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**Using Visual, Linguistic and Sensory Prompts in Fostering Meaningful
Writing Processes with Teenagers in a Public School**

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Using Visual, Linguistic and Sensory Prompts in Fostering Meaningful Writing Processes
with Teenagers in a Public School

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Abstract

This action research project reports how the use of multimodal resources in the English class fosters meaningful writing processes with a group of teenagers from a public school in Medellín, Colombia. Collection of data was done through class observations, a focus group, an in-depth interview, and students' written works. The implementation of some cycles, in which the emphasis was on using different modalities of prompts to foster students' meaningful writing evidenced that students developed a sense of enjoyment related to the connection of writing with their life experiences and self-knowledge; in addition to this, meaningful construction considering the awareness of stages in their writing processes enhanced confidence in themselves and with the teacher.

Key words: Writing process, multimodal resources, prompts, students' daily life, self-knowledge.

Degree Requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement for the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, in Medellín, Colombia

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Preface

Writing has been an aspect that has interested me during my life. I recall memories of writing moments with my parents and family, and experiences through school years. Seeing how writing crosses borders has generated a personal fascination for me, as I have experienced how emotions and feelings overcome time barriers when we are about to start writing something in front of a blank page.

I already have a degree in engineering, and I cannot leave out how these studies have influenced my experiences as an English teacher, and my vision of education. I understand that learning is a process that must be related to reality, to everyday life itself, then, it is important for me to think about different aspects to approach the design of the classes. That is why, the development of meaningful writing processes using somehow different elements to provoke enjoyment and connection of students with their own writings was a transversal axis in this research. This experience allowed me to understand many aspects of teaching writing in the English class, to get to know students' daily lives through their writing, and to observe how they developed their confidence in writing and in expressing personal aspects of their lives.

The context I discovered/experienced

This study was carried out in “El Instituto Nacional de Educación Media INEM José Félix de Restrepo”. This is an official public educational institution located in Medellín, dedicated to formal education services. By the time students reach tenth grade, they must choose one among the 21 modalities offered at school divided into Arts, Academic, Commercial, Industrial, and Social promotion. Students stay in the same modality until they graduate in eleventh grade.

I experienced this practicum stage, initially with a group of 32 students who from July to December 2021 were in the second half of 10th grade, and then from January to June 2022, four more came, having 36 students attending the first half of 11th grade. This course belonged to the English modality which consists of several subjects such as ethics, research, planning and prospective, technology and innovation, communicative skills and English. I started the observation process in communicative skills (tenth grade) and after in English (eleventh grade). In both courses, students were invited to participate not only in writing but speaking activities. These activities were mainly proposed by following the topics in a text guide which the CT complemented with other types of strategies and resources.

This was the group: X-13/XI-13.

In the group tenth thirteen (X-13), there were 32 students, 15 boys, 17 girls who were between 15 and 17 years old. In XI-13, there were 36 students, 21 boys and 15 girls. In this English modality they attend 16 hours of English per week. At the beginning of 2021, students were placed in levels A1 to B1 using an in-house test that followed guidelines from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the changes in terms of seating capacity, teachers split the groups each day for having face to face classes with half of the group, and the other half attended class from home via Google meet platform. This *two-scenario situation* challenged teachers' effort in relation to having the possibility of not leaving behind those students attending classes from home, trying at least to give them some strategies for being connected to the class. In this group (X-13), normally 9 women and 6 men attended face to face classes, 17 students were always connected through virtuality. In addition to this, there was a situation concerning the relationship among students. Once students move on to tenth grade and choose a modality, they do not stay with the same peers in 9th grade, but they are mixed, resulting in almost a new group. Because of this, when they reach tenth grade, they attend classes with different classmates and as a result do not know each other well.

In this X-13 class, the situation was still more challenging because students were not willing to interact among them, as many of them attended classes virtually. This became more evident when they went back to face-to-face classes at the beginning of October, 2021, and they had the chance to meet as a group. After almost a year of being in these two scenarios, not even the teacher was able to identify some of them.

Let me introduce my cooperating teacher

The cooperating teacher (CT) is a professor who has a continuous pedagogical preparation due to a concern of having excellent competences for helping and guiding students along their schooling. Her beliefs towards English teaching are related to a marked shift of a grammar-based methodology to an interactive, technological, and global orientation. She holds a master's degree in TESOL and a PhD in Applied Linguistics, and a wide experience both in private and public education, in some universities in the city, such as Universidad Luis Amigó

and Universidad de Antioquia. She is also a researcher, and acts as the coordinator of the CIINEM (Comité de investigación del INEM), which runs an annual symposium named “Jóvenes investigadores agentes de cambio”. The CT was always open to answer my questions regarding the school, the interaction with students and she gave me some advice considering how to face classes and school’s reality itself. This opportunity has impacted the way I see education and has increased my knowledge and experience of the teaching profession.

The English class

During the observation period, it was noticeable that the professor organized the 50 minute-classes in Communicative skills by initially asking students to copy the class agenda which usually had activities such as a topic about speaking strategies or an activity from the text guide referring to a grammar topic. Then she focused on activities from the textbooks Impact 2 from the National Geographic and *Global Citizenship* created by MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, Colombia). In both texts, they developed a variety of written activities such as filling in blanks, giving a short opinion about a topic or answering a requested question. It was also observable that the professor enriched the activities using PowerPoint presentations to expand a specific information, as well as YouTube videos or photocopies with activities involving coloring, writing, matching concepts, etc. In terms of participation, most of the students did not seem to like to speak in English, and they used Spanish during almost the entire class. Some students were more confident at using English, and they had a more constant participation.

Statement of the problem

What I focused on and the question I asked after observing the group

During the observations in this group, certain relevant conditions to problematize were evidenced. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, initially the group X-13 was split in two, at the same

time, each group attended face-to-face and virtual mode sessions, via Google Meet, then the class was organized in what I have named two scenarios. It was observable that students who attended the virtual mode had some problems with being connected to classes, they did not have opportunities to interact with their classmates, the CT, and in the English class processes.

It was really difficult to create a confident environment because students were a new group formed after being mixed when passing to the tenth grade, and as a result, they did not know each other well. Also, the lack of technological tools inside the schoolrooms like microphones, web cameras, electronic boards, etc., did not provide for an adequate environment for developing a virtual class. For students of X-13/XI-13 some other challenges were related to time constraints in terms of explanations because the time for classes was little, also that some topics from the textbook were difficult for them regarding new vocabulary.

The exploration of written language was transversal during all the classes, by using the activities in the textbooks which were related to some readings and topics that are covered in each of the units such as Unit 6: Life in the extreme, Unit 7: Are you going to eat that? Unit 8: Art in the open. It was noticeable that students performed these writing activities to give an answer to what was asked, then in these classes students did not express themselves to connect the English class content with their daily life. This connection with students' reality, and the enjoyment of the activities were key issues for me during this observation, as they constitute my teaching beliefs in relation to the possibility of addressing meaningful learning by connecting the aspects we are studying with daily life, each one's interests and self-knowledge. Along the observations, it was also noticeable some students' attitudes towards the activities such as negative comments, and the expression of boredom in relation to the written tasks proposed in class and following the text guide.

Taking advantage of the good relationship with the CT, I asked her if she had explored with the students the acceptance they had of the written and oral activities proposed in the text guide, and she expressed that she has not inquired about students' preferences concerning these type of activities. Therefore, there was no certainty if the students were comfortable with the activities carried out in class, especially with the written activities. In consequence, I decided to

Figure 1.
Students' reasons for studying English.



conduct a survey in October 2021 to explore in depth what students wanted to say about the English class. This survey contained questions to explore, in the first place, students' reasons for studying English (Figure 1). The reasons students expressed were divided into four major categories, and the one with the highest percentage of responses was related to “...estoy estudiando Inglés para tener un mejor trabajo y salir adelante”¹ 10th grade student, (October 10th -2021).

¹ “...I am studying English to get a better job and have a better future”

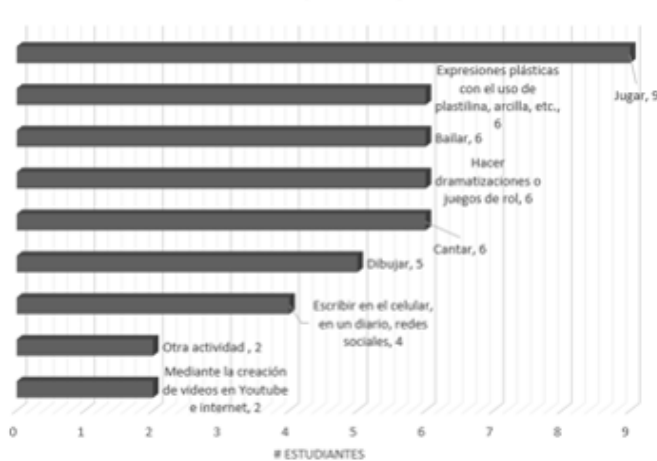
Figure 2.
Students' attitude towards the English class.



After questioning students' interest regarding English learning, they were asked about their attitude towards writing in English (Figure 2), resulting in most of them liking to write. In addition, the survey asked about the activities different from writing, students would choose to express

themselves (Figure 3). The ones with the highest percentage were playing, singing, dancing,

Figure 3.
Activities students chose for expressing in the English class



drawing. Those with the lowest percentages were creating videos, writing on a cell phone or on social networks. In addition to this data derived from the survey, an experience that confirmed students' preferences to express themselves through different modalities to writing, was the final task

assigned by the CT by the end of 2021. This activity consisted of selecting an activity to report a book analysis and a presentation of unit 5: Life in the Extreme from the text guide about Make an impact. They had to select a way of presenting these activities and the CT offered options like drawing, creating a comic, a blog, a play list, among others. It was evident that concerning the actual outcomes of the final tasks, they selected the ones that corresponded to those with higher scores in the survey and had more acceptance for students.

My connections with researchers in the field

The literature review I explored exhibits the theoretical concepts that support my research. For this project, I considered concepts related to the writing processes, and the connection to students' daily life experiences seeking to develop meaningful writing in the activities performed in class. Other concepts that were very to enrich this project were the exploration of multimodal resources to offer alternative means to facilitate meaning construction, and the possibility for students to be aware of their voice as writers and to develop abilities to create.

The writing process

There are many ways for writers to face their own process, as it was mentioned by Bahrebar and Darabad (2013) stating that "Writing has been defined in a variety of ways" (p. 3); Along this, for example, Flower and Hayes (1990, as cited by Bahrebar and Darabad, 2013) explained that "Writing is a straightforward act of saying what the writer can mean, the mental struggles writers go through, and the interpretations readers make" (p. 3).

When referring to the writing process, English language learners face some difficulties regarding the school setting and other personal aspects, besides, "EFL learners often struggle not only in language use at lexical and discorsal levels, but also in content generation" (Leki, 2001, as cited in Yang, 2020). Some of these circumstances are shared by the students in the observed group for this project, because of that, I considered this to be an opportunity to explore the use of different resources to encourage students' response to specific writing activities, taking into consideration that "el rol del docente actualmente implica una mayor búsqueda de estrategias,

herramientas y espacios para mejorar y actualizar nuestras formas de enseñanza”² (Nonato & Peña, 2017, p. 3).

In addition to the above-mentioned circumstances, it is noticeable that EFL students also face different problems when referring to the writing process, because they tend to feel blank, without any clear sentence in their mind seeing an empty paper in front of them. According to Bahrebar and Darabad (2013), “Most people are seen to have difficulty in getting their thoughts down on paper, and for them it is usually an ordeal to be avoided whenever possible; but to others, it is a common experience of whatever complexity it may be” (p. 3). Seeking to help students in this process provoking the growth of their enjoyment for writing, I found that prompts might become the motivation for students to respond to this process in a meaningful way. Bahrebar and Darabad (2013) explained that “In other words, they do not set down limits to what can be written about” (p. 5); on the contrary, the use of these guides can help students identify the path for finding inspiration in order to start their own writings. Here, Bahrebar and Darabad (2013) concluded “They are merely places to start writing” (p. 5).

Some authors have proposed concepts to further elaborate on the actions taken by writers. That was the case of Graves (1981) when he reported findings in terms of this writing development in the English classroom, mainly working with children. The author states that “The process begins when the writer consciously or unconsciously starts a topic and is finished when the written piece is published” (p. 11). Complementing this, in relation to this writing process among children, he also mentioned that “Significant sub-processes include topic selection, rehearsing, information access, spelling, handwriting, reading, organizing, editing, and revising” (p. 12). For children, the

² “the role of the teacher nowadays implies a greater search for strategies, tools and spaces to improve and update our teaching methods”

writing process would require different kinds of support because of their age, cognitive development and experience with the printed word, however, I find that the process itself becomes a sensible framework to work with teenagers.

Another perspective to be considered in the writing process is related to strategies. Graham et al. (2013, as cited in Chen, 2022), conceived “Writing strategies as techniques the writers consciously employ to develop ideas, plan, organize, revise, and reflect in the process of writing” (p. 30). Here, Laksmi (2006, pp. 145 - 146, as cited in Faraj, 2015) derives from Graves’ work some stages for the writing process defined as “prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing” (p. 132). These stages are influenced by the social context (Salmon, 2001), which Johnson and Mongo (2008, cited by Childs, 2020, p. 45) complements, explaining that “Writing is both an individual performance and a social practice” (p. 280).

Daily Life and Students’ voices

Another important aspect of this research is the connection between classroom life and students’ daily life. This issue has been addressed by authors such as Childs, K. (2020) or Kinberg, M. (2020) considering EFL classrooms as inseparably linked to students’ interaction and writing as a jointly constructed process. Students’ self-reflection derived from their connection to daily life, and the advantages of bringing this relation for developing writing skills, has been explained in Childs (2020), when she indicated that “Students often struggle with writing when it is not personal to them or their experiences” (p. 45). Also, when she concluded “What makes writing engaging to students is the opportunity to share their own thoughts and knowing their own perspectives will be received” (Childs, 2020, p. 45).

While Childs explored the previous ideas, in terms of students’ experiences and connection, Kinberg (2020) stated that “Making the connections between real-life experiences,

prior knowledge, retention, and motivation, can benefit the coaching of writing” (p. 3) and complemented by regarding the importance to “allow students to get involved in their own process, write, revise, and edit like authors, also when participating in publishing their work” (p. 3).

Based in the idea that students can write for themselves, it is necessary to remark that valuing students’ voices, it is a way to experience meaningful literacy, because it “integrates learners’ life histories, their growing capacity to make meanings, and their evolving understanding of the self, both as mediated by language learning” (Hanuer, 2013, p. 108 as cited in Yang, 2020, p. 2). Hence, students can write for themselves, in an exercise of authorship. The previous mentioned concept is explained by Kress (2010, p. 77, as cited in Cimasko & Shin, 2017, p. 389) by saying that “When an author constructs meanings for a text, she or he negotiates her or his own interest and agency to suit a particular audience that the text invokes” (p. 389)

Multimodal resources

In addition to the aforementioned, it is necessary to remark the importance of considering the students’ selection of alternative resources for designing activities to enrich their writing processes in the EFL classroom. For this project, the focus on multimodal resources became specific by the use of prompts.

Several authors list a set of advantages of using multimodal resources for sharing information in the EFL classroom, because “Un recurso multimodal es la implementación de más de un medio para recibir la información, los cuales le permiten al estudiante captar la información de manera más efectiva y completa, usando varios de los sentidos”³ (Nonato &

³ “A multimodal resource is the implementation of more than one means of receiving information, which allows the learner to grasp information more effectively and completely, using several of the senses”

Peña, 2017, p. 6), and considering the use of learners' senses in writing, Yang (2020) suggested that "Meaningful literacy is a wave of scholarship in applied linguistics that attempts to foreground learners' humanity in language teaching and learning" (p. 2). Finally, I consider that the use of multimodal resources as prompts in several activities not only supports students' writing skills, which was the major goal of this project, but also other skills such as reading or speaking. These resources also contribute to focus student's efforts on increasing self-reflection and knowledge, and promoting their meaningful connection to writing and daily experiences, as Childs (2020) stated when she said:

"In school settings, students are frequently asked to write and respond to set topics, and little time is spent on giving students the chance to develop their own topics. Authentic writing involves more than just reactions and rehashing or summarizing. Authentic writing tasks allow students to create, question, explain, and even challenge their environments. Writing tasks that involve students' daily lives (such as relationships with friends, their favorites, their environment, etc.), sets them up to be more comfortable with the idea that the purpose of writing is not simply to convey a "right" answer" (p. 45).

Research question and objectives

The guiding question of this research.

Based on the observations I made, the review of professional literature, and the problem I focused on, the research question was stated in relation to *how does the use of multimodal resources impact on the development of meaningful writing processes with a group of teenagers in a public educational institution in Medellin?*

The objectives I had in mind.

General objective:

To develop meaningful writing activities with a group of teenagers in a public school by the use of multimodal resources.

Specific objectives:

To promote students' self-knowledge through writing about their current interests and concerns.

To foster different multimodal activities in the English class seeking to create a connection between students' daily lives and their writing process

Action plan

The proposal to implement

In order to accomplish the objectives mentioned above, I defined an action plan to be developed in two parts from the term February-June 2022. In the initial plan (Figure 4), the emphasis was on allowing students to express themselves through the activities with higher scores in the survey. The first part of the cycle would focus on the students' knowledge of themselves, and the exploration of their tastes and feelings. This cycle would end with an exhibition in which students would explain the drawings they created, and their connection to them. In the second part, the focus would be placed on students' plans, talents, university world, learnings that they would express through dramatizations. The cycle would end with a staging of one of the above-mentioned aspects from their lives.

Figure 4.
First cycle and second cycle (initial proposal)



The methods defined for collecting data were written activities and other students' work, a focus group and in-depth interviews with 6 students that showed diverse levels of involvement in the English class.

Actions Implemented

The action research dynamic: what authentically took place

From the beginning of the implementation, my idea was related to fulfilling students' preferences regarding their means to express themselves. During the path and taking into account the CT's guidelines concerning the use of the text guides for following the main themes for each term, that is: Arts in the open, and Global Citizenship, I had to make decisions in terms of class activities. Taking advantage of the term themes and the freedom my CT gave me for lesson planning, I decided to start articulating the topics of the unit, students' preferences, and my intention with multimodality in order to foster meaningful writing processes among the students. Therefore, the cycles initially planned were modified, and became one cycle split in two parts:

Cycle 1 Part 1. What I know about me: drawing in the classroom. March-April (6 weeks):

Considering the results from the survey I conducted, I decided to use drawings as initial prompts for encouraging students to write. It is also important to mention that in the first part of the cycle, I articulated the unit of the text guide focused on Arts, to my proposals of using drawing and other expressions to support students' self-expression in written form, therefore, four activities were planned for guiding students in their writing process related to an examination of their current interests and self-knowledge. In this part of the cycle, brainstorming and drafting were the stages addressed for the written development process.

Cycle 1 Part 2. Feeling my world and my impacts on it: May-June (5 weeks). This part of the cycle was meant to allow students to express their ideas and feelings about decision making and

their own understanding of the world related to the concept of citizenship, following the theme of the period to be covered from the text guide on global citizenship. The invitation in this cycle was to create and represent situations they would face, or believed they would face, and make evident how they would act in front of them, letting students to explore sensations and writing about these, connecting what they wanted to express with the meaning of their daily life. In this second cycle the stages of the writing process related to revising, editing and publishing were considered.

Throughout the implementation I organized the agenda for every class so that students had the chance to be involved in the routine they have already experienced concerning the date. I asked for a volunteer to go to the board and copy the date, she/he could ask for help, and peers were willing to contribute. This practice made them feel confident among them and with me, they laughed and made funny comments.

In the initial class, I shared the results of the survey to the students as a starting point to show them how through this project, the writing process would depart from their own interests, which are my main reasons for conducting this research. I explained to them we would be writing in different classes to connect writing and self-reflection. For me, it was a priority to start building opportunities for students to express their connections with their feelings, current interests, daily life and self-knowledge through drawing, in order to provoke their expression in writing.

The first activity in this implementation, *Changes in my Life* (Figure 5) consisted of

Figure 5.
Activity Changes in my life.



asking students to share about important events in 2021 and 2022, concerning the change of school year, and explore those that were different for students in the new year.

To begin, I showed my own

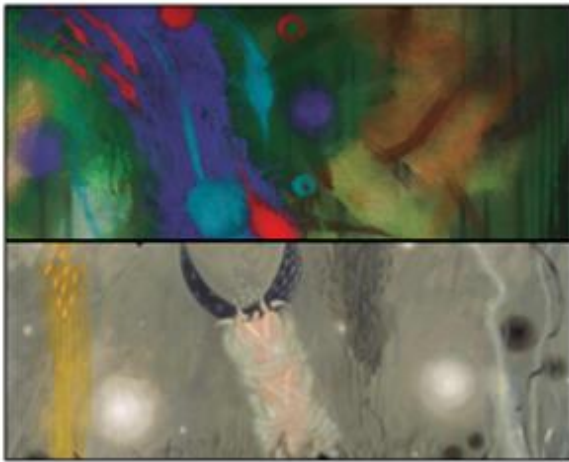
example, and then, I handed in a small sheet of paper which students had to divide into two columns. In each of these divisions, they were going to draw or write the aspects that were important for them in 2021, and in the second column they also had to draw a figure and put the three aspects that had been important for them up to that moment in 2022. It is important to highlight that some students followed my example, others created their own using only figures and letters, others, figures, and drawings accompanied by a word, the other group drew figures and wrote paragraphs accompanying the figures.

For the second activity of the cycle, I presented the work of Colombian artist Carlos Jacanamijoy⁴ to explain what he thought of our roots, the way in which our history has been told, from a domination point of view through foreigners' perspective. I invited students to reflect about their sense of identity writing a phrase, a paragraph, in which they expressed what they had felt, thought, and reflected after seeing Jacanamijoy's work⁵ (Figure 6). In the activity, the CT

⁴ Carlos Jacanamijoy (Santiago, Putumayo, 1964) has a master's degree in Fine Arts from the National University of Colombia. His work has been exhibited in renowned museums and galleries around the world.

⁵ Retrieved from [CARLOS JACANAMIJOY CANTOS DE LA MEMORIA, MUSEUM OF CULTURAL HISTORY Oslo Norway by Plan de Promoción de Colombia en el Exterior, Dirección Asuntos Culturales, Cancillería Colombia - Issuu](#). In the image: above: "The mirror reflects yourself", down: "Auca".

Figure 6.
Carlos Jacanamijoy's work.



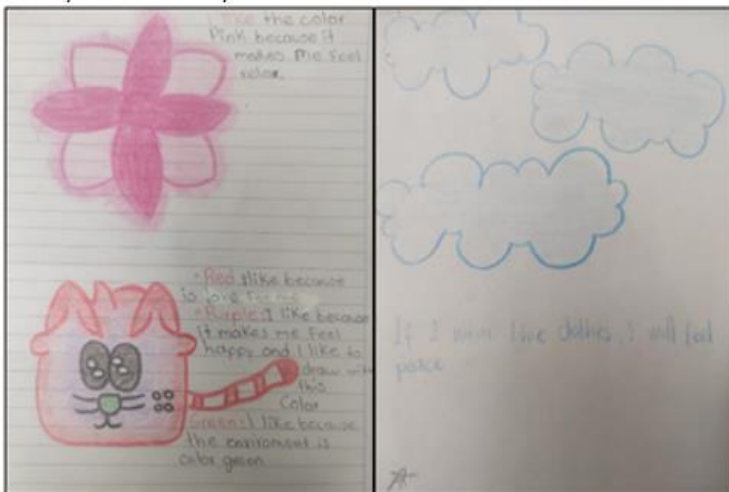
intervened and asked students to do their writing in their notebook for her to check and add a signature, so they just did small phrases. One of the students' ideas about this experience was:

“At the beginning I didn't understand all of those colors and lines, but at the end, I can imagine myself in the countryside, with my family, I like being Colombian...” (11th grade student, March, 2022)

After the implementation of the first two activities, Changes in my life and My identity, it was clear for me that focusing on prompts would be the path to continue the implementation of the following actions. Therefore, I decided to foster different visual, sensory and linguistic activities as prompts, seeking to create a connection between students' daily lives and their writing process.

For the third activity in this cycle, students were called to bring to class a pair of their

Figure 7.
Activity The colors of my life.



favorite-colored pencils. I asked students to make a drawing with each of the colors on a sheet of paper I handed in (Figure 7) with each of the colors. Besides, students had to write, explaining why those colors were important for them. I invited them to reflect on their

connections to those colors if they felt something special when they thought about these. I also modeled the activity using my own choices of colors and ideas. Students created connections to any activity they liked to do, a thing, sport or feeling.

For the completion of cycle part 1, we finally focused on writing a text to synthesize the three previous activities students did. I returned their previous work in class, and they were surprised by seeing the texts again. For example, one of them said: "*Miren mis dibujos, jaja, no recordaba, muy charro!*"⁶ (11th grade student, March - 2022). My advisor was present, she helped me a lot paying attention to students' requests, trying to understand if they needed some help, for instance. Here, it was noticeable that students were really focused, they were involved in writing the text. In this work, they made connections between all their works, they expressed ideas about themselves, their changes, concerns, interests, etc.

Starting the second part of the cycle, I made an activity to get the students back into the rhythm since we were coming back from Holy Week. I used a virtual pdf of the book *Zoom* from Istvan Banyai⁷. This is a wordless book that zooms through sequences of images pulling the point of view further and further on which you think you are looking for a part of something, a picture, or a landscape and then you are "surprised" to see that it is something totally different from what you had thought. I wanted to make a transition between themes, to close the Arts topic and introduce global citizenship, then with this book I wanted to emphasize in the sense of going beyond our close reality in terms of family and friends, city, and country.

The previous activity became the introduction to Global citizenship, the topic for the term assigned by the CT. In the following classes, I presented some concepts involved in being a

⁶ "Look at my drawings, haha, I didn't remember, very funny!"

⁷ *Zoom*, Istvan Banyai. (s.f).

global citizen such as diplomacy, inclusion or world orientation, and read the most famous phrases of important people in the history of mankind such as Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Nelson Mandela, among others. To conclude, we made a group discussion about the activities they did to be good citizens, how they considered this had an impact on their lives.

Then, we did the first activity of the second moment of the action cycle involving the concept of sense of belonging. This was mediated by the sense of smelling. I asked students to close their eyes to try to identify and discover the aroma. I passed by each of the chairs with some coffee beans which the students smelled. I chose coffee because it is a product that is related to Colombia, our customs and history. Then, I called students to write a text where they expressed their thoughts about the relation of this product with the idea of being Colombian citizens, the memories this product brought to their lives, family for instance, and if it means something to them to belong to Colombia.

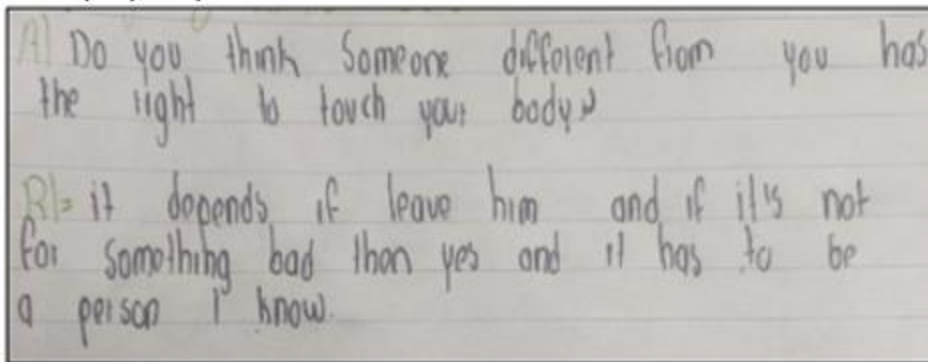
At this point of the process, I consider it relevant to focus on the revising stage. I reviewed all the texts students had written. Issues related to language structure emerged mainly in the use of capitalization and of subject-verb agreement (SVA), then I designed a class to address these issues. I contextualized and put those issues into practice so that students could use them for their written production. A slide presentation was used to expose the theory, and after this, I conducted an activity in which some students went to the blackboard to copy a sentence, I asked a question in terms of the use of plural or singular, and they had to select the correct SVA option, in addition, the sentences were used to help students be aware of the use of capital letters.

In the third moment of implementation in this cycle, students listened to an audio of nature sounds that I sent to their phones. All of them had headphones for the activity. I invited them to close their eyes and reflect on the sense of their relationship with the environment, with

nature, and the perception of respect towards it. The students wrote a text based on the connections they made, their feelings and what these sounds provoked in them.

Finally, the fourth moment of the cycle focused on the body, particularly on the idea of respect for each other's rights involving the body. I proposed an activity in which the students, with their eyes closed, would experience two different sensations on their hands and arms with two elements that generated a contrast: a piece of very rough sandpaper and a very soft brush. In this class, the CT instructed me to copy on the board the questions that acted as transitions to support students' connections to write about their connections and feelings. I did not have the opportunity to do it orally as in the previous activities. The result (Figure 8) was that students

Figure 8.
Activity My body



focused on providing a short answer following the model I evidenced at the beginning of the observations. At the end of the class,

some students expressed aspects such as: "teacher, no, I didn't like this one, we didn't have the possibility to express ourselves freely, nooo.." (11th grade student, May, 2022)

In the next session, I continued with the editing stage. I reviewed all the written activities students had done in the second cycle, and on top of the words or sentences where I identified the absence of SVA, or capital letters, I put a comment with a symbol (see Table 1 below).

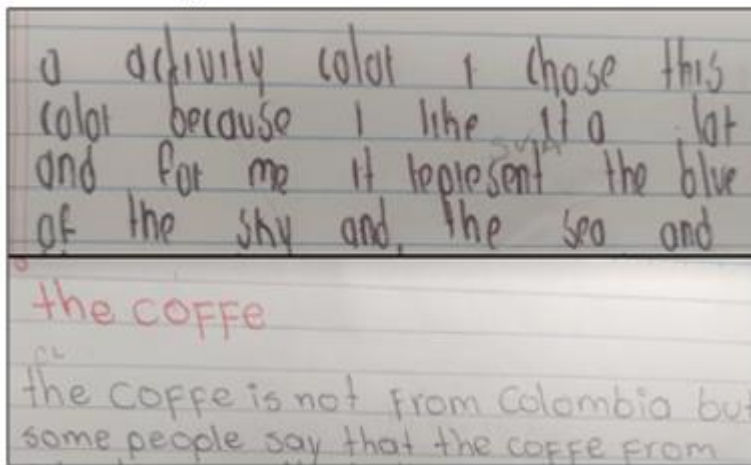
Table 1.
Comments regarding writing issues.

Symbol	Meaning	Example of issue
SVA	Check subject-verb agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I love of all this things...</i> • <i>My grandma always make the better coffee...</i>
CL	Absence of capital letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>After point: this year is a year of changes...</i> • <i>i chose this color because</i>

Note. Adapted from Faraj (2015)

During the class the students had the opportunity to observe their writing, identify, edit, and correct the problems that were present in relation to SVA and CL (figure 9). After this time

Figure 9.
Students' samples from activities.



Note. Revising stage.

for revising and correcting, the students made a synthesis of their texts related to global citizenship on a blank sheet of paper. On one side of the paper, they made a drawing focused on the idea of how they could make a difference in the world from the fact of being citizens, they could express

themselves freely in the drawing and relate the aspects they wanted. On the other side of the paper, they had to explain what they had drawn.

For the final activity of this second part of the cycle, I proposed, an activity related to the publishing stage. The students had to create a cover for their “personal book” (Figure 10) which consisted

of their written pieces for this second part of the cycle that I put

Figure 10.
Activity My personal book cover



together. They had to decide which of those texts were of their preference by putting any kind of mark. They could name it as they wished, use visual elements such as drawings, or colors. In this activity there was a provocation for the students to express their experiences, daily life, go back to their writings and relate their feelings.

Data collection and analysis

What were my project results?

To collect the data, and under the guidance of professional literature for triangulating this analysis (McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J. 2006), I took into account all students' samples, my observation narratives during the process, a focus group conducted with 6 students centered in their perception of the visual activities of cycle moment 1, and in relation to the writing process, finally an in-depth interview focused in cycle moment 2 with some students from this target group.

To analyze data I considered students' point of view, my own experience, and the connections to professional literature. The resulting categories were students' self-knowledge, understood as the way in which they were able to talk about themselves and express about their personal experiences, methodological novelty, understood as the perception of the classroom development and the elicitation of enjoyment, as well as a sense of confidence/trust in the teacher and in themselves. In addition to this, their impressions in relation to language awareness, derived from the methodological proposal using linguistic prompts and the writing process approach.

The process of writing and the enjoyment of it, was the main element in the project, as well as the presence of scaffolding as an approach and guide to support the students' process, allowing them to analyze their writing and take the risk for expressing their experiences and feelings.

What happened to the students as writers?

Considering the categories I mentioned above, in terms of students' self-knowledge, very clearly references emerged in the students' written samples related to friends and to themselves, aspects related to real life contexts and meaningful processes. Lombardi, (2007, p.3, as cited by Kinberg, M. 2020) mentioned that "Learning by doing is generally considered the most effective way to learn." To complement this, Kinberg (2020) said "And the more real-life those contexts are, the more meaningful they are for students" (p. 2). Within the sense of "me", students expressed ideas of self-reflection and self-learning about who they are, as well as concerns linked to the future of themselves. R⁸ said "*I think I have had many changes in my life the last years...I think it has been something good because it has made me grow as a person...*", and H

⁸ I used the initial of students' last name to introduce ideas they shared through the data collection processes

for instance said “...I also like purple because I’m a person who has felt two sexual sides very present (masculine and feminine). When I was a little girl I used to say that I was half boy, half girl and I still feel that...” In terms of their future, A mentioned “I want to have the life of my dreams, traveling, knowing the love, having a good job, to have a good body and many things like that”⁹. Data from the focus group emerged supporting this category when students talked about aspects in relation to the possibility of getting to know and meet each other personally and expressing themselves more by talking about what they liked and felt. A mentioned “*Tuvimos la oportunidad de recordar de nuestros anteriores años y como ha cambiado nuestra vida y mejoramos nuestra manera de pensar y pusimos en la hoja todo lo que sentíamos...*”¹⁰, as well as C when said “*hablamos así de lo que nos gusta, o de lo que sentimos, entonces siento también que es algo como muy gratificante para uno...*”¹¹. Besides of the previous aspects, in relation to the linguistic and sensory prompts, connected to their self-knowledge, R said “*aparte de que eran actividades muy para conocerse personalmente, entonces eso también ayuda como a hacer ver sus debilidades, fortalezas, o como expresar sus sentimientos, escribiendo, dibujando*”¹².

One of the objectives of my work was related to fostering this self-knowledge on the part of the students, giving them the possibility of expressing themselves in writing in relation to this. Taking into account the data from the in-depth interview, it was evident the presence of this connection at the moment students stated the authentic link with themselves and their own daily lives, as well as the meaning they gave to their writings and activities. Regarding authentic

⁹ I took the sentences from students’ texts, without corrections and I did my versions of their responses in English.

¹⁰ “We had the opportunity to remember about our previous years and how it has changed our life and improved our way of thinking and put on the sheet everything we felt...”

¹¹ “We talk about what we like, or what we feel, so I also feel that it is something very gratifying for us...”

¹² “Apart from the fact that they were activities to get to know each other personally, that also helps to show their weaknesses, strengths, or how to express their feelings, by writing, drawing, etc.”

writing, Childs (2020) mentioned that it “allows students to utilize their writing skills across subjects and topics, and it allows students to become more comfortable with the processes that writing involves” (p. 45). Besides, in relation to this, H said “*Por lo general cuando me piden que ps hable de mi vida, de mi historia, eso me gusta, eso fue lo que me motivó...*”¹³ They created their own understanding derived, initially from the linguistic prompts, and also through the experience of drawing and connecting with their senses. This was evident, in the moment M expressed: “*todo tenía su significado y más el que uno le daba*”¹⁴, or reviewing his performance in relation to the activities development about “*qué significado le busco, es como conocerse y la verdad ps esto es lo principal*”¹⁵.

When referring to the methodological novelty, data appeared in terms of students' feelings toward the classroom experience and building trust toward the teacher and themselves. Students' samples showed that they experimented a dynamic shifting in the methodological sense of classes, idea that has been explored by Childs (2020) when she mentioned that “In school settings, students are frequently asked to write and respond to set topics, and little time is spent on giving students the chance to develop their own topics” (p. 45). Reinforcing the previous mentioned conceptualization, V wrote “*In the activities that I had with Johan, they helped me to know myself...I learned but also had fun doing the activities*”, H said that “*During the activities I felt very good, very happy, I really liked all the work that we have been doing during these classes...*”. Considering the trust-building aspect, it was evident both in the samples and in the data that emerged from the other data collection instruments, the students' sense of opening up in writing and sharing personal issues. H recalled a personal moment related to her

¹³ “In general, when I am asked to talk about my life, my history, I like that, that's what motivated me...”

¹⁴ “Everything had its meaning and even more the meaning that one gave it”

¹⁵ “What meaning do I look for, it's like getting to know each other and the truth, well, this is the main thing...”

feelings: *"I was depressed, all my life was gray, but the good thing is that I developed my emotional strength and learned many things"*, U wrote *"...for a long time, I had depression and anxiety which was very serious because my mother put me in a help center..."*. Related to their own trust, M said *"...the green can represent a new me, I can grow of this feeling, I need to move on..."* Along with the previous statements, it is noticeable that during the activities, students built a sense of trust among themselves and towards the teacher expressing their meanings freely. The information from the focus group and in-depth interviews confirmed that the feelings representing a methodological novelty were present in the class. I consider it necessary to give a lot of value to the methodological proposal, that is to say, to give value to the way in which the moments from the cycle were done, related to daily life, through the word, with the prompts I proposed in each class. R stated that *"es algo que casi nunca nos ponen a hacer"*¹⁶, or C when he said *"es un cambio de metodología"*¹⁷. Also, A mentioned that *"las actividades si fueron interesantes porque por lo general no hacemos ese tipo de actividades porque actualmente con los profesores normalmente no hacemos ese tipo de actividades y en todas las actividades las preguntas eran muy buenas y las actividades también, entonces siempre me gustaba escribir uno se motivaba a escribir porque eran buenas las actividades"*¹⁸. In terms of enjoyment, regarding provoking and engaging classes, H mentioned *"Más que satisfactorias, tuve una experiencia muy satisfactoria porque las actividades eran entretenidas"*¹⁹, *"no fueron monótonas"*²⁰.

¹⁶ "It is something we almost never get to do"

¹⁷ "It is a change in methodology"

¹⁸ "The activities were interesting because usually we don't do that kind of activities because nowadays with the teachers, we don't usually do that kind of activities and in all the activities the questions were very good and the activities were also very good, so I always liked to write, and I was motivated to write because the activities were good"

¹⁹ "More than satisfying, I had a really satisfying experience because the activities were entertaining"

²⁰ "Were not monotonous"

Regarding the previous mentioned idea, also M said “*fue muy dinámico*”²¹, and A said “...y en todas las actividades las preguntas eran muy buenas, como el dibujo, la escucha, los videos interesantes, es un buen mecanismo para aprender”²².

Finally, making reference to language awareness, the writing process became visible and a core concept. In the process of accompanying the students, I acted as a “guide”, adopting a “modeling” for each activity by first doing it myself, expressing my own ideas and feelings, as a manner of guiding students and giving them enough clarity and freedom facing the activities, an action described by Faraj (2015) as “using scaffolding technique in the process of EFL students’ writing is a tool of instructors to help learner’s transition from the assisted tasks to independent performances” (p. 131). Then, allowing the students to experience a cycle of writing as a process by brainstorming, and drafting in the first moment of the cycle, and editing, revising, and publishing in the second moment of the cycle. As part of the writing process approach, within the editing and revising stages, it was important to study the most recurrent themes found in the students' samples throughout the cycle, such as SVA and the use of capital letters. Also, with respect the writing process both in English and Spanish, students mentioned aspects basically related to the awareness of sentence organization, things such as M when said “*ps que el inglés se escribe como cualquier idioma, ps es como en el Español, ud no iniciar con mayúscula, o no va a organizar la frase así...*”²³, or “*más que todos los adolescentes que escriben de una manera muy rara, ps como que abrevian las palabras, ps diferente...*”²⁴. Besides, regarding the previous

²¹ “It was very dynamic”

²² “...and in all the activities the questions were very good, like the drawing, the listening, the interesting videos, it is a good mechanism for learning”

²³ “Well, that English is written like any other language, well, is like in Spanish, you do not start with a capital letter, or you will not organize the sentence like this...”

²⁴ “Specially all the teenagers who write in a very weird way, well, like they abbreviate words, well, different”

idea, H said “*yo considero que es muy importante enseñar ese tipo de cosas ya que mucha gente no sabe cómo hacer uso de ese tipo de elementos*”²⁵, and “*creo que mejoro mi modo de escritura y si...*”²⁶, or R when she concluded that “*si, porque ps ya uno es como más consciente, y ps si, para escribir mejor y redactar mejor*”²⁷. In addition to this, the data that emerged showed an influence generated by the prompts, A expressed “*es una grandiosa manera de empezar a escribir sobre un tema ya que uno se basa en el dibujo y muy bueno*”²⁸, or “*aprender, describiendo, interactuando con más cosas, aparte de nada más escribir*”²⁹

Reflections and conclusion

What happened to me as a researcher and teacher?

The objectives for this research were clear from the beginning. As time progressed, learning was also present, initially in relation to the issue of confidence, since at the moment of having a "routine" to start each class and ask some students to copy the date, I noticed that a bond of trust was developed, both from them to me, as myself to start the class. I must say that my confidence strengthened from the first class to the last. Besides this, one of my learning experiences was related to the idea of being clear with students, this was present in the modeling process at the beginning of all the activities that I proposed. I consider that this has an impact on the methodological way of developing classes through my practicum time, not only following the stages of the writing process approach, but also giving the students the clarity of what was being proposed, in that case I felt a guide for them to start their own tasks. Bringing the reality of the

²⁵ “I think it is very important to teach this kind of things since many people do not know how to use this kind of elements”

²⁶ “I think my writing style improved and, yes...”

²⁷ “Yes, because well, one is already more conscious, and well yes, to write better and having a better wording of the sentence”

²⁸ “It's a great way to start writing about a topic as one relies on drawing and very good”

²⁹ “Learning, describing, interacting with more things, other than just writing”

students and their interests into the classroom was another learning experience for me. Giving them the opportunity to express themselves freely, as well as the possibility for them to create a piece of writing where the reader would be themselves, was a challenging aspect. I had the opportunity to analyze all that they expressed, to identify aspects that could have a certain impact on the development of their writing, so that they become aware of themselves in this process, was also an enriching experience.

In conclusion, the methodological change explored in this project was very relevant, since it was evident that it is possible to propose new elements that catch the students' attention, and allow them to build their own meanings in a pleasant way for them. I believe that this had an impact not only on the methodological, but on the personal aspects of the students and their feelings towards the class itself, and this was clear at the moment of evidencing the confidence students showed in their writings, in such a way that at the end of this experience it was contagious to me. In the end, the findings showed that the students connected with the proposal and felt a connection both with the activities and with me, fostering in some ways their writing processes.

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