic and conversational

skills; provide students with regular meetings to discuss their learning difficulties along with assisting them in solving psychological (SE) problems of theirs; connect Writing knowledge and skills to real-world life, etc. The applied methods make the teaching and learning processes crystal clear, and the students actively participate and engage in them. The result is that they can improve their AW knowledge, skills, performance, and achievement.

This research has answered the proposed research questions. However, it has three limitations: The first is that this study has a very limited number of research participants in the face-to-face Writing class. This limitation might inflict any kind of biased interpretation. Further research is therefore required with a large number of participants (at least 10% of the total population). The second is that the English lecturer not only acts as a teacher of English AW but also as a counsellor in solving the six apathetic EFL students' SE skills. This dual role does not yield optimal results in counselling the apathetic students because the lecturer does not yet have sufficient knowledge and skills to counsel the students' psychological (SE) problems. Consequently, the counselling process (knowledge, experience, material, etc.) does not work optimally. Future research exceptionally recommends involving counselling experts in solving students' psychological problems professionally. Lastly, this pilot study only involved one expertise, namely English. For future research, it is highly recommended to involve cross-scientific expertise (experts from ELT as a FL, English, and the Educational Science of Andragogy) to successfully explain and solve each different case faced by each participant.

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