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Ipsative Assessment Of Essay Writing To Foster Reflection And Self-Awareness Of Progress

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IPSATIVE ASSESSMENT TO IMPROVE ESSAY WRITING

Abstract

Ipsative Assessment to Improve Argumentative Essay Writing aimed at studying how an alternative type of assessment influenced the writing skill of 14 young adults and 10 adults from two Colombian universities one with a language program for undergraduate students from several academic programs, and the other in a teacher training program. Both contexts, face-to-face and online correspondingly, went through the same intervention and research process. Due to the nature of the Ipsative Approach, this study was also concerned with its effects on life-long learning and self-directness. The queries addressed throughout the paper were analyzing the way students structured their essays by means of the ipsative feedback and the influence of the assessment approach on students at the self-management levels. This action research study gathered qualitative and quantitative data, from the 24 students through four types of instruments: pre and post-questionnaires, an ipsative feedback form, students' essays and students' essays scores. This data was analyzed using Grounded theory and descriptive statistics. The first enabled the teacher-researchers to identify patterns in students' reflections and the last described the students' performance in essay writing. Findings revealed that by means of ipsative assessment students enhanced their argumentative essay writing as they grasped the structural and reflective nature of this skill. The comparison of various drafts allowed learners to reflect on their improvements at the same time they raised self-awareness of progress. The whole process took students to the realization that they were developing generic skills useful for academic discourse.

Keywords: Ipsative assessment, process writing, essay writing, self-direction.

Resumen

La evaluación Ipsativa para mejorar la redacción de textos argumentativos tuvo como objetivo analizar cómo un tipo alternativo de evaluación influyó en la habilidad de escritura de 14 adultos jóvenes y 10 adultos de dos universidades colombianas, una con un programa de idiomas para los estudiantes de pregrado de diversas carreras, y la otra en un programa de licenciatura . Ambos contextos, el presencial y en línea correspondientemente, fueron sometidos al mismo proceso de intervención e investigación. Debido a la naturaleza propia de la evaluación ipsativa, este estudio también se interesó en sus efectos sobre el aprendizaje auto-dirigido y a largo plazo. Las preguntas de la investigación se enfocaron en analizar como los estudiantes estructuraban sus ensayos por medio de la retroalimentación ipsativa y como este enfoque de evaluación influyó a los estudiantes a nivel individual. Para este estudio de investigación se reunieron datos cualitativos y cuantitativos de los 24 estudiantes a través de cuatro tipos de instrumentos: pre y post-cuestionarios, un formato ipsativo, ensayos de los estudiantes y sus calificaciones. Estos datos se analizaron por medio de muestreo teórico y estadística descriptiva. El primero permitió a los profesores-investigadores identificar patrones en las reflexiones de los estudiantes y la última describe el desempeño de los estudiantes en la escritura del ensayo. Los resultados revelaron que por medio de la evaluación ipsativa los estudiantes mejoraron la escritura de un ensayo argumentativo ya que comprendieron la importancia de la estructura retórica y el carácter reflexivo de la escritura. La comparación de diversos borradores le permitió a los estudiantes reflexionar sobre cómo mejorar su trabajo al mismo tiempo que les llevo a tomar conciencia de su progreso. Este proceso llevó a los estudiantes a darse cuenta que se estaban desarrollando competencias genéricas útiles para el discurso académico.

Palabras clave: Evaluación Ipsativa, proceso de escritura, escritura de ensayos, auto-dirección.

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Introduction

Ipsative Assessment of Essay Writing to Foster Reflection and Self-Awareness of Progress

Assessment in general has played a pivotal role in learning processes and, assessment of writing in particular since has been a center of debate since the early 70's when academic writing shifted its focus from product to process approach (Ferris, 2003). This shift has had pedagogical implications for both teachers and students who have to enlist in a task that seems demanding for both. Sommers argued that teachers, on one hand, are required to provide substantial feedback which is time-consuming, and students, on the other hand, are called to the interpret teacher's comments, which are commonly misunderstood (as cited in Ferris, 2003, p. 3). Based on this context, it is evident that formative assessment has been the centerpiece in the improvement of written work because its feedback component has been considered crucial to writing development (Klimova, 2011). Even though formative assessment can take various forms that can ease the difficulties mentioned above, it still fails at getting students more personally involved in the assessment of the written task; therefore, an alternative assessment approach that focuses on self-comparison of written work is proposed in this research study.

Academic writing at Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad Santo Tomás is a major component of the English language programs, and professors devote considerable time and effort to its assessment throughout an academic term. Particularly in intermediate English levels (B1) in both contexts, essay writing implies that the students are able to organize their ideas within an argumentative structure. The development of this task, particularly during the second academic term in 2013, allowed the teacher- researchers to focus on analyzing students' accuracy when writing an argumentative essay. At the time, both summative and formative feedback showed low performance with reference to students' cognitive development and use of the rhetorical

structure. From this preliminary diagnostic emerged the idea that students may need to apprehend about the developmental nature of writing by shifting the focus on the product to a scaffolded process of reflection, goal setting and last-long learning. In addition, the teacher-researchers realized that in order to guide the students properly through this ongoing process a different approach to teach the argumentative rhetorical structure was also needed. Finally yet importantly, the main outcome of the diagnostic inspired the intention of including the students as active participants in the assessment of their work hence foster accountability, self-direction and the learning of generic skills.

A central argument of this study - as opposed to the transmissible view of assessment- is that students can use self-referential goals (supported by the teacher's ipsative feedback) as scaffolds that in the learning process are used to measure the improvement of their own work. By allowing learners to set specific paths for improvement, they become accountable for the effectiveness of those and, at the same time they raise awareness of progress. This approach, known as Ipsative assessment, has the potential to change the focus on grades to self-management and autonomy as credit is given based on how far the learners have progressed from one draft to the subsequent one, rather than how well they have satisfied the criteria- reference assessment (rubric). After the implementation of this assessment approach, findings showed that by means of Ipsative assessment students enhanced their academic writing as they grasped the structural and reflective nature of this skill and they developed generic skills useful for academic discourse.

This paper illustrates an action research about the influence of an assessment approach on essay writing among a group 24 undergraduate students with a B1+ language level according to the common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR), one group from a

teacher-training program and the other form an English proficiency program in an online and face-to-face environment correspondingly. The study focused specifically on how Ipsative assessment leads to improvement in undergraduate students argumentative essay writing and how it influenced at the process and students' self- management level. This data was gathered by the quantitative and qualitative instruments implemented, such as students' essays, as well as through the insights provided by the students throughout the process. The study embedded literature with practical issues that arose from the study in order to give support to the process described and to the findings in each stage. This research study hopes to contribute to current assessment practices in both university contexts in relation to academic writing; it proposes to involve students in the assessment process by raising their awareness of their progress and impacting their learning process on their life-long learning skills.

Statement of the Problem

The assessment of writing in the two universities where this study took place is guided by institutional protocols that consider the use of tools such as assessment rubrics, writing conventions and formative feedback comments in order to assist the students in the process of achieving the objectives set by the writing criteria in each level. This practice has allowed learners to be informed about the justification that accompany their grades and the use of conventions show them those mistakes that have to be corrected in the final version of their papers. On the other hand, this assessment and feedback methods have been viewed as problematic for the teachers-researchers who considered that the student's role in the assessment process is insufficient in terms of learning and self-direction and that the workload of grading is not worthwhile due the consistent low results of the students' papers regardless their level.

It is commonly reported in the literature that assessment and its feedback component are considered for the most part the teacher's responsibility; one of the reasons of this problem is that still nowadays some teachers and learners understand assessment in isolation from learning. In traditional assessment practices teachers pointed out to students' mistakes and students were responsible to interpret and act upon those teachers' comments just in case those were read (Duncan, 2007; Taras, 2003). Sadly, this view of assessment in which feedback was seen as a mean of transmission is still a common practice nowadays (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Nonetheless, some other teachers more aware of current assessment methods painstakingly provide instructional feedback that serve as scaffold for task improvement and life-long learning.

Another problematic area of assessment has to do with the issue of motivation as an important factor linked to learning. Even though motivation was not tested in this research study, it is also considered here how poor assessment practices have a negative impact on student motivation. An example of this situation is that emphasizing corrections of form over meaning results in papers full of writing conventions that might affect students' morale (Cohen, 1987; Brice, 1995). In this respect, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) assert, "teachers should avoid focusing on surface mistakes, incomprehensible correction codes or discouraging comments that only lead to poorer writing outcomes" (p. 394).

Having in mind the regular issues presented in traditional assessment practices and the empirical evidence gathered from two Colombian universities, the teacher-researchers noticed the necessity to implement Ipsative Assessment as an alternative approach that could be beneficial on the way to overcome some of those problematic areas. The teacher-researchers

affirm that Ipsative Assessment has the potential to get students more involved through the self-referential assessment of their work, which would offset the teacher's workload.

Research Question

The research questions addressed during this study were:

- How does Ipsative Assessment scaffold improvement in undergraduate students argumentative essay writing?
- Does Ipsative Assessment influence undergraduate students at the self-management level?

Research Objectives

This study aimed at a) measuring the impact of Ipsative assessment in argumentative essay writing structure and process writing among EFL students at Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad Santo Tomás; b) analyzing the insights provided by the students throughout the process in order to identify how the Ipsative assessment approach impacted students' self-awareness level and generic skills development.

Specific Objectives

- To determine to what extent ipsative assessment feedback scaffolds learners in the improvement of their written work.
- To demonstrate that assessment based on self-referential goals and self-comparison encourages learners to be involved and draw an action plan for improvement.
- To identify students' perceptions towards self-awareness of progress and life-long learning.

Theoretical Framework

The primary focus of this section is to present a brief account of the latest and most relevant studies underpinning this investigation. The constructs developed were set by the main component of the research question and implementation: argumentative essay, process writing and assessment. At the end of this chapter there is a description of the transition from formative assessment to Ipsative assessment in order to encourage better understanding of how one evolved into the other.

Argumentative Essay

The argumentative essay structure at both university contexts aims to encourage learners to take a position on a controversial topic, stand by it through sound, logical arguments, and defend it by considering opposing viewpoints. The main purpose of this communicative task is to help students to develop their critical thinking skills as they have to gather information, analyze it, synthesize it and communicate it in a way that their composition convinces others about the correctness of their central statement. According to Álvarez (2001), the argumentative essay writing can be defined as a set of strategies an orator can use to persuade his audience to change their thoughts about a given idea, to adhere to his own, or admit a given situation or an external idea. Likewise, Díaz (2002), states that argumentative essays deal with controversial topics in which an author defends an idea that he considers valid. Similarly, Ordoñez argued that the argumentative essay is a structured text that is developed around a thesis statement that is supported through reasons and fed with facts, examples and details (as cited in Torres, 2004, p. 99).

In regards of the teaching of the argumentative essay structure, the teacher-researchers considered the genre analysis as the most appropriate approach to get the students acquainted

with the text type, its purpose and organization. In this respect, Morrison (2010) claims that genre analysis is characterized by the provision of models and explicit instruction, he highlights that students need to be aware of genre conventions and acceptable and that teachers need to provide explicit instructions. In like manner, Hyland (2004) states that students need to be provided with genre exploration and analysis opportunities for them to be aware of genre features and tools to write their own compositions. By implementing this approach, students not only learnt the linguistic and organizational patterns of the argumentative essay, but they also explored the creation of thesis statements, topic sentences, supporting details and other features related to this type of structure.

As to essay organization, participants followed the main organizational patterns of this structure: introduction, body and conclusion and within them, a paragraph structure composed by specific items that account for organization and consistency throughout the text. In the argumentative essay, cohesion is achieved through the appropriate use of connectors, which are meant to establish logical connections among ideas, while the coherence is evident through the relation between the thesis statement and its arguments with the context of the whole composition. According to Hyland (1990) “this text type is characterized by a three-stage structure: thesis, argument and conclusion, in turn each stage has a structure or moves some of which are optional elements in the system” (p. 68).

Other pedagogical components for dealing with the argumentative essay involves the students’ ability to manage content and organization issues to meet the requirements of the rhetorical structure; however to overcome these difficulties, explicit teaching of the schema characteristics and analyzing genre models can facilitate this learning process. As Hyland (1990)

states that genre analysis can help students to identify how well organized texts can convey meaning while badly organized texts result in ineffectual communication.

In regards of assessment, argumentative essay rhetorical structure was chosen for this study because it allows for a student- teacher dialogue. As it mainly involves how students structure their thoughts, the assessment process is bidirectional: formative comments are given by the teacher but it is in the end the students voice what shapes their written products. Marshall (1991) states that students' written work can be assessed constructively considering the genre analysis, which provide the criteria for qualitative evaluation and an objective basis for informed discussion on each stage of the essay.

Process Writing

Writing skills are highly valued in the universities where this study took place. Both, the face-to-face and the online contexts give a higher assessment value to the learners' written work due to the requirements of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for the development of this skill. According to this international standard, learners in intermediate levels should be able to write an essay that develops an argument systematically giving reason in support of or against a particular point of view. To do so, both universities language programs, take the students through a process writing that begins with the teaching of certain rhetorical structure and later guide them through some steps in which diverse cognitive aspects are taken into account to culminate with a learning product.

The process writing is necessary, among other reasons, because the writing skill itself possess the limitation of being learnt - almost exclusively - in formal settings, in contrast to listening and speaking which are acquired naturally. In this sense, Nunan (1999) states that writing can be one of most difficult things to do in language because it effectiveness depends on

the ability to deal with linguistic, pragmatic and contextual issues necessary for interpretation. In addition to these challenges Hedge (2005) has remarked on the importance of ideas organization, accuracy, proper choice of grammatical devices and lexicon that fix the requirements of style and structure. The value of process writing then, is that students are taken through a path of creation that involves motivation, working on ideas, planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing over a couple of cycles. In figure 1 it is described the core stages of the process writing approached proposed by Hedge (2005) which for the purpose of these study has been synthesized as: brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising and publishing. This adaptation encompasses the writing practices in both universities and allowed teacher-researchers to embed other processes related to the assessment component, which is the central issue in this research study.



Figure 1. Hedge's 7 stages involved in process writing.

Brainstorming. The aim of this stage is to recall prior knowledge or schemata. It is an essential step in the prewriting process because it stimulates imagination and allows students to generate ideas; in addition, White and Arndt (1991) explain that it should be used to identify the purpose and the audience, to develop the topic and organization of ideas. In this regard, Hedge (2005) states that knowing the audience is necessary to write more effectively and appropriately. The sense of audience influences the writer choice of content, vocabulary grammar and style. (Nunan, 1999, p. 272).

Outlining. After students have gathered ideas, they organize them in an outline. It persuades learners to focus on the organization of the text based on the rhetorical structure and students become aware of the topic sentence as the core of each paragraph. Moreover, the prior

choice of a discourse pattern influences word choice, and particular words have the tendency to appear based on text structures (chronological, argumentative, cause-effect) (MacCarthy, 1991, p. 82).

Drafting. Once students have outlined their compositions, they attempt to write the first version of their text based on the frame build for this purpose. The significance of the drafting stage is that it allows students to organize ideas into coherent statements in a way that makes sense for others to understand the message tried to be conveyed. During drafting, students go back over what they have said and modify it before they continue to the next stage. According to Zamel (1982) “writing involves generating; formulating and refining one’s ideas (...) writing is a process through which meaning is created” (p. 195).

Revising and feedback. In this stage, students are induced to improve their own work. Participants in this study identified aspects to be improved in their essays by using a checklist that matched the criteria in the rubric used by the teacher-researchers. Hedge (2005) points out that revising consists of assessing one’s work and constitutes one of the most crucial and beneficial parts of the process writing because the most significant learning happens at this stage. In regards to feedback, as part of the revising stage, Hedge also mentions that feedback in this stage can act as the catalyst for learning; meaning that the teacher should not provide it exclusively; students need to play a central role in the improvement of their own work.

Zamel (1985) points out that revising takes more than addressing features of form, organization, structure and cohesion; it encourages students to be more than language learners, developing writers. The revising issue in this study went beyond than the mere corrections because the students applied strategies such as highlighting items from the rhetorical structure and using the checklist to assess their texts. Furthermore, they were given strategies to overcome

possible problems with their compositions. The students decided how to use those strategies or if they wanted, they could implement their own. As the last step of the revising stage, the teachers-researchers provided feedback by focusing on how one paper had progressed over time.

Assessment

Language assessment as a component of the whole language learning process is any systematic procedure to collect information about students and thus it works as an efficacious tool to make decisions about teaching and learning (Lopez & Bernal, 2009). A study carried out in Colombia to examine teachers' perceptions about language assessment and the ways they use it in their classrooms suggests that there is correlation between language assessment training and perceptions about language assessment. Lopez and Bernal (2009) argue that those teachers who lack of training tend to use more summative than formative assessment and some of them consider assessment as an isolated activity from teaching. Similar studies in different contexts have suggested that assessment is associated with grades hence it is view as a summative process rather than an ongoing process (Taras, 2003; Perez, Guerra & Ladrón, 2004, as cited in Lopez & Bernal, 2009, p. 56).

Classroom assessment, according to Hughes (2003), may take the form of teacher-made assessment or alternative assessment (as cited in Lopez & Bernal, 2009, p.65). On one hand, teacher-made assessment evaluates certain outcomes from a particular group of students, whereas alternative assessment evaluates skills or knowledge that cannot be assessed through traditional testing (McNamara, 1997). This particular study is concerned with alternative assessment as it allows teachers to respond to differences in learner's needs and therefore gain understanding about how they progress over time. Some alternative assessment instruments are writing samples, journals, portfolios, classroom project and interviews (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

One major disadvantage of alternative assessment is that the process of using this type of assessment is time-consuming and the evaluation may lack of consistency (Hamayan, 1995), which may affect its validity and reliability. In the same sense, Brown and Hudson (1998) have pointed out that most research on alternative assessment is merely descriptive and persuasive without enough support in regards of validity and reliability. Lopez and Bernal (2009) state that there is more need for research that examines how alternative assessment can be more consistent and how assessment procedures can enhance teaching and learning.

From Formative Assessment to Ipsative Assessment

In recent years different types of alternative assessment have being the recognized in different settings, particularly how formative assessment turns into an instrument for further development of each student's learning (Hyland, 2000). The power of formative assessment falls on the fact that it provides feedback to both teacher and student. Teachers use the feedback received to check on students' constructions and, learners use teachers' feedback to make learning adjustments towards progress (Biggs, 1999; Brown & Knight, 1994; Ding, 1998).

Even though formative assessment "theoretically" works, there are a number of issues that need to be considered such as the increasing number of students per class, competition among peers, the effect of assessment on motivation and most importantly how feedback has to do with progress and short vs. long term learning. In formative assessment, feedback has to do with closing the gap between students' performance and criteria referenced demands whereas in Ipsative assessment students' performances are used as the criteria to check on their own progress. As Hughes (2011) points out "in formative assessment feedback is linked to external criteria and standards rather than to the processes of learning. On the contrary, Ipsative

assessment is based on comparison with students' previous performance and linked to long-term progress".

The concept of Ipsative assessment in higher education was initially tested in a study on Ipsative feedback and distance learning conducted by a group of researchers who examined the extent to which Ipsative assessment was used and the perceptions of its advantages among students and tutors. The findings revealed that Ipsative assessment was not used in distance programs and that the tutors did not inform learners about their progress. Learners, on the other hand, viewed Ipsative assessment as motivational and helpful (Hughes et al, 2011 p. 4). After this preliminary study, a second intervention was implemented to introduce and evaluate the Ipsative approach in a distance learning Master's program. The evidence showed that students who completed the Ipsative process by filling in the forms, increased motivation, however the urge of short-term grades confined the long-term benefit of Ipsative assessment (Hughes et al, 2011 p. 17).

What differentiates Ipsative assessment from other types of assessment is that it is more concerned with personal achievement, which has implications in both the task itself and life-long learning. By means of the Ipsative assessment, for example, students increase awareness about their own learning advancement while the long-term, generic skills are being developed. Hughes (2011) argues that moving from criteria-driven feedback to ipsative feedback might be the catalyst needed for encouraging "assessment for learning". Through Ipsative assessment, learners gain awareness about their progress, as they are evaluated through self-referential goals, which enable them to see achievable, realistic progression over time.

Furthermore, Ipsative assessment key principle is to persuade learners to reflect on the feedback provided by the teacher, aiming to explain what students have learnt and proposing

actions for future development; the teacher will provide such feedback by comparing existing performances and focusing on generic rather than specific skills. This technique implies that assessment will not be criteria based but in the light of “students personal best” (Hughes, 2011, p. 353), this technique is called feed-forward and, it was the core argument of assessment in this study. Throughout the implementation of the writing process, learners involve in Ipsative Assessment stages can endeavor to be informed on how well they have responded to previous feedback and progressed using a scheme (*Figure 2*) that initiates dialogue between learner and tutor (Hughes et al., 2011).

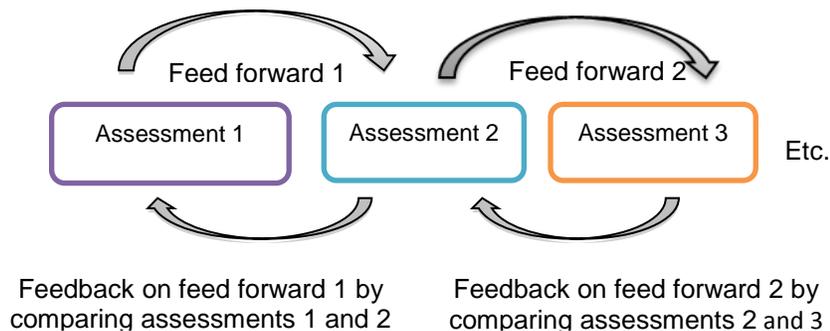


Figure 2. Hughes' Ipsative assessment approach scheme.

For the purpose of this research study, within Ipsative assessment, feedback played a fundamental role. The teacher-researchers believe in scaffolding as the best strategy to aid learners with their individual needs and essay goals, so scaffolding as the core of ipsative feedback here, emphasizes guiding each learner towards his / her best composition. Through scaffolding the learner is led to accomplish tasks s/he would not be able to do without assistance and through that path the more knowledgeable the learner gets about the task, the less assistance s/he will eventually need (Raymond, 2000). Thereby, it can be said that by means of the scaffolding strategy, students were empowered to become more self-directed as they learnt to deal with goal-setting, self-evaluation, and asking for assistance.

Concerning the teacher’s role when providing feedback through scaffolding, there are three major points to consider: the goals, the students’ progress and the strategies to be provided to overcome difficulties. These issues are in a way contained in the model proposed by Hattie and Timperley, which address the impact of feedback at different levels (Figure 3). This model is convenient for this study because it implements self-directedness objectives that students go through when being involved in Ipsative assessment. The model for effective feedback outlined below shows how effective feedback can assist learners in achieving their goals at the task level (argumentative essay), performance level (process writing) and self-management level (metacognitive processes). This model states that by including these issues in the feedback provided by the teacher, students shall reduce the gap between their work and what it is expected from them. However, for the sake of this study, the teachers-researchers adapted this model by comparing existing papers and encouraging learners to set individual goals.

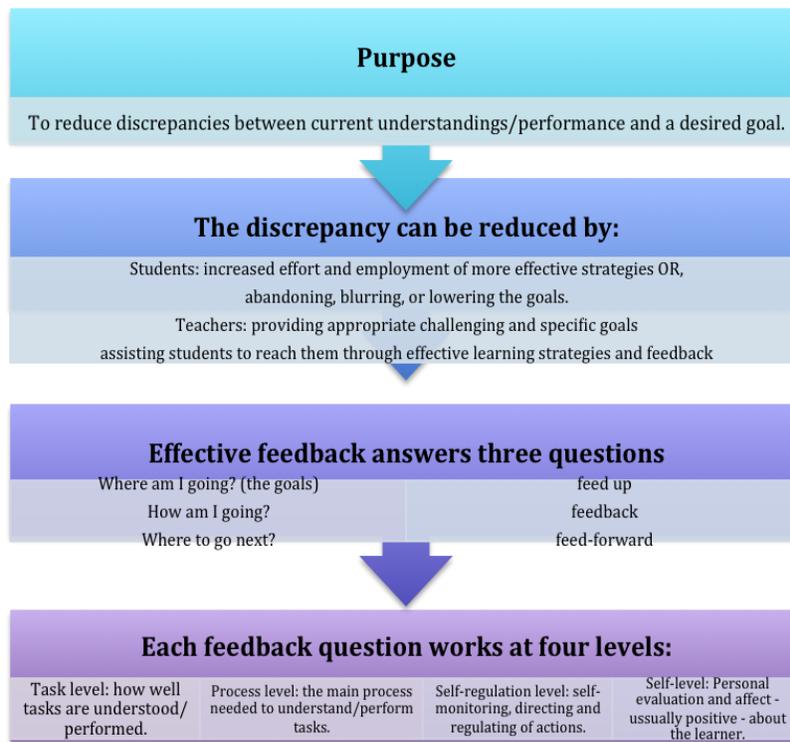


Figure 3. Hattie and Timperley’s model for effective feedback.

Hughes (2011) asserts that by means of Ipsative assessment, teachers can help learners to address the three components proposed by Hattie and Timperley (2007) (*Figure 3*): feed-up, feedback, feed-forward, by focusing their attention at the process level and self-awareness levels. The core of these concepts are goal setting, progress, and generic skills, all of them issues underpinning self-directedness as explained below:

Ipsative feed-up (focused on goals). Learners are encouraged to set their own goals (achievable ipsative goals) underpinning standard- based criteria (general goal) so that realistic progression is evident for both teacher and learner; thus, there is a shift of focus toward process over product.

Ipsative feedback (focused on current performance). Learners are informed about their progress and development, comparing to the previous paper presented, so that, grades and external criteria are undermined and yield to intrinsic motivation to growth.

Ipsative feed-forward (focus on where to go next). Because Ipsative assessment is implemented throughout several performances, it allows teachers to provide feedback on generic rather than task specific skills; consequently, the focus of feedback goes beyond improving surface mistakes to aid the learners through life-long learning processes. This practice allows for initiating and maintaining dialogue that is one of the principles of formative feedback pointed out by Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006).

As evidenced in the illustration of the concept of Ipsative assessment (*Figure 2*), the benefits are multiple, for both teachers and learners. Teachers, on one hand, might reduce their assessment workload because students are also responsible for taking part in assessing and improving their work. On the other hand, learners have an increased sense of their progress when their work is not undermined by external criteria or grades, but is guided towards improvement

by constructive feedback. Additionally, learners are suggested clear paths to follow from which they can make decisions on how to incorporate those in their work by feedback received through scaffolding. Giving students a voice in assessment helps them to develop self-direction and generic skills.

Research Design

This chapter gives an overview of the research methodology, the type of study conducted, the contexts and participants' features, the researchers' role, the data collection instruments and its validation process. Finally, the ethical considerations, the validity and reliability of the data gathered are presented.

Type of Study

This study is framed upon the Action Research approach because it aims at improving a practice born from a classroom problem or situation. The principles of Action Research followed in the study allow the teacher- researchers to identify their teaching context's problems, reflect critically on their own teaching practice, and bring about change (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 229). These principles were achieved by following an order in which planning, acting, observing and rigorously reflecting were the main stages in the research process (Kemmis & MacTaggart, 1992), in order to analyze the effects of the intervention designed (Cohen and Manion, 2000). Hence, this study follows the principles of qualitative and quantitative research with regard to the design of the instruments for collecting and analyzing both types of data. Additionally, these types of data reinforce the results, support and inform each other to foster the development of theory (Dörnyei, 2007).

For this research, the qualitative method was implemented bearing in mind its utility in describing and identifying patterns of relationships (Mishler, 1990), concerning participants' insights and reflections throughout the Ipsative assessment process based on the data gathered from the pre and post questionnaires, the Ipsative feedback form and students' essays. On the other hand, quantitative research helped the researchers to present statistical results by scoring

students' performance in accordance with the essay organization and schema characteristics of argumentative essays to demonstrate student's improvement in essay writing process.

Kemmis and MacTaggart (1988) have drawn together several strands of action research, which encompass precise characteristics of this study. This research was undertaken by two groups of students in a particular situation in order to improve their process writing, as well as their understanding of the process implemented to be carried out in the practice. The approach implemented frames the action research guidelines considering that the study was collaborative and it was achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members by introducing the Ipsative assessment in some of the process writing stages.

Certainly, this study aims at enhancing the way in which writing is assessed for this purpose, feedback on the process is provided by implementing Ipsative assessment to the participants of the research study by changing the focus on grades and turn it into comparison-based feedback and focus on progress. In this type of assessment, credit is given based on how well the learners have progressed from one draft to the subsequent one, influencing for the most part students' process writing and at the same time personal skills as in the case of students at the self – management level.

On the other hand, action research is developed through the self-reflective spiral, stages that were implemented from the beginning to the end of this study: evaluating, planning, designing, implementing and reflecting. At the first stage, the needs analysis evidenced a writing problem in two groups of students who were enrolled in to the Intermediate English course at Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad Santo Tomás. The data collected allowed the researchers to identify and describe the problem, state the research question and the objectives for the study. In the planning and designing stage, rhetorical structure awareness, process writing

workshops, rubrics, the action plan and the Ipsative assessment form were designed. At the last stage, data gathered was analyzed because researches argued that quantitative and qualitative data gathered provided evidence that continuous changes and evaluation in the pedagogical practices in both contexts would become in improved writing results. Also it was relevant to reflect on the effectiveness of the instruments used in pursuance of implementing changes if they were needed.

One characteristic of action research that it starts small working towards extensive changes, this study aimed at promoting meaningful impact on both contexts where the pedagogical intervention was implemented; addressing to improve writing teaching practices and the process for feedback given. In order to achieve this purpose, researchers from this study presented an alternative assessment approach, Ipsative assessment designed by Hughes, Okumoto & Wood (2011), which provides specific stages to follow when providing feedback in an assessment process, either in face- to- face sessions or using a virtual learning environment (VLE). This implementation impacted the teaching practice of the teacher-researcher at the Universidad de La Sabana, but perhaps to a greater extent the participants at the Universidad Santo Tomas, who were pre-service EFL teachers. Thus, this action research study “offers a means for teachers to become agents rather than recipients of knowledge about second language teaching and learning, and thus to contribute toward the building of educational theories of practice” (Burns, p. 70).

Finally in this study, data gathered from the different stages of the process were valuable to the researchers’ experience because these provide insights to reflect on current practices and consider improvements for future classroom issues. In terms of the research, records gathered enrich and validate its main objective by measuring the results of the students after following the

Ipsative assessment process in writing argumentative essays and categorizing the perceptions of the learners from the development of the assessment proposed. Noffke and Zeichner's (1987) make several claims for action research with teachers and they assert that this type of research provides changes in self- definitions of professional skills and roles, as well as, increases their feelings of self- worth and confidence.

Setting

The participants in this study were two groups of EFL learners enrolled in an Intermediate English courses at Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad Santo Tomás. The first is a private university located in the out- skirts of Bogota. The Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures provides academic programs in language teaching to different departments of the university and the external community, including the Intermediate English course selected for this study. In fact, this course belongs to an English proficiency program that consists of seven levels designed to develop students' abilities to achieve a higher level of communicative competence in English as a foreign language by working on the general systems of the language (listening, speaking, grammar, reading, writing and vocabulary). The Intermediate English course selected for this study corresponds to the level B1 of The Common European Framework for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment [CEFR] (Council of Europe 2001).

Universidad Santo Tomás is a private university located in Bogotá. Its programs include face-to-face sessions and virtual education in order to respond to the distance education modality. Distance education is managed by the VUAD (Vicerectoría de la Universidad Abierta y a Distancia), main office located in Bogotá, and divided into some regional centers named

CAUS (Centros de atención universitaria) located in different cities in Colombia. The VUAD is divided into two Faculties: Education and Sciences & Technology, with an amount of twelve and six programs respectively. The course selected for this study, Intermediate English I, corresponds to one of the programs lead by the Faculty of Education, the BA in English as a Foreign Language. This program aims at educating high quality English teachers who will be able to respond to the need for training in the area of teaching English as a foreign language, as well as meeting the challenges of the internationalization of the national economy. Throughout their training, students develop abilities to achieve a higher level of communicative competence in English, in 10 levels taken one per semester, working in the general skills of language (listening, speaking, grammar, reading, writing).

Finally, one difference that framed this study was the method of instructional delivery at the universities: at Universidad de La Sabana, classes met regularly with the teacher- researcher two hours per week and one hour through asynchronous activities. At Universidad Santo Tomás, most of the sessions were developed through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), the university Moodle platform *ustadistancia*, and some others were in face-to-face tutoring classes. Students from Universidad Santo Tomás received all the instructions through power point presentations and screencasts using the tool Jing; also, there were some video – conference tutoring sessions and constant communication between students and the teacher – researcher in order to balance information given to students from both universities. In both groups all the activities designed were scaffolded to develop students´ individual writing abilities.

Participants

This study included a group of 24 students, 14 from Universidad de La Sabana, and 10 from Universidad Santo Tomás. Students of this group were from different undergraduate programs and fulfill the requirements corresponded to the B1 level considering the results of the placement test, the guidelines of the Common European Framework and the fourth semester university curriculum. On the other hand, students at Universidad Santo Tomás were between 35 to 45 years old and just four of them are between 20 to 25 years. Students' attitude towards learning English as a second language was based on the requirement established in the university as part of their curriculum and, also they studied the language based on their personal desires. Finally, students from this group were candidates to get a degree as BA in English as a Foreign Language.

All in all, both groups were studying English as a requirement and were placed at an Intermediate English level which corresponds to the B1 level, according to the CEFR (2001). The required study at this level, identified students as independent users who can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters, deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling, produce simple connected text on familiar and personal interest topics and can describe experiences and events giving reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

Researchers' Role

In this study, the researchers' role is proposed from two points of view: one that responds to the role in the activities performed according to the different stages of this action research, and another that corresponds to their role according to the Ipsative assessment and process writing implementation. From the first perspective, based on Kemmis & MacTaggart statements,

researchers' role was to work on reflecting on and improving the contexts through repeated cycles of action and evaluation (2000). To carry out this role, the researchers conducted the study in a community of practice, where researchers worked to identify a problem of common interest, created an intervention to address the problem, gathered data to evaluate progress, and then repeated the cycle; this (Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart, & Zuber-Skerritt, 2002).

On the other hand, during the Ipsative assessment and the writing process, researchers became facilitators and motivators. According to the process explained by Brown, researchers had the opportunity to provide guidance in the development of the activities, providing advice to students and possible solutions to the weaknesses evidenced without imposing beliefs on the process writing (2001). Such guidance focused on discourse organization or essay structure, in order to address specific problem areas, encouraging students to be more than just mere language learners but rather developing writers (Zamel, 1985).

As motivators researchers created the right conditions for the generation of ideas, persuading students of the usefulness of the activity and encouraging them to exert as much effort as possible for maximum benefit and higher results. Harmer (2001) argues that teachers can manage three types or roles into the classrooms, from which researchers adopted two: a) Motivator that is based on creating right conditions to work in writing tasks and to encourage the students to make as much effort as possible for maximum benefit and, b) Resource, the teachers must be ready to supply information and language when it is necessary, being available to look at his or her students' work and their progress offering feed-forward advice and suggestions. The teacher can be a feedback provider who responds positively and encouragingly to the content of what students have written.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments selected in this study provide a variety of sources that evidence improvement in argumentative essay writing and categorizing the perceptions of the learners after identifying common self- management level after being involved in Ipsative assessment. Based on the types of data presented by Nunan and Bailey (2009) and Dörnyei (2007), this study collected qualitative and quantitative data in four types of instruments: pre and post-questionnaires, the Ipsative feedback form, students' essays and students' essays scores.

Pre and post-questionnaires, the Ipsative feedback form and students' essays, as qualitative data instruments, were used to interpret, compare and contrast codes found in records of the process which deal with the qualities and characteristics of those phenomena (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). In order to discover patterns in the quantitative data (Mackey & Gass, 2012) this study analyzed students' essays scores in order to present a descriptive analysis of students' progress.

Pre and Post Questionnaires. Implemented at the beginning of the pedagogical implementation, the pre- questionnaire designed for this study (Appendix A) is a type of survey instrument that presents multiple choice and open questions, aimed at gathering qualitative data conducive to characterize the population in order to define the participants in the study from both contexts. The design of the instrument measures three types of data from the respondent: factual, behavioral and attitudinal. Implementing factual questions defined certain facts such as some demographic characteristics and other main features of the context. Factual data gathered in this aspect revealed that the study included a group of 24 students, 14 from Universidad de La Sabana, and 10 from Universidad Santo Tomás. According to behavioral questions related to

experiences in language learning, four students from Universidad de La Sabana had had the opportunity to travel to an English spoken country against only one student from Santo Tomás. Finally the responses to attitudinal questions, used to find out what people think about the importance towards learning English (Dörnyei, 2007), revealed that students from both groups considered that they were studying the language because they liked it and because it was a requirement from their program curriculum.

The post-questionnaire (Appendix B) was also designed as a type of survey instrument, to collect data about students' perceptions, feelings or attitudes concerning skills, concepts, and other classroom issues (Phillips & Carr, 2010). Particularly, this instrument aimed at know the students' perceptions and ideas after being involved in the Ipsative assessment approach along the process writing. Implemented at the end of the intervention, the post - questionnaire gathered quantitative and qualitative results by presenting some open- ended, multiple choice questions and Likert scale statements (Dörnyei, 2007). Also this instrument aimed at analyzing the students' perceptions in regard to the changes implemented in the feedback given and the process writing throughout the pedagogical intervention, by comparing the results to the ones gathered in the pre- questionnaire.

Ipsative feedback Form. The Ipsative feedback form was designed to inform learners on how they responded and how much they progressed, by monitoring their advance over time involving several assessments (Hughes, et al., 2011). This instrument was used as a reflection tool for learners to express their interpretations of the teachers' feedback and to register the feedback strategies to be used to improve their subsequent paper (Appendix C). Students received feedback through the screencast tool Jing, which enabled them to listen to the feedback while looking at the screen in which the teacher emphasized certain aspects of their essays.

Moreover, at each stage students were evaluated on specific criteria based on the use of the rhetorical structure and use of language; the assessment process is explained in the following paragraphs.

In order to follow the Ipsative assessment guidelines, this study selected the drafting, revising and publishing stages of the process writing, because at these stages students were guided to present and revise three papers (first draft, second draft and final paper) and teacher feedback was essential in order to scaffold students action plans that would improve their papers. All in all, the main purpose of using the Ipsative assessment format, was not only to provide longitudinal feedback at each stage, but also, to provide a tool to students in which they analyzed feedback received, revised strategies to overcome weaknesses, described how those strategies were implemented and, requested particular feedback if necessary. Implementing the Ipsative feedback form promoted in students self -awareness of the writing process by allowing them to reflect and monitor their progress over time in the different assessments.

In the following paragraph the components of the Ipsative feedback form are described to present in detail the functions of this form in the study. From the form, students had to fill in the columns labeled: feedback on current performance, strategies to improve next paper, and request for particular feedback.

STAGE	PLEASE INDICATE WHAT FEEDBACK YOU WERE GIVEN. CONSIDER...	BASED ON THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED: HOW ARE YOU GOING TO IMPROVE NEXT PAPER? You can even use the strategies proposed or your own. Tips (ppt) & Strategies (Checklist).	REQUEST FOR PARTICULAR FEEDBACK. If you would like feedback on any particular aspects of your current assignment please make a note of them here.	
	FEEDBACK ON CURRENT PERFORMANCE		STUDENTS' REQUEST	TUTOR'S RESPONSE
1ST DRAFT				

Figure 4. Ipsative feedback form.

The figure above presented illustrates the Ipsative feedback form used in the pedagogical implementation and adapted from the one proposed by Hughes et al., (2011). The first column from the left specifies the paper that is going to be analyzed: first draft, second draft or final paper. Then, in the green column, students had to write down relevant comments from the teacher's recorded feedback. After that, in the pink column, students were encouraged to draw an action plan specifying the strategies they would use in order to improve their paper; for instance, they could revise and write down some of the strategies learnt from the teacher or look for some of their own. Finally, in the purple column, students wrote to the teacher if they had any particular need.

Students' essays. The students' essays proffer the most important piece of evidence that was collected, as they provided a multidimensional perspective of student's growth at a specific stage of the assessment. In the implementation four written samples from each student were collected at the diagnostic stage and drafting revising and publishing process writing stages, because the progress of the student's level of essay writing was the main purpose of Ipsative assessment, and consequently of this study, it was necessary to gather evidence of the student's progress throughout the process.

Students' essays scores. In pursuance of measuring the impact of the Ipsative assessment in argumentative essay writing from a statistical standpoint and supporting qualitative data gathered, three drafts and the final essay from each student were evaluated at the diagnostic, drafting, revising and publishing stages of the process writing using the students results chart (Appendix D).

To evaluate students’ essays and obtain the scores teacher- researchers used a rubric (Appendix E) comprising criteria related to the rhetorical structure of an argumentative essay, the use of language and the use of specialized sources. From the first criteria, components such as introductory paragraph (opening sentence, thesis statement and closing sentence), body paragraph (supporting paragraph and opposing paragraph), and conclusion (supporting and opposing argument and thesis statement) were taken into consideration. The second criteria correspond to the use of language in which sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar were evaluated. Finally, the third criteria considered the use of sources and the quantity of them used, three being the minimum established. All the categories were graded using a 4 to 1 Likert scale, being 4 meets expectations, 3 improving, 2 progressing and 1 needs improvement.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection instruments were applied in three stages during the research process: pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation.

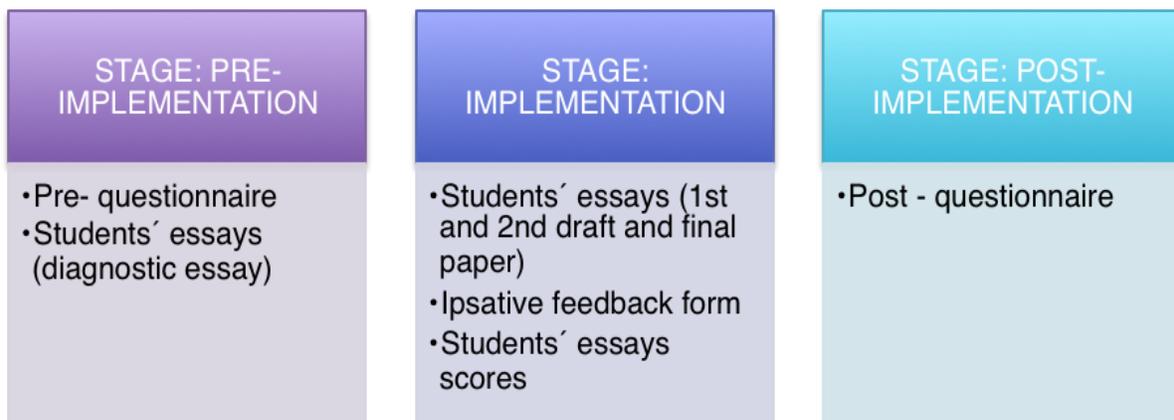


Figure 5. Data collection procedures.

The previous figure illustrates the data collection instruments used in each stage of the research process. In the pre-implementation stage students answered the pre- questionnaire and

wrote an argumentative diagnostic essay, in order to establish a measure of the students' accuracy when writing an argumentative essay and the use of the language. During the process of implementation, the teacher-researchers gathered and evaluated the students' essays and students' answers from the Ipsative feedback form in order to record significant information about the participants' improvement. In the post-implementation process the students completed the post – questionnaire in which they shared their insights regarding their performance in the overall process.

Ethical considerations

As part of social research, this study concerns people's lives in the social world, which involved ethical issues throughout its process (Dörnyei, 2007). These issues are more acute in the procedure because one of the interests of the study pointed to analyze people's personal views towards the instrument implemented, imposing no risk to the participants (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). To avoid ethical issues “ some elements proposed by Johnson and Christensen (2004) were considered: limiting the research information shared with the participants in order to avoid bias or even non- participation, balancing the relationship between the participants and the researchers in order to establish rapport and empathy, selecting data collection methods that preserve as normal as possible the participants regular activities or processes and controlling confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). To assure that these elements were taken into account; there was informed consent of relevant persons, committees and authorities within the study in order to present and receive acceptance in advance of the principles of the work (Appendix F).

Design and Validation of the Instruments and Procedures

During the semester 2013- II, one preliminary diagnostic was performed to verify the clarity of the instruments and instructions, providing important insights to the design of the instruments implemented. Although it was not part of the pre-implementation stage, it was conducted to initially revise the validity and reliability of the questions in the instruments and acquaint the students with the strategy to be implemented during the semester 2014- I.

In order to ensure validity and reliability, triangulation was used with the purpose of eliminating the researcher's own perspectives (Denzin, 1978). In this study when examining the validity of assessments instruments and procedures, conclusions, interpretations and inferences were drawn from them. As Lynch (2003) explains the "validity procedure" consists of using various data collection instruments and artifacts: pre-questionnaire, post-questionnaire, Ipsative feedback form, students' essays and teacher-researchers feedback. All these instruments and artifacts provided the teacher-researcher with abundant information from various sources that were contrasted with each other.

The design of the instruments was created in order to fit the main objective of this study, use appropriate language and lexicon according to students' proficiency level avoiding bias in the questions and instruments and, set objective parameters to collect qualitative and quantitative data.

Internal validity was ensured in this study by assuring that the outcome is a function of the constructs that are measured, controlled and manipulated throughout the process (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 52). For this reason to provide an answer to the research questions of this study, and to assure the validity of the results, four instruments of data collection were used, attempting to explain the self- management level statements manifested by the students after receiving the

Ipsative assessment approach and to evidence students' improvement in argumentative essay writing.

To ensure the reliability of the data in this study, a sound triangulation strategy was implemented, including the use of the same instruments a few times along the research process in the two contexts and applying here what was stated by Denzin (1978) in the sense that triangulation can be “defined as a way of validating hypotheses by examining them through multiple methods” (p. 141).

As the data analysis is studied from more than one instrument, the triangulation strategy is used to ensure research validity by generating an overall interpretation from multiple perspectives of the inquiry and using a variety of data sources (Dörnyei, 2007); teacher – researchers gathered initial data using the pre- questionnaire to characterize the participants of both contexts and it was found that both groups had the same proficiency level and that they fulfilled the basic requirements for intermediate English students with a B1 proficiency level.

The argumentative essays written by the participants were used as artifacts, and they were collected in the pre- implementation and implementation stages. The artifacts collected in the pre- implementation stage were used to diagnose the difficulties the participants had at the beginning of the intervention and the other artifacts collected in the implementation stage were used to observe the improvements of this study.

Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

Regarding the production of argumentative essays, researchers through their experience as Intermediate English teachers could evidence that feedback and assessment were, for the most part, their responsibility, making difficult to empower students to become self-directed learners whose skills could guide them to develop different tasks outside the Universities. Based on this necessity the Ipsative assessment approach would help B1 English language students from both universities take a central role in their assessment and feedback processes becoming more self-directed learners and increasing awareness in the writing process of an argumentative essay. ---

The pedagogical intervention presents a description of the pedagogical approach of the process performed with the students from both universities during the first semester of 2014 throughout nine sessions of the regular course organized in an action plan (Appendix G) which includes the timeline of the implementation. Also, the objectives of the pedagogical intervention and a detailed description of the three stages developed throughout the implementation are presented. Each week of the course aimed to present one activity to be developed by students independently in approximately ninety minutes responding to the characteristics of both settings.

The delivery of instruction at the universities throughout the implementation was characterized by face to face sessions and online activities. At Universidad de La Sabana, classes met regularly with the teacher- researcher two hours per week and one hour through asynchronous activities. On the other hand, at Universidad Santo Tomás, most of the sessions were developed through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), the Moodle platform *ustadistancia* and some face- to- face tutoring sessions were given. In both groups all the

activities designed were scaffold in pursuance of developing students’ individual writing abilities.

Instructional design.

This instructional design was developed under the principles of the Ipsative assessment approach and it was integrated with the process writing. In the following paragraphs the process illustrating how they were blended in the pedagogical implementation is described.



Figure 6. Process writing stages.

The figure above illustrates the stages adopted from the process writing proposed by Hedge (2005). This process was adapted in this study in order to embed the assessment feedback stage proposed by the Ipsative assessment approach (Hughes, 2011), setting an assessment process in which feedback provided pointed to evaluate specific criterion at particular stages of the process writing following a feedback protocol. Throughout the process writing, Ipsative assessment endeavors to inform the learners on how far they have responded to previous feedback and progressed, as it is described in the following scheme (Figure 7) (Hughes, 2011).

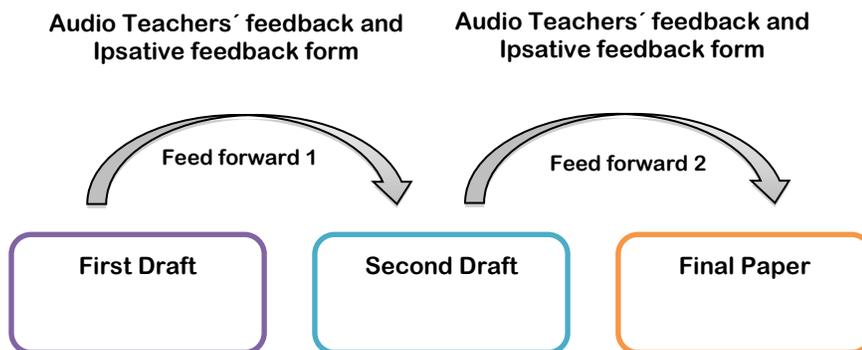


Figure 7. Implementation of Ipsative assessment in the process writing.

The previous figure illustrates the implementation model adapted from process writing and Ipsative assessment approaches. Considering the process writing approach and the Ipsative assessment approach, the researchers designed an implementation model divided in nine sessions, which were framed under the principles of the instructional strategy proposed by Dick & Carey (1996). This strategy was followed by the teacher- researchers in the design of each of the lesson plans (Appendix H) in order to outline how the activities would relate to the accomplishment of the objectives and to generate an effective plan to present instruction to the students (Gardner, 1985).

Blending process writing and Ipsative assessment into the pedagogical implementation provided scaffolds to set a coherent model that evidenced improvement in students argumentative essay writing and allow researchers to analyze students' statements to the self-management level after being involved in the Ipsative assessment process. The pedagogical implementation was divided in three stages: 1) diagnostic, 2) input awareness and 3) process writing and Ipsative assessment.

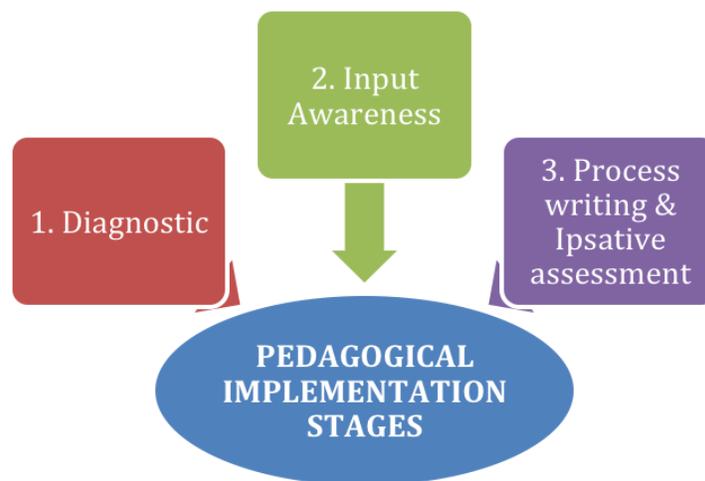


Figure 8. Pedagogical Implementation stages.

The figure illustrates the stages carried out in the pedagogical implementation. In the diagnostic stage, students wrote a 300- word argumentative essay with the objective to determine learners’ ability to develop and to organize ideas into a coherent text. The instruction provided was:

Write a 300-word argumentative essay about body modification; before writing it, you need to investigate, collect information and evaluate information to establish a position on the topic in a concise manner.

After implementing the diagnostic, the second stage of the pedagogical implementation was the input awareness stage, which aimed to achieve four objectives described in the figure 9.

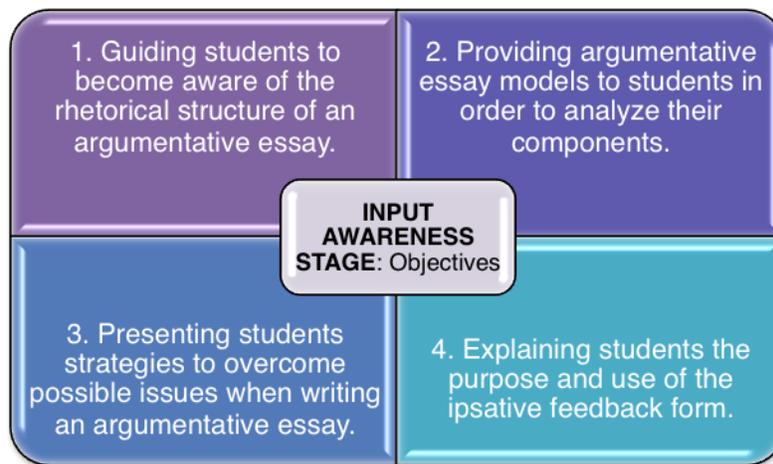


Figure 9. Input Awareness stage objectives.

In the input awareness stage, students went throughout genre exploration and analysis opportunities to be aware of the argumentative structure features by presenting the formal schemata of this type of essay using a power point presentation (Appendix I). This stage also involves numerous practice activities as required by the genre analysis approach in which providing models and explicit instruction is a must. Furthermore, students were introduced to a brief explanation about the usefulness of the strategy, the purpose, the process to be followed and

some samples of the key elements of this model (Ipsative assessment and feed-forward comments). This information was presented by using a video- audio tool, Screen Cast (Appendix J). In this stage, the teacher- researchers role is defined as a, designer, b, planner leader and c, facilitator.

The third stage responds to the implementation of the process writing & Ipsative assessment model. At this stage, researchers designed a writing guide (Appendix K) which provided vocabulary related to the topic of the essay, guiding students throughout the features of the rhetorical structure and leading learners in the linear process writing stages selected from the ones proposed by Hedge (2005), which were: brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising and publishing. Also at this stage, researchers aimed a) to stimulate recall of prerequisite learning around the theme selected, plastic surgery, b) to provide students some vocabulary by using stimulus material, c) to elicit the performance expected by presenting some samples of argumentative essays, d) to give students practice in identifying the elements of an argumentative essay by activating schemata of the outline of the essay, and e) to carry out a language and grammar analysis of some essay samples with regard to identify functional lexicon and grammatical structures to be implemented along the essay writing process.

The course followed in the process writing and Ipsative assessment stage used the writing guide described beforehand complemented with an Ipsative feedback form, a checklist with strategies to improve writing skills and, teachers' audio feedback. *Figure 10*, designed by the researchers, presents the steps followed in order to embed the two approaches in one model, process writing and Ipsative assessment. The description of each step follows afterwards.

PROCESS WRITING AND IPSATIVE ASSESSMENT

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE THREE

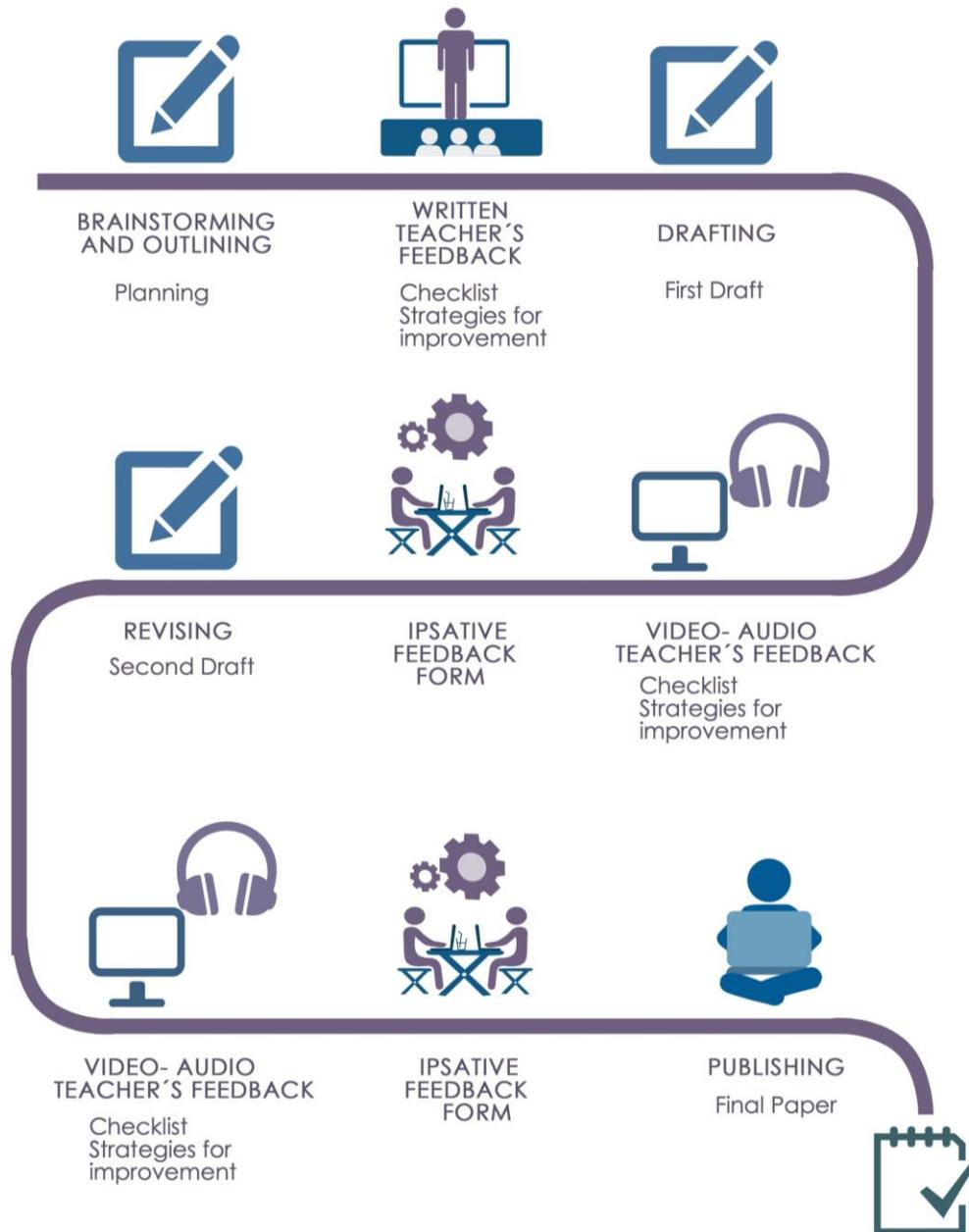


Figure 10. Pedagogical implementation third stage.

Process writing and Ipsative assessment stage: Description of steps.

Brainstorming and Outlining. During brainstorming, students read a given text and then generated ideas, identified new input knowledge, narrow the topic and find a direction. After that, based on the aspect selected, they wrote their outline considering the organizational patterns of the rhetorical structure of an argumentative essay: from the introductory paragraph, the thesis statement, from the supporting and the opposing paragraphs, the topic sentences and finally from the concluding paragraph, the conclusion.

Written teachers' feedback. Written feedback was provided to evaluate the outline components. Also, at this step students revised the checklist (Appendix L) in order to identify whether the outline fulfilled each of the criteria proposed for the essay. If any of them were not achieved, students read some strategies in order to clarify doubts and improved the essay.

Drafting. Students presented the first draft of the essay divided in four paragraphs. They highlighted the elements of the rhetorical structure complementing the information presented in the outline, to make them aware of the structure learnt in the raising awareness stage.

Video – audio teacher's feedback. Using the rubric designed by the researchers (Appendix E), the first draft was evaluated on a 4 to 1 scale. Students' only received the video – audio feedback and a general grade but records of the results of each criterion were kept for further qualitative analysis. Feedback on the first draft, second draft and final paper was provided using the Web 2,0 tool, JING (Appendix M) making a 5 minute recording of the activity on the computer screen accompanied by voiceover narration providing individualized feedback and guiding students according to their particular needs and results. Students received the recording via a link.

After listening to the feedback received, students reviewed the checklist in order to identify whether their draft fulfilled each of the criterion proposed to present the essay. If any of them were not achieved, students could read some strategies given or look for their own in order to clarify doubts and improve the essay.

Implementation of the Ipsative feedback form. Students filled in the first row of the Ipsative Feedback form (Appendix C) that corresponds to the first draft by considering the aspects: *feedback on current performance, how are you going to improve next paper and request for particular feedback*. In the first column, students summarized the audio- video feedback received on the first draft. In the second column students identified major constraints, reviewed the checklist and the strategies proposed, and described the ones selected and how they were going to be used, in order to improve the subsequent version of the draft. Finally in the last column students wrote any questions.

Revising. Students presented the second draft of the essay in which the elements of the rhetorical structure were again highlighted.

Video – audio teacher’s feedback. The second draft was evaluated by checking the proper use of the rhetorical structure and the use of language on a 4 to 1 scale. In this opportunity the use of language was evaluated considering: sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar. At this step, students also revised the checklist and asked questions whether was needed.

Implementation of the Ipsative feedback form. Students filled in the second row of the Ipsative feedback form, following the same procedure followed as in the first draft.

Publishing. Students presented the final paper of the essay in which the elements of the rhetorical structure were highlighted as in the second draft and also adding the three resources

used to support their arguments. After this, students filled in the final paper row of the Ipsative feedback form to complete the aspects: feedback on current performance, how are you going to improve next paper and student's request. Moreover, students provided an answer to the following questions: How can you compare your composition from 1st draft, to 2nd draft and to the final paper? Did you use the feedback provided? What have you learnt throughout this process and what will you do differently next time you engage in academic writing.

The principles guiding the activities designed in the last two stages, input awareness and process writing & Ipsative assessment, followed the scaffolding teaching strategy in which a more knowledgeable other provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner's development. (Van Der Stuyf, 2002).

On the other hand, teacher's feedback followed specific protocol guidelines designed by the teacher- researchers in order to avoid bias from the researchers and to provide answer to the main questions suggested by Ferris (2003) that aim to know what teacher feedback addressed and how the teachers constructed their feedback. The protocol started with students' names, then teachers praised students on revisions of previous drafts to acknowledge their progress (in the 1st draft refer to the outline, in the 2nd draft refer to the 1st draft and in the 3rd draft refer to the 2nd draft). After that, teacher- researchers explained what the focus of the feedback was and finally, the teacher made suggestions for the student to continue improving based on comparison of previous performances and the rubric designed as the undermining objective.

Furthermore, protocol considered treating students as individuals, being encouraging, clear and helpful. Moreover, it was relevant to identify major feedback points in order to prioritize issues on various essays drafts and avoiding students felt overloaded with too much information.

Results and Data Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered from the quantitative and qualitative instruments: pre and post questionnaires, the Ipsative feedback form, students' essays and students' essays scores. These were used in order to demonstrate students' improvement in argumentative essay writing after receiving the Ipsative assessment approach and to identify students' self- management level statements under the Ipsative assessment approach. Using quantitative data analysis techniques was very helpful in this mixed method study (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999) since the research questions from this study were answered by using both analytical approaches.

Data Analysis Methods

In order to provide evidence of students' improvement in argumentative essay writing after being involved in the Ipsative assessment process, and to identify students' self- management statements towards self – direct learning, researchers used descriptive statistics and grounded theory. The first method was used to summarize sets of numerical data and to describe the achievement of the group of learners (Dörnyei, 2007). On the other hand, grounded theory was used to reduce and analyze written data gathered through the three instruments by triangulating the information, identifying patterns and framing a core category to provide and answer to the questions set. As described by Cohen et al., (2007), Grounded theory is used to reduce the amount of written data to make it more manageable and understandable and to facilitate the building of a valid theory from the data analyzed.

Descriptive statistic. It helped analyzing the quantitative data to summarize findings by describing general tendencies in the data and the overall spread of the scores (Dörnyei, 2007).

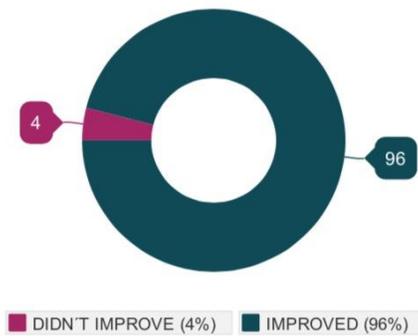
Such statistics are indispensable in this study because researchers aimed to measure the students' essays scores presented throughout the process writing in the implementation of Ipsative assessment in order to prove improvement in argumentative essay writing.

To describe the set of data, two groups of descriptive statistic were used to analyze the scores: the measures of central tendency and the measures of dispersion (Bailey, 2006). As Dörnyei (2007) affirms, measures of central tendency describe the data set with a single numerical value offering valuable information about the subject of study at the instant it took place (p. 213). On the other hand, measures of dispersion describe how the scores spread out in the data set and how they cluster together (Bailey, 2006).

The basic procedures used to describe the set of data were from the measures of central tendency, the mean, the median and the mode; and from the measures of dispersion, the standard deviation. The mean explains the way students' scores calculated on average across the whole process, the median shows the central point in arrange of scores, the mode is the number found most frequently in the set of scores and; the standard deviation tells how each score deviates on average from the mean (Bailey, 2006). The next figure (*Figure 11*) displays the results found in relation to mean, median, mode and standard deviation. Therefore, the analysis of the results is presented in the following paragraphs.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC

General students' Improvement



General Results of the implementation.

MEAN

The way students' scores worked out on average across the whole process.



MEDIAN

The central point in the arrange of scores

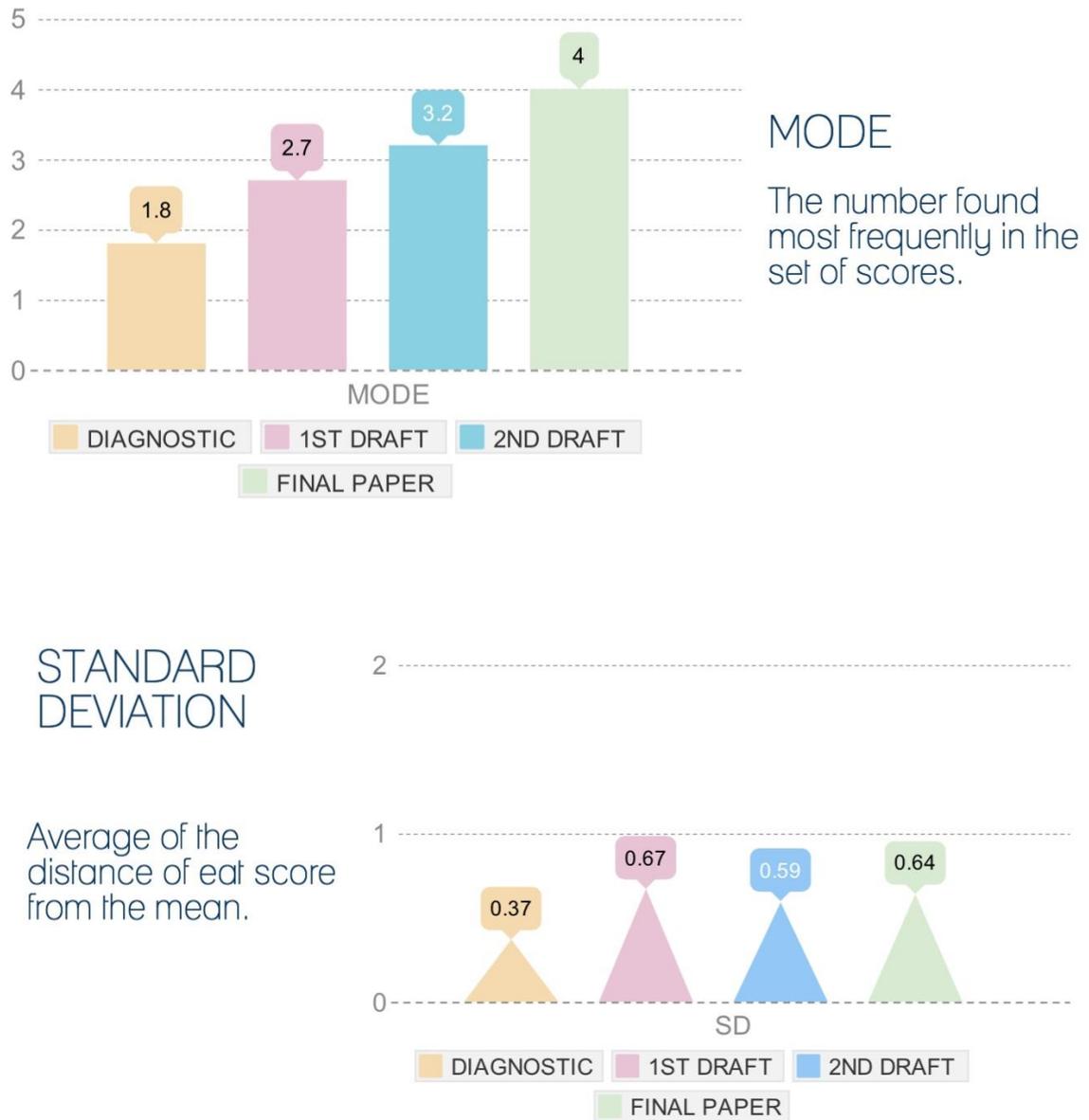


Figure 11. Descriptive Statistics.

This figure illustrates the results found in relation to mean, median, mode and standard deviation search for this study, in which for all situations the total frequency corresponded to the total number of students tested ($n= 24$). The variables were the students' essays scores evaluated in a 1 to 5 scale in each of the essays presented along the process writing ($\sum X_n$): the diagnosis, first draft, second draft and final paper.

The first table represents the students’ general improvement illustrating the significant effectiveness of Ipsative assessment in students’ essay scores considering the overall results of the implementation. An example of the results was evident from those students who scored 2.0 at the diagnosis and 4,0 on the final paper; displaying improvement throughout the process after implementing this type of assessment. After analyzing the data, the teacher-researchers found that 96% of the students showed improvement compared with a 4% who did not improve. From the 96%, 25% of students showed significant improvement, while 71% improved gradually indicating that the implementation of Ipsative assessment in argumentative essay writing resulted in improvements for most of the students.

The following table presents the mean, median, mode and standard deviation scores of each of the stages of the process writing based on students’ scores, from a 1 to 5 grade (Appendix N).

Table 1

Descriptive statistic results from students’ essays scores.

STATISTIC	DIAGNOSTIC	FIRST DRAFT	SECOND DRAFT	FINAL PAPER
MEAN	1,9	2,7	3,5	3,9
MEDIAN	1,9	2,7	3,4	4,0
MODE	1,8	2,7	3,2	4
SD	0,375	0,670	0,594	0,645

From these results it is evident that the mean, median and mode all show consistent improvement for the intervention group. The implementation of Ipsative assessment demonstrated its effectiveness in argumentative essays since the group scores improved gradually throughout the process, emerging in a mean score of 1.9 for the diagnosis, 2.7 for the

first draft, 3.5 and 3.9 for the second draft and the final paper. The median, as the middle point in the set of the scores showed a central point in each stage that progress along the process. Same improvement is visible at the mode process results in which the most frequently number of each stage increased along the implementation. On the other hand, calculating the standard deviation provided the spread of data from the mean, whose values from all essays presented at the four stages of the process writing (diagnostic, first and second draft and final paper) were under 1.0, representing that results were clustered closely around the mean. All in all, results were statistically significant therefore, change was ruled out and the results produced by the intervention were seen to be more reliable.

Grounded Theory. The second method considered in the data analysis of this mixed method research was the grounded theory approach which, is a specific inductive analytic process that offers the researchers an elaborated methodology leading the analysis to some basic understanding of the principles and causes underlying the target phenomenon (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 213). In other words, this method guided the researchers to read, analyze, articulate and verify the data, producing new insights and, theory starting from the research questions and objectives (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.46).

Dörnyei (2007) affirms three coding procedures in grounded theory approach: open, axial and selective coding. Also the author explains open coding occurred when the researchers broke up the data into chunks and assigned conceptual categories to the data segments derived from the data collection instruments. In axial coding the data was re-read and analyzed to identify the interrelationships between the categories found in the previous stage, and finally researchers explained the relationships found in the axial coding at a higher level of abstraction by

identifying a core category as a main unit that answered the research questions (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Therefore, those procedures will be explained in detail in this chapter.

Procedures of data analysis

This analysis was based on data collected from pre and post questionnaires, the Ipsative feedback form and the students' results. Using the data gathered, the researchers looked for relevant patterns from the participants' instruments and organized them in an Excel file, then the patterns were identified by categories using color strategy and subsequently, organized by groups. When the axial coding procedure was applied, the researchers read and analyzed the data again in order to identify categories with regard to the research questions.

Data Management. During the pedagogical intervention, students participated in one workshop presented on the Moodle platform of each university. The workshop was divided into nine steps, worked one each week, and it was planned to guide students into the argumentative essay writing process. Furthermore, the pre and post questionnaires were applied before and after the implementation of the writing process workshop and the Ipsative feedback form was implemented after student's presented the first draft, second draft and final paper. Data gathered from the four instruments was collected into the Moodle platforms of each university in order to keep a record of the students' samples of their written production or participation in the process.

Researchers organized and stored the data systematically in order to have a record of the progress of each student and to manage all the information. The students' answers from the pre and post – questionnaires, and the Ipsative feedback form were tabulated and stored into an Excel file to find and retrieve information easily at the coding stage.

Data Reduction. Data reduction was carried out between data manipulation and data analysis stages in order to prepare the data for analysis by reducing the number of variables to a manageable size (Dörnyei, 2007). In order to achieve this, it was necessary to re-read the data gathered with the three instruments and create fewer but broader variables that carry almost as much information as the original variables as Dörnyei suggested (2007). The process followed comprised selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data that appeared in the full corpus of the written-up field notes to address the subject of the study and make the data stronger (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Coding procedures

Open coding. According to Dörnyei (2007), open coding, is the first level of conceptual analysis of data. This practice was implemented in this process of the study in order to manipulate textual data to break open it into chunks whose length varied between a long phrase, a line, a sentence, and in some cases short paragraphs. Moreover, Corbin and Strauss (1990) express that open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data.

In order to manipulate data and follow the procedure for open coding, data gathered from the three instruments was analyzed in a word -by-word and line-by-line process and then it was labeled according to identified related patterns; this process was achieved by “interrogating” each segment with the questions: what is this piece of data an example of? What is going on? What principles underlie these actions/statements? What do they actually mean? Then, when meaning was assigned, it was necessary to analyze which of them corresponded to each of the research questions. After discovering and naming the categories, the researchers grouped the

labeled patterns into concepts rather than descriptions, “interrogating” each segment in order to reduce the number of categories to be worked with in further analysis. At the end of the open coding, researchers identified the sub- categories, their codes and excerpts to evidence the findings (Appendix O). Dörnyei (2007) proposed the previous process and it is known as an abstracting process from data to first – order concepts. *Figure 12* shows the preliminary categories for this analysis.

Axial coding. It corresponds to an abstracting process from first – order concepts to higher-order concepts (Dörnyei, 2007). In this process, the researchers made connections between the emerging categories with the purpose of integrating and grouped them into more encompassing concepts that subsume several subcategories (Dörnyei, 2007). In this axial coding stage, the researchers identified common features among the three instruments and then started to organize them into categories and sub- categories. The two main categories that emerged were: Enhancement in essay writing as an evolving – reflective process and Development of self – awareness of progress. *Figure 12* shows results from axial coding stage.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES	SUB- CATEGORIES
How does Ipsative assessment evidence improvement in undergraduate students argumentative essay writing?	Enhancement in essay writing as an evolving - reflective process.	Effective use of schematic text structure: rhetorical structure of argumentative essays
		Process-oriented writing approach
Does Ipsative Assessment influence undergraduate students at the self-management level?	Development of self-awareness of progress.	Developmental feedback (feed forward).
		Generic Skills Development

Figure 12. Categories and Sub- categories emerged from axial coding.

Selective coding. In this last stage of coding proposed by grounded theory, the researchers selected a core category to concentrate on in the rest of the analysis and reporting the study. This

core category is considered as the centerpiece of the proposed new theory, taking into account that this category needs to be of a sufficiently high level of abstraction to be able to subsume other categories (Dörnyei, 2007). In this process researchers used the constant comparative method to generate the core category by combining systematic data collection, coding, and analyzing with theoretical sampling, (Conrad, Neumann, Haworth, & Scott, 1993, p. 280) based on the data gathered in the two categories and the subcategories presented before. The following figure (*Figure 13*) shows the core category emerged from the final categories at the selective coding stage, named Ipsative assessment of essay writing to foster reflection and self - awareness of progress.

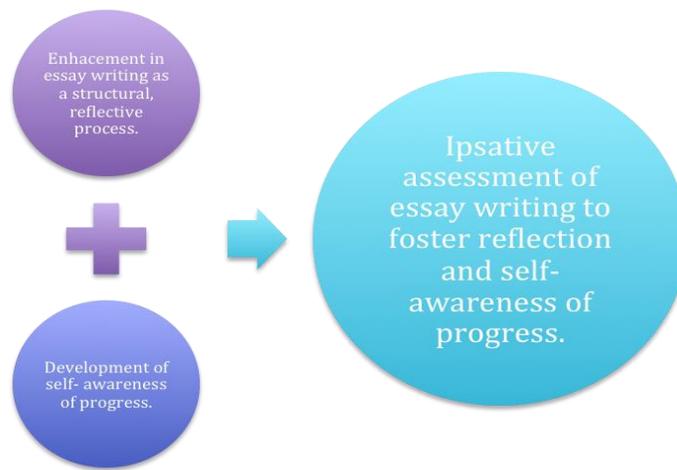


Figure 13. Final categories and core category.

Core category: Ipsative assessment of essay writing to foster reflection and self-awareness of progress. Having students going through a writing task focused on process (as opposed to product oriented-approach) in which learners were encouraged to reflect and act upon feedback by self-comparing their own work, allowed them to gain understanding of how their work evolve over time.

The introduction of Ipsative Assessment in the development of a writing task called for

students becoming active participants in the elaboration and evaluation of their work. Such shift in focus empowered learners to make informed decisions on their papers in steady progress, as weekly comparison demanded for more in the light of their own pieces of work.

This experience affected several areas of the learners' generic skills: a) the writing task, as it evidenced effective use of schematic structure (argumentative essay rhetorical structure) from diagnosis text to post diagnosis text; b) the performance processes: as the same paper was submitted several times with different kinds of improvements that went from content, to language and ended up with use of specialized sources, c) the personal level: as motivation was reflected in the Ipsative form as well as in the data collection tools due to the feeling of personal development, and most importantly; d) self-management: as learners compared their paper to a previous version it and then had to draw an action plan for improvement. This self-management issue was possible due to the feed forward component of Ipsative assessment in which the teacher proposes where to go next and the students debriefs how to do so.

Data Display and Verification

As in data reduction, data display and verification are analytic processes to condense data (Miles and Hubermans, 1994). In the process of designing displays, researchers developed analytic activities when deciding the data, form, charts and graphics that were used to organize, compressed assembly of the data categorized, which allowed conclusion drawing and action in the next steps of the analysis (Miles and Hubermans, 1994). In addition, the researchers verified the data gathered by checking and re-reading it, in order to identify whether it was valid and remained consistent. According to this analytic stage, Miles and Hubermans (1994) consider the data verification as the process of association of information to provide conclusions effectively.

As Dörnyei (2007) explains, coding is undoubtedly a key process in qualitative data analysis that should be accompanied by essential analytical tools in order to organize it. In order to fulfill this aspect, researchers used charts, to organize patterns in open and axial coding, and graphics to display significant insights from the data analysis.

Categories

The following are the categories and the subcategories that came to light as the result of the process of analyzing and triangulating the data gathered from the three instruments implemented.

Category 1: Enhancement in essay writing as a structural, reflective process.

Assessing learners' language performance through different types of written texts leads to the realization about their ability to display judicious thinking, yet, when putting those sensible thoughts on paper, students seemed to struggle with idea development and organization. Having analyzed students' needs through assessment results, the teacher-researchers decided to tackle the argumentative essay as a task to promote reflective, structural processes in writing.

One of the first steps of the process writing was creating an outline; after having received feedback on that, students noticed they had to think over their issue. It was not as straightforward as they thought. Firstly, because the requirements of the rhetorical structure compelled learners to take a stand on an issue, create a thesis, search for pertinent sounded facts and use that information wisely in order to support or refute two contradictory perspectives. Secondly, the organization of the information gathered had to be framed according to the rhetorical structure in a way that the text was accurate and made sense as a whole. These two processes – reflective and structural – appealed to various critical thinking skills necessary for learning in general and

academic writing in particular.

Subcategory: Effective use of schematic text structure: rhetorical structure of argumentative essays. Regarding the schematic text structure of argumentative essays, it was noticeable that comparing the results gathered in the diagnostic stage and the final paper presented by students at the end of the process writing, learners progressed and results evidenced improvement in the acknowledgement and implementation of the rhetorical structure of an argumentative essay.

The earliest stage of the pedagogical intervention required students to write an argumentative essay about a given topic. The evidence showed that, in spite of the extensive training students had been through in regards of writing academic texts, these tasks seem to be insufficient to persuade the learners to produce an organized text. The following excerpt illustrates this statement in depth: (Appendix P).

DIAGNOSTIC ESSAY: I LOVE MY BODY- BODY MODIFICATIONS NO!

The body modifications in the human may be for several reasons:

First, the social aspect where the person live and your relationship with them.

Second, the spiritual part, all human beings are free to our beliefs, therefore; everyone can decide if want convert his body.

Third, the aesthetic, because if the person doesn't comply with what is ,the person practice a surgery confidently and how the technology is now so advanced, leave your fears and takes up the challenge and the consequences if complicated .

The body modifications, that most practice the man in the twenty-first century are:

-Piercing: An opening in any part of the body to place an earring.

-Tattoo: It is a picture, text or image on the skin with ink.

-Scaling: Are scars intentionally produced by cutting or burning, dead tissue and can have terrible consequences.

Excerpt 1. Participant 19. Needs analysis artifacts.

This excerpt shows that the student did not organize the composition within the argumentative essay rhetorical structure; hence the lack of coherence in the text as whole and cohesion within paragraphs indicate that the final composition was an assortment of non-quoted information with no reference to a thesis nor an argument.

The aspects previously mentioned were improved through the pedagogical intervention because students became aware of the eight criteria set from the rhetorical structure of an argumentative essay and they presented a coherent argument that was developed throughout the essay.

The next excerpts are samples of student artifacts that revealed improvement.

<p>TITLE:</p> <p>Yellow: opening sentence</p> <p>Green: Thesis Statement</p> <p>Pink: Closing Sentence</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>PLASTIC SURGERY: VANITY OR HEALTH</u></p> <p>Almost every day we can hear about some plastic surgery that failed or had been succeeded. The main question is: Is it necessary to risk my life just for take the chance to look apparently better than I am ?</p> <p>Even though people have freedom of expression, plastic surgery was created to relieve the suffering of people who really needs this process not for cosmetic arrangement, because plastic surgery takes care of correction of form and bad function in some part of the body and people can feel better and can be normal after recover their regular appearance and cut their sadness.</p>
<p>Light Blue: Topic Sentence</p> <p>Gray: supporting Details</p> <p>Light Blue: Topic Sentence</p> <p>Gray: supporting Details</p>	<p>The role of plastic surgery is to normalize the anatomical features of the body parts that have been affected by different causes including injury, trauma, or malformations, and need to rebuild and corrected by surgery. The main objective of the plastic surgery is that patients with birth defects or who have suffered an accident as a result of this function have lost a part of your body, can get to regain that functionality and appearance; even to correct malfunction generated by bone breaks or burned skin. The point is that who really needs the plastic surgery are the people that are victims of many circumstances that affect their appearance, but sometimes these are the people who can't get this help just because they don't have the enough money to do it, this is really unfair.</p> <p>The plastic surgical procedure has taken so boom, which today can be categorized as an industry that moves large sums of money around the world and has come to merge with the tourism industry, to the point that now found in the tourism market plans including cosmetic plastic surgeries just to improve the "beauty", but what about for the sick people who really needs this surgical process</p>

	and cannot get access to it ?
<p>Dark Blue: Opposing view</p> <p>Red: supporting View</p> <p>Green: Reference to the thesis statement</p>	<p>Vanity and trade have created a new surgical cosmetology industry that today is the most affordable and more when people are willing to travel outside their countries in order to indulge their whims and in turn for economy.</p> <p>I think science discipline to relieve mental pain through the body arranging for people to have a normal life, but this discipline became the biggest industry of vanity. Is it the freedom expression the most important thing to show? What about health? What will happen with the people that needs help to fix or improve their illnesses for different causes but are not available to get it.</p>

Excerpt 2. Participant 15. Process writing highlighted workshop - second draft.

The body modifications like art.

The man has been used since ancient times in his body the modification as a way to express what he feel and what he believe, so he uses his body as a medium to express his emotions. Tattoos, piercings and body modifications are artistic expressions that communicate messages that are necessary to express in the body but to society are not well seen. This essay tries to show that body modifications go beyond a simple fashion, although to society is cause for rejection and discrimination; those are customs that are transmitted from generation to generation.

Body modifications arise not only for fashion also for ancestral, cultural, spiritual and even moral beliefs with which people try to show others what they feel. The Philosopher Richard Tamayo Javeriana University mentions "is very interesting the form like the person unites spiritual and moral values that define themselves with the need to make those values are expressed bodily". These people also have families, children, wife, daily routines like those of any other person, the fact that they look different on the outside don't deprive them of have the same basic needs as any other individual. Emilio González body modifier says "the modification doesn't measure if you are good or bad, if you can do work or not, many people who have damaged a country wearing tie, is like a double moral"

On the other hand society considers these practices are contrary to the proper conduct moral and religious, the society have a lot of problem with these people who make in their body a modification because they think that these people are bad, irresponsible, crazy, unconscious, unprincipled, generating rejection and discrimination for them. "Social discrimination for people with body modifications that comes to workplace image by stereotypes ignore the human and professional capacities of people," said Diego Bermúdez, researcher at Personeria Laboral in Medellin.

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Excerpt 3. Participant 21. Process writing workshop – Final Paper.

As previous excerpts show, students identified and displayed the eight categories established to write an argumentative essay. They tried to persuade the reader using a central statement and organizing complete and coherent arguments that were explained along the essay (thesis statement, supporting and opposing arguments & details and conclusion). In addition, students managed to use proper references of the sources used, and producing an organized text as a final product.

The previous excerpt showed that the writer defined the purpose of the essay in regard to persuading the reader of the correctness of a central statement. In addition, he framed his text by following the organizing principles of the argumentative genre: thesis, argument and conclusion. This indicates that the genre-analysis instruction was an essential element for learners to be able to compose a coherent and structured essay that met the requirements of schematic text structure. In this sense Hyland (1990) states that a text has tidy boundaries and a clear describable function.

The next subcategory will describe learners' improvement in the production of a structured and coherent argumentative essay by focusing on the process writing approach.

Subcategory: Process-oriented writing approach. Dealing with papers in a process-oriented fashion was somehow a different way to write essays for students from both university contexts. As stated in the pre-questionnaire, learners' views on feedback on writing were mostly related with having teachers pointing out at language mistakes, (practice that underpins product-oriented approach). Involving participants through the process writing approach enable them to consider different aspects of the same composition along different drafts: rhetorical structure, ideas development, language use and use of resources. At the end of the process, students witnessed the improvement of their final product and their writing skill.

At the pre- questionnaire implementation, students’ were encouraged to select the essential aspects of an academic paper, from four options given: content, grammar, vocabulary and process. Learners could also provide any aspect on their own. The subsequent analysis of the results gathered showed that students marked process writing as the least important aspect to be taken into consideration, and priority was given to the content of the text. The following extract illustrates the results gathered from pre- questionnaire question selected:

Table 2.

Pre- questionnaire question six answers.

Academic Writing				
6. What is most important when writing academically, number from 1 (most important) to 4 (less important) and add your own.				
CONTENT	GRAMMAR	VOCAB	PROCESS	OTHER
35%	22%	26%	17%	Main ideas, coherence and didactics

In Table 2, it is visible how process-writing received a low score in comparison to the percentages given to the other options, which can represent how students were declining the role that this process represents into succeeding as a proficient writer. Results indicated that learners considered grammatical, lexical and most influential, content knowledge as key elements when writing an academic paper.

DIAGNOSTIC ESSAY

BODY MODIFICATION

Every day we see different bodies on the street, but day by day we can see very strange bodies also. Today there are many people with body modification on the streets, and this phenomenon is despicable to the eyes of many normal and traditional people. By the time the world is running many changes are happening at the same time, but sometimes changes are good and others are so difficult to believe or just watch them. The Human History Evolution told us that the human could be came from apes or amphibious.

Excerpt 4 Participant 15. Process writing workshop – Diagnostic Essay.

In the excerpt number 4, it is presented the first paragraph of a diagnostic student essay evidencing that the student only presented isolated sentences using vocabulary related to the topic given from different sources. Absence of a thesis statement or main idea of the text is also shown.

As the implementation progressed, attention was pointed to the reflections provided by the students in the Ipsative feedback form at the end of each stage of the process writing. Students showed deep reflection on how their performance upon advices received was significant, and also identified the purpose of the linear steps and strategies, as these could help them to surpass weaknesses in order to build up an improved version of their essay conducting the result of their writing. Same reflections were identified in the post questionnaire analysis. These following excerpts illustrate what students reported about their acknowledgement in aspects related to the process oriented writing approach.

in the first draft I did not knew how use the structure of the essay and had many mistakes to did the topic sentences and the main idea of the paragraph and in the second draft I fix many mistakes and the draft was better and have a little mistakes of organization, but then I think that the final draft is better and has the ideas more clear. 2. yes, I did. I had used the feedback provided and it was very useful to learn more about the structure of the essay.
[sic] (Excerpt 5. Participant 9. Ipsative feedback form)

Well, my first composition was very bad , the process help me to improve my process with argumentative essays , i tried to keep all instructions in the road , i think after the first composition , the second was better than the first but also have mistakes so , i learn to fix my compositions with correct instructions that the teacher say me.
[sic] (Excerpt 6. Participant 11. Ipsative feedback form)

1st draft and 2nd draft were chances to build my final paper. My teacher was very helpful in this process. Her observations contributed to achieve my goal. [sic] (Excerpt 7. Participant 17. Ipsative feedback form) (Excerpt 8. Participant 17. Ipsative feedback form)
Its very useful for the students because whe can see if we are doing a good process, taking into account the corrections of the teacher and the positive and negatives aspects on what we need to work on. (Excerpt 9. Participant 1. Post- questionnaire)

It is important all the observations made by the teacher as in the first draft were many difficulties and errors present, exposing a topic not in the proper way and second draft , improved significantly, but also this and hope I have corrected errors in my final essay, providing training in my formation. [sic] (Excerpt 10. Participant 23. Ipsative feedback form)

Really, from de 1st, 2nd an final paper there is a big diference. I needed time to reflexing about this. I read and read and read again to undertand. Also, this exercise helps me to another asignature. [sic] (Excerpt 11. Participant 24. Ipsative feedback form)

Excerpts 5 to 11.. Students´ acknowledged of improving.

After analyzing the previous group of excerpts, students acknowledged that they enhanced their final compositions due to the process writing they went through. In addition, researchers perceived other advantages from the process mentioned in the excerpts: students identified the stages of the process and their functions in order to achieve the outcome. Feedback was understood as a scaffold to achieve their own goals. In regards of the process, the students claimed to have learned the importance of having a structure because it will be useful in other academic contexts and also, they students became aware of their process by setting strategies as self-directed learners.

This category has reported findings on how learners progressed by evidencing improvement in the acknowledgement and implementation of the rhetorical structure of an argumentative essay through the use of the Ipsative assessment. Also the implementation of this type of assessment by the hand of the process writing approach allowed them to consider different aspects of the same composition along different drafts: rhetorical structure, ideas development, language use and use of resources, improving their final product and their writing skill. The successive category describes learners´ development of self- awareness of progress.

Category 2: Development of self-awareness of progress. In spite of having designed a criteria assessment tool (argumentative essay rubric), which was mostly used to provide

feedback on a first draft; subsequent teacher's comments (second, third and final feedback) underpinned the progression achieved by learners from a former paper to the one assessed.

As opposed to criteria reference assessment, Ipsative Assessment does not close the gap between current and expected performance but instead it gives credit for how far the learner has improved (Hughes, 2011). In practice, giving learners comments of praise, not only worked for the purpose of progression itself, but it also served as a platform to provide scaffolding of the upcoming stages of their work.

Subcategory: Developmental feedback (feed forward). Feed-forward was carried out by informing learners how well they had responded to weekly feedback and from there the teacher-researchers guide them on how to continue improving, (improvement led by the path learners themselves established for their papers). The outcome of this enriching practice was evident in two aspects: the progress of the writing task and the influence of the process in learning for life. The former resulted from the continuity and periodicity of feed-forward and, the latest because feed-forward attempted to work on students' critical thinking skills for writing.

The following excerpts taken from the Ipsative feedback form and the post questionnaire display conclusive perceptions that demonstrated that students were able to compare their drafts in order to improve their final paper by identifying and putting into practice strategies to overcome difficulties identified.

I could compare the first, the second draft and the final paper, in the way that with the practice was easier establish the ideas and identify all the parts of the essay.

[sic] (Excerpt 12. Participant 5. Ipsative feedback form)

I have to consider the suggestions that the teacher gave me in the previous outline feedback. After I am going to follow the checklist support carefully, to get a good improvement in my essay.

[sic] (Excerpt 13. Participant 15. Ipsative feedback form)

When I start with my first draft I had many doubts because it was the first time that I have done a essay like this, but fortunately I was improving, the doubts were resolved in the second draft, I improved to reach the goal and submit my final paper.

[sic] (Excerpt 14. Participant 22. Ipsative feedback form)

In this part I realized my mistakes and I had to step forward to improve my process it can identify mistakes to improve in the following written.

[sic] (Excerpt 15. Participant 8. Post- questionnaire)

Excerpts 12 to 15. Feed forward implementation.

From the *excerpts 12 to 15* is possible to pinpoint the core of the feed forward concept of the student understanding of where to go next by comparing with previous performance (Hughes, 2011). In addition, the applicability of three fundamental principles from feed forward were identified: a) students were more likely to act upon feedback because it was considered as a tool to help them with the next piece of work, b) feedback allowed teachers and learners to create a dialogue about single pieces of work of each step over a period of time by using the screencast tool and c) feedback gave students comments about writing skills to be used to improve draft work in a different academic context at the process level (Hughes, 2011). These two aspects will be explained in depth in the following sub – category.

Subcategory: Generic Skills Development. Generic skills refer to the development of life-long learning abilities that are useful beyond current pieces of work (argumentative essay writing), as they are to be exploited in other types of assignments or even personal skills. Based on learners' comments after the pedagogical implementation took place, the experience of

Ipsative assessment over argumentative essay writing, allowed them to gain understanding about how to assert certain viewpoints or how to use arguments appropriately either to support or refute controversial ideas. In order to develop generic skills among learners, the teacher-researchers provided general feedback comments to foster critical thinking skills necessary for elaborating sounded arguments for essay writing, instead of focusing attention on the correction of specific writing segments. The following excerpts show participants' perceptions with regard to life – long learning abilities:

I learned to work with clear objectives. It's important to work with clarity on concepts.
[sic] (Excerpt 16. Participant 24. Ipsative feedback form)

Well, I think that I learnt one of the most important things, follow the instructions, and I learnt to do an argumentative essay. In my next essay I will investigate more, and analyze the different aspects that have one argumentative essay.
[sic] (Excerpt 17. Participant 12. Ipsative feedback form)

I can say that I learned so much and that it is so useful to the next activities in my career.
[sic] (Excerpt 18. Participant 3. Ipsative feedback form)

The writing structure. It's the proof that my style of writing has changed to be more professional, or at least more academic for this type of essays.
[sic] (Excerpt 19. Participant 7. Ipsative feedback form)

I have learned many things about how to plan and present the essay
[sic] (Excerpt 20. Participant 23. Ipsative feedback form)

It really has been very rewarding for me. Because as I said before it was the first time I did, I learned about new grammatical structures and vocabulary, I am very happy with this new knowledge.
[sic] (Excerpt 21. Participant 22. Ipsative feedback form)

My experience was so rewarding because with this I really learned and understand the theme.
[sic] (Excerpt 22. Participant 5. Post questionnaire)

My experience was so rewarding because with this I really learned and understand the theme.

[sic] (Excerpt 23. Participant 5. Post questionnaire)

I have a much better reading and writing comprehension, and I Know how to keep in that way.

[sic] (Excerpt 24. Participant 1. Post questionnaire)

The next time I get involved in academic writing, I feel safer because I have learned the importance of correct organization and structure.

[sic] (Excerpt 25. Participant 14. Ipsative feedback form)

Excerpts 16 to 25. Participants' perceptions with regard to life – long learning abilities.

Learners illustrated how comments received on generic skills development at the process level are applicable for future assignments, as expressed by Hughes (2011), as they learnt about setting specific objectives, getting clear understanding on concepts, following instructions, researching on accurate resources and organizing and planning stages in writing process. On the other hand, students expressed that feedback fostered generic critical skills which have long term value for their career and personal lives when facing academic assignments that point to essay writing.

To sum up, after ascertaining the data gathered from the two categories set, meaningful conclusions appeared in order to provide accurate evidence that the use of the Ipsative assessment of essay writing fosters reflection and self - awareness progress. On the one hand, instructing learners through genre analysis and complementing it with process writing approach resulted in higher quality results in the final compositions. On the other hand, using comparison, appraising for progress, scaffolding for improvement and mostly encouraging learners to set an action plan enabled them to play an active role in their assessment and writing learning process.

Conclusions, Pedagogical Implications and Further Research

This research report has documented the test of Ipsative assessment approach on argumentative essay writing of two groups of undergraduate students. The outcomes of this study showed that this approach influenced students in both cognitive and self-management levels of their learning. Firstly, by means of Ipsative feedback students were challenged to deploy a set of critical thinking skills necessary to produce an argumentative text. It means that, conversely to traditional feedback practices, Ipsative feedback pointed out to foster generic skills (arguing, supporting and refuting viewpoints) rather than focusing on language mistakes. The results of this shift in focus were clearly seen in the learning product, but the most significant effect was that the students raised awareness of the importance of these generic skills in their life-long learning.

Secondly, the implementation of Ipsative assessment allowed the teacher-researchers to tackle a situation they considered problematic in their teaching contexts where the student's role is rather passive in regards of assessment. The main trait of this implementation was that students were request to act upon the feedback given by drawing an action plan to improve their work. This goal setting task enhanced students' autonomy and gave them the opportunity to make informed decisions of content rather than correcting surface mistakes, this in turn, allowed them to play an active role in the assessment process. Moreover, the comparison of various drafts encouraged students to be accountable for the betterment of their essays at the same time the raised self-awareness of progress.

As seen the findings are in line with Hughes (2011) who states that Ipsative assessment has the potential to improve cognitive areas, in this case how learners develop and structure ideas in an essay, in addition to motivational and life-long learning skills.

Pedagogical Implications

In order to incorporate the Ipsative approach into the regular lesson planning, some changes in the teaching process had to be made in order to comply with the requirements of the process writing and the Ipsative assessment. One of the major impacts of those changes was that the whole process lasted three times more than it does in the current teaching practices at Universidad de La Sabana and Universidad Santo Tomás. Even though this situation represented some challenges in the planning, the teacher-researchers considered it was worthwhile because the students' results outperformed those from the preliminary diagnostic carried out in the second academic term – 2013.

Having in mind those time constraints, it may be difficult to fully introduce both writing and assessment processes into regular practices; however, the teacher-researchers consider that the incorporation of at least three of the scaffolds provided this intervention into the language programs would be ideal in order to enable students to become more independent learners. Firstly, the experience of this intervention showed that the students ought to be exposed to a variety of activities that require critical thinking skills, (activating background and life experience knowledge, classifying information and analyzing samples), before writing so that the writing comes as a natural part of a learning process rather than an imposed assignment. Secondly, the multiple benefits of following a process writing thoroughly is evident in language competence, text structure and ideas development. Finally, the teacher-researchers believe that is a need for a change in the perception held by students towards assessment; the teacher-researchers consider that learners need to be involved in the process by proposing a specific course of action and hence be account for the improvement of their work.

Further research

After having explored Ipsative assessment, the teacher- researchers believe in the self-directed nature of the approach and its usefulness in higher education. Even though its implementation is very laborious for teachers because of time and organization demands, it can be tackled through appropriate use of technology.

Other limitations of this study also confirm what it is stated by Hughes (2011) in regards to progress understood as the improvement of grades in the short term. Whereas young adults hoped to see a rise in summative results, distance learners in addition were able to recognize the value of Ipsative assessment in the long-term. One possible way to overcome this situation could be raising awareness of students about their active role on assessment and self-direction, to do so, students should be encouraged to draw action plans for improving subsequent papers in the process writing as well as providing account of such improvements when handing submissions. A thought-provoking focus for further research should be then analyzing the role of summative scores in Ipsative Assessment.

The qualitative results from this study consistently showed that motivation is one of the areas in which Ipsative Assessment impacts the most, therefore, further research of this topic in the field of second language learning would produce interesting gains.

The literature on Ipsative Assessment display a steady link between this approach and self-regulation as one of the levels in which Ipsative feedback operates. It is stated in Hattie and Timperley (2007) that feedback on self-regulation is one of the aspect that is most likely to elicit change in the task and learning. Hence, self-regulation in Ipsative assessment would be worth consider for further work.

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Appendices

Appendix A

1 out 2

Pre-questionnaire.

Answer the following questions

Section A: General Information

1. Gender: Male – Female
2. Age: 15 – 20 ____
20 – 25 ____
25 - 30 ____
3. Have you ever worked: Yes___ No___

3.1 Are you currently working? How long have you worked? (_____)

Section B: Your experiences in Language Learning

4. Have you ever travelled to an English Spoken Country? If yes, explain the length and purpose of your trip.
-

5. Which of the following statements best describes your attitudes towards English Learning:
 - I learn English because I have to (it's part of the curriculum and / or it's necessary for my professional development)
 - I learn English because I enjoy it.
 - For the two reasons previously stated.

Section C: Academic Writing

6. What is most important when writing academically, number from 1 (most important) to 4 (less important) and add your own.
 - a. Content
 - b. Grammar
 - c. Vocabulary
 - d. Organization
 - e. _____.

Appendix A

2 out 2

Pre-questionnaire.

7. Below each of the following statements please indicate where on the scale between 'High Importance' and 'Low Importance' most reflects your experience or opinion. Please tick the appropriate box.

	High Importance	Medium Importance	Low importance
Reading before Writing.			
Analyzing samples of texts similar to my writing assignment to guide my own.			
Using sophisticated language.			
Getting others (as peers) comment on my writing.			
Getting others (as teachers) comment on my writing.			
Editing my text as many times as I am satisfied with it.			
Going through a writing process.			

8. Do you look for ways on improving your papers beforehand them on your teacher? If so, list them.

Section D: Perceptions towards feedback

9. Based on your own experience, do you think teacher’s feedback is actually useful?
 Explain your answers.

Yes____ No____

-
10. How can feedback be more effective and useful for you?
-

Appendix B

Post-questionnaire.

Next to each of the following statements please indicate where on the scale from 1 – 4 most reflects your experience or opinion. Please tick the appropriate box and elaborate more on your answer if you find it necessary.

4 (*Completely Agree*) 3 (*Partially Agree*) 2 (*Partially Disagree*) 1 (*Completely Disagree*)

	4	3	2	1	Clarify your answer if necessary.
1. Typing my teacher’s feedback helped me to interpret /understand better what I had to do to improve my <i>upcoming paper</i> .					
2. The plan that I proposed on how I would improve my <i>upcoming paper</i> was carried out as I intended.					
3. The strategies suggested to improve different aspects of my paper were useful for me.					
4. I took advantage of the “ <i>students request</i> ” square to request further tutoring form the feedback provided.					
5. I found the feedback form useful in my writing learning process.					
6. I consider that my writing skill has improved due to the use of the feedback form.					

Based on your own experience, do you think teacher’s feedback is actually useful? Explain your answers. Yes____ No____

How can feedback be more effective and useful for you?

Appendix C
Ipsative Feedback Form.

STUDENTS' FEEDBACK SHEET				
DESCRIPTION OF THE FORMAT: This tool has the purpose of initiating a dialogue between you and me. We can monitor your progress over time checking how have you evolved in the different assignments. Also you can work on the feedback received for your assignment and how this would help you to improve your next version (feed- forward).				
STUDENT'S NAME:				
STAGE	PLEASE INDICATE WHAT FEEDBACK YOU WERE GIVEN. CONSIDER...	BASED ON THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED: HOW ARE YOU GOING TO IMPROVE NEXT PAPER? You can even use the strategies proposed or your own. Tips (ppt) & Strategies (Checklist).	REQUEST FOR PARTICULAR FEEDBACK. If you would like feedback on any particular aspects of your current assignment please make a note of them here.	
	FEEDBACK ON CURRENT PERFORMANCE		STUDENTS' REQUEST	TUTOR'S RESPONSE
1ST DRAFT				
2ND DRAFT				
FINAL PAPER				
AT THE END OF THE PROCESS	FINAL REFLECTION. PROVIDE AN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:			
	How can you compare your composition from 1st draft, to 2nd draft and to the final paper? Did you use the feedback provided?	What have you learnt throughout this process and what will you do differently next time you engage in academic writing.		

Appendix D
Students Results chart.

1 out of 2

STUDENT'S RESULTS CHART.						
STUDENT NAME:						
CRITERIA		DIAGNOSTIC	1ST DRAFT SCORE	2ND DRAFT SCORE	FINAL PAPER SCORE	
RHETORICAL STRUCTURE	INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH	OPENING SENTENCE				
		THESIS STATEMENT				
		CLOSING SENTENCE				
	BODY PARAGRAPH	SUPPORTING PARAGRAPH				
		OPPOSING PARAGRAPH				
	CONCLUSION	SUPPORTING AND OPPOSING ARGUMENT				
		THESIS STATEMENT				
	TOTAL		0	0	0	0
	PERCENTAGE		0,0	0,0	0,0	

USE OF LANGUAGE	SENTENCE STRUCTURED				
	VOCABULARY				
	PUNCTUATION				
	GRAMMAR				
TOTAL				0	0
PORCENTAGE				0,0	
USE OF SPECIALIZED SOURCES	SOURCES				
	# OF SOURCES				
TOTAL					0
OVERAL TOTAL					0
GRADE					0,0

Appendix E
Teacher’s Rubric.

1 out of 2

TEACHER’S RUBRIC						
INSTRUCTION: This rubric is used to evaluate the criteria that must be included in the argumentative essay.						
CRITERIA		MEETS EXPECTATIONS 4	IMPROVING 3	PROGRESSING 2	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1	
RHETORICAL STRUCTURE	INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH	OPENING SENTENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introductory sentence describes or explains the relevance of the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introductory sentence describes some relevance of the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introductory sentence vaguely explains the relevance of the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introductory sentence does not state the relevance of the problem.
		THESIS STATEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a focused thesis statement that shows a solid position about the problem chosen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The thesis statement is a bit broad; it shows one’s opinion of the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis statement is vague and it lacks of solid reasoning of the problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis statement is in the form of a fact and it fails to show understanding of the problem.
		CLOSING SENTENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The closing sentence frames the content of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The closing sentence partially refers to the content of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The closing sentence doesn’t refer to the content of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There isn’t a closing sentence in the introductory paragraph.
	BODY PARAGRAPH	SUPPORTING PARAGRAPH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a focused topic sentence which is connected to the thesis and supported with research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a broad topic sentence somehow related to the thesis but it needs stronger support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic sentence is unclear in relation to the thesis and its support is weak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is not a topic sentence nor it is connected to the thesis and it evidences lack of support.
		OPPOSING PARAGRAPH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic sentence acknowledges the opposing viewpoint. It is refuted with research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic sentences acknowledge the opposite viewpoint but its refutation lacks of research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The topic sentence is not about the opposing view (of the thesis). It criticizes the opposing viewpoint. It is not refuted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is not a topic sentence. The paragraph content is not about the opposite viewpoint of the thesis. There is no refutation.
	CONCLUSION SUPPORTING AND OPPOSING ARGUMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion synthesizes supporting and opposing arguments without repetition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion summarizes supporting and opposing arguments without repetition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion repeats the information from supporting and opposing arguments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusion presents just new information. 	

		THESIS STATEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion restates one’s thesis and proposes a course of action or insight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion returns to the thesis statement and provides some suggestion for a change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion vaguely refers to the thesis. It proposes a light course of action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion does not refer to the thesis. No opinion about a new course of action.
USE OF LANGUAGE	SENTENCE STRUCTURED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are well- structured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is generally correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure needs revision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are unclear or confusing. 	
	VOCABULARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific words and formal language is used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific words and formal language is evident yet there is occasional use of “you” and “I”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few vocabulary and some informal language are used, wrong translation or slang. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language used is too informal and specific words are not properly included. 	
	PUNTUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation, spelling and capitalization are correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few mistakes of punctuation, spelling and capitalization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some mistakes of punctuation, spelling and capitalization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistakes of punctuation, spelling and capitalization are frequent. 	
	GRAMMAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate grammar choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few grammar mistakes that do not interfere with understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some grammar mistakes that may interfere with understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple grammar mistakes. 	
USE OF SPECIALIZED SOURCES	SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source material is properly documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source material is used but is not properly documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source material is limited or it is not properly documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sources or no documentation of them. 	
	# OF SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three sources are included into the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two sources are included into the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one source is included into the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sources are included into the essay. 	

Appendix F
Students' Consent Letters.

**CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE
INVESTIGACIÓN**

Bogotá, 01 de Marzo de 2014

Señores:

Estudiantes Intermediate English I (flexibilizado) & Pre- Intermediate English II (renovado)
Programa de proficiencia en inglés
Universidad Santo Tomás
Bogotá

Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada *Implementing Ipsative Assessment to Improve Essay Writing Among Undergraduate EFL Learners* este estudio busca investigar los efectivos de una nueva estrategia de retroalimentación en el desarrollo de ensayos argumentativos. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Autodirigido de la Universidad de La Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente solicito su consentimiento y colaboración como participantes de mi propuesta de investigación, que se llevará a cabo a lo largo de este primer corte; Esto implica la planeación e implementación de actividades y recolección de datos durante 4 semanas en las cuales ustedes responderán dos cuestionarios, completaran dos formatos de reflexión en relación con la retroalimentación del proceso de escritura y presentarán además del ensayo principal, dos ensayos más, uno al comienzo y otro al final de la investigación, los cuáles no tendrá incidencia en las notas de clase.

Igualmente, se les garantizará el uso de seudónimos para mantener su identidad en el anonimato en todas las publicaciones que la investigación origine. Cabe anotar que el proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones y notas parciales y/o finales del curso, por tal razón si usted firma la carta de consentimiento acepta voluntariamente participar del proyecto de investigación.

Así mismo, usted puede decidir rehusarse a responder, participar, o abandonar el proyecto. Sin embargo, su participación voluntaria será de gran ayuda para llevar a cabo este proyecto de manera exitosa.

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término mi investigación.

Atentamente, Acepto participar

Firma 

Nombre: Combita

Docente investigador Diana Jazmín Unívio Céspedes.

Appendix G

Action plan followed by the researchers.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE	EVENTS OF INSTRUCTION	RESOURCES	SESSION DELIVERED	DATE	OUTCOME & DUE DATE
Rhetorical Structure Awareness Session	Introduction to the task, concepts and close practice activities.	Power point presentation	In class	Feb. 25 th .	March 7 th
Pre-writing Session	Input session – Vocabulary, grammar and rhetorical structure close and open practice	Writing Guide activities 1 - 5	In class	March 10 th	Activities 1 - 5 March 21 st
Writing Process	Brainstorming and outlining	Writing Guide activities 6-7	Online	March 24 th	Outline March 28 th
Teachers’ Revision	Outline revision and approval	Writing Guide activity 7	Online (JING)	April 1 st	April 8 th
Writing Process Strategy awareness session	Explaining students the feedback strategy and get them write the 1 st Draft.	Strategy Power point presentation + Writing guide activity 8	In class	April 15 th	April 18 th
Teacher’s 1st feedback	Provide feedback on students 1 st draft and remind students how the feedback strategy works.	JING-(tool)	Online	April 21 st	JING Files April 28 th
Writing Process	Students write the 2 nd draft + references.	JING (tool) + Writing guide activity 8 + Ipsative Form	Online	May 2 nd	2 nd Draft May 5 th
Teacher’s 2nd feedback	Provide feedback on students 2 nd draft	JING (tool)	Online	May 6 th	JING files May 10 th
Writing Process	Students listen to the JING (tool) file and write their final paper.	JING (tool) + Writing guide activity 9+ Ipsative form	In class	May 12 th	May 15 th
2nd Diagnosis & Post – Questionnaire	Students re-write about “body modification” and answer the post-questionnaire	Students 1 st diagnosis file	Online	May 16 th	May 16 th

Appendix H
Lesson Plan.

LESSON PLAN

1 of 5

Adapted from Dr. Joan Rubin’s Lesson Planner, ICELT lesson plan template and Weekly Planner 2012-02 Department of Languages and Cultures, Universidad de La Sabana

Name of co-researchers: Andrea Pérez and Diana Univio				
University Code Numbers: – 201214416 – 201214296				
Institution: Universidad de la Sábana and Universidad Santo Tomás (VUAD).				
Date of Class: 24/02/2014			Length of class: 90 Min	
Week No. <u>1</u>			Time Frame: 12:00- 4:00 pm	
Class/grade: Intermediate English I			Room:	
Number of students: 24			Level of students: A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2	
Lesson Number				
	1 x	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8
Class Objective To introduce learners to the rhetorical structure of argumentative essays by implementing the instructional strategy and by providing numerous practice activities in which learners will explore the concepts of thesis statements, topic sentences and text organization.				
Language Goal Students will be able to establish a position on a topic in a concise manner presenting their PROS and CONS				
Learning to Learn Goal Students will learn how to write an argumentative essay by following the rhetorical structure by establishing a clear thesis and following solid arguments.				
Identify a topic for the lesson On the path of writing.				
Materials and Resources				
Material 1: Power point presentation “on the path of writing: argumentative essays”.		Rationale: Introduce the rhetorical structure and provide practice activities.		Annex 1
References: University of North Carolina (2012). <i>Conclusions</i> . [ONLINE] Available at: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/conclusions/ . [Last Accessed 30 October 2013].				
Material 2: Power point presentation “on the path of writing: argumentative essays”. Slide 13- Thesis statement.		Rationale: Create a thesis statement (step by step process).		Online resource
Source: Thesis statement creator. Available at: http://johnmgarvey.com/apworld/student/thesiscreator.html				
Material 3: Power point presentation “on the path of writing: argumentative essays”. Slide 16- Exercises to practice.		Rationale: Analyze the components of the rhetorical structure by checking essay samples.		Annex 2
Assumed knowledge				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands and implements properly punctuation, grammar and mechanics. • Identifies relationships and make connections among main ideas in a text and the rest of the information inside it. • Uses an extensive variety of sentence connectors and understands the grammar usage of simple and perfect tenses. 				

<p>Anticipated problems and planned solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may feel overwhelmed about the rhetorical structure of argumentative essays. (Instruction strategy is implemented to foster self- directed learning). • Students lack of knowledge of the components of the argumentative essay. (Essay samples provided to be analyzed).

LESSON SEQUENCE TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS						
Teacher's role	Stage	Aim	Procedures		Interacti on	Time
			Students' actions	Teacher's actions		
Model Encourager Facilitator	Gaining Attention	To gain learners attention	Students will watch a wordle to predict what is included in an argumentative essay. Students write their answers in the proper answer sheet.	At this point some problem questions will be posed by the teacher to gain students attention in order to appeal to their interests. E.g. What do you think should be consider in an argumentative essay?	SS	5 min
Model Encourager Facilitator	Informing learners of the objectives	To inform the learners what they should be attempting to learn at the end of the process. Also to encourage the learner to design his own goal.	Students will be asked to read the lesson objectives and then to read about goal setting in order to provide them some input to design their own goal.	Objectives of the class are presented in order to inform and engage the student to the process and performance expected at the end of the lesson. Presenting goal setting, the teacher aim to provide a tool to students to determine their own performance according to their own pace and commitment.	SS	10 min
Guide Monitor Encourager	Stimulating Recall of Prerequisite Learning	To recall for prior information (background knowledge) in order to make part of the learning event by asking a recall question.	Individually, students will check the previous knowledge required in order to write a short paragraph	The teacher will provide students the main three requirements before starting the new topic. The students will be able to access to some sources to have an idea of each one of them.	SS	10 min

Appendix J

Video- Audio explanation of the Ipsative Feedback Form.

Link: <http://screencast.com/t/L3SdSZxB>

STUDENTS' FEEDBACK SHEET				
DESCRIPTION OF THE FORMAT: This tool has the purpose of initiating a dialogue between you and me. We can monitor your progress over time checking how have you evolved in the different assignments. Also you can work on the feedback received for your assignment and how this would help you to improve your next version (feed- forward).				
STUDENT'S NAME:				
STAGE	PLEASE INDICATE WHAT FEEDBACK YOU WERE GIVEN. CONSIDER...	BASED ON THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED: HOW ARE YOU GOING TO IMPROVE NEXT PAPER? <small>You can even use the strategies proposed or your own. Tips (ppt) & Strategies (Checklist).</small>	REQUEST FOR PARTICULAR FEEDBACK. If you would like feedback on any particular aspects of your current assignment please make a note of them here.	
	FEEDBACK ON CURRENT PERFORMANCE		STUDENTS' REQUEST	TUTOR'S RESPONSE
1ST DRAFT				
2ND DRAFT				
3RD DRAFT				

Appendix K
Writing guide designed.

1 of 5

WRITING GUIDE
ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

AIM: To write a paper in which you will try to persuade readers to agree with your viewpoint. To do so, you will develop **one thesis** from two conflicting points.

MATERIALS: Lots of reading to support your thesis.

LANGUAGE REQUIRED: verb tenses (present simple – present perfect – passive voice), connectors, vocabulary related to body modification (plastic surgery).

STRATEGIES NEEDED BEFORE GETTING STARTED:

1. **Close Reading:** Even though your own observations and knowledge will take part of your paper, reading will allow you to get the appropriate vocabulary, structure, historical and cultural facts, examples and details to support your points. From that reading you will have to interpret and decide how to use that data throughout your paper.
2. **Developing a thesis:** As you read, you will strengthen your position towards a given controversial topic, that interpretation will be the basis of your thesis statement in which you will tell the reader what you are going to argue and how you are going to do it.
3. **Analyzing the essay structure:** Academic papers demand that ideas are developed under certain organization, not only because of the need of coherence itself, but also because it will help the reader to understand your logic and move smoothly along the text.
4. **Planning:** Going through process writing will help you to develop each section of your paper in detail which will result in saving time and getting a successful result. The process writing consists of brainstorming, planning, outlining, drafting.

Activity 1: Have a look to the following wordle an answer:

- What are we going to discuss about?
- What do you think are the benefits of this medical procedure?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information is developed in the 3rd paragraph? • How is it related to the sentence in green in the 1st paragraph? • What is it about the sentence in blue? • Name 2 characteristics of the text in grey. 	<p>On the other hand, analysts of the psychological behavior have proved that body modification produces a psychological change, in fact; generally speaking, it is known that esthetic surgery can improve people’s self-esteem. However, researchers have proved that half of the patients who undertake cosmetic surgeries are not satisfied with the result which produces Body dysmorphic disorders (better known as BDD).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the conclusion organized? • How does the sentence in dark blue relate to the 3rd paragraph? • How does the sentence in red relate to the 2nd paragraph? • How does the sentence in green relate to the thesis statement? 	<p>Even though people believe they can be happier after they have undertaken cosmetic surgery, they should consider the side effects of this decision rather than focusing only on the “positive” side of the issue, before making such decision, you should wonder, Do I really needed? Or am I being influenced by the standards imposed by the society?</p> <p>Written by: Elisa Santos Kiroshita - Universidad de La Sabana Student.</p>

Activity 4 - Language Analysis: From the essay “The beauty & the beast”:

- List some connectors of addition and add others that you may know:
- List some connectors of contrast and add others that you may know:
- List some connectors you know to show result:
- List some connectors you know to compare:

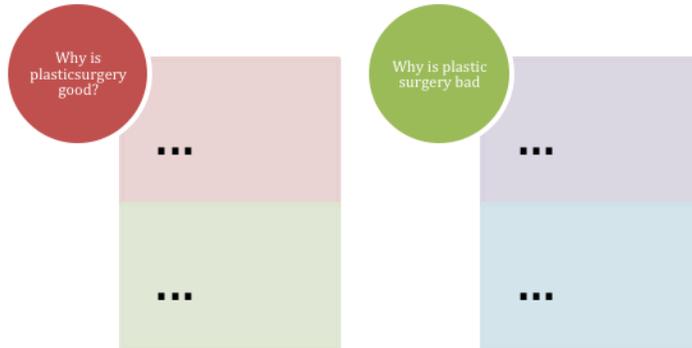
Activity 5 – Grammar Analysis: From the essay “The beauty & the beast”:

- Identify 3 sentences in present simple and explain the writer’s intention to use it:
- Identify 3 sentences in present perfect and explain the writer’s intention to use it:
- Identify 3 sentences in passive voice and explain the writer’s intention to use it:

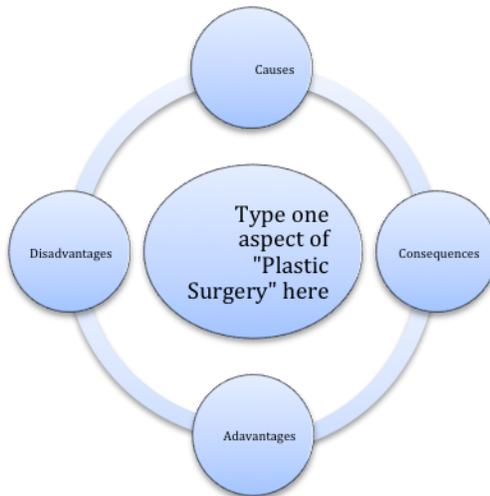
Activity 6 - Process Writing: Brainstorming

- There are many controversial issues related to plastic surgery, let’s read about them and takes notes on aspects that get your attention:

Is cosmetic surgery good or bad? ... Click here to learn more
<http://debatewise.org/debates/1442-is-cosmetic-surgery-good-or-bad/>



- b. Using the ideas from Activity 2, choose one aspect of Plastic Surgery that you would like to develop throughout your essay and fill in the bubbles with words/ideas from Activity 6a.



Activity 7 - Process Writing: Outlining

INTRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THESIS STATEMENT: Provide a complete idea, which will be controlling your ‘for and against’ essay. This idea will also be restated in the conclusion. <hr/>
BODY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOPIC SENTENCES Paragraph 1: Develop your main idea. It must be related to the thesis statement. <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 2: Counter argument. <hr/>
CONC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONCLUSION: Balance the thesis statement with the counter argument. <hr/>

Activity 8 - Process Writing: Drafting. After your finish your draft, highlight according to the instruction in the left column.

<p>Yellow: opening sentence</p> <p>Green: Thesis Statement</p> <p>Pink: Closing Sentence</p>	
<p>Light Blue: Topic Sentence</p> <p>Gray: supporting Details</p>	
<p>Light Blue: Topic Sentence</p> <p>Gray: supporting Details</p>	
<p>Dark Blue: Opposing view</p> <p>Red: supporting View</p> <p>Green: Reference to the thesis statement</p>	

REFERENCES

Provide references below. Keep in mind that without properly cited references your writing is not as valuable and may be even turned down and/or penalized.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Appendix L

Checklist and strategies proposed to students.

1 of 2

STUDENT'S CHECKLIST						
<p>INSTRUCTION: Before you submit your assignment (first draft, second draft or final paper) please check that you have followed all the guidelines so that we can identify and mark your assignment. Mark each box with an X symbol. If your answer is no you can click on the strategies proposed on the right to clarify your doubts and improve your essay.</p>						
CRITERIA		DESCRIPTION	YES	NO	STRATEGIES PROPOSED TO IMPROVE SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF YOUR ESSAY	
RHETORICAL STRUCTURE (80%)	INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH	OPENING SENTENCE	Did my opening sentence describe or explain the issue?			http://1drv.ms/1enNna3
		THESIS STATEMENT	Does my thesis statement show my position towards the issue chosen?			
		CLOSING SENTENCE	Did I close the introductory paragraph with a sentence that states the purpose of my essay?			
	BODY PARAGRAPH	SUPPORTING PARAGRAPH	Is the supportive argument connected to the thesis and developed with details?			http://1drv.ms/1enQKho
		OPPOSING PARAGRAPH	Does the opposing argument acknowledge the opposing view and refute it with solid research?			

	CONCLUSION	SUPPORTING AND OPPOSING VIEW	Does the conclusion synthesize both arguments without word repetition?			http://1drv.ms/1enVKm4
		THESIS STATEMENT	Does the conclusion readdress one’s thesis and propose a course of action and / or opinion?			
USE OF LANGUAGE (10%)	SENTENCE STRUCTURED	Are the sentences well-structured?			http://1drv.ms/1enXqfm	
	VOCABULARY	Is it language fomal/ academic?				
	PUNTUATION	Are punctuation, spelling and capitalization correct?				
	GRAMMAR	Is grammar appropriately selected to provide coherence to the whole text?				
USE OF SPECIALIZED SOURCES (10%)	SOURCES	Is source material properly documented?			http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx	
	# OF SOURCES	Are there three reading sources included into the essay?				

Appendix M

Samples of the Students’ audio – feedback given using the tool JING.

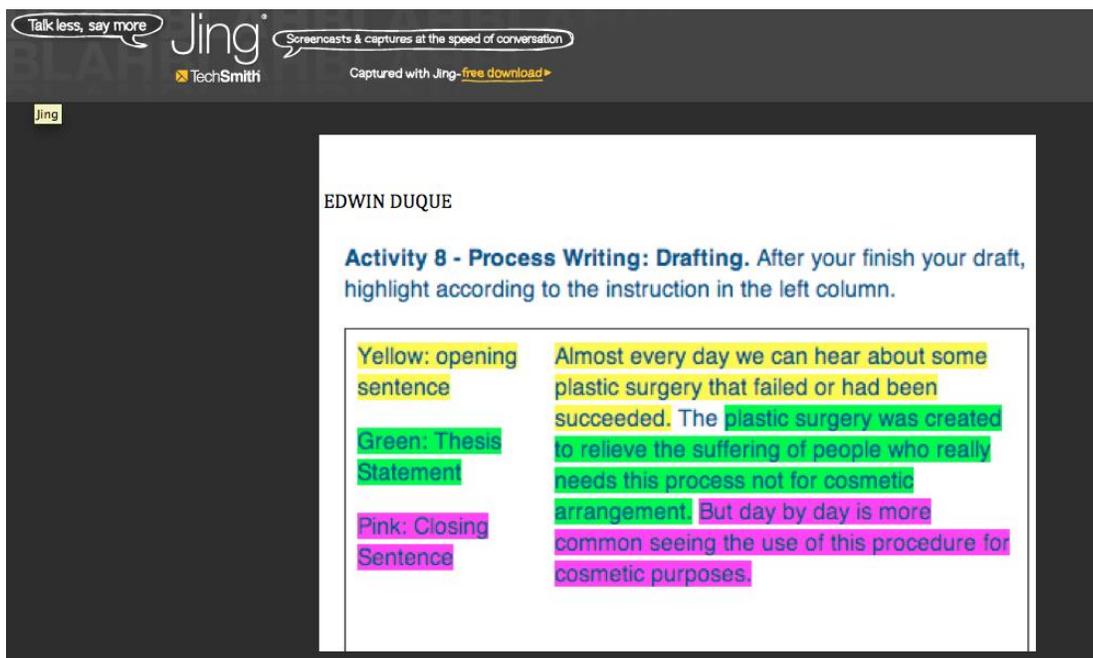
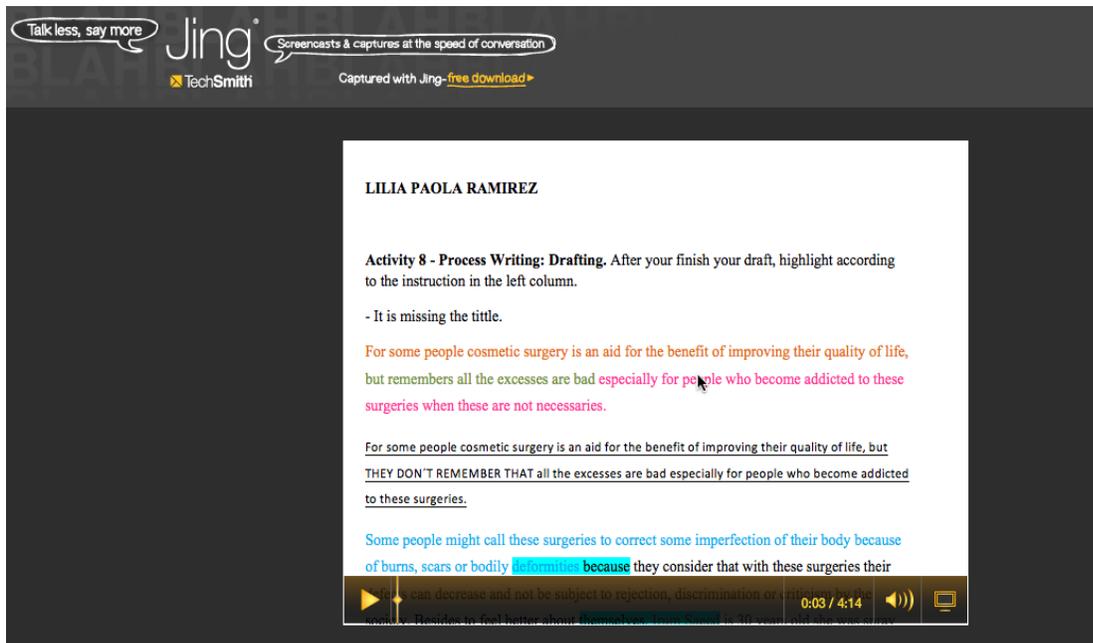


Figure 14. Samples of the Students’ audio – feedback

Appendix N

Student's scores and mean, median, mode and standard deviation score of each of the stages of the writing process.

VARIABLE	DIAGNOSTIC	1 st DRAFT	2 ND DRAFT	FINAL PAPER
STUDENT				
1	1,6	1,5	3,9	4,4
2	2,1	2,9	3,8	4
3	2,9	3	3,4	2,5
4	2	3,5	3	3,2
5	1,8	3,8	4,3	4,6
6	1,8	2,1	2,5	4,7
7	1,3	1,8	2,7	3,6
8	1,4	3,6	4,2	4,5
9	1,4	2,7	3,2	3,8
10	1,6	1,8	2,5	2,4
11	1,8	2,1	4	4
12	1,9	3,3	3,6	3,8
13	2	2,5	2,8	3,4
14	2	3,5	4	4,5
15	2,7	3,4	4	4,2
16	1,8	2,7	3,3	4,4
17	1,8	1,8	3,2	3,4
18	2,1	2,7	3,2	4
19	1,8	3,1	3	3,1
20	2,1	2,5	3,4	4,3
21	2	2,7	4,2	4,8
22	1,5	1,8	3,9	3,8
23	1,8	2,1	3,1	3,6
24	2,3	2,9	4,6	4,2
MEDIA	1,9	2,7	3,5	3,9
MEDIAN	1,9	2,7	3,4	4,0
MODE	1,8	2,7	3,2	4
SD	0,375	0,670	0,594	0,645

Appendix O

Preliminary Sub-Categories, codes and excerpts.

1 of 3

SUB-CATEGORIES	CODES	EXCERPTS
Effective use of schematic text structure: rhetorical structure of argumentative essays	Searching and collecting physical resources for writing	Searching for similar information, consulting pages, books documentaries and all kind material that I can get.
	Searching and collecting knowledgeable resources	Taking into account the recommendations of my teacher.
		Feedback help me to learn and know the good way I should use when write.
	Rhetorical structure	I will put more arguments to refuse.
		I used writing conclusion strategies and body paragraph strategies.
		That is very important stablish the thesis stament and be very concise with the arguments and counter arguments.
		I learn do the thesis and the structure of one essay argumentative.
	Live Long Learning	Before, I didn't have any idea about make a good essay, but now I now the instruction and requirements to make it.
		I really understand how to write in right way.
		I know the structure of a essay I can rewrite my essay to a formal essay, with structure, with supporting details, with a refute idea and more.
	Feed back and feed forward	The Structure becomes strongres step by step.
		Is very useful check the feedback provided because is a kind of guide and let you see the correct distribution of the essay.
		In may first compotition I don't have to idea to do , but in the second compotition on the final compotitionm I have knowed to do.
As soon us I received the feedback I started changing and improving the writing but in the second draft the feedback helped me and I can write a better essay whit a liltle corrections.		

<p>2 of 3</p>		<p>It really has been very rewarding for me Because as I said before it was the first time I did, I learned about new grammatical structures and vocabulary, I am very happy with this new knowledge.</p>
<p>Process-oriented writing approach</p>	<p>Feedback</p>	<p>I had used the feedback provided and it was very useful to learn more about the structure of the essay.</p>
	<p>Discipline and planning for writing</p>	<p>I have to organize my schedule to get enough time and improve everything before the timeline is over.</p>
		<p>I don't have many time and sometimes people is the same and there are problems with them, the comunication is too hard.</p>
	<p>Editing</p>	<p>Reading the text many times.</p>
		<p>Check my document, to correct and improve it</p>
		<p>Teacher find mistakes that I sometimes I don't see</p>
	<p>Process writing</p>	<p>I tried to keep all instructions in the road</p>
		<p>The process help me to improve my process with argumentative essays.</p>
		<p>1st draft and 2nd draft were chances to build my final paper.</p>
		<p>As in the first draft were many difficulties and errors present, exposing a topic not in the proper way and second draft, improved significantly,</p>
<p>In the second draft I fix many mistakes and the draft was better and have a little mistakes of organization.</p>		
<p>Really, from de 1st, 2nd an final paper there is a big diference. I needed time to reflexing about this.</p>		
<p>Developmenta I feedback (feed forward).</p>	<p>Feed forward</p>	<p>The teacher give us some tips to build a great work.</p>
		<p>Teacher is a guide and he always answer a questions that I have or explain me the topics with other tools.</p>
		<p>I could compare the first, the second draft and the final paper, in the way that with the practice was easier stablish the ideas and identify all the parts of the essay.</p>
		<p>Thanks to this proccddure we can make the changes.</p>
		<p>I learned to work with clears objetives.</p>
		<p>We can see if we are doing a good process, taking into account the corrections of the teacher and the positive and negatives aspects on what we need to work on.</p>
		<p>I can say It was effective, useful and helpful.</p>
		<p>In this part I realized my mistakes and I had to step forward to improve my process</p>
	<p>Feedback</p>	<p>Help me to improve my learning.</p>
	<p>My teacher was very helpful in this process. Her observations contributed to achieve my goal.</p>	

		I can say that the information, the accompaniment, the support and the advice proposed by the teacher help me to do a better work in each step.	
		I corrected the mistakes according to the video.	
		That was useful for me because I can check the mistakes that I had with the feedback make me realize what were my mistakes and how I can improve it.	
Generic Skills Development.	Motivation	In this final paper I feel better because I have a idea and points to follow	
		Improve your weaknesses and also it can give you motivation to continue your process.	
	Live Long Learning		The next time I get involved in academic writing, I feel safer because I have learned the importance of correct organization and structure.
			I learned to work with clear objectives.
			It's important work with clarity on concepts.
			I think that I learnt one of the most important things, follow the instructions,
			I can say that I learned so much and that it is so useful to the next activities in my career.
			I will be so sure about my future compositions.
			In my next essay I will investigate more.
			The writing structure it's the proof that my style of writing has changed to be more professional, or at least more academic for this type of essays.
			I had to be more ingenious and faster.
			I learnt to follow instructions for doing a job well.
			My experience was so rewarding because with this I really learned and understood the theme.
			I have a much better reading and writing comprehension, and I know how to keep it that way.

Appendix P**Diagnostic essay sample.****DIAGNOSTIC ESSAY: I LOVE MY BODY****BODY MODIFICATIONS NO!**

The body modifications in the human may be for several reasons:

First, the social aspect where the person live and your relationship with them.

Second, the spiritual part, all human beings are free to our beliefs, therefore; everyone can decide if want convert his body.

Third, the aesthetic, because if the person doesn't comply with what is ,the person practice a surgery confidently and how the technology is now so advanced, leave your fears and takes up the challenge and the consequences if complicated .

The body modifications, that most practice the man in the twenty-first century are:

-Piercing: An opening in any part of the body to place an earring.

-Tattoo: It is a picture, text or image on the skin with ink.

-Scaling: Are scars intentionally produced by cutting or burning, dead tissue and can have terrible consequences.

-Expansions in the body: A modification in the body because these are openings or holes in parts of the body, it can be done by drilling or a surgery aesthetic, but is very delicate and can affect the health of the people for this should care in the treatment.

The modifications in the body are the new trend in the world, God doesn't agree because he made us in his image and likeness, we don't need that, we have an identity, so that if we mistreat our body beautiful.

In the world there are many ways to modify my body, now I decide that I don't need.

Thank God for our body,

You are free but not to abuse your body.