

How may the use of organizational note-taking strategies through word processor based-activities help in seventh grade students' formal letter writing?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine if writing with word processors and using certain writing strategies changes the quality of letters written by seventh grade students at a private school in Bogotá, Colombia. In this qualitative study, data was collected using questionnaires, students' logs, and focus groups. The results reflect how motivational factors increase students' awareness of their process of writing and the benefits of feedback and self-regulation in learners. In addition, the findings provide evidence of improvement regarding the quality of students' letters in terms of discourse organization, overall structure, and paragraph organization. This study found that teacher and peer feedback affected students' motivation in the process of writing. Participants were motivated to use the organizational note-taking strategies to improve their letters while becoming more confident in writing in the foreign language.

Keywords: writing strategies, writing process, word processors, feedback and motivation.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de éste estudio es determinar si escribir con procesadores de texto y mediante el uso de determinadas estrategias de escritura cambia la calidad presenta cambios en cartas escritas por estudiantes de séptimo grado en un colegio de carácter privado en la ciudad de Bogotá. En este estudio de investigación- acción la información fue recolectada mediante cuestionarios, diarios y entrevistas de grupo. Los resultados reflejan los cambios en la motivación derivados de la concientización de los estudiantes en los procesos de escritura, y los beneficios de la retro-alimentación y la auto-regulación de los estudiantes. Asimismo, en los resultados se puede evidenciar las mejoras en la calidad de sus cartas en aspectos tales como son la organización del texto, organización de párrafos. Además, los resultados de la retroalimentación del docente y retroalimentación en parejas se beneficiaron por los efectos positivos en factores emotivos que les ayudaron en el proceso de escritura. Estos factores les permitieron escribir textos de mayor extensión y les dieron mayor confianza en el proceso de escritura en la lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: estrategias de escritura, proceso de escritura, procesadores de texto, retroalimentación y motivación.

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Introduction

Fostering students' writing is an important goal to achieve in the classroom and in students' academic performance. According to Pajares (2003, p. 142), the writing performance is the observable realization of the written competence. Pajares studies about social cognitive theories are based on Bandura (1997) who contributed to academic implications for writing and writing outcomes in research about composition in the classroom. In addition to improvement in students' written performance, there is a need to support the use of strategies in written activities in the classroom. This action research project pursued a communicative approach to the teaching of writing in an EFL setting. The importance of this project aimed at focusing on the process of writing and students' use of metacognitive skills when writing. It was found in the diagnostic test that students writing skills achieved low scores which results will be discussed further.

The use of the metacognitive skills applied to the writing process. Note-taking strategies are applied to writing during the planning and summarizing processes. Thus, note-taking allows learners to organize and recall information during writing tasks. Another strategy was taken into account for the implementation of this project: organizational strategies. These metacognitive strategies are helpful for learners to plan writing tasks and important for becoming aware of their own meta-cognition in order to control their own learning. Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary & Robbins (1999, p. 12). Research concerned with writing performance has shown encouraging results in teaching writing strategies explicitly for writing in different genres. These studies demonstrate that learners who were taught writing strategies produced better texts than students who were not. Moreover, Scott (1996, p.5) claims that students can acquire writing competence over time.

It has been argued that writing competence cannot be taught; rather, instructors can provide students with characteristics of good writing as well as good writing strategies that may enhance students' writing competence. This is also an important factor considered in this project, since students' awareness of the use of writing strategies helps them achieve better results.

Process writing has become an important approach for the teaching of writing. Integrating technological tools such as word processors added benefits to the writing process. Technology has become an important part of our lives at personal and professional levels. Teachers are now encouraged to use Information and Communication Technologies in their professional lives. Dudeney and Hockly (2007, p.25) state that computer-aided writing enhances the writing experience. Strategies used for computer-aided writing are different than when composing with pencil and paper; motivational factors are of great importance in the writing experience. Based on these aspects, this project deals with enhancing students' writing processes by learning strategies with word processors. Furthermore, this project takes into account learners' needs at a private school due to the interest of the participants from this community and the teacher-researcher to provide solutions to learners' problems.

Chapter One discusses the statement of the problem, justification, research question and objectives. In Chapter Two, the constructs from this project are discussed while taking into account different theories that support the project. In Chapter Three, the type of study is illustrated and research instruments are presented. In Chapter Four, the pedagogical intervention is described in detail, as well as procedures followed during data collection and steps taken during the implementation. Lastly, in Chapter Five the data analysis and actions undertaken to

analyze the data are commented on and in Chapter Six, the conclusions, pedagogical implications and limitations are considered.

Chapter 1

1.1 Statement of the problem

The complexity of writing represents multiple degrees of difficulty for learners. Nunan (1991, p.87) demonstrates that learners not only need to have lexical and syntactical knowledge but also understand organization and coherence in order to write different texts. According to Zamel (1987, p.712), writing in EFL is a two-sided approach; one side is focused on the product and the other is centered in the process of writing. In the teachers' context, the participants have difficulty relating to writing competence, which in their L1 is neither well-focused nor well-structured; therefore, when these students write in the foreign language, they face many difficulties.

For instance, the students at this private institution have been struggling to improve their writing skills. The results from the diagnostic test they took at the beginning of the school year reflect the problems they have in writing for academic purposes. The problem areas detected in the tests were related to lack of organization, coherence, cohesion, and effectiveness, which led to an unclear message. Thirty students took the test (Appendix I). The aim of the test was to have students communicate a message in a short letter. In the results it was observed that two students scored the maximum of five points and their only problems were in occasional spelling or grammar errors. One student scored four points and their problems were spelling, grammar, and use of cohesive devices. Seventeen students scored three points, the average for the group. These students have spelling or grammar errors that sometimes interfere with meaning or require more effort from readers. Also, the students did not address all the questions in the task. Another four

students achieved two points; they had errors related to grammar and spelling and language errors that impeded communicating a clear message. Six students scored one point and all had the above problems related to grammar, spelling, and cohesive devices, their biggest problem was in terms of completion of the task. They addressed some parts of the task but did not answer all the questions or the responses were unclear. Therefore, these students have a need: to be oriented in the stages implied in the process of writing. After the diagnostic test was administered to students, it was noted that they did not use strategies for organizing or planning their letters; however, the use of cognitive strategies such as translation by using their first language as a basis for producing their letters was found. Other possible strategies learners may have used for the task include transferring, relating previous conceptual knowledge, and inferencing, guessing meanings and filling in missing information.

Furthermore, learning strategies have been a topic on which researchers such as Cohen (1998, p.25) discuss the importance of strategy-based instruction in language learning. Thus, strategy-based instructions may prove to be a powerful tool for teaching and developing writing. According to Wenden (1991, p. 312), writing strategies can be classified into four types. Rhetorical strategies refer to strategies learners use to organize and present their ideas. Metacognitive strategies are strategies that learners use to control their writing process consciously. Cognitive strategies refer to those used by writers to implement actions and social strategies refer to those used by learners to interact with others and regulate their emotions. Such strategies have proved to be great aids for the writing process.

In the foreign language syllabus at this private institution, learners are expected to be able to write effectively in the foreign language in order to take international examinations. In the

Institution's Education Project (PEI), Manual de Convivencia, Article 7, it is mentioned that students are trained to take Cambridge examinations throughout their "bachillerato" (junior, middle, and high school levels) before moving to the next year. These examinations are the KET, PET, and FCE. According to the student's level, they are required to take the Cambridge Key English Test, an elementary level examination for learners of English level 1. For the writing component of the test, learners complete three types of writing tasks: filling in gaps in a text, completing forms, and writing short notes. Taking these into account and based on students' writings, there was a need to train learners on letter writing tasks. The writing of letters focuses on addressing the requirements of the syllabus and the improvement of learners' writing competence.

1.2 Research question

Based on the problem, this research project seeks to answer the following research question:

How may the use of organizational note-taking strategies through word processor based-activities help in seventh grade students' formal letter writing?

1.3 Research objective

General objectives

- To evaluate and assess the impact of two learning strategies: organizational strategies and note-taking strategies.
- To analyze how word-processor based activities used in the writing process influence students.

1.4 Rationale

In the development of this project, two main issues were considered. The first is students' needs to communicate effectively in the foreign language through the process of writing. Learners need to know how to write whole pieces of communication in which they can develop information and ideas with a sense of audience in mind. Communication includes writing tasks such as writing letters and e-mails, among other writing tasks, from which they can develop writing just as they develop listening, speaking, and reading skills. The next issue is to find out how the use of organizational and note-taking strategies and the use of word processors can influence students' writing. These two issues motivated the researcher to investigate how learners could communicate their ideas more accurately in writing.

Learning to communicate by means of writing raises the issue of linguistic competence. According to Scott (1996, p. 2), writing competence refers to the writers' awareness of writing and strategies used in the writing process. Each student has a degree of competence in his L1 and if students are exposed to the process of writing and its different stages through the aid of learning strategies, it can facilitate their writing competence in the foreign language.

For the purpose of helping learners develop writing ability that can be used not only for communicating more effectively, but also for training learners to take international examinations, the researcher proposed a writing framework that reinforces the use of metacognitive skills. These skills include note-taking and organizational strategies and were applied through word-processing based activities in order to help students with the writing process and enable them to regulate their own learning.

The process of writing can include different types of activities such as brainstorming, shared planning, and multiple drafts, among others, that are used for pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing. This process approach to writing was selected for this project as it focuses on the steps students go through in the planning, drafting, and editing stages learners experience when writing.

Technology has become an important tool for writing with the introduction of word processors. Researchers such as Lehr (1995) and McKenzie (1991) explore how these word processors have affected the writing process, including aspects such as motivation, quality, and length of compositions. Also, students spend more time in revision stages and on the general mechanics of writing. Thus, taking these factors into account, the researcher made the decision to use word processors as tools for the process of writing. This study may have several pedagogical implications in the context of educators aiming their pedagogical practices at developing students' written competence in the foreign language. As a consequence, learners may become more aware of the importance of using strategies before, during, and after writing that may enhance the quality of their writing. As mentioned earlier, one goal in the mission and vision of this project's educational setting is to help learners become competent in the use of the foreign language and be able to communicate by means of that language. In addition, this project intends to contribute to the EFL field and foreign language learning as an alternative for the teaching of writing to young learners in contexts similar to the one in the present study. Taking into consideration the researchers' community, several benefits may arise from the results of this qualitative study, as one of the main intentions is innovation that could be shared by teachers who also have students with difficulties in writing skills.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will describe in detail the main constructs in the research study. It starts from the process of writing which focuses on the stages a writer goes through during the writing process. Then, for the second construct, metacognitive skills are reviewed; the two strategies used in the implementation of the project are conceptualized. Organizational and note-taking strategies and the rationale that supports this selection are presented. Finally, a revision of the literature of word processing will be reviewed by providing an overview of research studies and the rationale for the selection of these tools as pedagogical devices for this study. Furthermore, results from research related to writing, the use of strategies, and the use of word processors are referenced to provide the rationale for the present study.

2.1 Writing in the EFL classroom: Process writing

Writing in a foreign language to express and communicate ideas and thoughts is a complex cognitive task; the process is made up of several stages that lead to a final product (Hedge 1988, p.7). Regarding this, Badger and White (2000, p. 155) mentioned that process writing has to do more with linguistic skills rather than linguistic knowledge, including grammar. Therefore, the focus is on planning and drafting and not on grammatical items or text structure. Though writing in a second language has been a topic explored comprehensively by Chandler (2003), Ferris (2002), Matsuda (2001), and Silva (2001), among others, more relevant research has been conducted in countries where English is viewed as a foreign language. According to Leki (as cited in Manchon, 2009), most of these foreign language speakers do not use the language in second language contexts but in another type of academic setting or situation. It is not difficult to observe that even for a native speaker of a language, mastering writing requires

special training; consequently, learning to write in a second language can be viewed as a difficult task. Hyland (2006, p. 380) views writing in a second language as a challenging task for a learner as seen in the composition component included in teaching materials in American colleges and universities. A typical model shown by Tribble (1996, p. 118) focuses on the stages of process writing: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing. These stages reveal that this process is cyclical. According to Langer and Applebee (2007, p.6), process writing is an approach to the teaching of writing. In general, this approach is marked by instructional sequences designed to help students think and organize ideas before writing. The writing steps proposed by Tribble (1996) and Hedge (2005) are used for this project because the researcher sought to aid and monitor learners throughout the stages described by the authors. The key aspects that should be taken into account in the writing process are the stages writers go through. This approach focuses on the process rather than the final product.

Therefore, motivating, guiding, and demonstrating should be encouraged in the classroom in order for the learners to cope with such a demanding task. As Harmer (1998, p.86) shows, some reasons for teaching writing in the classroom include reinforcement, language development, learner style, and training learners throughout the different stages of writing. Consequently, teaching writing is a process to be followed that not only takes into account the form of the language but also the function of communicating a message.

The focus on classroom activities that promote the development of writing is described in Nunan (1991, p. 87) as process writing. Holmes (2004, p. 3) proposes the use of a process-oriented approach that facilitates the planning and production stages of writing. In the learners' environment, this approach can be worked on by hand with the use of note-taking and

organizational strategies. Silva (2001, p. 23) mentions that the process approach in the classroom provides an encouraging and motivating environment for learners in which students can work with minimum interference from the instructor. The teacher's role is to help learners develop the strategies needed for the different stages of writing. The writing process has been described differently by a number of researchers since the early 1970s. One of the most influential models to date is the one described by Hayes and Flower (1987). This model takes into account cognitive processes such as planning and revising, as well as writers' long-term memory and knowledge of the topic. It has been influential in terms of explaining that writing is a recursive, not linear, process. Furthermore, researchers such as Hairston (1982, p. 76-78) and Applebee and Langer (2006) provided the base of the model, including the focus on the process and not on the product, as well as thinking in terms of what the writer does cognitively in the writing process such as planning and revising. In her research, Kroll (2003, p. 10) explains major issues in writing instruction, feedback, and assessment. Raimes (2004, p. 4) describes the process of writing as a set sequence of overlapping steps and activities such as presenting, planning, pre-writing, drafting, revising, feedback, and editing. For the implementation of this project, elements in the process of writing have been selected as guidelines from the various models described above and will be discussed in more detail below.

2.1.1 Procedures in the process of writing

2.1.2 Pre-writing

According to Hedge (2005, p. 17), this stage of writing helps learners generate ideas, plans, and organize their writing. Tribble (1996, p. 117) mentions that in prewriting activities,

the writers consider the purpose and sense of audience, which are related to both the function and thought of the reader. When writers think about the purpose of their writing and their audience, they may select certain information, forms, and styles needed to present the piece of writing. Some useful strategies for prewriting activities are listing ideas, questioning, brainstorming, mapping, clustering, and free writing. These strategies will be discussed in more depth in the metacognitive strategies section.

2.1.3 Composing and drafting

At this stage, the writer makes drafts focusing on what they want to say. During this process, the writer often makes interruptions to check, revise, and recycle from the planning to the drafting. Hedge (2005, p. 12) claims good writers concentrate first on content and leave details such as grammar and spelling for later. Thus, this drafting process focuses mainly on what writers want to say and re-drafting focuses on how to say it. This revision involves assessment. A good strategy for drafting is writing outlines, and in this case, writing with the MSWord™ comment tool, which allows writers to make notes that can be used for revising and editing and can be erased later.

2.1.4 Revising and editing

This editing stage consists of rethinking and reorganizing the overall structure and making changes, a vital part of the writing progress. According to Raimes, (2008, p.42) editing and revising go beyond correcting errors in spelling and grammar. Revision and editing also include revising ideas and logic. Hedge (2005, p. 12) states that writing instructors' feedback should go further than the minor problems on the surface of the writing. This is an issue with

novice writers when they think of revising and editing. Novice writers rarely make global changes in their writing. In order to address this issue, direct intervention from the teacher is recommended in terms of direct questioning and collaborative writing as it may encourage learners to start over, add, and delete parts of their writings. For this project, these stages are relevant since they allow students to focus on the different stages of writing. Given the fact that in each of the stages students will deal with different strategies to write their tasks, this will be discussed in the next section, which describes metacognitive skills in the writing process.

2.2 Metacognitive skills in writing

The writing strategies a writer uses are relevant in determining the quality of the pieces of writing. According to Krashen (1984) “writing competence is the abstract knowledge a proficient writer has about writing” (p. 20). Scott (1996, p.2) explains that though there is not a standard definition of a good writer, theory and research in EFL and ESL show there are common traits in good writers, including the use of effective composing strategies. These good writers take the time to plan and revise their pieces of work, which leads them to be flexible and modify or adapt in their writing plan. A classification of writing strategies proposed by Wenden (1991, p. 302) and Riazi (1997, p. 128) represents the types and uses of strategies learners apply in the writing process. This classification of strategies is presented in Table 1 and represents what students’ use during the different stages of writing. The use of these strategies determine the quality of the compositions.

The instruction and use of writing strategies that learners require for the composing process are an aid for writing. Learners can develop their thinking, achieve their goals, and expand their self-regulation processes.

Table 1	
Model of writing strategies adapted from Wenden (1991) & Riazi (1997).	
Rhetorical strategies	Used for organization and presentation
Metacognitive strategies	Used for planning and monitoring
Cognitive strategies	Used for understanding, summarizing, imitating and producing
Social-affective strategies	Used for motivational and communicative purposes

2.2.1 Note-taking strategies

According to Chamot (1999, p. 23), note-taking strategies are useful for planning, monitoring, problem solving, and evaluating. The author demonstrates that note-taking strategies are aimed at writing important words and concepts relevant to the learners' experience. According to Boch (2004, p. 101) note-taking helps students learn how to write. Note-taking has two basic functions: to record information and to aid reflection. Thus, this is a valuable tool in writing; note-takers can re-read information and develop comprehension abilities. Note-taking

strategies contribute to making judgments or addressing problem solving situations. In the EFL setting, note-taking can help learners plan their writing in tasks that may vary from listing items, outlining, and summarizing, among others. There are different note-taking methods that favor learner styles; these include outlining and clustering, which help visual learners organize notes around main ideas. Amberg (1993, p. 72) highlights the importance of using either the outlining or clustering method to improve note-taking strategies. As this author describes, outlining creates a format for taking notes in the form of numbers and letters that show relationships and relative importance among different items. In contrast, when the clustering technique is used, the organizational pattern tends to be visual rather than numerical and alphabetical. The note-taking strategies discussed in this section are relevant for this study since they are associated to the planning and monitoring stages students use during the pre-writing stage. These note-taking and organizational strategies were used during the implementation before learners engaged in writing tasks.

Kauffman (2004, p. 152) found that the strategies had a strong effect on learners' sense of achievement. Three components were related to note-taking: the cognitive, self-monitoring and self-efficacy components. This is an important issue for language learners as they approach learning through note-taking. Students are able to use these skills for better comprehension; the strategies will allow them to monitor their own learning, thus allowing students to establish mental links that may help them organize and recall information during and after learning tasks.

2.2.2 Organizational strategies

These strategies, often called planning strategies by Chamot (1990, p. 229), are described as crucial first steps towards becoming a self-regulated learner. These strategies in language learning are necessary for planning and rehearsing the linguistic components necessary to carry out a language task O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner, Kupper, Russo(1985, p .21-46). Planning strategies help people develop and use forethought, through which learners reflect before a task and think about how they are going to approach it. Metacognition combines thinking and reflective processes; according to Anderson(1999), this instructional model follows five steps that teachers should take into account for learners to follow: 1. Preparing and planning for learning, 2. Selecting and using strategies, 3. Monitoring strategy use, 4. Orchestrating various strategies, and 5. Evaluating the use of strategies.

According to Flower & Hayes (1980a, p. 31-50), sometimes learners are not conscious about the ways people use the strategies for the planning stages of writing in daily activities. However, if the teaching of these strategies is implicit, then teaching can have an impact on students. Therefore, if teachers can encourage students to first set goals, teachers will be able to help them become aware of the purposes of the tasks they are to perform. By doing this, learners can start planning on their own by using an alternative strategy such as outlining and thus arrange the sequences for carrying out the writing tasks.

Pre-writing tasks help learners improve their engagement with activities since these tasks allow them to generate or organize ideas for compositions, according to Graham and Perin (2007). These authors claim that students who engage in activities where they can plan and

organize their ideas before writing a first draft of a paper improve the quality of their writings. In addition, according to Flower, Shriver, Carey, Haas, and Hayes (1992), planning in writing is seen as a type of response with two variables: the writing situation and the writers' knowledge. Writers draw from three strategies: knowledge-driven planning, schema-driven planning, and constructive planning. These organizational strategies or planning strategies as explained by Chamot, et al. (1990, p. 229) are important in this project because their use in the learning tasks provide learners with reflective thinking. It allows them to have self-regulation processes, which may help them be more in control of their learning process.

2.3 Word processors as tools in the classroom

Teachers use the MSWord™ processing program to prepare worksheets, materials, etc., but they can also use these programs for correcting, editing, and providing feedback to learners. The other functionality is their use as a tool for writing. Teachers and learners may interact with this tool when it is used for teacher corrections and for peer correction and revision. Word processing software helps students through the writing stages Pennington (1996, p. 126) proposes a model for writing that consists of four stages:

- Writing more easily
- Writing more
- Writing differently
- Writing better

Pennington points out that writing takes place through the interaction between an internal processor (the mind) and an external processor (the computer keyboard). In stage one, writing

more easily, writers are aware of the advantages the word processor provides; such functions are useful for making revision changes, including additions, deletions, movements of text, and producing different drafts of a text, among others. This stage is related to both physical and psychological factors. As far as the physical factors are concerned, once learners become accustomed to typing on the computer, the editing, deleting, and rewriting become less difficult for the writer. Psychologically, according to Kelly (2002, p. 7), the motivational factor of working with word processors means that learners find keyboarding enjoyable since it's easier to edit, rewrite, and make corrections; computers encourage students to experiment with different types of writing. At stage two, writing more, learners realize writing is easier with a computer, and as a result, they feel less anxiety and subsequently write more; however, this does not mean that the quality is better. Bangert and Drowns (1993, p.88) claim that word processing stimulates quantitative effects in process and product in the sense that more time and energy are spent on writing and a greater quantity of written output is produced. According to Rogers (2008, p.6), at this stage learners are allowed to pay more attention to their own process of learning as they have more control of the writing process. At stage three, writing differently, an evolving process from steps one and two takes place; learners naturally use the computer to focus on the different stages of writing: drafting, editing and revising. Pennington (1996, p.135) also mentions that computer use encourages a writing process that involves a sequence of composing events that is a more evolutionary process to writing and less product-oriented.

At the last stage, writing is better developed as writers improve their skills; learners enjoy writing more and write longer, which leads to an improved quality of writing. Also, learners spend more time revising and polishing their work. Rogers (2008, p. 8) States that through these

constant processes of revisions, learners will be able to pilot their own writing skills and therefore, their own learning process.

The chart below shows the steps proposed to implement this project adapted from Tribble (1996) and Hedge (2005); two learning strategies that will facilitate the writing process for students were added to the writing steps.

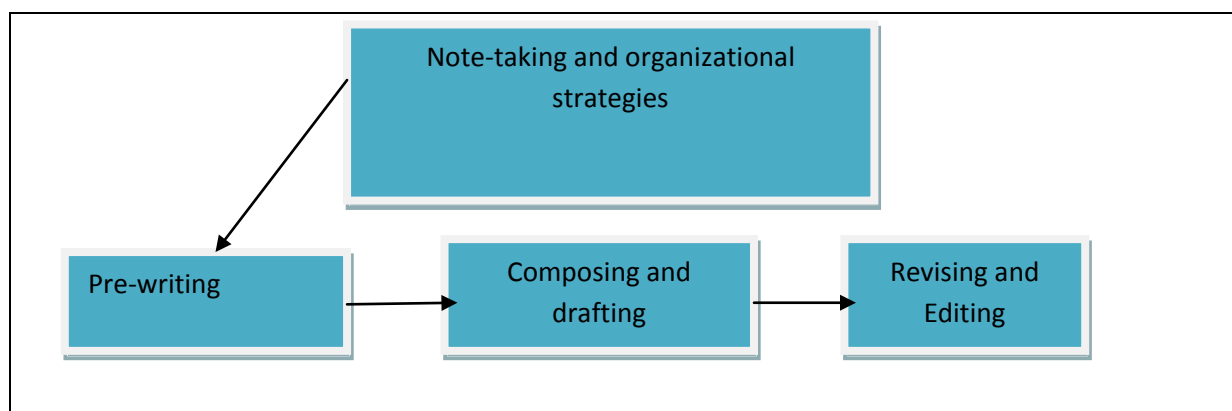


Figure 1: Note-taking and Organizational Strategies applied to the steps of Process Writing. Writing stages proposed by Tribble (1996) and Hedge (2005). Adapted by Cárdenas (2011).

Having explored the main constructs related to the topic of this study, research studies done in the field of writing with word processors and metacognitive skills in writing are presented in the next section.

2.4 State of the Art

2.4.1 Writing with word processors

In a report by Salomon, Kosminsky, and Asaf (2003), they argue that writing in technological environments affect writing and cognition, particularly writing with word

processors. These authors mention the long lasting effect versus the direct effect. To start with, the direct effect of word processor has a tendency to create easier production but fewer revisions from learners. On the other hand, when essay planning, learners planned less with the computer than when writing by hand. The authors mention that planning was less relevant to global and conceptual aspects of the essays and pertained more to technical and sequential aspects. The researchers claim that the research could not answer whether planning increased by using word processors. Only ease was a condition mentioned when using word processors at planning stages. Furthermore, they mention that writing with word processors enables and promotes collaborative writing.

Ulusoy (2006) carried out a project in which the researcher discusses that computers make the writers' job easier during different stages of writing. The author states that computers help writers plan more effectively by using concept maps and outlines. Also, the motivational aspect of writing through computers helps learners at pre-writing stages develop their writing. The author mentions the benefits of using word processors in the composing stages, in which learners can compose texts sequentially, follow outlines, and have more freedom than in a paper and pencil based writing. Finally, computers can simplify the revising process.

Goldberg, Russell, and Cook (2003) analyzed studies that were focused on the comparison between U.S. school students writing with computers and writing with paper and pencil. They mention something that has been found in other related studies regarding the quantity of writing versus the quality of writing. The researchers mention that for educational leaders who question whether computers should be used for students' writing development, the results are in favor of computers. The study found more motivation and engagement in writing

but also students who produced work of a higher quality and greater length. A study by Graham, Harris, and Mason (2005) administered a test of written language to 273 second-grade children in order to determine if these children had problems in their writing. The researchers found that the development of writing implies changes in learners' behaviors, knowledge, and motivational issues. The instructional model was based on planning and writing stories and a writing strategy to support learners through self-regulation. In their findings they mentioned that through the process writing approach, writing instruction represents significant changes in writing development for students who experience difficulties in writing. Process approaches to writing instruction are beneficial for learners who experience difficulties learning to write. Although the learners made progress in their writing development, the writers mention there is still more research needed to determine the effectiveness in the writing performance of both good and poor writers.

In a report by Jaramillo and Medina (2011), the researchers discuss the findings from their project in which they implemented a process writing approach. They report students wrote short descriptive texts about environmental issues in order to develop writing skills. One of their main aims was to sensitize students towards environmental care and conservation. They mention in their findings that students' motivation was an important factor that was enhanced through the use of English with other subjects such as biology, ecology, etc. Although they mentioned students' improvement in terms of vocabulary use and how feedback was beneficial for students, there is no other evidence of how students' writings evolved.

In another project, Muñoz (2010) describes the outcomes of a research project with first graders. It presents a detailed account of the development of cognitive and writing skills through

the use of materials based on the structural cognitive model and how students developed in their role as EFL writers. Some of the project findings had to do with the stages children's cognitive skills went through during mediation with the teacher and collaboration with their peers and showed whether students were successful at using cognitive skills for the tasks designed for writing development. Also, the author mentions that more tolerance towards errors in the writing process should be fostered during early stages in order to make writing enjoyable for young learners. To sum up, the analysis of the classroom artifacts led the researcher to conclude that learners internalized and overused language structures by means of creating their own L2 grammar through generalization. Children created their own hypothesis about L2 writing systems that helped them convey ideas and develop their acquisition process when writing independently.

2.4.2 Metacognitive skills in writing

McMullen (2009) carried out a project that used learning strategies to improve the writing skills for students at Yanbu University College in Saudi Arabia. His aim was to analyze the use of strategies in Saudi students in academic writings. McMullen used Oxfords' Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) in order to analyze the frequency in which learners made use of the strategies for writing. According to his findings, from 165 students who participated in the project, 94 females made more frequent use of the strategies. Learners were given explicit strategy instruction prior to the writing tasks and according to the study, females made use of metacognitive strategies more often than their male counterparts. McMullen mentions this study found an improvement of the quality of students' essays and written products and students benefited from the direct strategy instruction piloted in the project. McMullen

(2009) found at the end of the project students had become more aware of the benefits the learning strategies had for their written products.

The researcher concludes that learners were able to use the margins of test papers to organize their writing (note-taking strategies). They also were able to communicate their ideas more clearly (organizational strategies) by avoiding irrelevant sentences. Students improved in the area of writing mechanics. They also used substitution strategies, using synonyms or descriptive phrases for unknown words to compensate for lack of spelling. In brief, their writings improved in organization, coherence, and mechanics. In another research study conducted at a secondary school with tenth graders in the Netherlands by Kieft and Rijlaarsdam (2006) aimed at studying the use of learning strategies when learning literature. In the hypothesis these authors suggested the more students used planning and organizational strategies, the better the results would be in their writing planning stages. They conducted this project with 113 high school students. They measured through tests the frequency of use of the strategies during the different steps of writing essays in the drafting, revising, and final drafts. They concluded in their findings that adapting the writing tasks to a planning writing strategy while supporting students seemed as if this was more beneficial for literary tasks than for free writing. They said whether learning is present in the discovery stage of the task or in the planning and the writing that students rehearsed in the sessions.

In his research project Camelo (2010) shows how classroom projects in writing can be implemented by taking into account students' interests, their interactions, and the cognitive and metacognitive strategies used to improve writing quality. It was required that students use the strategies while writing different types of texts; the quality of the texts improved due to a

reflective process and improvements of their drafts. By means of teachers' guidance and students' participation, learners were able to identify and use narrative, argumentative, and expository types of texts and their characteristics. The researcher found students were able to use deductive and inductive strategies to monitor their writing process. They also used evaluating and problem solving strategies in order to improve writing tasks.

Parra (2010) conducted a study with seventeen students. The researchers' aim was to explicitly teach socio-affective strategies and measure the impact they had on student's motivation in learning English. The results from this action research project suggest that teaching socio-affective strategies to learners enhanced learners' awareness of their own feelings and social relationships in their language learning experience. In their project, Tracy, Reid, and Graham (2009) conducted their research with 127 third grade students and taught these learners planning strategies for writing stories. The students were divided into two groups: in the first group students were given explicit strategies instruction and in the second group students received traditional skills instructions on spelling and grammar. In their outcomes they mentioned that students from the first group wrote longer stories and qualitatively better ones than students from the second group. The researchers also said that learners in the control group maintained the gains achieved during the pre-test and post-test stages. Finally, they mentioned that the writing performance of young writers can be improved by teaching them strategies for planning and writing along with self-regulatory procedures needed to teach the strategies more effectively.

Hübner, Nückles Renkl, (2009) focused on cognitive and metacognitive strategies students used while writing learning journals in English. The study mentioned the benefits of the

learning journals to learners and how through writing these journals, learners were required to use metacognitive skills. The authors mention that this longitudinal study had two groups: the experimental and control group. According to their findings, learners in the experimental group who received cognitive and metacognitive prompts elicited a higher degree of strategies in their journal entries than in the control group. These students were able to outperform the students in the other group; however, a few months later the students in the control group had significantly increased their use of the strategies in journal entries. According to the findings, these results can be explained from the perspective of the cognitive load theory. These prompts might have supported the experimental group's students in applying cognitive and metacognitive strategies provided that they were unfamiliar with the learning journal method. Thus, the prompts facilitated the task for learners to perform useful strategies such as organization and elaboration strategies. According to the authors' conclusions, they are not sure how the use of the strategies that prompted cognitive and metacognitive strategies could transfer to other areas. Results of these studies make a meaningful contribution to teachers' understanding of the writing process, writing strategies, and how writing through word processors has been taught in classroom settings. It is important to understand the different outcomes of these research studies because they provided this researcher with the benefit of knowing how writing instruction can be made more meaningful by taking into account what other researchers have found locally and abroad. Also, it is significant and valuable to highlight that the findings of these research projects contributed to previous research done in the fields of English language learning in both second language learning and foreign language learning.

To summarize, the literature reviewed from these research interventions helped this researcher understand how the theories of writing and teaching instruction have evolved. In addition, this research has brought to light the concept of strategies that learners use during the writing process and the tools in which writers approach writing tasks. The findings of those research projects have provided the researcher with other factors to concentrate on, such as the evaluation of writing, feedback and peer-feedback, and assessment and self-regulation, which frame this research project.

Chapter 3: Research design

This chapter presents the type of study conducted, a description of the context, participants, the researcher's role, and the data collection instruments. It also includes the data collection procedures followed in this project. In addition, this chapter presents the triangulation technique and ethical considerations taken into account during the implementation of the research study. This is a qualitative research study which, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), is focused on the interpretation of phenomena in its natural settings in order to understand it from the perspectives of the participants.

3.1. Type of Study

Qualitative research has been defined in many ways but this type of research in general is concerned with explaining social phenomena and the understanding of this phenomena. According to Creswell (1994, p.12), qualitative studies are defined as an inquiry process of understanding human problems based on a holistic view that reports on a detailed view of the participants and is conducted in a natural setting. This method of inquiry is often used in different academic disciplines and has become popular in education and language learning. One of the methods of qualitative research is action research. Action research was chosen for this study because it invokes the processes of reflection and analysis in the classroom as a means to change or improve conditions of learning. As Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, p 6) described, the linking of the terms "action" and "research" highlights an essential feature of the method: trying out new ideas in practice as a means of improvement and increasing knowledge. According to

Burns (1999, p.26), action research is contextual, small-scale, and localized; it identifies and investigates problems within a specific situation.

A model provided by Cohen and Manion (1996, p.23) illustrates the steps in action research needed to contemplate the achievement of the goal:

- Identify and formulate the problem.
- Discuss and negotiate with interested parties.
- Review literature.
- Modify or redefine the initial problem as necessary.
- Select research procedures and methods.
- Select evaluation procedures.
- Implement the project over the required time period.

Initially, the researcher observed a classroom situation in which he wanted to intervene in order to bring about changes. The specific issue was students' performance in writing skills. It was observed that students were not making use of learning strategies in their writing process in the foreign language. Thus, the problem was identified and posed as a research question in terms of students' abilities, and a proposal was made which intended to find whether students were aware of how they learn by using organizational and note-taking strategies. Therefore, the project aims at improving their language learning experience. This improvement will seek to reinforce their knowledge of the foreign language through the use of their writing skill.

3.2 Context

This research project took place at a catholic school in Bogotá, Colombia. At this institution, students do not follow a textbook. Teachers are required to design worksheets for students. The school claims to follow a communicative approach to TEFL. Learners have eight hours of instruction each week.

The syllabus in which the teaching of foreign languages is framed is the competencies curriculum model. The teaching of English is based on the communicative approach applied to three competencies: linguistic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic. English is taught as an intensive subject; within the curriculum English is seen as an essential subject and the main objective is to develop the competencies in the foreign language for all students who finish the secondary program and whose aim is higher education. According to the educational institutional project (PEI) at that school, the foreign language department has included in the students' curriculum reading and writing achievements that correspond to the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras (National Competency Standards in Foreign Language). Students need to understand elements from the foreign linguistic code to combine ideas coherently, understand different types of written texts and graphics, and organize short paragraphs that fulfill a communicative purpose.

3.3 Participants

The participants in this group are thirty students from the seventh grade, eighteen boys and twelve girls between the ages of eleven and twelve. Their language level is elementary A2 according to the Common European Framework of Languages. These learners

use basic structures fairly well; however, they need to improve their writing skills and the use of more complex structures. These learners share some common difficulties related to writing in their first language that may be transferred to writing in the foreign language. Such difficulties are related to lack of coherence in their writing tasks, their message lacks clarity. These students are required to take standardized international examinations from Cambridge KET; this is an elementary exam that tests the abilities students have in written and spoken language. At this point the test is over the students' level.

Considering their affective and cognitive needs, these learners lack confidence to communicate their feelings and ideas in L2. They sometimes use L1 in the classroom and are often encouraged to use L2. The group represents a diversity of learning styles, but they need to be more self-confident and use the target language in the classroom. Some of the learners are risk-takers, but others need to be encouraged constantly because there is an urgent need for them to become more autonomous in their learning process. Since the group has mixed-ability individuals, they need challenging activities that stimulate attention and enhance production. Some of them finish writing tasks quickly, but do not check their work. Consequently, the teacher needs to provide an environment that serves as a model for learners. Such an environment will encourage them in their writing process. Beginning in the pre-writing stages, learners can generate their own ideas, organize them, and have opportunities to reflect, react, and interact.

3.4 Researcher role

The researcher's role was as teacher and observer-participant. As a teacher, the researcher did the planning, modeling strategies, provided feedback, and monitored students. As an observer-participant, the researcher observed and analyzed learners' responses and behaviors. The participants' role was focused on guiding the process of the implementation. According to Burns (2010, p.30); classroom observation is a basis of action research. It allows researchers to document and reflect upon students' interactions and classroom events at the moment they occur.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Prior to conducting this project, the three ethical concerns were responsibility, confidentiality, and negotiation. First, the researcher informed the school principal of the project and received a consent letter signed by the principal. As soon as the project was approved, the participants and their parents also received a consent letter requesting their authorization to allow students to participate in the project. To protect participants' identities and confidentiality, their names were not used. According to Burns (2010, p.33), confidentiality ensures that identities of participants involved in the research are not made public. Therefore, students were told the results of this study would be published but not their names.

3.6 Data collection instruments

Taking into account the techniques for data collection, non-observation techniques were used to collect the data. Wallace (1998, p.55) claims these techniques are introspective; individuals self-report on their beliefs and attitudes. Factual data can also be obtained with such techniques. The data collection instruments used for this project were questionnaires, students'

logs, and focus groups. For the pre-stage of the intervention one instrument was used: the diagnostic test in writing. This test, which is standardized practice, is valid and reliable in terms of format and structure.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was pilot tested and then administered to collect the data regarding learner's feelings, thoughts, and experiences during and after the intervention. According to Burns (1999, p.129), three types of information can be obtained from questionnaires: factual, behavioral, and attitudinal. During the implementation, a questionnaire was applied to gather information about students' previous knowledge about writing. Data gathered from these questionnaires included factual information concerned with the use of strategies and the writing process.

3.6.2 Students' logs

The students' logs gathered information regarding the organizational and note-taking strategies students used when facing the writing task. Also, data concerning writing perceptions and the use of word processors was collected in these logs. Through collecting logs and other types of narrative data, researchers are able to collect a continuous stream of events or behaviors. According to McKernan (1996, p.215), these techniques are unstructured as they allow freedom of responses from participants. These learning logs were useful for the gathering of data that contained students' reflections and responses to writing the letters. Woolfolk (2001, p.265) claims that learning logs allow students to consolidate their learning and allow instructors to obtain valuable information in regards to student understanding.

3.6.3 Focus groups

According to Krueger and Casey (2009, p.6), in the late 1930s some scientists had doubts about the efficacy of interviews and began investigating alternative ways of conducting interviews. They were concerned about the accuracy of data gathered through close-ended-response choices. A new form of interviews emerged: focus groups. Focus groups do not have a questioner that may influence the data. Focus groups have specific features. They are composed of five to ten people, though there can be as few as four and as many as twelve. They can provide qualitative data in a focused discussion and allow participants to share their thoughts and interests about a certain topic. This instrument was used at the end of the pedagogical intervention. An advantage of using this instrument was students felt more comfortable talking to the researcher about their experiences in the project. They could view the researcher not as someone in a power position, but rather as someone who encourages different types of comments from participants.

3.7 Triangulation technique

In order to overcome problems that arise from relying on a single form of evidence or perspective such as intrinsic biases, diverse sources of information were combined through triangulation. First, the standardized test was used for the needs analysis. Then, the teacher administered questionnaires to learners and collected data during the intervention. This data was compared to the data gathered from students' logs, and the data that was collected in focus groups was compared to the previous instruments. According to Burns (1999, p.162),

triangulation is one of the most common ways of checking for validity. Triangulation is a way of corroborating that different methods of investigation produced the same results.

3.8. Data collection procedures

The instruments used during the implementation of the project are divided into three stages: pre-stage, while-stage, and post-stage. In the pre-stage of the project the written test was administered, and in the while-stage of the pedagogical intervention students answered questionnaires and wrote in their logs. In the post-stage students participated in focus groups.

Table 2 shows the stages of the instruments applied and their purposes.

Pedagogical intervention stage	Instruments administered	Aims
Pre-stage	Written test	To collect student's samples to observe student performance.
While-stage	Students' questionnaires Students' logs 1 Students' logs 2	To analyze aspects related to the use of organizational note-taking strategies and the writing process using word processors.
Post-stage	Focus groups	To listen to students sharing their opinions and thoughts about their experience in the project.

Table 2: Data collection Instruments.

Chapter 4: Pedagogical Intervention

This chapter will describe the processes followed during the implementation of the project. The blending of the writing strategies and the process writing approach is explained, as well as that of the design of the didactic units. It will also give an account for the lesson plans, activities used in the implementation, the action plan, and the timeline.

For the design of the didactic units a process writing approach was selected, defined by Tribble (1996, p.118) as the teaching of writing that stresses the creativity of the individual writer focused on the process of writing. According to Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987, p.12), process writing involves cognitive processes that aim at problem solving situations and is therefore a nonlinear process that involves creativity from learners who discover and explore their ideas as they approach meaning in communicative activities.

Learners are encouraged to get collaboratively involved in planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing. Hedge (1988) describes this process as the motivation to write: getting ideas together in order to plan and outlining to make notes. After that a first draft is produced for later revising, editing, and publishing. The steps to follow integrate the process of writing with note-taking and organizational strategies that allow students to plan, reflect, and organize their thoughts before they start the productive stage of writing. The steps were divided into three separate sessions. In the first session students used note-taking and organizational strategies for writing outlines. In the second, learners wrote the first draft of the letter. Finally, in the last session they received feedback and worked on their second drafts. For this pedagogical

implementation, lesson plans were based on the ICELT¹ format. Each of these lessons had four stages: the warmer, the lead-in, the control practice, and the free practice. Three didactic units and eleven lessons were designed. These lessons were distributed during the first, second, and third weeks of the intervention. Every didactic unit was comprised of four classes. For each didactic unit there was one two-hour session for input where strategies were presented and modeled. Another two-hour session followed for pre-writing and generation of ideas. The next two-hour session was used for composing the draft. The last two-hour session was for revising and editing. Regarding the instructional method, the diagnostic test was administered to learners to find out their abilities in writing; next students were explicitly taught the learning strategies they would use, in this case note-taking and organizational strategies. Amber (1993, p.72) mentions the importance of either clustering or outlining as powerful techniques for learners to plan and organize their thoughts before a writing task. Learners can carry out a task by planning beforehand what they will do. According to Chamot (1990, p.229), these strategies are necessary for preparation for a task in language learning and lead to self-regulation. This was the input the learners received before they engaged in the activities proposed for each class.

Second, data was gathered from the first questionnaire, aimed at collecting information related to what students knew about the use of writing strategies. At a later stage, learners received the input they needed through teaching the process of writing. As mentioned earlier, learners applied note-taking and organizational strategies to plan and draft their letters. This helped them move from task to task at their own pace. The teacher provided the models and the

¹In-service certificate in English language teaching

scaffolding they needed as they progressed from drafting to revising to editing. The design of the three didactic units was distributed as the sample for unit one and for the others as well.

4.1. Instructional design

The implementation sessions took place in the school multimedia lab. Each learner was provided with a computer for the tasks. The teacher introduced and modeled the outlining techniques to students who then practiced with the organizational and note-taking strategies. The teacher clarified doubts learners had regarding the use of these strategies. After, the teacher explained the process of writing and the different steps of pre-writing, writing, revising, and editing. Students were given time to compose their first outlines. Thus, students used either clustering or outlining techniques for this process of generating and organizing ideas.

The first task was a letter of inquiry. The learners were provided with a MSWord™ document in which they found activities to be done during each of the sessions. These documents also had links the researcher included for learners. In the documents learners found models of letters. A video beam was used for the sharing purposes of the activity so participants could see the models projected on the board. While learners saw these models, the teacher elicited from them the structure of the letters. Learners were asked questions related to the process of communicating: reader, context, and purpose of the letters. In the pre-writing stage, learners found in the MSWord™ document links they could access on the computers that presented advertisements for different products. This was used as input vocabulary for the lesson. From a variety of ads, they chose the one they liked so they could start writing their first draft. The

teacher asked students, once they finished their drafts, to send them to the teacher’s e-mail, and then feedback was sent back to the learners.

Stage /Session dates	Topic ,didactic units and materials	Data gathering
Pre-stage March 11 session 1 Sessions 90 minutes	Diagnostic test-written test Word processors	Written test
Pre-stage March 14-session 2 March 18-session 3	Teaching of organizational and note-taking strategies /Word processors Aim: The students will be able to use the outlining techniques in order to focus their attention in the content of their writing pieces.	students’ outlines students’ brainstorming drafts
While-stage March-28 session 4	Unit 1- Topic : advertising Aim: writing a letter of enquiry Word processors	Students plan their draft of the first letter
While-stage April 01- session 5	Letter of enquiry part II- revising and editing - Word processors	Writing rubrics Students’ questionnaires
While-stage April 04-session 6	Editing the first letter- Word processors	Final draft
While-stage April 18-session 7	Unit 2 - Topic: looking for a job Aim: writing a letter of application Word processors	First drafts
While-stage April 22-session 8	Letter of application part II- revising and editing -Word processors	Writing rubrics Peer-feedback
While-stage April 29-session 9	Letter of application Word processors	Final draft
While-stage May 02-session 10	Unit 3 –Topic: giving directions Aim: writing a letter of invitation Word processors	First draft
While-stage May 06-session 11	Letter of invitation part II- revising and editing -Word processors	Writing rubric Peer-feedback
While-stage May 09-session 12	Editing the second draft	Teachers’ feedback Students’ log
While-stage May 13-session 13	Presenting final product	Second draft
Post-stage June 02-session 14	Discussion	Focus groups

Table 3: Action plan.

Through the feedback, scaffolding was given and students were encouraged to revise and redraft their letters. Furthermore, the teacher asked students to work in pairs to revise their partner’s work. The teacher continually checked and monitored students’ work and they received

students' peer observations, as well as teacher feedback. This process was repeated for the following lessons. When students started working on the second letter, the teacher introduced the checklist for letters and basic concepts about self-assessment so students could revise and edit their drafts.

The action plan is presented in table 3, which illustrates the topics, units, and aims of the implementation sessions.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and findings

This chapter presents the methodology and procedures for the data analysis that took place during the different stages of the project. It describes how the researcher kept and managed data. Furthermore, it reports on the process of coding that led to the categories that emerged from this data collection and data analysis process.

5.1 Methodology for data analysis

For data analysis the grounded theory methodology in qualitative research was used. This approach aims at creating theory derived from collected data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23). According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p.7), this methodology allows the researcher to develop a hypothesis after data are collected rather than testing hypotheses. This process helps the researcher to develop theory based on findings from participants and the coding processes. In addition, Hopkins (2008, p.148) claims that in the outgoing process of data analysis there are four stages: data collection and generation of categories, validation of categories, interpretation, and action for development. In the grounded theory methodology there is a main feature which Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.23) call comparative analysis. This technique allows researchers to identify patterns and relationships in the patterns. Through this technique the researcher compared and contrasted common patterns found in the data, coded the data, and analyzed it to find the patterns and relations that led to the discovery of the categories and the theory derived from the findings.

5.2 Procedures for data analysis

For data analysis, a four stage-model was followed. According to Burns (1999, p.156), in the first step, assembling the data, the researcher gathers the collected data. In this study the data consists of questionnaires, students' logs, and focus groups. During this stage broad patterns emerged. The second step, known as coding, was developed to identify patterns and reduce data. This process led to the categories and their properties. According to Hubbard and Miller (1993, p.9-49), a fully developed category needs to include abstract concepts that should be conceived in terms of its properties and dimensions of the phenomenon it represents. This coding process will be discussed in more depth in the next section. In the third step, comparing the data, the patterns that were repeated in the gathered data were analyzed. In the last step, building interpretations, the researcher goes beyond describing and categorizing in an attempt to build theory from the patterns and categories found.

Thus, the analysis of the data in this project was performed taking into account what Corbin and Strauss (1990) call the interrelation of data collection and data analysis in which they explain that the analysis of the data begins as soon as data are collected. Through examining the data collected, the researcher saw features related to students' awareness of their formal letter writing and motivational factors that will be explained in the categories section.

5.3 Coding process

Through the coding process, the instruments were refined using a pilot test with five students from another group prior data collection to be more pertinent for gathering data useful to answer the research question. The conceptualization of the language found in the data is a

process in which the researcher describes the content of the data and his interpretation of these (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During this step the researcher labeled concepts that emerged from the data through comparing similar incidents and grouping them under the same label. Subsequently, the researcher started the coding process that consists of naming and grouping the data in order to find relationships between them. According to Freeman (1998, p.99), codes can come from three sources: from outside the data, such as the setting, the research question, etc., from the data itself, or from the researcher. In this project the codes emerged from the data collected (see Appendix H).

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.57) mention three different types of coding: open, axial, and selective. Open coding was used with the data assembled from the instruments applied in this project. Questionnaires, students' logs, and focus groups were analyzed to answer the research question. The researcher used open coding to look for emerging patterns in the three instruments by using MSWord™ comment tools to insert in the documents the comments the researcher had made when reading and analyzing the data. Colors were used to label the main concepts found in the data. During the process, the researcher made a copy of the raw data that was kept in one folder and the analyzed data that was kept in a different computer file. A copy of the raw data was made in case it was needed for revision purposes. Moreover, the researcher attempted to establish relationships by using color-coding, which facilitated the coding of repeated ideas and concepts found in the data. The researcher was able to establish connections between categories and subcategories using color-coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), this process, known as axial coding, makes connections between categories and subcategories and their relationships are compared with the data. In this step the procedure of axial coding allows putting

data back together by establishing connections between categories and sub-categories. A chart created during the axial coding process revealed the emerging categories and their properties. These relationships are presented in Appendix H.

An additional analysis of the two categories and the subcategories was performed in order to find existing relationships between the categories. The first category is related to learners' cognitive skills, and the second is more related to extrinsic motivation that comes from writing with computers. The first category and its properties are connected to the second category as the word processors made a positive change in students' writing process. The emergent core category involves the improvement made with word processors that come from motivational factors and students' awareness of the improvement in their writing skills by means of self-regulation. Table 4 shows the categories.

Table 4: Categories.		
How may the use of organizational-note-taking strategies through word processor based-activities help seventh grade students' writing of formal letters?		
CATEGORIES		
<i>Increasing students awareness of formal letter writing</i>	<i>Enhancing students motivation by means of word processors</i>	Core category
Developing self-awareness in students through feedback and peer-feedback. Raising students' awareness of using writing strategies in the writing process	Writing with word processors motivates students in the editing process	<i>Increasing self-regulation in students through formal letter writing with word processors</i>

5.4 Data management

The first step in order to follow a systematic approach was the process of collecting, storing, and retrieving information. For this purpose the researcher opened two files on his computer. One of the files kept the information gathered from the questionnaires, the focus groups, and the logs. The other file kept students' drafts of their letters and their assessment rubrics. All students were given a number. The researcher chose numbers instead of nicknames due to the large number of participants. Numbers were also given because they make it easier to keep track of the data gathered from each student, as well as to keep students' identities protected.

5.5 Data reduction

In qualitative research, data reduction is a process whereby the researcher needs to select, focus, simplify, and transform raw data. According to Hopkins (2008, p.161), data reduction goes from the data collection stages until the data analysis process concludes. For the purposes of this study, as suggested by Hubbard and Miller (1993), information was narrowed as the researcher coded. After, the researcher created a file in MSWord™ where the categories and the relationships among them were organized in a chart. After this information was grouped, it was easier to see which concepts could be grouped under each category.

5.6 Validation process

An important procedure is validating the results to avoid the possible subjectivity associated with analysis and interpretation of data. For the validation process, the researcher used triangulation by means of the different data gathering instruments, such as students' logs,

questionnaires, and focus groups in order to corroborate the information that was found. According to Burns (1999, p.160), using one single gathering technique gives only a partial view of a given social situation, such as a classroom. Using different data gathering techniques provides more reliable results.

Thus, this technique was applied by comparing and contrasting similar patterns in the data collected. In addition to triangulation, the comparative method developed by Corbin and Strauss (2008) is another form of ensuring the validity of the results. Through the process of data reduction and narrowing, the data collected from students' questionnaires, students' logs, and focus groups was analyzed through the use of a matrix in which the relationships between concepts, categories, and the core category could be seen. Consequently, the results from data reduction and triangulation showed the two emergent categories: an increase in student's awareness of formal letter writing and external motivation provided by word processors in the process of writing.

5.7 Data display and verification

The emergent patterns show how connections are made and how they fit into a bigger picture. Freeman (1998) describes how maps can take different forms depending on the graphic organizers used. The author mentions different types of matrices that are used to show all of the patterns and relations. Thus, the researcher used diagrams to illustrate the emerging categories, subcategories, and the core category.

5.8 Categories

In order to display the categories, the researcher took into account the research question and the categories and subcategories that emerged from the coding processes.

5.8.1 Core category

Increasing self-regulation in students through formal letter writing with word processors

The procedures for this core category were the integration of the two categories previously discussed: the increasing awareness of students of their writing process and the external motivation provided by word processors. In language learning, affective factors are attributed to self-esteem, motivation, and self-regulation. Thus, for the integration of the two categories the factors addressed in students' awareness are related to cognitive and metacognitive issues. The other category addresses issues related to motivational factors, in this case the use of word processors. According to Zimmerman (1997), self-regulation explains the interactions between a person's behavior, beliefs, and the environment; for instance, the learner and feedback received from a teacher.

5.8.2 Category 1: Increasing student awareness of formal letter writing

This category describes students' reactions to the use of strategies applied to the writing process and how they started to see writing as a process that serves multiple purposes: first, writing for classroom and educational purposes and second, writing for creative purposes. Regardless of which purpose learners have for writing, they write because they are required to or because they feel motivated. Students were able to see that writing is a form of communication.

Within some of the properties of the category, learners also started to see feedback to their writing from the perspective of the learner and the readers' point of view. The relation of the category to the research question draws from the socio-cognitive factors such as learner's motivation, learner's attitudes towards learning a foreign language, and developing the writing skill in L2. This category takes three factors into account. The first is related to raising students' awareness of using writing strategies in the writing process. The second is developing self-awareness in students through feedback and peer-feedback. The third aspect is writing with word processors in order to motivate students in the editing process.

Subcategory 1: Raising students' awareness of using writing strategies in the writing process.

This subcategory refers to the strategies learners used when they needed to deal with a writing task. If learners are to succeed in their learning tasks, they need to be aware of the strategies they use. Rivers (2001) calls this process metacognitive awareness; it eventually leads learners to reflect, plan, and monitor their own learning. In the classroom learners typically do not reflect much upon their learning; however, after they finished working on their drafts and final letters, students reflected upon their learning through writing letters and completing logs. Learners mentioned the helpfulness of either using organizational and note-taking strategies according to the tasks they were doing or what they had already done. Students said that during the pre-writing activities it was useful to take notes to remember or recall information. They also confirmed the outlines they did helped them in the writing tasks.

Below are two excerpts written by students that describe strategies they used in their writing. These two excerpts were taken from two instruments: students' logs and focus groups. Excerpts were translated into English since the data was gathered in Spanish.

Student 1. The writing strategies that we have learned and practiced this term have helped me in my writing, to organize my ideas and take notes.

Now that I know different strategies for organizing my ideas and for writing better texts, it is helpful not only in English, but also in other subjects such as science, social studies, and Spanish.

Excerpt 1: Student's log No. 2. May 10th

These learners' responses show how student one became aware of how the writing strategies he/she used and practiced throughout the writing process were important. Student one mentions he/she used both strategies for the writing tasks and reflected upon the value of the writing strategies they may use when facing tasks in other subjects. Through the students' logs, learners reflected upon their performance in the writing tasks. Student one shows how the writing strategies helped plan tasks better without any assistance. These strategies are helpful for generating ideas and planning the writing task, and the learner demonstrates how they became aware of improvements made. Furthermore, another student mentions how these writing strategies helped improve the writings and composing processes.

Student 12.

Writing with computers has been very good for me. I learned that by brainstorming my ideas can be organized easily. The brainstorm allowed me to identify the main and secondary ideas easier. Then the draft is done and the person who does the feedback can understand it better with the rubric. This person points out the mistakes easier so improving end editing the draft is easy to do and this is how my composing has improved.

Excerpt 2: Students' questionnaire April 1st.

As described before, students went through the process of working on their drafts before the researcher provided feedback. This learner mentions how their writing improved by using organizational strategies and graphic organizers. According to the learner, using graphic organizers helped structure concepts and ideas. As a result, the organizers allowed them to organize information. Furthermore, the student mentions the importance of using these strategies to improve the quality of the draft and revised versions. According to Ulusoy (2006), students can develop good planning strategies using computers. This process can be done using pencil and paper, but word processors offer more features, such as organizers to elaborate lists or cluster ideas. The student evidences in this reflection how they became aware of improvement in their writing with the aid of the writing strategies and of the usefulness of peer feedback, which allowed him / her to edit his writing easier and more meaningfully.

Subcategory 2: developing self-awareness in students through feedback and peer-feedback.

During the implementation of the project, students started seeing feedback as something more than just teachers' corrections. The analysis of data revealed that feedback became a tool for them. This subcategory is also related to students' awareness of writing skills as a strategy for improvement. Learners discovered that feedback can be helpful either to encourage someone who is doing something well or to show someone how to get on the right track. The following excerpts explain why students became more aware of their progress through asking for or giving feedback to their peers.

Student 20. During this process we have done writing, pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and feedback, I have learned to write a formal and informal letter. Also, it has been helpful for me to learn how to express myself better and writing letters that are understandable for the person who reads it and easier for me to write them.

Excerpt 3: Students' questionnaire. April 08th.

Students recognized the value of the feedback they received to develop their letters. Also, they were aware of the importance of giving and receiving feedback from peers while correcting and editing their letter drafts. Learners acknowledged the value of the writing rubric they used for self-assessment. This instrument proved useful for learners when comparing their letters to the models provided because they could use the rubric as a guideline. Also, the writing rubric allowed learners to know what specific sections they needed to improve.

Throughout the process of writing, students always had the teacher's feedback from their first drafts. Soon after they made revisions on their first draft, they had the chance to receive peer feedback by means of the writing rubric. This allowed them to make additional changes to their letters as suggested by their partners. To illustrate this, Student 20, whose sample is provided above, had interesting insights on the effects of feedback on his writings. The student became aware of the differences between formal and informal types of writing. The student also mentions that the functionality of communicating a message through writing and taking into account the reader's position. Ferris and Roberts (2001) emphasize the connection between feedback in active error correction and improvement in writing skills. The authors claim that

learners give great importance to writing accurately and learners' need to obtain corrections from the teacher.

Student 20. My vocabulary also has improved, now it's easier for me to find the appropriate words so I can express myself better. The feedback has also helped me. Now I am more aware of my mistakes and correct them to improve my writing.

Excerpt 4: Students' log No. 1. April 01st.

In the excerpt above, the learner talks about the improvement they experienced in vocabulary and how it has helped to find correct word choices to express himself/ herself. The word processors have a spell checker tool that allows writers to check synonyms and other word choices, but the student mentions that through feedback they were able to note mistakes made and how to correct them in order to improve their writing. Nicol and Macfarlane (2006) discuss feedback as information in regards to students' learning and performance and how these processes of feedback and formative assessment help students be more in control of their learning. Research also shows that feedback is a cognitive process that interacts with motivation and beliefs. This is discussed by Dweck (1999) who mentions how external feedback has been shown to influence how students feel about themselves and what and how they learned. Furthermore, another source of external feedback is learners themselves. From time to time it is difficult for learners to understand what teachers want; therefore, it is easier for learners to have peers suggest strategies and tips for improvement. Nicol and Macfarlane (2006), mention that peer- dialogue is beneficial to students' learning in various ways. For example, students who have just learned something are often better able than teachers to explain it to peers. These peer discussions allow students to reject and revise initial hypotheses and construct meaning through negotiation. Teachers also promote learning when they ask students to give feedback to each

other, and learners are encouraged to learn by listening to peer's experiences while they construct knowledge together.

Student 24. In my opinion, this term I have improved in terms of my writing process. I have learned grammar, vocabulary, and how to write better, among other things. I have learned how to give feedback, revise, and make corrections to my classmates. I feel I have learned a lot.

Excerpt 5: Writing rubric comments. April 8th. Student.24

Student 24, in the excerpt above, illustrates the learner who reflects upon different issues that were helpful and valuable during the feedback and peer assessment sessions. She/ he mentions how feedback allowed them to make changes in her writing, how she/ he provided assessment to her classmates and how she/he learned from assessing her/his partner's and their own work. Although, some of the student comments in feedback were surprising, others were not. For instance, students mentioned that they prefer the teacher to do the feedback and error correction on their papers. Perhaps it is assumed that some of them do not entirely trust their peers' assessment. In a project conducted in Canada, Vokic (2008) found the perspective students had on the feedback from the teacher in their L2 writing. The researcher found dual opinions on the effects of feedback. These effects depended on the types of feedback applied, whether this feedback was focused in content or form or the feedback was explicit or implicit and if feedback came from the teacher or the peers. From the findings of this project, the researcher would highlight how peer feedback influenced students' performance by raising awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. Feedback also helps develop metacognitive processes in learners.

As students implemented their writing strategies, feedback and peer feedback gave them a different perception on writing. They also started seeing changes in their writing tasks. When they composed their drafts, they had two kinds of feedback, the teacher's and peers. In the different pieces of data collected, students mentioned how they improved their writing in the areas of spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. In the next two student excerpts, this sense of improvement is evidenced.

Student No. 20 I think this term I have improved in the stages of writing: pre-writing, drafting, edition, feedback, and revision. I have learned a lot of grammar and vocabulary and I think when I am composing I am writing better.

Excerpt 6: Students' questionnaire. April 8th.

In the excerpt above, the student perceives different aspects that have improved his/her letter writing: grammar and vocabulary. When students were training in the multimedia laboratory in school, they were given brief training in the use of these MSWord™ processing tools, one of which is a grammar checker. During the implementation, students used these tools when writing and editing their drafts. This checker can be helpful if it is used properly. The grammar checker provides assistance to learners that include identifying grammatical errors, run-on sentences, and subject-verb agreement, among others. However, it has some drawbacks. For instance, the grammar checker is programmed to object to the use of the passive voice, even if it is correct sometimes (Wong, 1996). Grammar checkers have some disadvantages and are not perfect. People program them and learners can become dependent on them. There have been discussions about whether or not teachers should allow learners to use grammar checkers. Recent research, according to Graham and Perin (2007), maintain that these tools have shown favorable results in students with disabilities in writing; however, the results are favorable in fluency, not

in grammar accuracy. From the data analysis in this research project, the researcher agrees with the view of Graham and Perin (2007) that these tools facilitate the writing process; however, learners should be advised that not all the corrections provided by the checkers are accurate.

Student No. 7.

I have observed improvements in the way I write, the variety of vocabulary, the coherence in my letters. The different steps that we use in order to create good pieces of writing are somehow evidenced in the quality of the writing and the mistakes we make we can correct them.

Excerpt 7: Students' log. No. 1. April 01st

This student mentioned that during the term writing skills have improved and the intervention had been useful. They mention how their way of composing different types of writings has changed. Also he/she mentions that the writings they have done are more coherent and lexical variety has improved. Vocabulary is another important aspect students claimed was improved during the implementation of this project. The learner claims that now he/she is able to make better vocabulary choices. This alludes to the communicative purpose and the quality of the letters. One key aspect in the improvement of vocabulary has to do with two main issues: accuracy and appropriateness. While the first is related to clarity and usage, the latter is related to register and style. According to Silva (1990), the focus of the attention in process writing is producing a written product; therefore, writing is a complex and creative cognitive process. There are two variables in this case. For a creative writer a supportive learning environment and the use of collaborative feedback is essential for a learner to express his ideas and convey meanings. When young writers do not feel pressure about form and style they can focus on expressions and communications.

5.8.3 Category 2 *Enhancing students' motivation by means of word processors*

Students said that working with computers provided them with tools that facilitated their writing tasks, especially with spell checker and translator, among others. Most students agreed that using the spell checker helped them not only correct mistakes but also made them aware of how to spell unknown words. After revising the coding in the data collected, most students said that three aspects improved in their writing tasks: spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. Thus, for these learners the tools provided by word processors allowed them to make changes by revising spelling and grammar. This represents a change from traditional writing on paper to computer-based composition. Kelly (2002) mentions that word processing instruction has improved students' writing skills. It is also highly motivational, eases tensions, and makes writing processes such as revising, editing, and publishing easier, thus encouraging learners to experiment with various types of writing.

Writing with word processors motivates students to edit.

This subcategory is related to the new experience of students finding writing easier and having more motivation to engage in writing tasks. Learners described that traditional writing on paper is boring because all their school assignments are with pen and paper. Learners saw writing on word processors as a new form of accomplishing their school duties. Word processors enabled them to use a tool they are familiar with, a computer, to help them revise, edit, and publish their writing. Daniels (2004) found that computers, along with teacher participation and personalized instruction, affected students' attitudes and motivation towards learning. The excerpt below shows how learners felt towards writing with word processors in the school tasks.

STUDENT 15. From my point of view reinforcing writing using computers is an innovative way and is not as boring as writing with pen and paper. Besides there are advantages like correcting our errors without a teacher or when we work with computers we can access online dictionaries. For example: when we were doing the application letter we could guide ourselves from the examples in the internet and it was easier and more understandable.

Also I think that this way we are more dedicated to work and when we write by hand you can get stressed and this does not allow us to concentrate in our work and it automatically corrects our spelling and we can notice our mistakes.

Excerpt 8: Students' log. No. 1. April 01st

For this student, reinforcing writing tasks through the use of word processors is an innovative and practical approach that is less monotonous than traditional forms. She/he mentions the utilities the word processor and the Internet offers, such as online dictionaries. Though the student mentions one of the advantages these tools provide, they also stated that with these tools there is no need for the teacher; however, according to recent research, without proper guidance or training these tools offer few advantages. According to Ulusoy (2006), word processors can simplify the revising process. Computer commands such as insert, delete, copy, and paste allow the writer to rearrange a text without the need to retype all the information. However, the quality of the revisions depends on changes made by students. For instance, some learners pay more attention to surface errors and corrections but do not improve sentence structure or clarity of expressions. During the editing process, writers can use spell checkers, on-line dictionaries, and grammar manuals to improve their work.

Something that caught the researcher's attention were the comments of a student who is very independent and who gets good grades on all assignments. He/ She discusses some of the same advantages of using word processors, but he/she mentions some disadvantages as well.

Student N° 3

I think writing with computers has advantages and disadvantages because when you write is faster and the presentation is much better than writing by hand. But I think the spell checkers are a disadvantage because in my opinion we lose the opportunity to practice with the spelling of words but in general terms, writing through computers facilitates the use of English because of the access to other tools the computer offers such as access to the internet and guides for writing.

Excerpt 9: Focus Group 1.June 2nd.

Although most students agreed that computers facilitated the task, in the excerpt above it can be concluded that not all of them think similarly. For example, Student 3 was first at finishing the tasks and showed outstanding results in the drafts and final versions of the letters. They mention, for instance, that the spell checker did not allow the user to practice his/her own spelling of words. However, for most beginning learners, word processors facilitate tasks. For learners who do not have good spelling skills, using a spell checker raises awareness. However, spell checkers have some disadvantages. According to Beatty (2003), learners may select a first choice correction whether the choice is appropriate or not. Also, these checkers allow users to add new words to standard dictionaries without verifying if they are correct or incorrect. However, when spell checkers are used in classroom activities, they may provide options that assist in fluency, and therefore learners feel relieved during the composing process. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) came up with ten commandments for motivating language learners. One of these commandments is that when a learner's linguistic self-confidence increases, he/she can be stimulated to enhance performance in the task. Also, Graham and Perin (2007) suggest that word processing is a tool that has a positive impact on the writing of adolescents. They say that word

processing positively impacted students' motivation, the amount of time they spent revising drafts of their writing, and their overall writing achievements.

Student N° 15

I consider that when writing with computers we are more focused on the tasks but when we write by hand we are more stressed and this does not allow us to concentrate in our work. Writing with computers also helps us to correct automatically our work and we can note our mistakes.

Excerpt 10: Students' questionnaire. 1. April 8th.

The excerpt above evidences the student's position about writing on paper. For them it is more stressful and does not let them focus on his/her composition process. She/he also mentions that if there is less stress they can spend more time on editing and revising. According to Kroll (2003), the use of the computer improves learners' attitudes towards writing and builds confidence. The author mentions that inexperienced writers and learners in L2 feel less confident in their writing process. The mechanical capabilities of word processors can provide learners with tools such as spell checkers that may relieve a writer's anxiety about grammar and spelling mistakes.

Student 20. During this term, I have been able to note improvements in my writing, writing with the computers has helped me with my compositions because I write and I do not have to worry about the mistakes with the computer tools I can do it later. I think writing with computers should be taught to everyone because it's the best way to learn how to write in another language. Also, writing with computers is more didactic and you do not get bored.

Excerpt 11: Focus group. June 01st.

As illustrated above, the student is aware of the improvements he/she has made in the writing process. The student's attitude towards the learning process is positive and he/she seems

motivated by the type of tasks done during the project. The student highlights that the writing process should be taught as a method for learning to write in a foreign language. According to Pennington (1996, p.2) “students who work with word processors indicate a range of positive effects in affective outcomes: writing activity, revision behavior and better attitude towards writing”

5.8.4 The quality factor in students’ written letters

For the analysis of students’ letters, the same aspects of the diagnostic test were considered here, including aspects related to lack of organization, coherence, cohesion, and effectiveness in communicating a clear message. These aspects were evaluated using a rubric (see Appendix 9). The samples shown in this section are from different tasks, including the diagnostic test and Writing Tasks 1 and 2. The letters are presented in the first and final draft in order to illustrate improvements made by students in their drafts and improved versions.

<i>Written task N.1 first draft student 20</i>	<i>Written task N.1 final draft student 20</i>
<p><i>April 28, 2011</i></p> <p><i>138th Street # 20-21</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Camilo arias(cap)</i></p> <p><i>Dear Mr. Arias</i></p> <p><i>hello(cap) Mr. arias(cap) (WORD MISSING) to inform you that our company is offering them (w.w) crown pieces for bathrooms and sinks, floors, toilets and many other kinds of parts that I recommend you and your company: Paragraph break I hope that very soon (WORD MISSING) call us for (WORD MISSING)your orders.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you very much. (P)</i></p> <p><i>Business manager. (P)</i></p>	<p><i>May 03, 2011</i></p> <p><i>138th Street # 20-21</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Camilo Arias</i></p> <p><i>Dear Mr. Arias</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Arias I am writing this letter to offer some pieces of the company crown.(w.o)</i></p> <p><i>This company is offering them (w.w) crown pieces for bathrooms and sinks, floors, toilets and many other kinds of parts that I recommend you and your company.</i></p> <p><i>I hope to hear from you avery good (NN) Not necessary reply. (w.o)Thanks and have a nice day. Students’ name Business manager</i></p>

In the sample above, it could be observed that student 20 successfully communicated his/her message in the task; however, there were minor errors in grammar and use of language that require extra effort from the reader in order to interpret the message. On the left sample the learner show his/her first attempt; the sample on the right was the final draft of the assignment. In the final draft the participant shows improvements that he/she made from feedback received. For instance, the second draft evidences more adequate organization patterns as compared to the first draft. Student 20 seemed to have followed the instructions for the task and while the rough draft appears to be occasionally missing information, the learner seemed to have spent time on the spelling of words and grammar structures. However, when writers miss or omit words this represents a problem for the readers' understanding. In this case, if this was writing for an international examination, it would have caused the students to lose points. Finally, this student makes a greater effort in the second draft, in which the participant took into account the recommendations received and made improvements.

Such improvements were in the planning and organization of the letter. The paragraphs show improvement in terms of structure, but at this point it is difficult to spot topic sentences and supporting details. It is important to highlight the fact that at this level (A2), students writings are not error free and marks are given according to whether they are able to communicate a clear message or not. Thus, the learner was able to communicate the message and received 4 marks for completing the task.

Written task N.1 first draft student 4	Written task N.1 final draft student 4
<p>You must include the date and senders' address here. Check class samples</p> <p>You also have to include the recipients' information here</p> <p>I regret to inform you that I have been using your product..... crecimiento(w.w.)spanish fortified and stops hair loss in use for two months and I have increased hair loss issue.(p) I (WORD MISSING)worry and went to the doctor I had to make special exam was not normal that I caused a very rare disease called dead hair after all these tests I was told it was because of the shampoo I use is theirproduct. Paragraph breakDeberia(w.w.)Spanish have a warning label that does not react or say the same for all pacientes(w.w.)Spanish is why I demand that I pay all medical treatment and return of my money</p> <p>in advance thanks for your attention</p> <p>Students' name</p>	<p>May 30, 2011</p> <p>Dear : Miss Smith</p> <p>Manager Human Talent,</p> <p>Sedal Company, Cll 127 n°12 -69</p> <p>Villas of Aranjuez, House 9</p> <p>By means of the present one (NN) Not necessary I regret to inform you that I have been using your product growth fortified and stops hair lose(w.w)lossin use(omit) for two months and I have increased hair loss issue I worry .</p> <p>and (WORD MISSING)went to the doctor I had to make(w.w)special exam was not normal that I caused a very rare disease called dead hair after(??) not clear allthesetestsParagraph break</p> <p>I wastoldit wasbecauseof theshampoo useistheirproduct.(WORD MISSING)should haveawarning labelthatdoes not reactorsaythesamefor allpatients is whyI demandthatIpayallmedical treatment andreturn ofmy money(w.o.)</p> <p>In advance thanks for your attention.(p)</p> <p>Students' name</p>

Another participants' sample shows how he/she dealt with the draft and then the final version of the letter. Different from student 20, learner 4 showed they did not follow the guidelines. First, the layout of the letter was not appropriate; it did not have a heading that included the senders' address and date. The information is shown in a group but there paragraphs

are not clearly defined. Although grammar is used well by the participant, there are frequent errors in spelling and expressions that require patience and interpretation from the reader. After the student made adjustments to the first draft some improvements were made. Conversely, this letters' ideas are shown in such a way that the reader must stop and go back to interpret or convey what the writer wants to communicate.

Written task N.1 first draft student 30	Written task N.1 final draft student 30
<p>May 10, 2011 (remember to include your information and the recipients' address here. The date goes below this information)</p> <p>Dear Natalia, (is this formal?)</p> <p>I hope you are well and you're always right ^{(NN) Not necessary} in your life.</p> <p>I was reading the letter that you sent me, ^{(P)(WORD MISSING)} 30of April this year. I thanks^(sp) foryou^(w.w)interest in selling this product(the TV) <i>Paragraph break</i> and I understood the entire contents of the letter but there are some aspects of this product that I think you should check and correct for the improvement of this product:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the first place ^(P) I thinktheTVshouldhave abetterresolutionforgreaterclarity. 2. In the second place ^(P) I thinkitshouldbeformattedscreenLCDinstead of plasma. 3. And in third place ^(P) in myopinionyoushouldproducetheseTVcompa nies keeporiginate from differentsizes(inches) forpeople tohavemorepossibilitiesto choosein thisregard. ^{(??) not clear} 4. Thankyourattentionand I hopeyoureview and improveaspectsofthis proposal. <p>I hopethatyou reviewthese proposalsandmakethechanges that youconsidernecessary to yourproduct.</p> <p><i>Students' name</i></p>	<p>Students' name</p> <p>56 Beverly towns</p> <p>California, LA</p> <p>30 may 2011</p> <p>Mr. Michael Vincent</p> <p>Manager</p> <p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>I hope you are well. I was reading ^(t) the letter that you sent me on 30of April this year. I thank for you^(ww)interest in selling this product(the TV) but there are some aspects of this product that I think you should check and correct for the improvement of this product:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the first place, I think the TV should have a better resolution for greater clarity. 2. In the second place, I think it should be formatted screen LCD instead of plasma. 3. And in third place, in my opinion you should produce these TV in different sizes (inches) for people to have more possibilities to choose in this regard. 4. Thank your attention and I hope you review and improve aspects of this proposal. <p><i>Students' name</i></p>

In the two samples above, student 30 made an interesting draft that caught the teachers' attention due to the organization and the display of information. The student made a good attempt at communicating a message, with only minor spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors in the first draft. It seems they used outlining or clustering in order to plan and organize the letter. Later in the final draft, small adjustments were made and the participant finished what is considered one of the best pieces of the class.

Written task N.1 first draft student 16	Written task N.1 final draft student 16
<p>April 28th 2011</p> <p>Street 123 Bogotá, DC</p> <p>Name?</p> <p>Dear customer(sp) relations of Marden:</p> <p>My name is laura,(cap) i'm a big customer of your shop (Marden), i saw,(cap) on the internet the offers for this year, i liked somethings but i don't ,(cap) know if they are on sale.please you could tell me of the offers...</p> <p>When are they? Of how much are ? And that they are?</p> <p>Organize your information in a paragraph.</p> <p>I thank your answer!(omit)</p> <p>Students' name</p>	<p>May 02, 2011</p> <p>Street 123 Bogotá, DC, Marden Enterprises</p> <p>Dear Anna Roberts</p> <p>customer service,(p)</p> <p>Hi, my name is Laura, I hope you are fine, I am a big customer of your shop and I would like to ask, if can you give me all (w.o). Information of marden ? The offers, the sales, the sales point, and everything.</p> <p>I saw on internet the oficial(sp) page of the shop and asked me(cap) when can I subscribe in this page and how can i do?(check this)</p> <p>Thanks for your answer and if you want (missing information) contact me my e-mail is xxxxxx@hotmail.com; you can send the information there!</p> <p>Students' name</p>

As illustrated above, the participant shows some non-impeding errors in grammar and spelling that do not hinder interpretation from the reader. However, some problems are found in the organization of the letter. For instance, there is incomplete information in the heading and no recipients' name on the letter. In the letters' layout it seems they may have clustered ideas without developing them. This may have happened to the learner while in the pre-writing sessions. Students were exposed to outlining and clustering techniques for writing in these sessions (see Appendix K). Similar to other students' samples, the participant lacks paragraphing and therefore most sentences are long with no breaks, making it difficult for the reader to see topic sentences or supporting statements. In contrast, when student 16 worked on the final draft, he/she made improvements in the organization and development of ideas as suggested from the feedback received.

Furthermore, the final draft shows the student made an effort to develop his/her ideas by asking the recipient information that was not found on the Internet. This makes the letter more authentic in the interaction pattern between the sender and recipient. Another finding from the sample shows something that was found among many letters. It is a phenomenon known as ellipsis, in which learners omit words in paragraphs, thus, making it difficult for the reader to grasp the general meaning.

Written task N.2 first draft student 12	Written task N.2 final draft student 12
<p>Mr. Carlos Duarte</p> <p>Comcel. Inc manager. Salitre street 1542. bogota. (Do not forget to include today's date and your address and the recipients)</p> <p>Dear Carlos: (sir)</p> <p>I write this letter to say that I am a school student and I want to finish a project on communications matters, my project is going be to conduct(t) some surveys to people on the phones they drive,(w.w.) their suggestions and concerns and with all the details are poorly a little of each device. (??) not clear <i>Paragraph break</i> If possible I would like to make this project as an official in any area of their headquarters because as I said before I'm close to being a great professional in the field of communications, thus in cellular telephony. (??) not clear Also I mention this because doing this works the name of his company would increase in large quantities.</p> <p>If you are interested in holding this workshop all you have to do is contact me and inform me about what you want to do, if you want to add conditions or something else.</p> <p>Thanks for your time,</p> <p>Students' name TI 968574236</p>	<p>November 16, 2010</p> <p>Students name 127 street 52-41 Mr. Carlos Duarte Manager Comcel. Inc Head of Management. Salitre Street 1542. Bogota.</p> <p>Dear Carlos@this is informal) (sir)</p> <p>I write this letter to say that I am a school student and I want to finish a project on communications matters,(p) my project would be(w.w) to conduct some surveys to people on the phones they drive, their suggestions and concerns and with all the details are poorly a little of each device.</p> <p>If possible I would like to make this project as an official in any area of their headquarters because as I said before I'm close to being a great professional in the field of communications, thus in cellular telephony. Also I mention this because doing this works the name of his company would increase in large quantities. (you said you were a school student before)?</p> <p>If you are interested in holding this workshop all you have to do is contact me and inform me about what you want to do, if you want to add conditions or something else.</p> <p>Thanks for your time,</p> <p>Students' name TI 968574236</p>

In the two samples above student 16 uses basic structures fairly well. However, the participant has writing issues related to coherence and cohesion that make it very difficult for the

reader to grasp the general ideas. In the final draft only minor corrections were made and only parts of the message were communicated; the attempt did not fulfill the task.

The next excerpt includes two samples from student 22. The first sample corresponds to the written diagnostic test that was administered before the implementation. The second sample comes from written task 2. These excerpts were corrected using the writing codes that are in red. They are shown here to indicate errors the student had in his/her writing. This shows some of the findings regarding quality in the improvement of the letters.

Diagnostic test	Written task N.2									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have just been to a concert to see your favorite group. Now you are writing a letter to your English pen-friend. Use the information you wrote in your diary before the concert and tell your friend where you have been and what the concert was like. <table border="1" data-bbox="285 1121 756 1381"> <thead> <tr> <th>DIARY</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Concert : muse (CAP)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date: Saturday 9th April</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Where: Coliseum the campin(WW)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>How much (tickets): 3(??)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The tickets cost 50.000 each one</td> </tr> <tr> <td>They did a discount of 10.000 to me</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The music that they sing is a rock</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The tickets almost were all sold ones (x)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Dear Andres and Daniela (P)</p> <p>I invite them(WW) to this concert for which(WW) they are my best friends and the music of muse (CAP) is very good, (P) also in that (‡) I want to happen (WW) a time with you. We meet (T) on Saturday, the 9th of April in (WW) the coliseum the campin, we will amuse ourselves It (M)me thrills that we go(T) the three(M) to the concert, I want them(WW) very much, (‡)already I want to be in the concert with you,(P)Paragraph breakthey(WHO)are brilliant very brilliant and my best friends, I them see(WO) in the concert If you want to take someone you say(WW)to me and I buy you the tickets But you have to say to(WW) me beforehand Bye.Students' name</p>	DIARY	Concert : muse (CAP)	Date: Saturday 9 th April	Where: Coliseum the campin(WW)	How much (tickets): 3(??)	The tickets cost 50.000 each one	They did a discount of 10.000 to me	The music that they sing is a rock	The tickets almost were all sold ones (x)	<p>Colombiagef (CAP)textilecompany www.gef.co Phone3216549 14-0268Avenueaddressnumber</p> <p>Sales Gef Textiles</p> <p>80-20(P)Punctuation 40streetnumber^(NN)Not necessary Colombia(P)Punctuation,-Bogotá May 2, 2011</p> <p>DearMsAngelaBejarano (P),Punctuation</p> <p>Respected Sir (WW) I wanted to say that I love your collection of clothes and wanted to ask (WORD MISSING) some clothes for my family and me if there is no problem@inappropriate for a formal letter.)</p> <p>Missing information2 t-shirts design a shoulder uncovered and 6 jeans for me and my mom a shirt type polo v-neck and jeans too I also ask you(T) (WO) please send me the gef(C) catalog for more information about their(WW)clothes and please send me 2 and 2 shorts and sundresses to school please 4 shirts daily White 1 white polo for physical education and 2 sacks of wool dark blue and light green and 4 pairs of socks for girls 5 to 3 for women and 4 men</p> <p>To stay on you guys (what do you mean?)- i Many thanks</p> <p>Students' name</p>
DIARY										
Concert : muse (CAP)										
Date: Saturday 9 th April										
Where: Coliseum the campin(WW)										
How much (tickets): 3(??)										
The tickets cost 50.000 each one										
They did a discount of 10.000 to me										
The music that they sing is a rock										
The tickets almost were all sold ones (x)										

The samples above represent improvements the student made in their writing process. The results from analysis of the written texts showed that students' writings contained errors that sometimes hindered communication and therefore the reader needed to make an effort to analyze and correct these pieces of writing. The researcher found one of the problem areas for these learners was cohesive devices; in the diagnostic test and writing task 2, the student used cohesive devices but sometimes wrongly placed or overused them. In the written text most of these errors and faulty punctuation can be seen. Another problem was lack of paragraphing. Most of the sentences are long, but there are no breaks which makes it difficult for the reader to see topic sentences or supporting statements. There are sentences with the (§) symbol that stands for missing words. This omission of words, known as ellipsis, is frequent in the samples and as a result, these sentences require more time and attention from the reader to grasp the general idea. In terms of lexical items and lexical relationships the learner frequently uses wrong word choices or sometimes substitutes lexical items using the first language. As it has been noted, most of the diagnostic written texts were similar to this one and the most problematic areas for learners were layout, discourse organization, cohesive devices, and paragraph structure. Written task 2 is written by the same learner and taken from the final draft. The letter has improved in terms of the format of the letter, paragraphs are better organized, and messages are conveyed more effectively in spite of lexical and spelling mistakes. When this letter was revised once again, it was noted that the learner showed improvements in the use of tenses and to some extent, the use of punctuation. To sum up, the learner improved the letter layout, paragraphs are better developed, and supporting statements are clearer. The student was able to communicate ideas

comprehensibly with minor mistakes. Also, spelling and punctuation developed to a slight extent.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and pedagogical implications

Chapter six discusses the conclusions, pedagogical implications, and limitations of this research project with the objective of analyzing the results of this study on students' writings. Additionally, this chapter evaluates the two metacognitive strategies implemented and what impact the word processing written activities had on the learners and the institution. Subsequently, comparisons are made with findings from similar research studies and how they connect to this study.

This study aimed at solving a problem faced by seventh grade students in their writing, specifically with organizational features, use of cohesive devices, and above all lack of effectiveness in communicating a clear message in written form.

First of all, raising students' awareness in regards to the importance of writing and communicating a clear message was a slow and difficult process. In the end, students became more sensitive towards the process of writing and the sense of an audience. At the beginning of the implementation process, learners had difficulties coping with teachers' feedback; however, when they were exposed to peer-feedback, it became easier for them to both accept and provide feedback. This is important if a learner needs to become aware of what he is doing right or wrong and it helps participants self-regulate when approaching a task or goal. According to Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997), writing tasks should be appropriate for students' capabilities and teachers should provide learners with explicit strategy instruction, like goal-setting and appropriate scaffolding, to help improve learner's self-regulation.

Second, learners showed difficulties at the beginning of the project in organizing and planning their letters. When introduced to the organizational and note-taking strategies, their letter writing improved significantly. The word processors helped learners achieve better products when planning and organizing their letters by using concept maps and outlining techniques. Thus, their drafts of the letters showed a higher quality than when they did not use these metacognitive skills. Also, learners wrote more in length on the computers than when they wrote with pen and paper.

Although the quality of the learners' written productions was not high, it seems that using the word processors enhanced learners' motivation towards writing. In other research, for instance, Daniels (2004), investigated the motivational effects of computer technology on writing instruction with fifth grade students and found writing length was increased when computers were integrated in the writing process. He also mentioned that other factors such as teacher's involvement, instruction, and personalized assistance affected student's motivation towards writing. Moreover, it was significant for this study to find that these young learners were able to improve their writing quality. Although not all the gains were noteworthy, there were significant improvements in terms of layout, discourse organization, paragraph structure, and above all, learners' confidence. While participants wrote only a few sentences in the initial stage of this project, they eventually were able to write well-developed paragraphs. However, they still need to practice in order to keep improving, as writing is a skill that takes time to master. Another relevant finding is that the spelling, grammar checkers, and other MSWord™ tools are important for inexperienced writers. These tools may be far from perfect, but they can provide confidence

for young writers whose linguistic levels are low. Through the use of these tools students can revise their work, make corrections, and feel comfortable and motivated.

Considering the research question about how the use of organizational and note-taking strategies help students in the process of writing formal letters, it can be said that through the use of the strategies students' awareness of the benefits increased as they could see how using the strategies in the pre-writing activities helped in later drafts. They could also note that the writing products had more quality and they felt more motivated to write when using the computers. Learners could see how their drafts evolved through teacher's feedback and peer-feedback and they were more aware of what they were doing right. Feedback and the use of metacognitive strategies also helped students improve organization in their writing. Throughout the reflective processes students were able to become more self-regulated learners.

Feedback played an important role in terms of the improvement in the quality of students' letters. Before students became involved in this project, they had not used self-assessment or worked with rubrics. This became an important factor in terms of raising learners' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and also what they were doing right or wrong. Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) explain interesting research that has been done in criteria-referenced self-assessment. Some general aspects of self-assessment range from what it is to how it is done. A key issue that is raised throughout the paper is considering that self-assessment must be formative. This helps learners self-regulate their learning process and promotes achievement. One of the main purposes of self-assessment is to discover learners' improvement. When they become engaged in self-regulation practices, they reflect on their performance and this practice leads to better results. In order to help students become effective users of self-assessment,

Goodrich (1997) suggests some criteria be taken into account; the first is to teach the value of self-assessment. Next, access to clear criteria; there are too many rubrics or checklists that may be too broad and do not show clear criteria for learners or even teachers to understand. Subsequently, there must be a specific task as the focus of the assessment. When students were introduced to the writing rubric, they improved through either feedback from the teacher or peer-assessment. Students became more confident and motivated and they felt they could self-assess. They also knew what their teacher expected from them. They were able to monitor their progress and revisions.

Writing with word processors was very motivating for these participants. Learners' letters were longer, organization was improved, and the products showed a higher quality than the ones displayed in their previous writings. Learners were also more focused on their revising and editing processes of writing. They mentioned several times that, through the use of word processors, writing became easier for them; the editing process of their letters was improved due to the tools they had access to on the computers. Word processors offer grammar and spelling checkers that are useful for such a process. According to Armstrong and Casement (2000), in the editing process of writing such tools are very important: a writer can simplify his revision process through deletions, insertions, and move commands that allow rearranging of the text. However, although the authors mention that on-screen revisions are easier, the quality of the writing depends on the nature of the changes made by the writer.

6.1 Limitations

The project had some limitations in terms of the language lab where the implementation sessions took place. First, the word processors are outdated and students sometimes complained about the computers. At times there were issues with Internet connection, which slowed the process. This also had a secondary effect on students' deadlines because due to computers or Internet failures, they could not comply with deadlines. For this reason, it was difficult to retrieve documents from students because they had to send them to the teachers' personal e-mail.

Another constraint was the explicit teaching of metacognitive strategies before each session, because it reduced time from the session and from time that was planned for the participants' writing performance. Although the researcher considers that explicit input should be done before any of the writing tasks planned, learners had to be constantly reminded of the use of these writing strategies. Otherwise, some of them would simply not use them.

6.2 Pedagogical implications

In view of the fact that teachers should consider students' cognitive, linguistic, and affective needs, among other variables, before attempting or drawing conclusions about what they need; Students' writing competence in the first language plays a big role in foreign language development. Students need instruction in writing and teachers should provide them with appropriate input as well as raise students' awareness of the writing process and how writing develops through time and practice.

The development of writing through word processors also presents some advantages for young learners who are accustomed to the use of computers for the realization of different tasks

at home and school. Thus, this represents an advantage in terms of motivational and pedagogical factors. Word processing tasks are beneficial for students who need to get to know basic functions such as learning to type. Furthermore, learning tasks such as the letters developed during this project can represent realistic and attainable goals for learners. Many bilingual schools today demand learners face international examinations, and in order to cope with such demands teachers need to provide students with adequate training to meet those demands. The contributions from this study to this private institution represent an instructional framework which teachers can take as a basis for enhancing students' writing development. This framework aims at improving mechanical aspects of students' writing and developing learners' awareness by using a communicative focus on the teaching of writing while using computers as the medium to develop writing.

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APPENDIX A

Consent letter

Bogotá, D.C. Marzo 3 de 2011

Formato de autorización
Señores padres de familia
La Ciudad

Señores padres de familia:

Soy un estudiante de la maestría en didáctica del Inglés de la Universidad de La Sabana, y estoy llevando a cabo una investigación que se titula "What is the effect of applying organizational-note-taking strategies through word processor based-activities on the quality of seventh grade students' writing of formal letters?"

Este trabajo tiene como objeto mejorar la enseñanza-aprendizaje de los estudiantes en el idioma Inglés en el Colegio De La Salle con los estudiantes de grado séptimo y por tal razón me dirijo a ustedes para pedir su autorización de permitir a sus hijos ser partícipes de dicho proyecto.

A sus hijos se les garantiza confidencialidad en los resultados de esta investigación y además la privacidad de su identidad. Este trabajo será mi trabajo como proyecto de grado y de antemano agradezco su tiempo y colaboración; por ende solicito su consentimiento para que su hijo participe en este proyecto

Firma estudiante.

Andrés R.

Firma padre

Ramiro Rincón

firma madre

Lucy Rincón

Atentamente

Jaime Cárdenas Bello

CC.79.487.893. Bogotá

APPENDIX B

Students' questionnaire

Student N° 3

Cuestionario N° 1

Estimado estudiante el siguiente cuestionario tiene como objetivo analizar aspectos relacionados con el proyecto de la aplicación de estrategias de toma de notas y organizacionales en el proceso de escritura por medio de procesadores de Word con el objeto de ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar en el proceso de escritura en el Inglés. Agradezco su colaboración al diligenciar este cuestionario de forma muy sincera y objetiva.

1. ¿Cuándo tengo que realizar un escrito qué pasos tengo en cuenta para comenzar a escribir?

Primero que todo tengo que pensar en lo que voy a escribir, pienso mis ideas, las hago coherentes, luego las organizo y las uno con conectores para que el escrito quede de una forma coherente.

2. ¿Qué estrategias utilizo para comenzar a escribir?

pensar en lo que voy a escribir
Concentrarme
pensar y organizar mis ideas antes de escribirlas
Releer lo que escribí y corregir lo que quedó mal.

3. ¿De qué forma estas estrategias me sirven para realizar mis escritos?

Me ayudan por que los escribo de forma más clara y coherente, además mis escritos quedan mejor estructurados y son más puntuales y breves.

4. ¿Cómo le parece escribir? (explique sus razones).

Me parece chévere porque nos ayuda a desarrollar más nuestro intelecto, además nos hace más cultos. Por otra parte me gusta escribir sobre temas interesantes porque aprendo más.

5. Si la anterior respuesta fue afirmativa seleccione una de las siguientes alternativas.

x util, inútil, x motivante, entretenido, frustante x,
agradable, otra?cuale/es _____

6. ¿ha escrito cartas de tipo formal? (explique sus razones).

Sí, una vez que escribí una carta para la coordinadora para comentarle sobre un problema que tuve con un compañero.

7. Si tengo que escribir alguna tarea o trabajo para mis estudios lo hago con papel y lápiz o lo hago en el computador.

A-Computador

B- a mano

8. Describa cuales son las ventajas o desventajas de las dos formas.

Computador

Ventajas:

El computador reconoce nuestros errores ortográficos y los corrige, además no importa si tenemos la letra fea ya que aquí es predeterminada. Por otra parte, si nos faltó algo lo podemos colocar sin necesidad de borrar lo ya realizado.

Desventajas

Hay muchos comandos, es decir, puede ser mas demorado el proceso de escritura si no somos muy ágiles para digitar. Por otra parte, si por alguna razón se nos cierra el archivo, perdemos todo nuestro progreso.

9. En papel y lápiz

Es bueno porque podemos poner algunos simbolos a "tachones" para que se nos entienda mejor nuestro texto, pero el problema es que si tenemos letra fea es posible que no se nos entienda, además podemos cometer muchos errores ortográficos.

¡Gracias por su colaboración!

APPENDIX C

Students' log

STUDENT N. 5
 Date: April 04th, 2011

Estimado estudiante: el siguiente log tiene como objetivo analizar aspectos relacionados con el proyecto de la aplicación de estrategias de toma de notas y organizacionales en el proceso de escritura por medio de procesadores de Word con el objeto de ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar en el proceso de escritura en el Inglés. Agradezco su colaboración al diligenciar este log al finalizar las clase de forma muy sincera y objetiva.

STUDENT LOG N° 2
NOMBRE Student 5.

1.	En el día de hoy aprendí A realizar escritos de una forma coherente, además aprendí las partes necesarias para realizar un escrito
2.	De qué forma organicé mis ideas antes de comenzar a escribir Ise una especie de brainstorm y las organicé en un mapa conceptual, luego las escribí en un texto con algunos conectores y les agregué algunas palabras
3.	Que estrategias utilicé en el día de hoy para hacer mi trabajo en clase Utilicé la de hacer un brainstorm y un mapa conceptual.
4.	Usar estas estrategias me ha servido para realizar mis escritos en la clase. Explique. Si me ha ayudado ya que me ayudan a organizar mejor mis ideas y puedo estructurar mis escritos más fácilmente en párrafos.
5.	Escribir en el computador me ha servido en la redacción de mis escritos. Explique. Si me ha servido porque este me ayuda a corregir la ortografía de las palabras, además me ayuda a organizar mejor mis ideas, a encontrar sinónimos de las palabras relacionadas y además cuando escribo en el computador tengo disponibles herramientas como el internet y el diccionario con las que puedo entender mejor y consultar más al escribir.
6.	¿Cuales de estas estrategias le han servido o sido útiles en sus escritos? Organización y planificación <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sí <input type="checkbox"/> no Toma de apuntes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sí <input type="checkbox"/> no Explique sus respuestas: Si porque primero investigo sobre el tema, consulto sobre esquemas ya realizados y sobre estos tomo apuntes importantes, entonces así ya tengo todas las partes y la información suficiente para realizar mi escrito.
7.	utilizar el computador ha tenido algún efecto en mi habilidad para producir escritos. Explique Si ,ya que escribo más rápido y además este me indica cuantas palabras llevo y así me queda más fácil completar las palabras necesarias para una carta formal o un escrito.

TODAY I LEARNED HOW TO WRITE IN A COHERENT WAY AND I LEARNED THE NECESSARY STEPS TO COMPOSE I USED A BRAINSTORM AND I ORGANIZED MY IDEAS IN A CONCEPT WEB THEN I WROTE IN A TEXT WITH SOME CONNECTORS AND I ADDED SOME OTHER WORDS THESE STRATEGIES HELPED ME TO ORGANIZE MY IDEAS BETTER AND I CAN STRUCTURE MY WRITINGS EASIER IN PARAGRAPHS WORKING ON THE COMPUTER HELPS ME TO CORRECT SPELLING OF WORDS, BESIDES IT HELPS ME TO ORGANIZE MY IDEAS BETTER, I CAN FIND SYNONIMS OF RELATED WORDS I HAVE SOME OTHER TOOLS LIKE THE INTERNET AND A DIC FIONARY WITH THIS I CAN UNDERSTAND BETTER AND MAKE SEARCHES ON THE WEB WHEN I AM WRITING WRITING WITH THE COMPUTER I CAN WRITE FASTER AND THIS TELLS ME HOW MANY WORDS I WRITE AND THIS ALLOWS ME TO COMPLETE EASILY THE WORDS I NEED FOR A FORMAL WRITING OT OTHER WRITING TASK

APPENDIX D

Focus group sample transcription

Focus Group Sample Interview Guide

Estimados estudiantes:

En el día de hoy vamos a trabajar en una actividad grupal la cual será grabada por razones de poder recordar lo que aquí vamos a discutir. No hay respuestas correctas e incorrectas, todo lo que digan será de carácter confidencial. Por lo tanto lo invitamos a compartir sus opiniones de una forma abierta y nos gustaría escucharlos a todos.

1. ¿Qué piensan acerca del uso de estrategias de toma de notas y planificación?
2. ¿Qué les parece el modelo del proceso de escritura?
3. ¿Qué piensan de las actividades de escritura que se llevan a cabo por medio de los computadores?
4. ¿Qué les parece el trabajo con las cartas realizadas?
5. ¿cuales ventajas o desventajas pueden describir en cuanto al uso de las estrategias aplicadas al proceso de la escritura por medio del uso de los computadores?
6. cuales ventajas o desventajas pueden describir en cuanto al uso de las actividades realizadas en el computador al escribir las cartas?
7. En cuanto a la calidad de las cartas realizadas ven algún progreso desde que realizaron los primeros borradores hasta las revisiones finales de las mismas?

Sample Transcription

1. ¿Qué piensan acerca del uso de estrategias de toma de notas y planificación?

Student N°3

Pues, Yo pienso que que el uso de estrategias como el que veíamos en clase aunque es muy bueno pero cuando se aplica al inglés es un poco complicado porque se necesita un buen dominio del idioma.

Student N° 30

Me parece que es muy importante pues tomar notas para facilitar el aprendizaje porque pues cuando uno escribe uno aprende más hmm y ya.

Student N° 11

Pues yo pienso que son buenas estrategias ya que pues nos ayudan a superar nuestras dificultades y a sacar unas mejores notas.

Comentario [J1]: GOOD COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH TO BE ABLE TO USE THE STRATEGIES??

Comentario [J2]: TAKING NOTES WRITING STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE LEARNING (MOTIVATING)

Comentario [J3]: USE OF WRITING STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES AND EARN OR GET BETTER GRADES

2. ¿Qué les parece el modelo del proceso de escritura?

Student N° 20

Pues bien redactar ortografía

Student N° 17

Ehh, chévere porque pues nos avada mucho para después y aprendemos muchas cosas.

Student N°. 29

Bueno pues a mí me parece que es bastante bueno ya que pues a futuro nos puede ayudar bastante pues digamos que cuando tengamos un problema y cuando necesitamos comunicarnos en el extranjero o algo así pues ya sabemos cómo defendernos.

Student N° 30

Si, digamos pues en la presentación de... A las personas que saben manejar el inglés es importante saber cómo escribir las cosas.

Student N° 15

Yo opino que es muy bueno porque nos ayuda en el futuro en el trabajo y la universidad y si vamos a viajar a otro país.

Comentario [J4]: LEARN TO COMPOSE

Comentario [J5]: PROCESS WRITING FOR WRITING BETTER OR WRITING QUALITY IT ALSO HELPS TO IMPROVE SPELLING

Comentario [J6]: LEARNING STRATEGIES USEFUL FOR LEARNING MANY THINGS

Comentario [J7]: LEARNING FOR OTHER PURPOSES, TRAVELLING ETC. LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE

Comentario [J8]: LEARNING IF YOU KNOW THE LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW TO WRITE IT

Comentario [J9]: AWARENESS LEARNING FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES TRAVELLING ABROAD

3. ¿Qué piensan de las actividades de escritura que se llevan a cabo por medio de los computadores?

Student N° 3

Pues yo pienso que tienen pues sus ventajas y sus desventajas. Porque pues son muy buenos para el trabajo, cuando usamos el computador es muy rápido y pues la presentación es muy buena. Entonces el proceso de la escritura en el computador se ve presentado muy bien. ortografía perdemos mucha practica en la ortografía y entonces es como una desventaja que el computador te ayude, si pues yo me parece que la escritura en el computador es bueno nos facilita un poco el uso del ingles ya que pues la ortografía de algunas palabras igualmente como tenemos acceso al internet y a otras herramientas del computador podemos usar por ejemplo traductor y guías de escritura.

Comentario [J10]: ADVANTAGES WRITING FASTER ON THE COMPUTER

Comentario [J11]: PRESENTATION OF WORK IN TERMS OF QUALITY

Comentario [J12]: THIS LEARNER PERCEIVES THAT THE TOOLS MAY BE A DISSADVANTAGE FOR HIM, BECAUSE HE RESENTS THAT COMPUTER TOOLS DO THE JOB FOR HIM

Comentario [J13]: SPELLING

Comentario [J14]: IT IS VERY IMPORTANT HOW THE STUDENT IS AWARE OF THE USE OF TOOLS TO FACILITATE THE WRITING PROCESS HERE

Student N 29

A mí me parece que es bueno, eh, pues ya que desde un comienzo puede ayudar como a no complicarnos tanto y me parece que es una buena ayuda.

Comentario [J15]: NOT TO GET COMPLICATED OR STRESSED

4. ¿Qué les parece el trabajo con las cartas realizadas?

Comentario [J16]: THE STUDENT PROBABLY REFERS TO WRITING BEING FACILITATED OR IN OTHER WORDS PERHAPS WRITING EASIER

Student N 11

Pues me parece que nos ayuda a mejorar la ortografía y pues la presentación de las cartas depende mucho de la perspectiva que tengan las personas que la reciben y pues me parece muy importante.

Comentario [J17]: SPELLING REPETITIVE

Comentario [J18]: WRITING QUALITY

Students N 20

Pues me parece muy bueno ya que nos ensena pues la estructura para hacer cartas para dársela otra gente con un formato pues bueno

Comentario [J19]: WRITING PROCESS

Comentario [J20]: QUALITY

Student N3

Pues me parece un trabajo bueno porque nos prepara para realizar cartas y escritos por ejemplo cartas dirigidas al colegio que necesitan un esquema formal pero en ingles.

Comentario [J21]: FUTURE LEARNING - LIFELONG

Comentario [J22]: WRITING FORMAL LETTERS

5. ¿cuales ventajas o desventajas pueden describir en cuanto al uso de las estrategias aplicadas al proceso de la escritura por medio del uso de los computadores?

Student N 11

Pues una de las ventajas es que pues los mapas conceptuales ya que es un mecanismo para algunas personas es fácil de desarrollar y pues sus ventajas el computador corrige gramática.

- Comentario [J23]: WRITING STRATEGIES
- Comentario [J24]: EASY
- Comentario [J25]: TOOL FOR IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS

Student N 32

Pues me parece bueno pues corrige los errores, me parece una ventaja que es más fácil después de finalizar es más fácil estudiarlo y pues está más resumido y tiene las ideas principales.

- Comentario [J26]: EASY
- Comentario [J27]: SUMMARIZED
- Comentario [J28]: WRITING STRATEGIES

6. cuales ventajas o desventajas pueden describir en cuanto al uso de las actividades realizadas en el computador al escribir las cartas?

Student N 29

Pues yo pienso que es muy bueno ya que ahorramos tiempo y espacio y se ven mejor presentadas ya que nos corrige la gramática y la ortografía y eso hace que uno aprenda.

- Comentario [J29]: SAVE TIME
- Comentario [J30]: WRITING QUALITY, WRITING TOOL

Student N 27

Bueno pues nosotros tenemos algunos procedimientos para desarrollar estas cartas y pues a mí se me hace que eso es un gran apoyo eh pues ya que nos ayuda y yo estoy seguro que he mejorado respecto a los anteriores años.

- Comentario [J31]: MOTIVATING
- Comentario [J32]: LEARNING

Student N 11

Pues creo que al principio estaban pues demasiado mal ya que no conocíamos la estructura bien pero ahora que ya la conocemos mejor las cartas quedan mejor.

- Comentario [J33]: SELF-AWARENESS

7. En cuanto a la calidad de las cartas realizadas ven algún progreso desde que realizaron los primeros borradores hasta las revisiones finales de las mismas?

Student N 3

Pues al principio las cartas eran menos especializadas ya que no teníamos la capacitación.

- Comentario [J34]: WRITING QUALITY
- Comentario [J35]: SELF-AWARENESS

Student N 11

Pues a mi me parece que el transcurso que hemos hecho desde el principio hasta el final del periodo ha sido bastante bueno ya que pues a comienzos algunos lo hacían regular y otros mal y otros pues ahí. Pero pues con el transcurso hemos aprendido nuevos métodos y ahora todo el mundo lo hace bien pues ahí.

Comentario [J36]: SELF-AWARENESS

Comentario [J37]: WRITING STRATEGIES

Student N 30

Pues he mejorado mucho [porque antes no teníamos como la guía o la capacidad para realizar estas cartas y para poder pues hacerlas.

Comentario [J38]: LEARNING-SELF-AWARENESS

Comentario [J39]: FEEDBACK

Student N 17

A mi me parece que al principio pues no sabíamos como hacer las cartas pero con el tiempo fuimos aprendiendo y ahora podemos redactar mucho mejor que a como las redactábamos antes ha sido un proceso largo pero ha servido.

Comentario [J40]: STUDENTS AWARENESS -LEARNING

Question 1

Student 3. Pues, Yo pienso que que el uso de estrategias como el que veíamos en clase aunque es muy bueno pero cuando se aplica al inglés es un poco complicado porque se necesita un buen dominio del idioma.

Comentario [J41]: THE STUDENT THINKS THAT STRATEGY USE IS MORE APPROPRIATE FOR LEARNERS WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF LANGUAGE

APPENDIX E

Writing rubric

Self-Assessment Writing Rubric Template

Teacher's name: Jaime Cárdenas Bello

CRITERIA	5	4	3	2	1
1. Content and ideas			x		
• Does the letter have themes or topics needed?					
• Does the letter include main idea and secondary ideas that provide relationships?		x			
• Does the letter have a heading with name and date?	x				
• Are there sufficient details, persons, scenes and actions in the letters?			x		
• Does the letter have a surprising ending?		x			
Comments:					
Students' comments: she should make more interesting things on it and she should make it more longer					
Peer's comments:					
2. Sense of an audience					
• Does the letter provide enough information with the reader?		x			
• Does the letter show different situations?	x				

Self-Assessment Writing Rubric Template

Teacher's name: Jaime Cárdenas Bello

• Does the writing show elements that capture the reader's attention?			ⓧ		
• Are the ideas developed coherently?		ⓧ			
Students' comments: <u>I think this would be better but it isn't bad for me</u>					
Peers' comments:					
3. Word choice and conventions (form)					
• Does the letter contain grammar mistakes that interfere with meaning?		ⓧ			
• Does the letter show use of punctuation and capitalization?			ⓧ		
• Does the paper have the length about 100 words?			ⓧ		
Students' Comments: <u>she make some mistakes but not a lot really</u>					
Peers' comments:					

APPENDIX F

Sample letters

First draft

Student 5

BOGOTA, LA CALLEJA: 127d street, 19-65

Comentario [J1]: Cap letters

6 June 2011

Professor Jaime Cardenas Bello.

Dear Mr. Jaime:

I write this letter to you because I want to be considered for the new job vacancy that you are offering in the internet ads.

Comentario [J2]: tense

I am a student, I study at Colegio De La Salle but now I am in holydays, accordingly to this, I am working in a supermarket packing bags and helping in the finance process, but the problem is that this job will finish at July 2, and that means this job is for undefined time and this doesn't help me on my monetary situation.

Comentario [J3]: spelling

Comentario [J4]: on

For this reason I need the job, I plan to work at your company for a long time because I need to increase my experience and my salary to balance my situation. Also, I am interested in your company because it is a little important company, and I am good at the finances but I am also good at domestic work (and you perhaps need a person skilled). Moreover, I have 28 honor mentions and 6 gold medals at Colegio De La Salle, and I also have the approval of many teachers and two principals.

Comentario [J5]: what do you mean? perhaps the opposite

Comentario [J6]: Word order

I have reached the 7 grade at the school, and I have an specialization in soccer and English, I am also making an specialization in mathematics and science.

If you want to contact me please call me at 3112684779 or make me an e-mail, my e-mail direction is dalejobohorquez@hotmail.com , we can keep in touch in that two ways.

Comentario [J7]: Wrong word

Comentario [J8]: those

Sincerely

Student 5

Second draft

Student 5

BOGOTA, LA CALLEJA: 127d Street, 19-65

June 6, 2011

Professor: Jaime Cardenas Bello.

Dear Mr. Jaime:

I am writing this letter to you because I want to be considered for the new job vacancy that you are offering in the internet ads.

I am a student, I study at Colegio De La Salle but now I am in holidays, accordingly to this, I am working in a supermarket packing bags and helping in the finance process, but the problem is that this job will finish on July 2, and that means this job is for undefined time and this doesn't help me on my monetary situation.

Comentario [J9]: w.w

For this reason I need the job, I plan to work at your company for a long time because I need to increase my experience and my salary to balance my situation. Also, I am interested in your company because it is a very important company, and I am good at the finances but I am also good at domestic work (and you perhaps need a person skilled). Moreover, I have 28 honor mentions and 6 gold medals at Colegio De La Salle, and I also have the approval of many teachers and two principals.

Comentario [J10]: Word order

I have reached the 7 grade at the school, and I have an specialization in soccer and English, I am also making an specialization in mathematics and science.

Comentario [J11]: Quite odd

If you want to contact me please call me at 3112684779 or make me an e-mail, my e-mail direction is dalejobohorquez@hotmail.com , we can keep in touch in those two ways.

Comentario [J12]: Wrong word

Sincerely

Student 5

APPENDIX H

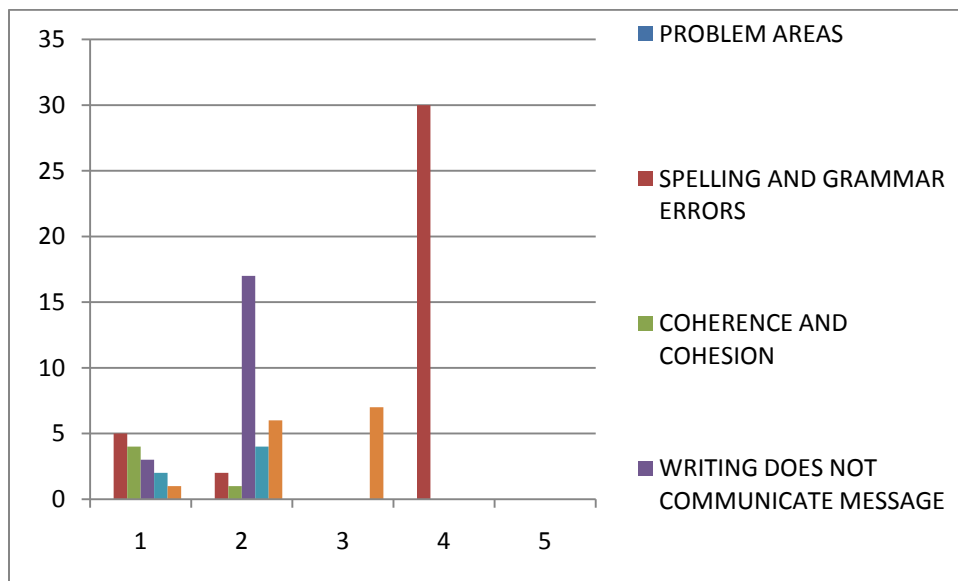
Axial coding process: Categories, properties

RESEARCH QUESTION		
<p>How may the use of organizational note-taking strategies through word processor based-activities help in seventh grade students' formal letter writing?</p>		
CATEGORIES		
<p><i>Increasing students awareness of formal letter writing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of teachers' feedback and student to student feedback. • Awareness of the use of strategies in their writing. • Learners' self-regulation process in writing letters 	<p><i>External motivation provided by word processors in the process of writing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing with word processors to facilitate the revising, editing tasks in the process of writing which increases students' confidence <p>1. E.W.W. 9. Q. 2. U.S. 10. S-C 3. L.V. 11. O 4. G.F. 12. T-N 5. T. 6. Sp 7. M. 8. A.</p>	<p><i>concepts frequencies and codes</i></p> <p>1. Easy way(easier) for writing(13) 2. use of summaries(3) 3. learning vocabulary(2) 4. guidance feedback(7) 5. tools :translators 6. improve spelling(14) 7. motivation-motivating (8) 8. assessment(4) 9. quality (10) 10. self-corrections (17) 11. organization (7) 12. taking notes (3)</p>

APPENDIX I

Diagnostic test results

# MARKS	RESULTS	PROBLEM AREAS			
		SPELLING AND GRAMMAR ERRORS	COHERENCE AND COHESION	WRITING DOES NOT COMMUNICATE MESSAGE	DOES NOT WRITE MINIMUM OF WORDS
5	2	√			
4	1	√			
3	17	√	√		
2	4	√	√	√	
1	6	√	√	√	
0	0	√	√	√	√
TOTAL STUDENTS 30	30				



APPENDIX J

Rubric for diagnostic test

Marks	Criteria
5	<i>All three parts of message clearly communicated.</i> Only minor spelling errors or occasional grammatical errors.
4	<i>All three parts of message communicated.</i> Some non-impeding errors in spelling and grammar or some awkwardness of expression.
3	<i>All three parts of message attempted.</i> Expression requires interpretation by the reader and contains impeding errors in spelling and grammar. <i>All three parts of the message are included but the context is incorrect. Or Two parts of message are clearly communicated.</i> Only minor spelling errors or occasional grammatical errors.
2	<i>Only two parts of the message are communicated.</i> Some errors in spelling and grammar. The errors in expression may require patience and interpretation by the reader and impede communication.
1	<i>Only one part of the message communicated.</i> Some attempt to address the task but response is very unclear.
0	<i>Question unattempted or totally incomprehensible response.</i>

Adapted from: Elliot , Ireland, Saxby ,(2010).Richmond KET Practice Tests. Teacher’s resource book. Richmond Publishing House.

APPENDIX K

Sample lesson plan

ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM

Name of teacher: Jaime Cárdenas Bello		Candidate Number:	
Institution: Private School			
Date of Observation: DAY MONTH YEAR 28 03 2011	Time of observation 9:20-10:20 a.m.	Length of class 90 minutes	
Class/grade: 07	Room: Computer lab		
Number of students: 30	Average age of Students: 12		
Number of years of English study: 7	Level of students Elementary		
Lesson Number 1	Observer:		

<p>Main Aim(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students will be able to use the outlining techniques in order to focus their attention in the content of their writing pieces.• The students will be able to write the first draft of their enquiry letters. <p>Subsidiary Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The students will write their letters following process writing approach through drafting and re-drafting their papers.• The students will use strategies provided by the teacher that will help them go through pre-drafting and re-drafting their papers. <p>Personal aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide students with writing techniques and writing strategies that the students can find useful for their learning process. <p>Note: Aims are to be written as performance-based objectives, which go from covert to overt behaviours (See Wenning, 2008 at http://www.phy.ilstu.edu/pte/310content/objectives/stperfoobjectives.html)</p>	
<p>Assumed knowledge:</p> <p>Write a description of the language/skills/competences that students already know/have that will serve as a basis for new language/skills input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners are able to describe the methodologies or strategies they use prior to writing.• Learners are able to organize information in a mind map.	

Description of language item / skill(s) Writing

"Process writing is learning how to write by writing," notes Stone (1995, p. 232). This current emphasis in writing instruction focuses on the *process* of creating writing rather than the end product (Tompkins, 1990). The basic premise of process writing is that all children, regardless of age, can write. The initial focus is on creating quality content and learning the genres of writing.

When writing, students work through the stages of the writing process. The creation of writing occurs in basically five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. *Prewriting* is the planning and idea-gathering stage. *Drafting* refers to time spent composing a rough draft. *Revising* is the process of improving the draft. Students reread their work and share it with a partner or small group; they then make changes in the writing based on the feedback from their peers. *Editing* is the process of correcting mechanical errors. *Publishing*, or sharing, is accomplished in a wide variety of ways when the work is in final form. Student of all ages move back and forth among these stages while writing; the stages are not lockstep or sequential (Gardner & Johnson, 1997; Tompkins, 1990).

The implementation of process writing can take several forms. Some examples of classroom application include writers' workshop, writing across the curriculum, the use of journals or logs, and modeled writing.

Taking notes is not a skill that comes naturally to many students, but it is also not a skill that is taught in many classrooms. Note Taking is one of the most important study skills for High School Students. Because note taking is so important to educational success, it is important that students learn proper methods for taking thorough notes. The outline method of note taking is one that will look familiar to many students.

The outline method of note taking starts on the left-hand side of the paper. The most important points are placed at the left edge of the paper. Less important points, which are typically ideas that support the main points, are indented to the right. Each set of less important points is indented more to the right. It is easy to see, at a glance, the level of importance of the different ideas because of the distance between them and the major points.

An alternate form, which requires a little more thought, is to start with minor points to the left and indenting as points get more important. The alternate outline form is best used in lectures where minor ideas are used to build up to the most important ideas.

With either form, indentation is enough to show the importance of the ideas and the relationship between them. If you would like something more concrete, however, you can opt for using dashes, bullets or a Roman numeral and letter combination for further emphasis. For the sake of speed and being able to focus on the lecture, you may want to consider adding the marks after class when you review your notes.

As the name suggests, the Outline method is a outline of the material, divided into Main topics, SubTopics, and details. Outline notes look something like this:

I. First main topic

A. Subtopic

1. Detail
2. Detail

B. Subtopic

The outline method of note taking has several advantages. The outline method not only shows the content and main points of the lecture, but also shows the relationship between points. With an outline, it is easy to identify the main points of the information, and reviewing can be as simple as turning main points into questions. In addition, the outline is set up so simply that it takes very little, if any, editing for notes to be easily understood.

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A major benefit of the outline method is the ability to focus on the lecture. Outlining does not require speed or great detail in the writing, both of which take away from your ability to listen to what is said. Outlining does require that you pay enough attention to the lecture to be able to outline the key ideas, which can help you retain more of the information.

There are some disadvantages to the outlining method. The outline method can be difficult to use in science and mathematical courses because those courses need more of an ability to show sequential relationships than outlining offers. Courses with fast-paced lectures may also be difficult to outline, partially because outlining requires the note-taker to think about organization.

For teachers, you may wish to familiarize students with different styles of note taking in addition to Outlining, such as charting and mapping.

The outline method is somewhat familiar to most students, and can be easily used for many classes. Although it does require the student to think about how to organize the notes, the outline method is simple in design and allows students to focus on the lecture. The outline method of note taking is an excellent way to ensure your educational success.

References

Process Writing. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/methods/instrctn/in5lk11.htm>

Outlining technique. Retrieved from: <http://www.study-skills.ca/blog/2008/03/04/taking-notes-outline-method/>

<u>Anticipated problems</u>	<u>Planned solutions</u>
<p>Students may not know how to brainstorm their ideas.</p> <p>Students do not know what outlines are about.</p>	<p>Teacher will monitor walking around the class providing the assistance to these students who need help brainstorming their ideas.</p> <p>Teacher will present some sample student's work and learners can get familiar with the features of these note-taking strategies.</p>
<p>How do the anticipated problems and planned solutions relate to the above needs analysis?</p> <p>The anticipated problems are related to the pre-writing strategies and the type of writing task the students will do in the sessions. Learners are required to brainstorm their ideas and plan their writing in order to achieve the communicative goal and the use of the language they will approach. Therefore is necessary for participantsto make use of strategies before they write.</p>	

Materials :

- **Describe all the materials that you are going to use in the lesson, and attach copies/photocopies with their corresponding rationale and proper referring citation.**

Computers with access to the Internet, magazines, newspapers, posters, markers

How to take good notes in class

Video retrieved from:<http://www.howcast.com/videos/168967-How-To-Take-Good-Notes-in-Class>

When you plan for your day, you plan for success

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8W_aCMxbCw

How to write a basic outline

Retrieved from: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKpXm3JJTCU&feature=related>

Image Retrieved on November 01, 2010 from:

<http://faculty.uoit.ca/hughes/Writing/WritingProcess.html>

Sample models letters of enquiry

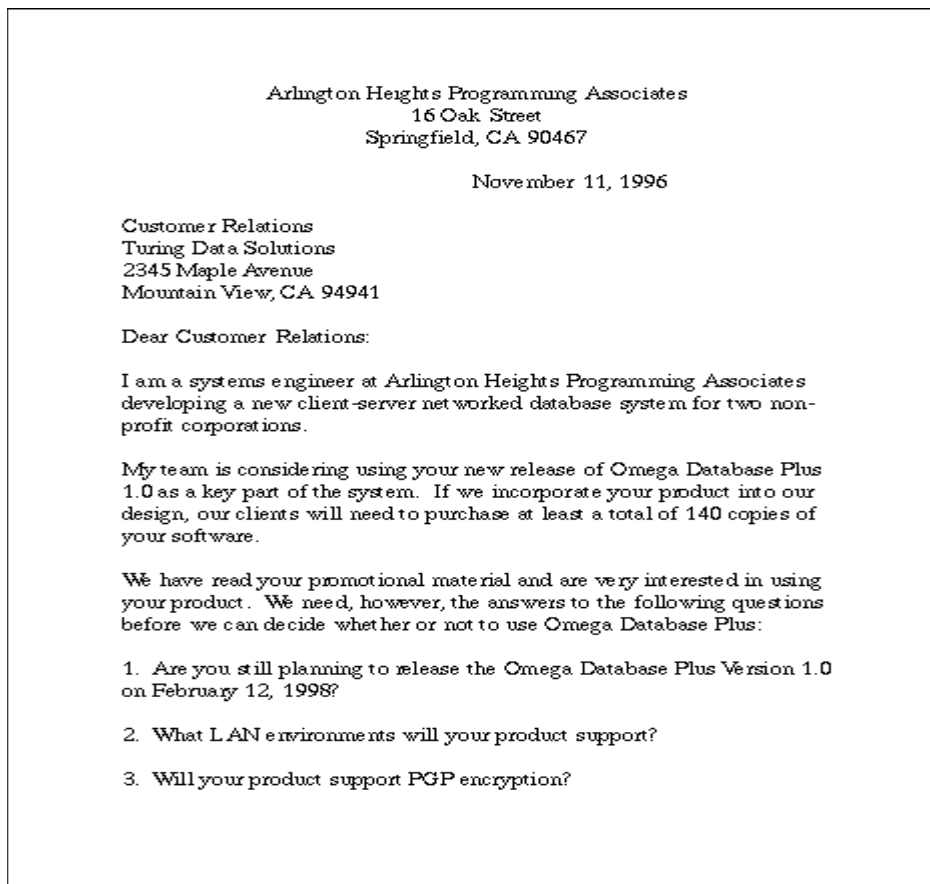



Image Retrieved from: <http://www.mhhe.com/mayfieldpub/tsw/l-inquir.htm>

<p>6 June 1996 1117 The High Road Austin, TX 78703</p>	<p>Heading—the date and the sender's address.</p>
<p>Mr. David Patrick 3005 West 29th, Suite 130 Waco, TX 77663</p>	<p>Inside address—name and address of the recipient of the letter.</p>
<p>Dear Mr. Patrick:</p>	<p>Salutation</p>
<p>I received your June 6th letter requesting consultation and am providing my recommendation in the following.</p>	<p>Body text of the letter: single spaced text with double spacing between paragraphs; no paragraph indentation.</p>
<p>First, let me review my understanding of your inquiry. The question you raise revolves around whether the heating registers should be located in a low sidewall, or in the ceiling, and, if ceiling registers are used, which type—step-down or stamped-faced—will deliver the best results. Additionally, the problem concerns whether there is any benefit to having heating registers near the floor, whether moving heated air “down” in ducts negatively affects blower performance, and whether adequate injection that can be achieved on the low speed of a two-stage furnace.</p>	<p>Use of special formatting within the letter—use bulleted or numbered lists, even headings and graphics.</p>
<p>My recommendations are as follows:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can find nothing in either Carrier, Trane, or ASHRAE design manuals that indicates drop as being a factor in duct design any different from normal static losses. If you have different information on this, I would like to have references to it.• I cannot see any advantage to low sidewall application. The problem is injection and pattern. I do see an advantage to low sidewall return; <i>Carrier Design Manual—Air Distribution</i> is a good reference on both items.• I recommend step-down diffusers with OBD because they have pattern and volume control that is superior to stamped-faced diffusers.• I am opposed to low sidewall diffusers or floor diffusers in the application you describe. The increased static losses that result from trying to get the ducts down through the walls will only increase installation cost and reduce efficiency.	
<p>If there is anyone in your organization who is uncomfortable with these recommendations, let me know. I'd be very interested in reviewing any actual documented test results. Let me know if you have any further questions or if I can be of any further assistance.</p>	
<p>Sincerely,</p>	<p>Complimentary close</p>
	
<p>Jane A. McMurey, P.E. HVAC Consultants, Inc.</p>	<p>Signature block</p>
<p>JAM/dmc Encl.: invoice for consulting services</p>	<p>End notations</p>

Stage	Aim	Procedure/ session one Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction
<u>Warmer</u>	To set the context for learning activities.	<p><u>Procedure</u></p> <p><u>T shows Ss the two videos about how to take good notes in class and organizational skills. Students gather in pairs to discuss the most important information. T monitors and guides the activity.</u></p>	<p>20'</p> <p><u>TS</u></p>
<u>Lead in</u>	To raise Ss awareness.	<p><u>Procedure</u></p> <p><u>T applies the learning styles survey and he discusses with Ss the purpose of this tool and they are told the results from this survey will be given and discussed in the next session.</u></p>	<p>15'</p> <p><u>TS</u></p>
<u>Controlled practice</u>	To discuss with students the use of self-assessment and introduce the sample rubric to share it with them	<p><u>Procedure</u></p> <p><u>T plays a video about the basic information a writing rubric contains. Ss watch the video and T introduces the rubric they will work with. Additionally T explains what self-assessment is with Ss and asks Ss what information from this rubric should be changed and / or included.</u></p>	<p>20'</p> <p><u>TS</u></p> <p><u>PW</u></p>
<u>Free practice</u>	To give students the chance to reflect about their own writing problems	<p><u>T gives Ss instructions and makes sure Ss understand the instructions. First, Students fill their own information about the problems they have when writing in English, about general aspects such as grammar, punctuation etc. Then Ss have to go around the classroom finding someone who shares their same problem and ask for advice.</u></p>	<p>15'</p> <p><u>IW</u></p> <p><u>GW 15'</u></p>