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Eduardo Andrés Zapata Mejía

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Improving Writing Skills through the Writing Process Approach: from Theory to
Practice

Eduardo Andrés Zapata Mejia

School of Languages, Universidad de Antioquia

Teaching Practicum and Research Advisor

Ms. Natalia Isabel Franco Betancourt

Magister in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Thesis Advisor

Ms. Carolina Herrera Carvajal

Magister in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

El Carmen de Viboral

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Abstract

This action-research aimed at exploring how the implementation of the Writing Process Approach improve students writing skill particularly by writing a descriptive text. It was conducted in a public school in Rionegro, Antioquia with 35 sixth graders. Action strategies included three stages of the Writing Process Approach: Prewriting, Drafting and Revising. Data collection instruments included teacher's journal, students' artefacts, and a focus group. Findings referred to the positive impact and improvements in students' writing skills in each stage in the Writing Process Approach in terms of composing, sentence formation and usage.

Keywords: Writing Process Approach, prewriting, drafting, revising, descriptive paragraphs, composing, sentence formation and usage.

Título del proyecto en español: Proceso de Escritura: de la Teoría a la Práctica

Degree requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in foreign language education (English- French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

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Preface

I am an undergraduate student from a foreign language teaching program from the University of Antioquia. I conceive myself as a student-teacher that hugely believes in students' capability to learn new languages, indeed, this motivation supports the development of this research that focuses on the students' writing process. This project takes place in a public urban institution, specifically in a sixth-grade group of 35 students whose age ranges between 12 and 14 years old. This action research is addressed to the English teaching collective.

Eduardo Andrés Zapata

Rionegro, Antioquia. June 16, 2023

Description of the Context

This research project was carried out in a public urban school in Rionegro, Antioquia. The mission of the school is to educate young people and instill values that improve the personal development of students and contribute to society. The vision of the institution is to be an inclusive entity that is contextualized to the needs of the student population, and that in turn educates students in their life project.

Concerning the English class, lessons were 4 hours per week. The content is primarily based on grammar topics, vocabulary and understanding texts about daily activities. The general evaluation system applied is based on “Sistema Institucional de Evaluación” and is divided into 4 percentages, cognitive procedural (60%), attitudinal (15%), self-evaluation (5%), and summative (20%). However, every teacher proposes his or her evaluative system under these percentages.

Regarding the participants, they were sixth graders whose ages ranged between 12 and 14 years old. Students considered English as a useful tool to travel abroad and get a decent job. Nevertheless, students have also expressed that they feel that English is boring and mandatory (Questionnaire, August 31st, 2022). The cooperating teacher holds a bachelor’s degree in foreign languages. She has 17 years of experience in teaching foreign languages in different institutions and locations.

After observing this sixth-grade group classes, dynamics and interactions, the major shortcoming related to learning that I could identify was related to the limited exposure to language production in terms of writing skills, activities that students had in the lessons in which students could practice what they have studied.

Statement of the Problem

Initially, overreliance on comprehension check, the recurrent and overused comprehension checks to see if the students have understood any topic led to hinder students' ability to apply what they had learned moving from topic to topic putting into practice what they studied in class. In fact, students were always asked: are we ok, do we understand the topic, is it clear? and students' answer was always "yes" (Journal entry, September 9th, 2022). This attitude towards these types of questions showed some sort of understanding or it seemed that students understood the explanations, therefore the class moved to the next grammar topic. For example, they were working on determined articles one class and the next they were working on WH questions (Journal, September 14th, 16th, 2022). Thus, there was not a space to practice the grammar item or a space where students could produce or attempt to produce the content hence there were no opportunities to verify for comprehension.

In addition, the class dynamic included three types of activities to foster practice. The first type of activity was a board exercise in which students had to translate some sentences written on the board, nevertheless, these opportunities were obstructed by the interference of the teacher, leaving students with the chance to copy the translated sentences on their notebooks. The second type of activity was a worksheet called "taller dirigido" (Journal 18, September 14th, 2022). This worksheet was for students to work with in class and they were supposed to solve it by themselves, but there were limited opportunities for them to solve it and most of the time, the teacher provided the answers. The other type of activity was homework. Students were generally assigned to translate and to write sentences in their notebooks, however, these were not revise and the students did not have the chance to share what they have done.

Another issue was the design and content of the syllabus, which was based primarily on grammar. As the observations went by, I perceived that the classes were mostly focused on grammar and the topics were barely connected to one another. For instance, in one class, the students worked on singular and plural nouns (Journal, August 17th, 2022) and in the next class, they worked on personal information (Journal, August 24th, 2022). Moreover, they were used to working with two types of resources: Worksheets and videos. The first type was taken from the workbook "*Fun English Book 4 Pupil's edition*". These worksheets were about self-information; the "a - an" articles; rules for plurals, expressions as "there is" and "there are" and the verb -to be-. The videos were taken from YouTube. These videos were about plural and singular nouns (Journal, August 17th, 2022) and the indefinite and definite articles. But the students were never asked to produce the language in a written or oral way by using those structures they saw and practiced in their worksheets.

Finally, classes lacked more spaces where the students could be assessed and provided with feedback. Generally, classes followed the same dynamic, teacher's explanation of a topic, followed by some examples, and finally, a confirmation for understanding. Therefore, the space for the students to produce in a written way and to be assessed was left aside. In fact, the cooperating teacher said that she dislikes any type of evaluation, she preferred to have in-class activities (Personal Communication, September 9th, 2022). In this sense, the lack of a production stage was not covered with any type of evaluation or activity.

Overall, this classroom environment did not provide students with the chance to perform what they have learned in the class. First, learning was only assessed through yes /no questions without interaction, or production. Second, there was not a complete teaching cycle of a lesson, and third, activities did not have a purpose related to the homework and class practice because

there were no spaces for students to report their answers written or spoken to assess their learning. Indeed, the lack of written production activities remained more evident because they did not go through all the stages of the writing process even though they worked on many topics which were not connected or practiced

Theoretical Background

In this section, I introduce and develop four concepts used for this action research project. The first concept mentioned is writing skill with its definition, its assessment and advantages of the assessment tool. The second concept is the Writing Process Approach, I present its definitions, its characteristics, advantages, and limitations. Finally, I provide the definition, characteristics, and schematic structure of a descriptive text as the resulting product of the writing process.

According to Reinking et al, (1993) writing is a way of communication and people communicate all the time; through writing, individuals can express themselves creatively, convey complex information, and engage in a dialogue with others. Hamp-Lyons (1983) refers to writing as a personal act in which writers take ideas or prompts and transform them into ‘self-initiated’ topics. Additionally, Kroll (2001) defined that writing was initially seen as a product, an approach that pays exclusive attention to managing linguistic knowledge successfully, such as grammar and vocabulary. For this reason, its procedures are commonly associated with the traditional and cognitive methodologies for language teaching and learning which main purpose is accuracy and writing at the level of words or sentences. Thus, in this traditional approach to writing, the product has an important role in the grading process.

However, different authors argued that for grading the writing skill, the process should be included. In fact, Hyland (2003) asserts that through evaluation the teacher assesses progress

over the process and identifies follow-up tasks to address weaknesses. Besides, Ariza (2005) and Brown (2010) and suggest a permanent assessment of the process, providing feedback and posing questions to the students.

To assess the final product of the writing process, Perkins (1983 as cited in O'Malley, 1996) proposes the use of analytic scoring. In this type of grading, he suggests three criteria: Composing, sentence formation and usage. Composing focuses on central ideas with an organized and elaborated paragraph. Sentence formation consists of standard word order and completeness. And usage is defined as standard inflections e.g., plurals, possessives, ING, etc. and subject agreement e.g., we were vs we was.

There are different advantages in using analytic scoring. Perkins (1983 as cited in O'Malley, 1996) points out that this type of scoring allows the provision of feedback focused on specific aspects of students' writing and it also allows teachers to have diagnostic information for planning instruction. According to Hamps-Lyons (1991, as cited in O'Malley, 1996), another advantage is that it is possible to provide positive feedback on progress in the components of writing.

Regarding the strategy to be applied to improve writing skills, Hudelson (1989), stated that the Writing Process Approach involves students in the construction of texts (descriptive, narratives, persuasive), on topics in which they have a personal interest. In addition, process writing marks a shift from exclusive emphasis on the products of writing to the emphasis on process of writing and interactive learning between teachers and students.

In addition, another definition of this approach is proposed by Brown (2001) as a "method of teaching writing that emphasizes the writing process rather than the final written product" (p. 336). This approach involves breaking down the writing process into stages, such as

prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, as well as encouraging students to engage in each stage in a deliberate and systematic way. The goal of this approach is to help students become better writers by giving them the tools and strategies they need to plan, organize, and revise their writing effectively.

Moreover, there are different perceptions of the process of writing. For instance, Gebhard (1983, as cited in O'Malley, 1996) identifies three different processes: The prewriting, the writing and the post writing. The first one is the stage of motivation to write, the students brainstorm ideas and develop concepts, the second one is the phase to produce, it can be done in class or at home and the last one refers to sharing results.

Another perception is Brown's theory (2001) about the process of writing. Here, the process also has three phases: prewriting, drafting, and revising. And the author proposes different strategies for each one of the stages. He suggests prewriting, brainstorming, listing vocabulary, discussing, and free writing. For drafting, he recommends monitoring work and editing for grammatical errors. And finally, for revising, he proposes instructor's feedback, proofreading and peer-reviewing. In the same line, Peregoy and Boyle (1993) also propose different strategies such as: Graphic organizers, the provision of space for doubts, the revision of students' work and feedback for improvement.

Brown (2001) identifies two advantages of the process writing approach. First, it permits students to lead their writing process because they can reflect as they write. Second, it relates to the internal resources that students have. For Brown, the process approach to language acquisition is beneficial for students since they are the ones who create the language, they must concentrate on the message and the content, and their unique influencing factors are valued. To develop this action research, I implemented Brown's approach with its three stages: prewriting,

drafting, and revising. This, considering the needs of the context of this research project, where they did not have opportunities to see theory and to put into practice what they learn.

However, theory also shows some limitations of the Writing Process Approach. Reid (2001) voiced that the main concern that people have with the process approach is that it pays less attention to grammar and structure and puts little importance on the final products. Besides, Leki (1992), for example, indicates three main limitations; few ESL and NNS (non-native speakers) teachers receive specific training to teach writing, many ESL and NNS teachers are not likely to abandon more traditional views, and both NES and NNS teachers and researchers consider the process approach to focus too insistently on personal experience.

Finally, it is important to highlight the type of text to be developed in this research. The descriptive text is a type of text which is used by the writer or speaker to describe a particular thing, person, animal, place and or event to the readers or hearers (Gerot & Wignel, 1994; Knapp & Watkins, 2005). The process of describing is done through ordering their characteristics clearly, starting from naming them, classifying them, and dealing with their attributes, behaviors, functions, and so on, thus the reader can possibly notice what the writer is writing about as if they could directly see it through their own eyes. To complement (Butt, et al., 2000; Derewianka, 1990; Gerot & Wignel, 1994; Knapp & Watkins, 2005) announce and define the schematic structures of a descriptive text as: Identification: is the process of introducing and identifying a specific participant, such as a person, item, location, animal, or event. Description is organized to characterize that participant based on its attributes, looks, personality, and habits or qualities.

Moreover, Noprianto (2017) proposes some important compositions in a descriptive text, he says that a descriptive text, like other text types, is not only constructed with some rigid rules in the form of sentences, but also composed by considering its purpose and the meaning of each

structure. Lastly, Derewianka (1990); Emilia and Christie (2013); Gerot and Wignell (1994); Knapp and Watkins (2005) state that some commonly used linguistic features are: specificity on participants as main character, present tense as dominant tense, linking verbs or relational process frequently (is, are, has, have, belongs to) in order to classify and describe appearance or qualities and parts or functions of the participant, mental verbs when describing feelings, and uses adjective to add information to nouns (participants).

Overall, the implementation of the Writing Process Approach through prewriting, drafting and revising in descriptive texts, can provide an appropriate and ideal stage in class to work on students' writing skill. The objectives and actions that were taken in this research are presented and described in the following section.

Research Question

How may the Process Writing Approach help sixth grade students to develop their writing skills with descriptive paragraphs?

Objectives

General Objective

To explore students' development in writing skills through the implementation of the Process Writing Approach.

Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of writing process approach on student' writing skills considering their feelings.

2. To gather my own reflections as a teacher researcher about the impact of the three phases of the writing process approach on students' writing skill.
3. To evaluate the progress of the writing process on students' writing skill before and after the implementation of the approach.

Action Plan

In the development of this project, I carried out three main actions applying to the WPA over a period of three months. Before starting with the three-stage cycle in this writing approach, I implemented two diagnostic exercises, these consisted of an initial moment where students wrote a descriptive paragraph of a person, and this was to check at what stage students' writing skill was, and a final moment where students wrote the same descriptive text of a person that we did in the first diagnostic moment to check students' improvement after the application of WPA.

The first action was the 'prewriting stage' where I presented and provided to students with the pertinent tools and examples, to first give students the opportunity to elaborate a descriptive paragraph or a graphic organizer like the example and second so they have samples to create several descriptive texts. The second main action was the 'drafting phase'; here, students oversaw their own writing process about a description of the personality of a person. First it was about personality, later it would be about physical appearance. The third final action was 'revising stage'. In this stage, students were provided with direct peer feedback, and they would have to correct any possible mistake that they had.

Data was collected through teacher's journal entries, students' artifacts, rubrics, and a focus group. These aimed to analyze the impact of the WPA on students' writing skills considering their feelings and perceptions about the approach and how it affected their writing

skills and confidence. I gathered my own reflections on how the approach was working in the classroom recorded in the teacher researcher journal. Finally, I used rubrics to evaluate the students' progress with their writing process, and this was done at the beginning and at the end of the cycle. The rubrics aimed at analyzing students' performance on composing, sentence formation and usage criteria.

Development of Actions

Before the implementation of the three stages of the WPA, we had a diagnostic exercise. The idea with this activity was to identify students' level in writing descriptions before implementing the strategy. For this piece of writing, students had to write a complete description of a person where they include physical appearance, personality traits and the connectors and a topic sentence they knew.

The first action was the prewriting stage. It consisted of presenting students with enough written examples so they had the proper tools and understanding of what they would do later. The use of a graphic organizer was the first topic that I presented to students, after that they had to create their own graphic organizer about describing a person's goods, personality, and things this person does. This, with the purpose of showing students how they could organize information to later put it into a descriptive text. Additionally, grammar and vocabulary topics were presented and included in the prewriting stage. Topic sentence, 'and – but' connectors, verb to have and parts of the body were seen during this stage to have more linguistic tools to produce the final descriptive paragraph. By doing so, I presented to students three different types of descriptive texts given that they would produce at the end a more complete descriptive paragraph, so I segmented the full information of this final text into separated paragraphs to better illustrate students, the first one was about personality, the second one about physical

appearance and the third one was a combination of the previous two topics (personality, physical appearance) and the topics seen along the classes.

The second action was the drafting stage where students were asked to produce writing outcomes. At the beginning they produced a graphic organizer but from there on, they created paragraphs; three paragraphs were created in total: personality traits, physical appearance and the last one including more information. As proposed in the WPA, the objective of this drafting stage was to allow students to put into practice what they had seen about grammar, and vocabulary.

The last stage was revising. In this phase students had the opportunity to check and correct spelling, word omission, word choice or sentence order mistakes in their descriptive texts (personality or physical appearance). These mistakes came from feedback from the teacher and feedback from their peers. The objective of this stage was mainly to help students to realize what they were doing wrong. After they went through this revising stage, they could deliver a new version of their writing pieces; in total they delivered two versions of every descriptive paragraph, except in the post writing stage.

It is important to clarify that these stages did not follow any established order, as writing is an ongoing process. While the traditional approach suggests that prewriting should be the first stage, followed by drafting, and revising, it is important to recognize that the writing process can be flexible, and writers may find a different order or even loop back to previous stages as they work on a project.

The last action was the ‘final diagnostic moment’. In this stage students had to produce individually a complete descriptive paragraph that included topic sentence, connectors, and adjectives related to personality and physical appearance, verb to have and body parts. The

objective was to check how much they improved their writing skill after implementing the writing process approach.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed through the five stages proposed by Burns (2010) which are: gathering the data, coding the data, comparing the data, developing interpretations, and reporting the results. Journals were codified and focus group was transcribed and manually codified in an excel chart. I sorted the data into categories before grouping it into final categories and themes. After categorizing the data, I triangulated information that resulted in valid facts for reporting findings and its interpretation.

Findings and Interpretations

This study aimed at exploring the development of the students' writing skill in descriptive paragraphs through the Writing Process Approach (WPA). Data analysis revealed two main findings, namely Impact of the Writing Process Approach in each of its Stages: Prewriting, Revising and Drafting, and Improvements on the Students' Writing Skill in the Aspects of Composing, Sentence Formation and Usage. In the following paragraphs, I provide further explanations of these findings.

Impact of each Stage in the Writing Process Approach

Data revealed that the different strategies applied in the stages of the Writing Process Approach allowed students to better understand the instructions, increase their motivation, improve on vocabulary, raise their awareness of the use of the language and make connections with prior knowledge. In the following paragraphs I present evidence on how this improvement was observed in each phase of the approach: Prewriting, Drafting and Revising.

Prewriting Stage

Data analysis disclosed that the prewriting strategies, such as graphic organizers and modeling allowed the students to better understand the explanations, the development of the activities and expected outcome. To illustrate, when I asked the students how pertinent the graphic organizer was, they stated that it helped them to express their ideas, as reported by one student in the conversation held in the focus group “A mí me quedó muy bonito porque me exprese mucho y me ayudó a mí y a mí compañera a ver de qué íbamos a escribir después” (Focus group, April 25th, 2023).¹ Moreover, the modeling strategy also helped students to understand clearly what was expected from them and it guided the students to produce their texts, as I reflected in one of the journal entries “Visual aids helped the students to better replicate the content of the example in their own outcomes” (Journal 13, April 18th, 2023).

However, some students have also expressed that it is was important to have different sources of examples to get all the idea or purpose of the activity and to better understand the process, as one student mentioned in the focus group: “Bueno a mí me parece que, es mejor que usted dé un ejemplo, hay personas que no se concentran bien en las cosas o no entienden casi”² (Focus group, April 25th, 2023). This also exposed the importance of providing examples in different formats, thus all the students can do the activity in the class. Overall, the author emphasizes that prewriting helps students generate and organize their thoughts, which leads to more effective and coherent writing. Prewriting refers to the activities that students engage in before they start writing, such as brainstorming, outlining, and organizing ideas and allow

¹ “I am very pleased with it because I expressed myself a lot, and it helped me and my colleague to figure out what we were going to write next.”

² “Well, in my opinion, it is better if you give an example. There are people who don't concentrate well on things or don't understand much.” (My translation)

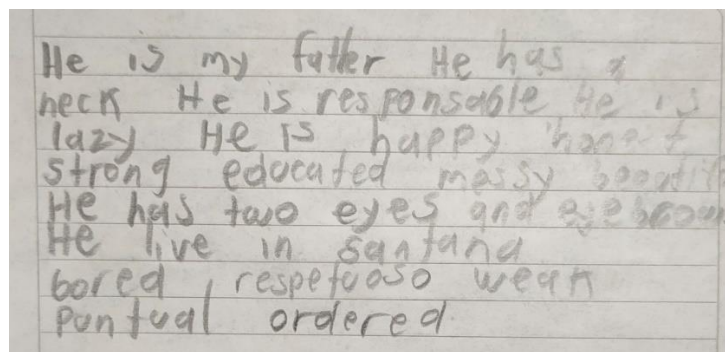
students to explore different perspectives and consider various ideas before committing to a specific approach.

Drafting Stage

Data revealed that students felt motivated to put into practice what they learned in the prewriting stage. One of the student expressed that “Profe a mí me gustó mucho lo que hicimos la clase pasada con la descripción, porque como me gusta describir, sé utilizar el verbo to be, adjetivos, preposiciones y todo eso y como que uno se destaca más”³ (Focus group, April 25th, 2023). Additionally, from 20 students, 20 delivered every version of their descriptive paragraph. What is more, students expressed their enthusiasm for utilizing the learned concepts such as the verb ‘to be’, adjectives, prepositions, and for doing the descriptions. For instance, figure 1 shows one of several students’ productions where they elaborated a description of a person of their interest, hence, they acknowledged that this practice helped them excel in their writing and demonstrated their understanding of the topics covered in class.

Figure 1

Student’s Descriptive Text about a Person



Note. A written piece where one of the students wrote the paragraph following the drafting stage of the WPA.

³ “Teacher, I really liked what we did last class with the description because I enjoy describing things. I know how to use the verb “to be,” adjectives, prepositions, and all that, and it feels like one stands out more.” (My translation)

Theorists emphasize that drafting is a crucial step where students put their ideas into written form. It is during this stage that students focus on developing their thoughts and expanding on their prewriting. The author suggests that students should be encouraged to write freely and not worry too much about grammar or spelling at this stage.

Revising Stage

Data revealed that quality feedback provided the students with opportunities to improve and increase their vocabulary, raise their awareness of their use of the language and connect with prior knowledge. Regarding their vocabulary enrichment, according to the participants in the focus group, feedback received during the writing process had a positive effect on their vocabulary. For instance, one of the participants stated: “Mucho porque aprendí más palabras que no conocía, eemm, y aprendí a hacer descripciones más profundas sobre una persona”⁴ (Focus group, April 25th, 2023).

Furthermore, this constant feedback process allowed students to revise their texts multiple times, leading to raise their awareness about the way they used the language, as expressed by another student:

yo cuando usted me decía que eso estaba malo lo corregía y aprendía para la próxima de ahí. Por ejemplo, cuando usted me dijo que eso estaba malo porque creo porque era que habían, eraaa... como es que se dice... plural y singular... esa cosa y no se podía poner el verbo to be (Focus group, April 25th, 2023)⁵

⁴ “A lot because I learned more words that I didn't know, umm, and I learned how to make deeper descriptions about a person.”

⁵ “When you told me that something was wrong, I would correct it and learn for the next time. For example, when you told me that something was wrong because, I believe, it was about the difference between plural and singular... that thing, and the verb ‘to be’ couldn't be used.” (My translation)

Additionally, some students expressed that thanks to the revising activity they realized that after making a correction with their peers, they discovered a new mistake on their own descriptive text. Finally, with peer feedback, data suggests that the students could make connections with their prior knowledge. Students utilized what they knew to check and assess others' products, as illustrated in the following excerpt from a journal.

During the activity most of the students were very concentrated checking and revising their notebooks and the one from their peers. Some students were writing comments like: "le falta el verbo to be", "este no es el verbo to be que va con el pronombre"⁶, some other comments were asked to me as follows: "profe, aca este adjetivo si esta bien?"⁷ (Journal 12, March 29th, 2023)

For students, this activity was very innovative because they had never had the chance to assess others by themselves. They also claimed that this helped them to create an extra support to what they know, and they had to go over their notes to check if grammar, sentence formation or usage was appropriate.

Finally, the author suggests that students should focus on improving the content, organization, and clarity of their writing during this stage. Revising involves evaluating the effectiveness of the ideas, the logical flow of the text, and the use of supporting evidence. The author also highlights the value of peer feedback and teacher guidance in helping students revise their work effectively.

⁶ "You're missing the verb 'to be' and "This is not the verb 'to be' that goes with the pronoun."

⁷ "Teacher, is this adjective correct here?" (My translation)

Improvement on Students' Writing Skill

Data analysis unveiled improvements in students' written language. This finding emerged from comparing two written moments, one before and one after the implementation of the Writing Process Approach (WPA). In the following paragraphs I present evidence on how students' improvement regarding composing, sentence formation and usage.

Composing

Data analysis demonstrated how students' ability to prepare and compose their paragraphs enhanced. According to Perking (1983), composing focuses on central ideas with an organized and elaborated paragraph. Although the students, in the two tests, were not allowed to use their cellphones, their products had a good result in composing. To exemplify, when revising students' productions, it was clear that some students were joining sentences, using different connectors and punctuation marks. The instructions for the two tests were to write a description of a person they admire using as many words and connectors as possible. To illustrate students' progress, the following images portray one of the students' pre and posttests:

Figure 2

Student's Production before the Writing Process Approach

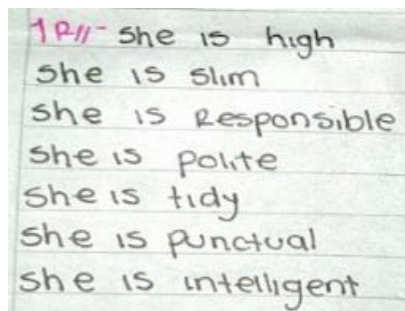


Figure 3

Student's Production after the Writing Process Approach

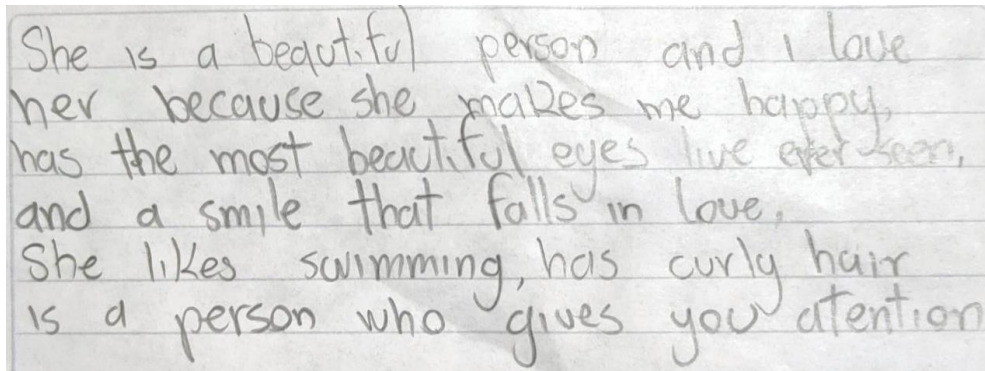
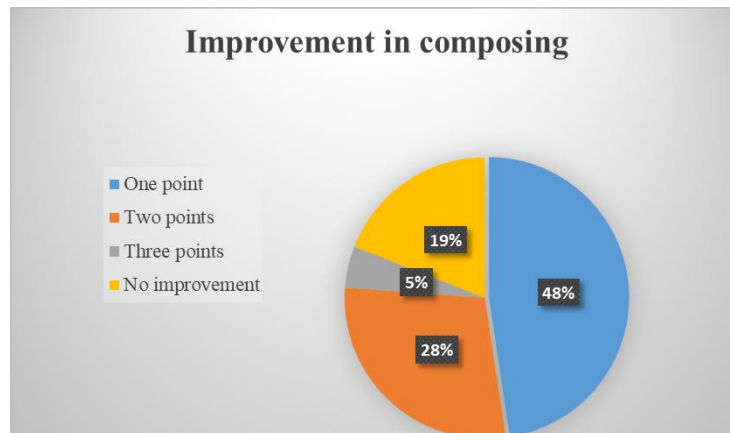


Figure 2 shows the written production of a student and how this student did not have very clear how the composition of a text was with punctuation marks and connectors. However, along the process, this learner could understand what the structure of a paragraph was and how connectors were used, as seen in Figure 3.

Additionally, figure 4 depicts the students' enhancement in the post test. The points represent how much the student's post-test grade improved in comparison with the pretest grade, and the percentage is the students who have improved that number of points in their grade.

Figure 4

Students' General Improvement in Composing



Considering the information depicted in the graph, most of the students improved their grades, one, two or three points, in the composing criterium. Only nineteen percent (19%) did not show any progress.

Sentence Formation

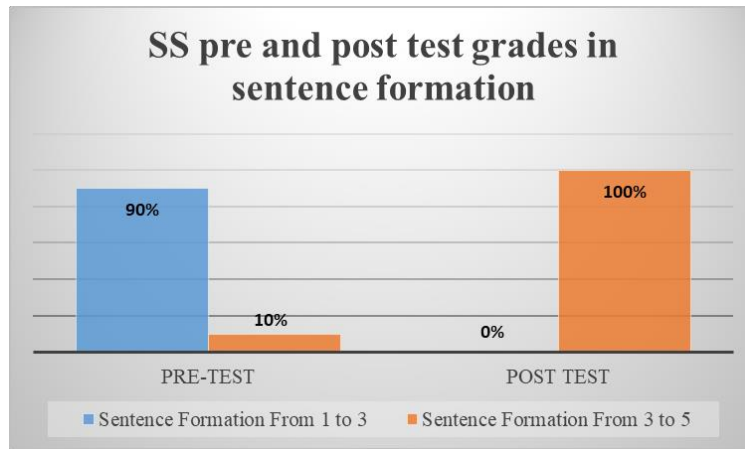
Data analysis also revealed that sentence formation was positively affected after implementing the Writing Process Approach. Perkins (1983) defines sentence formation as standard word order and completeness. Before implementing the writing process approach, students' ability to create sentences using pronouns, verbs and complements was notably lower than when the writing process was carried out. For instance, the following student's production reflects how he improved, in sentence formation: "The she has eyes brows is colors the hair from is worker is estudent she hase dents is hase brown hase skin is nice is talkative hase usban nice, polite" (Pretest, March 22nd, 2023). Then, in the post-test, the same student wrote:

My mom is hair black, my mom is short she is beautiful, she is fourty four years, she is intelligent, she is honestly, she is tolerant, she is punctual, she is orderly, she is educated, she is ordered, she has a house, she cook delicious, she is happy, she is responsible, she is strong (Post test, April 19th, 2023)

When comparing these two pieces of writing, it is evident that the student improved in sentence formation, in the post test and the sentence starts and finishes, showing how the student obviously identifies the different parts of his sentences: The subject, verb and complement. Figure 5 depicts the comparison of the students' grades, in sentence formation, before and after the implementation.

Figure 5

Grades of the Pre and Posttest in Sentence Formation in the WPA.



This graph shows that, in the pre-test, 90% of the students got a grade from 1 to 3 and 10% from 3 to 5. In contrast, in the post test, all the students were graded, in sentence formation, from 3 to 5.

Usage

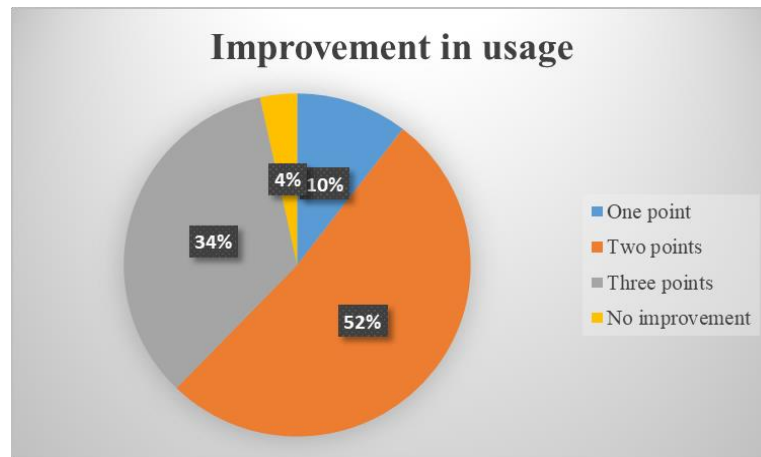
Data showed that Usage was greatly improved in students’ writing skill. Considering Perkins’ (1983) definition, usage is standard inflections: Plurals, possessives, ING forms; and subject agreement: We were vs we was. This process constantly reinforced two things, first students’ ability to retain concepts and students’ ability to be aware about mistakes and how to avoid them. Students commented on this improvement in the focus group:

Yo, cuando usted me decía que eso estaba malo lo corregía y aprendía para la próxima de ahí. Por ejemplo, cuando usted me dijo que eso estaba malo porque creo porque era que habían, era... como es que se dice... plural y singular... esa cosa y no se podía poner el verbo to be (Focus group, April 25th, 2023).

Then, it could be understood that students improved in word inflections and plurals. As illustrated in Figure 6, the general performance of the group in usage, where 96% of the students improved their grade in this criterium by at least one point.

Figure 6

Students' General Improvement in Usage



In the post test, 52% percent of the students got an improvement of two points on their grade. 34% of the students increased their grade by three points and only 10% improved their grade by one point. The 4% is the percentage of students whose grade did not change in the post test.

Conclusions and Implications

The Writing Process Approach (WPA) has proven to significantly improve students' writing skills, including prewriting, revising, and drafting phases. Effective use of graphic organizers and modeling has enhanced students' grasp of the task, improved students' understanding and outcomes, aiding in better productivity and encouraging independence. During the revising phase, feedback has empowered students to enhance their language proficiency, vocabulary, and self-correcting abilities. It also provided opportunities for students to raise their language awareness and connect with prior knowledge. Peer feedback and

collaborative learning further reinforced students' knowledge and improved composition, sentence formation, and language usage during the drafting stage. This drafting allowed students to apply what they had learned throughout the process and demonstrated their improved writing skills. Overall, the WPA and its strategies have facilitated students' development in all stages of writing, resulting in well-crafted written compositions. Moreover, students showed improvements in composing, sentence formation, and usage, indicating the effectiveness of the writing process approach in enhancing students' writing abilities.

Teachers who want to take a similar approach should use prewriting strategies like graphic organizers and modeling to help students understand the content and instructions. Giving examples and using visual aids can help students understand and remember what is expected from them. Including feedback and peer assessment during the revising phase can also help students improve their vocabulary and language awareness skills. Finally, the drafting phase allowed students to apply their knowledge and skills, while this phase also permitted them to demonstrate their comprehension and writing proficiency.

For future possible action research, I recommend teachers to use various prewriting strategies that could be investigated and implemented to improve students' understanding and creativity in writing. Second, teachers can incorporate technology tools and online platforms for collaborative writing and feedback exchange. Third, the research should be expanded to include a larger sample size and a range of proficiency levels. Finally, researchers and teachers could investigate the long-term effects of implementing the writing process approach on students' writing skills and overall language development.

Reflection

First, throughout the research process, I conducted several steps that took me to multiple feelings. This was quite enriching and fulfilling for me given that it indirectly contributed to questioning myself on how I would see myself in charge of the whole group and how I would do it if I was there. Continually, this research process also made me go back and forth when I started to implement. At the beginning, I had multiple options on what to research about, this caused me to a certain point to be confused about what to research. For instance, after a whole first process of finding an issue, I had to change this issue to a different one. Finally, implementing this research process made me feel in a rush; when I first started the implementation, I felt that steps were done in an immediate way. Week after week I had to do something different in the research process, this caused me to feel that I was running out of time and that the things I was doing were incomplete.

When talking about my teaching process I could not implement many things that I learned in other courses of the licensure program. As time was flying, I felt that I could have done things differently, in the research and in preparing classes. For instance, strategies to better conduct this action research such as doing the journal entries after the class would have contributed to remembering more aspects of the lesson easily. In addition, I felt that I lacked classroom management strategies. For instance, I had a hard time when dealing with time for each part of the activity, I also had a problem with group management because discipline sometimes was affecting the dynamic of the class.

Finally, my academic experience and life at the university was hugely fulfilling. Every course and teacher provided me great and valuable knowledge on English and French and what is being a teacher like.

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