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An Approximation to Writing Process through the Implementation of a Process-Genre Approach

in a Blended Learning Environment

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Abstract

Considering that writing is an essential language skill that learners must develop to succeed in academic contexts, this mixed method study inquires about the impact of the process-genre approach in writing descriptive paragraphs through a blended learning environment. The teacher-researchers conducted this study with a group of tenth graders at Santiago Pérez School in Zipaquirá - Cundinamarca, and a group of first semester students at Institución Universitaria CESMAG (Centro de Estudios Superiores María Goretti) in Pasto- Nariño. Participants completed five face-to-face sessions and four online sessions and received orientation to guide their paragraph writing, emphasizing structure, coherence and cohesion through the blog "Describing Worlds". The writing process implemented five basic writing stages (planning, gathering information, drafting, revising, and editing) that supplied learners with suitable models. The data analysis revealed significant improvement in students' descriptive paragraph writing regarding its organization (coherence and cohesion) and vocabulary, and important development of students' self-reflection of their learning. Results led to the conclusion that the use of a process-genre approach in a blended learning environment is an effective scaffold for the writing process and fosters autonomous learning. However, it is recommended to research further issues of feedback for the development of autonomy in blended courses and teacher-student interaction.

Key words: descriptive writing; process-genre approach; blended learning, self-directed learning

Resumen

Considerando la escritura como una habilidad básica que los estudiantes deben desarrollar para tener éxito en contextos académicos, este estudio de método mixto indaga sobre el impacto del enfoque de proceso-género al escribir párrafos descriptivos a través de un entorno de aprendizaje mixto. Las investigadoras llevaron a cabo este estudio en un grupo de estudiantes de décimo grado en el colegio Santiago Pérez en Zipaquirá - Cundinamarca, y un grupo de estudiantes de primer semestre en la Institución Universitaria CESMAG (Centro de Estudios Superiores María Goretti) en Pasto-Nariño. Los participantes completaron cinco sesiones presenciales y cuatro sesiones virtuales, y recibieron orientación para guiar la escritura de un párrafo haciendo énfasis en la estructura, coherencia y cohesión a través del blog "Describing Worlds". El proceso de escritura se implementó en cinco etapas (planeación, recolección de información, redacción, revisión y edición) que brindaron a los estudiantes modelos apropiados y oportunidades para analizarlos. El análisis de datos reveló una mejoría significativa en los textos descriptivos de los estudiantes respecto a la organización (coherencia y cohesión) y el vocabulario, y en el desarrollo de actitudes reflexivas sobre su propio aprendizaje. Los resultados llevaron a concluir que el uso del enfoque de proceso-género en un ambiente de aprendizaje mixto provee un andamiaje apropiado en el proceso de escritura y refuerza el aprendizaje autónomo. Sin embargo, se recomienda profundizar el estudio del desarrollo de la autonomía a través de la implementación de cursos híbridos y la interacción docente-estudiante con respecto a la retroalimentación presencial y virtual.

Palabras claves: Escrito descriptivo; enfoque de proceso género; aprendizaje mixto, aprendizaje autodirigido

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Chapter One: Introduction

Writing is a fundamental language skill that learners must develop to succeed in an academic context; therefore, it is a field of interest for teachers of English as a Foreign Language. Teaching writing has been mainly approached from two perspectives: product and process (Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Tribble, 1996). In the former, the main teaching focus is on grammar accuracy. In the later, the focus is on supporting learners' processing of ideas by following a sequence of steps (Tribble, 1996). In our classrooms, the traditional product oriented approach was frequently used because its focus on form made it easier to use and grade learners' papers from our large classes. Chen (2007, as cited in Hasan & Akhand, 2010, p. 78) claims that "the large numbers of recent studies concerned with the measurement of strategy training for L2/ FL learners have been product-oriented" (Hasan & Akhand, 2010. p.78). Tribble (1996) also states that to develop writing skills it is necessary to emphasize two focuses: one focus is on genre, the other is on process. The author also argues that the perspective used to teach writing in a classroom must recognize the social and personal value of helping young students to enrich themselves using writing as mean of communication and as an opportunity to access knowledge while going on the literacy process (Tribble, 1996, p. 67).

Developing writing skills requires a more communicative and innovative approach such as the process-genre approach proposed by Badger and White (2000) that considers three factors: knowledge about language, knowledge of the context (especially the purpose for writing), and skills in using language. Writing development happens by drawing out the learners' potential and by providing input to which the learners respond (Badger & White, 2000, p.157).

The implementation of this approach "makes students aware of the differences between spoken and written language, offers explicit and systematic explanation of language functions in

the social context, and demonstrates how texts are structured in distinctive steps or stages to

achieve their purposes" Zhuang (2007, p.21). Additionally, using this approach in a blended

learning environment that enables both face-to-face interaction and access to different sources of

information from the Internet, benefits learners who can work according to their own pace, on

their own time and from different places (Olapiriyakul & Scher, 2006). Such a flexible

environment helps prepare learners in the self-regulation of their learning process as well.

Statement of the Problem

Learning English as a foreign or second language is a requirement to succeed in a

globalized world because it can bring learners new opportunities as long as they can

communicate their ideas and have access to new information. English has become a lingua

franca and nowadays it is necessary to learn it. In our current Colombian academic context,

policy makers such as the National Ministry of Education (2006) formulated the basic standards

of competence for foreign languages: English for Colombia based on the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR, hereafter).

The News Virtual Center CVN (2014) of the National Ministry of Education published a

document called Vision Colombia 2019; it states that students who finish eleventh grade of high

school must demonstrate language level B1 according to the CEFR. Therefore, learners should

be able to use English for communicative purposes and the acquisition of knowledge should

allow them to use the language in real situations.

In spite of Colombian government efforts to support the Colombian bilingual plan, the

results of the national SABER 11 test for English (2013) has shown that students' performance

from Santiago Pérez School does not fulfill the required B1 level; most of them are placed in

level A1. Likewise, the results of the entry diagnostic test administered to the freshman students

at Institución Universitaria CESMAG (Center for Higher Studies Maria Goretti) 2012-2013

revealed that their English level is very low and corresponds to the level A1. Furthermore,

regarding the national standards for English, we realized our students were not reaching the

expected level in order to pass the SABER 11 test and be able to access university studies. Such

low performance was also evident at Santiago Pérez School and Institución Universitaria

CESMAG`s internal evaluations where the result in language test and specifically in

composition exercises revealed they had knowledge of basic grammar structures but their written

productions showed they wrote short paragraphs with vocabulary, grammatical, coherence and

cohesion problems.

       An important concern is that the classroom instruction at Santiago Pérez School is not

providing adequate exposure to the language because the emphasis is on teaching grammar and

vocabulary. There is no communicative purpose in the syllabus rather it gives priority to the

structures. Even though the methodology is not clear, the syllabus proposes a set of teacher-

centered activities using traditional resources like dictionaries and textbooks. Within this context

students in an initial needs analysis survey manifested they had written texts such as articles and

letters but their compositions did not reflect the desired performance for level B1; the analysis

also indicated that students had difficulties with the use of vocabulary and structures for

expressing their ideas. Regarding I.U. CESMAG, there have been a great number of changes

during the last three years. University stakeholders have had the best attitude towards

implementing new trends. The main concern now is to help students to obtain better results in the

SABER PRO test. As long as this test is a requirement to graduate, it assesses students` specific

knowledge about their own careers and their English language performance. According to the

National Ministry of Education (MEN, hereafter), students must have a level B2 in this test.

However, students have poor performance in English written production. Consequently, our

main interest as teacher-researchers was to help our students improve their writing skills, to

enhance our students' performance in the SABER PRO and SABER 11 tests. Additionally,

fostering our students' writing skills is critical not only for academic domains, but also for

effective communication skills in social and professional contexts.

The use of new educational technologies and web 2.0 tools in the current teaching

practices can make the difference in the teaching-learning process, the technological devices may

encourage students to study and connect new information with the old knowledge (Duygu,

Aşkım & Dindar, 2012). Certainly, technology is helping students relate the subject of a lesson to

learners' own experiences, as well as helping them summarize the information to facilitate

comprehension and therefore increasing individual learning (Hackbarth, 1996 as cited in Duygu,

Aşkım & Dindar, 2012. p. 31). However, developing learners' language skills through the

implementation of new technologies has not been of interest for the current administration at

Santiago Pérez School where there is not a specialized English classroom or laboratory, and the

teaching practices proposed in the curriculum do not include technological equipment. As a

result, technology use at the school is minimal and has not yet been used to develop students'

knowledge and skills. In direct contrast, in the I.U.CESMAG context, there are technological

facilities, like a laboratory with English software Tell Me More® and access to Internet not only

in the laboratory room, but also on WI-FI on any students' personal computer. Notwithstanding,

facilities are underused and appropriate strategies in the classroom to help students with their

learning process are needed.

Based on the above context and pedagogical realities, we considered it suitable to

research how to develop our learners' writing skills by implementing new technologies in the

classroom. According to a students' needs analysis (See Appendix A) and preliminary data gathered in the pre-stage, learners received instruction in writing following a traditional approach, centered on teaching grammar and following writing models without having a communicative purpose in mind. This situation motivated the two teacher-researchers to implement the process-genre approach in a blended learning environment to tackle the tenth and first semester students' low proficiency level in writing. The researchers expected learners to improve the creation of descriptive paragraphs by providing them with opportunities to outline, draft, review, and rewrite their text having a clear purpose and audience for their text. Thus, this mixed method action research attempted to answer the following question:

Research Question.

What is the impact of the use of a process-genre approach in A1 EFL students' descriptive paragraph writing skills in a blended learning environment?

General Objective.

This mixed method-action research attempts:

To analyze the impact of the use of process-genre approach in a blended learning environment to develop writing skills in composing descriptive paragraphs and promote self-direction in language learning in two groups of A1 English level learners at Santiago Pérez School and Institución Universitaria CESMAG.

Rationale

The Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) designed the national "Bilingual Colombian Programme" to strength the English proficiency in all educational levels because it recognized the importance of knowing English as a second language to become more competitive in a globalized society. The bilingual program included standards of communicative

competence to allow higher levels of performance in the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Writing is a fundamental skill but it has been poorly nurtured in our students' learning contexts starting earliest school grades. This situation has resulted in the low quality of learners' writing skills at the higher education level. We rarely find a text written by our students that demonstrates skillful descriptive paragraph structure, appropriate use of lexicon, and proper coherence and cohesion. Through the survey implemented at the pre-stage of this research, we noticed that school and university students had a poor performance in writing texts. Therefore, we saw the need to implement an approach that would help students overcome the current shortcomings. The approach we considered appropriate to accomplish this is the process-genre approach supported by a blended learning environment.

Evidence collected from the implementation of the process-genre approach in a blended learning environment would help to enhance teaching practices on local and global educational English Language Teaching (ELT, hereafter) community, as educators and readers of this study would be able to expand ideas on how to improve writing skills through a writing process supported by the use of technology. The ELT community would also find as an appealing strategy, the use of a Virtual Language Center (VLC, hereafter) not only to blend their courses, but also to encourage learners to become reflective on their own learning process and become more autonomous and committed with their learning.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

The current chapter deals with these constructs: *process-genre writing approach,*

descriptive paragraphs, blended learning, and self-directed learning.

Process-Genre writing approach

Writing is a very complex task, thus scholars have suggested that effective writing classes

should include several approaches to enhance students' writing-learning processes. At first in the

1970s and the 1980s, a process oriented approach emerged which focused on developing second

language writing skills through pre-writing activities such as planning, drafting, editing and

revising (Badger & White, 2000; Kim, 2006). Later in the 1980s and 1990s, interest arose in the

genre approach that focused on the context in which the writing occurs (Hyland, 2003). At the

same time, Leki (2003) claimed that providing class time for writing as a communicative tool

based on learners` needs and goals would enable teachers to succeed in teaching writing. It

became clear that teaching students to write in a second or foreign language would require that

the kind of target language learners need depends on their educational goals and communicative

needs. That meant that teachers must engage learners in communicative acts that let them write

with a specific purpose and recipient in mind (Leki, 2003, p.2).

Attempting to provide students with the appropriate input and guide their process

simultaneously, Badger and White (2000) joined the genre, product and process approaches in an

alternative model called the process-genre approach. This approach takes advantage of the

strengths of the three approaches: writing involves knowledge about language (as in product and

genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the

purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process

approaches). Writing development happens by bringing out the learners' potential (as in process

approaches) and by providing input to which the learners respond (as in product and genre approaches) (Badger & White, 2000, p.157).

The strong point of the genre approach for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) is the social factor associated with it. According to Hyland (2003, p.23) "genre refers to abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" and consequently, the genre-based approach offers teachers a way to provide learners with a variety of written text such as writing personal or business letters, mails, academic essays, journal articles and brochures which should help them fulfill properly their communicative purpose. Hyland, op cit. also considers that this approach offers explicit and systematic explanation of language functions in the social context. Similarly, Kim (2006, p. 34) asserts that a genre-based approach "implies that before writing, the context of a situation should be considered and analyzed in order to anticipate what linguistic features are required. The structural features that genres are made up of include both standards of organization structure and linguistic features". Zhuang (2007, p. 21) also notes that genre makes students aware of the differences between spoken and written language.

Johns (1997) and Paltridge (2001) (as cited in Hyland, 2003, p. 27) highlight the methods employed during genre classes including the investigation of the texts and contexts of students' target situations, reflection on the writing practices, exploitation of genre sets, and creation of mixed-genre portfolios. In teaching writing the genre approach works as Hammond (1992, as cited in Rahman, 2011, p.4) proposed "as a cycle which includes modeling, joint negotiation, and independent construction". Hammond's teaching cycle begins exposing students to examples of a specific genre (modeling) which suits the writing abilities expected to be developed by the learners; here they should analyze the text configuration (structure and language) and its

communicative intention. Then, the manipulation of clue language forms fosters the teachers and students joint negotiation. Finally, learners produce their own texts by choosing a topic, researching, and writing (Rahman, 2011, p. 5).

The process approach also contributed to the perspective of the process-genre approach. Using it, the teaching of writing requires generation of ideas and compilation of information through planning, gathering information, drafting, revising, and editing activities (Campbell, 1998 in Rahman, 2011, p.4). Similarly, researchers like Tribble (1996), Harmer (2004) and William (2005) suggested four main stages in the writing process: planning or pre-writing, drafting or composing, editing (reflecting and revising) and final version. Later, So and Lee (2013, p.4) included evaluation as a fifth stage as they realized that "the students need to be provided explicit opportunities for evaluating and reviewing what they did in the one cycle with peers and the teacher". The first stage, planning or pre-writing, is of great importance for writers, as it considers three main issues: the purpose of writing, the language to use, and the information to include. Then, the writers need to think about the audience they are addressing, because that also influences the choice of language. A final step is the definition of the structure of the text; that means the writer must define the sequence of the facts, ideas, or arguments to be included (Harmer, 2004, p. 5).

Teaching writing in a foreign language requires the definition of the most effective and efficient approach to enhance students' writing skills; therefore, Badger and White (2000) created an instructional model for the process-genre approach (See Figure 1) where the writing process starts with the determination of the communicative situation that will lead to a particular purpose for the writing. The identification of the purpose implies the consideration of key aspects for the writers such as the subject matter, the audience who is addressed the text, the

organization and channel or mode. Once those aspects are defined, the planning, drafting and

publishing phase start and must reflect and be consistent with the previous writing steps before

proofreading a final version of the text. This model defines three sources for input: the teacher

who leads the selection of language and how to address the audience, the other learners through

their interaction, and the texts as key materials (models) to set the kinds of texts learners should

write.
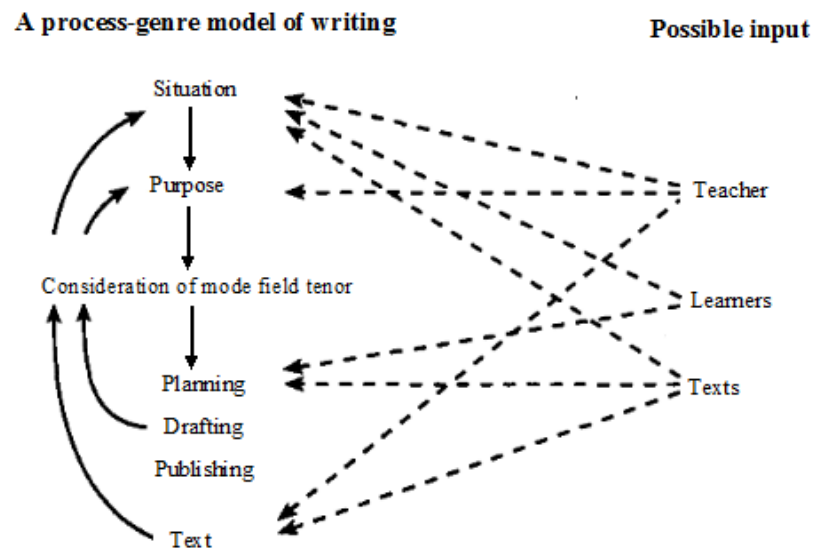
Figure 1. Process-genre model of writing teaching. Reprinted from "A Process Genre

Approach to teaching writing," by Badger & White, 2000, *ELT Journal, 54 (2),* p.159. Copyright

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Through the analysis of this writing model, it appears that the process-genre approach

was the most appropriate to enhance our learners' writing process. The present study recognizes

that this approach to writing is a conscious act that requires a series of organized and linked

stages, which allow writers to think and re-think their compositions attempting to communicate

effectively and develop their linguistic and pragmatic competences. It means learners can use

appropriate language and structures in setting meaningful messages or contents when composing descriptive paragraphs to describe a place.

Descriptive writing

On way to classify writing is by considering its purpose, the language, and the organization needed to communicate the ideas for a chosen topic. That classification of writing, known as genre, is the term for grouping texts that have common features in language and structure and are related to a specific communicative situation. Swales (1990, p.58) defines a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes". Hedge (1988 as cited in Zhuang, 2007, p.23) lists general types of writing, such *as static description, process description, narrative, cause and effect, discussion, comparison, classification and definition*. Similarly, Gerrot and Wignel (1995 as cited in Hami 2011, p.14) list genres such as spoof, recount, report, analytic exposition, narrative, description, hortatory exposition, explanation, reviews, discussion, procedures and new items.

Selecting from all those genres, it appears that a descriptive text is one of the first genres people use in personal and academic contexts. Descriptive writing occurs when writers put words together in a piece of text attempting to inform the characteristics of a person, a place or a situation. It means that writing descriptive text demands the selection of content, language and form, which have a communicative purpose in mind. A descriptive text is the simplest and easiest writing form compared to narrative, recount, or procedure, particularly for the beginners (Ellis, Standal & Rummel, 1989). According to Medina (2003), it is important that learners identify the characteristic of a descriptive text; it requires the identification of the function of the text and the analysis of the structure through a comparison with a narrative text. Then, the writer needs to "differentiate between objective and subjective descriptions, and the main

characteristics of the vocabulary they expect to find. Special attention should be paid to the role of adjectives within the descriptive texts" (Medina, 2003, p.151).

A descriptive paragraph is a short composition that consists of several sentences to present a main subject, and which has three main parts: a topic sentence, a body or supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence (Walters, 2000; Nordquist, 2014). This type of composition uses sensory details about sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings, and textures to create vivid images in the reader's mind (Pearson, 2007). Other important features inherent to writing are the coherence and the cohesion. Hinkel (2003) emphasizes that a coherent text is not necessarily cohesive and defines "cohesion as the way of connecting sentences and paragraphs into a unified whole, and coherence is the organization of the discourse with all elements present and fitting together logically" (Hinkel, 2003, p. 279).

Since our learners at Santiago Pérez school and at I.U. CESMAG need to improve coherence and cohesion in descriptive paragraph writing and according to their language level (A1) we considered it relevant to directly provide our learners with the appropriate knowledge for writing descriptive paragraphs. We agree with Ferede, Melese and Tefera (2012, p.31) who state that:

Students' poor experience of writing in high school could be the main factor for their poor writing performance. This means, partly, teachers at high school level may not teach writing at all or may give the skill little attention, and their perception about writing and how it should be taught can have something to do with this situation.

Furthermore, the lack of writing experience results in our students not knowing how to approach the writing task. Rubin and McCoy (2008) highlight the importance of helping learners

develop skills to approach a task until they can work on their own. Rubin and McCoy, Op Cit, (2008, p.4) consider that "task analysis approach is one that requires a fair amount of modeling and coaching for learners to be able to use this important tool". Consequently, this study intended to support learners' descriptive writing skills in a blended learning environment, as a strategy to encourage learners to follow the process-genre model and take advantage of current technological facilities, as well as, to extend the use of these resources outside of the classroom.

Blended Learning

Technology has become an important tool in language teaching and in the learning process. Despite the rejection that some teachers have had towards the use of technology (due to internal and external factors like the institution, resources and the teacher itself) research shows that teachers who do give great importance to information and communications technology (ICT) and perceive it to be useful, completely transform their teaching (Mumtaz, 2000). The National Ministry of Education (MEN), in the ten-year education plan (2006-2016), encouraged teachers to develop skills in managing technology in classrooms. The MEN also states the importance of looking for strategies to foster learners' self-directed learning skills using online sources and adapting them to lessons in a way the learner feels more confident with their performance. MacDonald (2008, p.2) points out that technologies such as "networks offer scope for new way to access limitless resources (…) and offer the possibilities to develop greater self-direction in learners and to move away from teacher-directed approaches to teaching and learning."

The use of technology in education and its integration with face-to-face traditional methods is becoming more accepted. In fact, technology has helped reduce traditional classroom teaching practices and facilitated new student experiences. Olapiriyakul and Scher (2006) state that the combination of resources allows for more flexibility and provides additional

opportunities to access information. This means that the Internet allows a student to access information in ways that fit his/her lifestyle, and the student's learning becomes more effective (Vijitsriphiboon, 2006).

The combination of face-to-face teaching and Computer Assisted Language Learning, (CALL, hereafter) is usually referred to as blended learning. Blended learning intends to increase learning potential and is more common than pure CALL (Pegrum, 2009, p. 27). Thus, blended learning has become a valuable strategy for teachers because blended courses join the best aspects of both face-to-face and online instruction. In addition, Garrison and Vaughan (2008), state that "blended learning is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences (...) most important, blended learning is a fundamental redesign that transforms the structure of, and approach to, teaching and learning" (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008, p.5).

Almpanis, Patrick, Mclellan, Dinsmore, Faustino and Basuki (2010, p.265) proposed four designs to approach a blended course (See Figure 2). Design 4 is a good option to work with as this design includes aspects from Design 1, 2 and 3.
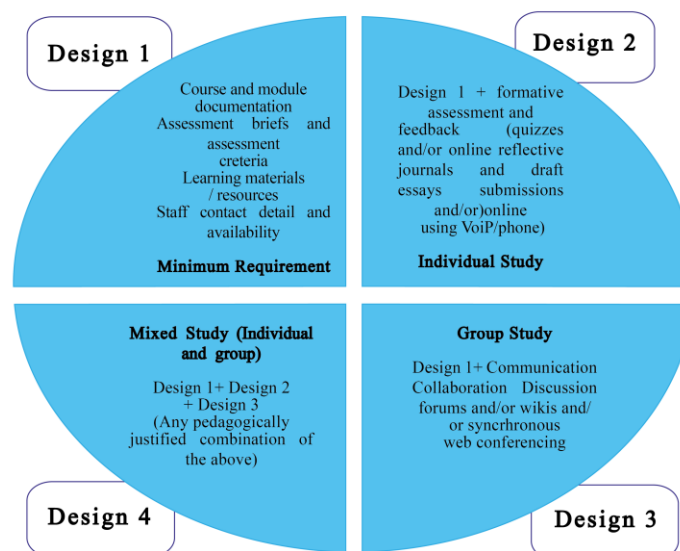
Figure 2. The blended and flexible learning framework. Reprinted from *Academia.edu,* by Almpanis, et al., 2010, Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/3726267/PROPOSING_A_FRAMEWORK_FOR_BLENDED_AND _FLEXIBLE_COURSE_DESIGN. Copyright 2014 by Academia.

To address Design 1 and 2, requires providing learners with learning resources to work online and to encourage their individual study. These resources may include audiovisual material and learning material created specifically for the course, such as slides presentations, Voki©, Prezi© and Google© drive documents. Finally, to address Design 3 and 4, it is recommended to mix individual and group work and foster students and teachers interaction by means of discussion boards.

The adopted design works well for independent, self-paced, self-directed study and can be flexible as it allows for different entry points in terms of duration and completion times. Staker and Horn (2012, p.4) state that "when a course takes place partly online and partly through other modalities, the various modalities are usually connected. In other words, what the students learn online informs what they learn face-to-face, and vice-versa." As a result, this flipped classroom provided learners with interactive activities for each session that extended face-to-face instruction to online activities for independent work giving learners the opportunity to learn on their own time and pace.

Self-Directed Learning

In order to enhance blended learning practices, it is important to link self-directed learning to it. In Garrison (1997), the researchers found a theoretical model of self-directed learning quite helpful to understand what features to take into account in designing and

implementing courses that foster self-directed learning skills. Three dimensions need to be considered: *self-management, self- monitoring and motivation for being a self-directed learner*. Self-direction requires a lot of responsibility and compromise, and certainly, for teachers it is a challenge to teach how to do it. Therefore, it is relevant for teachers when promoting self-directed learning to be aware of learners' personal needs, expectations and interests.

Self-directed learning claims to empower students to be more responsible in making decisions about their own learning by involving various activities and resources, as well as by participating in academic groups (Hiemstra, 1994). A self-assessment form was created to let students self-monitor their progress and performance in writing. Designing and implementing courses which can go beyond language teaching to promote self-directed learning requires teachers to consider the usefulness of leading learners into self-direction, the main features of self-directed learners, and the principles to build the course. It is relevant to consider that self-directed learning can be promoted in all environments, it means, in face to face, hybrid or online courses, therefore it is in teachers' own hands the task of creating opportunities to implement appropriate self-directed strategies that lead to a lifelong learning.

Based on Garrison's (1997) theoretical model of self-directed learning, we can identify some important learners' characteristics to foster in our students. The self-management characteristics include learner willingness to take control of his/her learning, ability to decide what and how to learn; learner resourcefulness in looking for information and ability to solve emerging problems by themselves or collaboratively. Brookfield (1985 as cited in Garrison, 1997, p. 19) argues that "the full adult form of self-directed reaming is realized when external activities and internal reflective dimensions are fused". Here, self-monitoring plays an essential role in the learning process; it means to develop reflective thinking skills that help students be

aware of what motivates their learning in connection to the cognitive process of taking

responsibility to decide, plan, implement and evaluate their performance in the achievement of

any task. Considering the above mentioned characteristics and advantages of having self-directed

learners, in this particular study, the researchers planned contextualized writing activities

intended to promote motivating events with communicative purposes, while implementing self-

directed learning in class aimed at making learners responsible of their own learning process.

State of the Art

Recent studies aimed at enhancing writing skills, have demonstrated that it is more

significant to use hybrid approaches rather a single one, depending on the learners' needs in

context (Behjat, Yasmin & Bagheri, 2011; Nikiforou; So & Lee, 2013).

So and Lee (2013) carried out a quantitative case study on the effects of an L2 writing

Instructional Model for Blended Learning in Higher Education in two universities in Seoul,

Korea. They reported the model was effective for the development of L2 writing skills, and the

participants considered it useful and helpful although they had difficulties dealing with some of

the tasks and activities provided in the model. An adapted version of the process-genre approach

in blended learning environment model implemented by So and Lee (2013) guided the design of

the pedagogical intervention for the present study. Similarly, Miyazoe and Anderson (2010)

studied the learning outcomes and students' perceptions of online writing by using

simultaneously a forum, a blog, and a wiki in an EFL blended learning setting at a university in

Tokyo, Japan. So and Lee, Op Cit, 2010 confirmed students' positive perceptions of this

blended online writing course design, and identified progress in the students' abilities to

differentiate English writing styles. Additionally, Nikiforou (2011) conducted a qualitative

revision of writing in an online learning environment at the University of Cyprus finding the

need to train students to revise for meaning when they write; and that the wiki offers a good environment to work on process writing and raise students' awareness on revisions. Accordingly, the activities developed for the current study, attempted to guide participants into the reflection of their own process and the use of web 2.0 tools.

Despite the small number of studies carried out in Colombia related to the use of a process-genre approach for improving EFL students' writing skills, their contribution is significant in terms of strategies and methods that help teachers reflect on the best way to design meaningful lessons. These interesting studies include "*Short story student-writers: active roles in writing through the use of e-portfolio dossier*" by Cuesta & Rincon (2010). This research reported the effects of using the process- genre approach and e-portfolio dossier to improve short story writing among eleventh graders from the public school INEM Santiago Pérez located in the southeastern Bogotá, Colombia. The results of data analysis from this study revealed significant improvements in students' written production and the emergence of new roles among the learners: they evolved from a passive to an active status, which enabled them to become planners, builders and reviewers of their own short story writing process. This study helped us to corroborate the importance of designing tasks that are contextualized and meaningful. As a result, we decided to let students choose a well-known place from their surroundings to write a descriptive paragraph.

Another significant Colombian study is "*The Process-Writing Approach: An Alternative to Guide the Students' Compositions*" by Ariza (2005). This research was developed with 36 ninth graders at República del Ecuador School, Bogotá, in 2004 with poorly developed writing skills. This action research study involved the use of a series of activities related to the generation of ideas and focusing stages from the process writing approach. Ariza (2005) found

that students showed much more interest, creativity and production of ideas when the starting

point was a picture or a sequence of pictures or cartoons. In addition, the study revealed that

tasks must be short, clear and simple, and appropriate for their proficiency level or students get

bored or frustrated or feel unable to do them and then simply give up. This study helped create a

willingness to learn in the students, most of them wished to be able to deal with a larger number

of vocabulary, structures and coherent elements. In fact, it was essential to create materials that

encouraged and motivated students in their learning process. Taking into account Ariza's (2005)

findings, we included pictures in each activity that helped learners understand the tasks more

easily. We also used the blog "Describing Worlds" to provide a motivating lesson in a blended

learning environment.

Apart from the research highlighted above, Lizarazo's (2012) research "*Using a Blog to*

Guide Beginner Students to Use Adjectives Appropriately When Writing Descriptions in

English" was a pedagogical innovation that asked students to supply the correct adjectival order

according to the rules of English when students wrote a description. The target group was sixth

graders at Colegio Nueva Delhi I.E.D. in Bogotá, Colombia. After explaining to learners how to

use the blog and resources from Internet, they solved tasks on the blog and printed worksheets.

Teacher-researchers implemented a process approach where students received feedback to be

able to improve their productions of physical descriptions. The students' writings reflected the

effectiveness of the activities in terms of the correct use of adjectives (word order). Students

commented that the exercises were clear and entertaining; this showed an increase in their

motivation during the sessions. Therefore, the current study provided students with activities

through the blog "Describing Worlds" and feedback during the whole process allowing the

students to improve their writings considering the aspects of a descriptive paragraph: topic sentence, organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.

Based on the previous studies, it is evident that the field of writing has focused mainly on the product-process approach and just some of them included the use of technological tools. Therefore, the current research explored the effects of the combination of two main approaches to enhance writing: a product-process and genre approach (process-genre approach) through a blended learning environment with the participation of two different population settings: students from Santiago Pérez School in Zipaquirá, and I.U.CESMAG in Pasto.

Chapter Three: Research Design

Having presented the theory related to the constructs of this study and the state of the art, this chapter describes all the aspects considered for the design of this research study: type of study, researchers' role, context of the project, participants' profile, the data collection instruments and procedures.

Type of study

The present study is as a mixed method action research. A mixed research method is "an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms" (Creswell, 2009. p.4), and it involves methods of data collection such as observations and interviews to gather qualitative data and administration of traditional surveys to get quantitative data. This study advocates the implementation of what Creswell (2009) called a *concurrent mixed method procedure*; this type of procedure collects quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, and both forms of data converge in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Nunan and Bailey (2009, p.17) consider that action research is motivated by the desire of "bringing about change and improving teaching and learning in the classroom where the research takes place". Two English teachers-researchers conducted this action research in their own classrooms to observe and go deeper in understanding how the implementation of a process-genre approach affects students' writing skills when working in a blended learning environment. It also aimed to bring about changes in class instruction after having identified a problem in our specific educational context. Action research is cyclical (See Figure 3), which indicates that it follows a set of sequenced steps, which includes the identification of a problem, formulation of hypotheses, and planning an intervention (Nunan and Bailey, 2009). Then, the

intervention takes place with observation of outcomes, reflection on them and identifying the

follow-up issues.
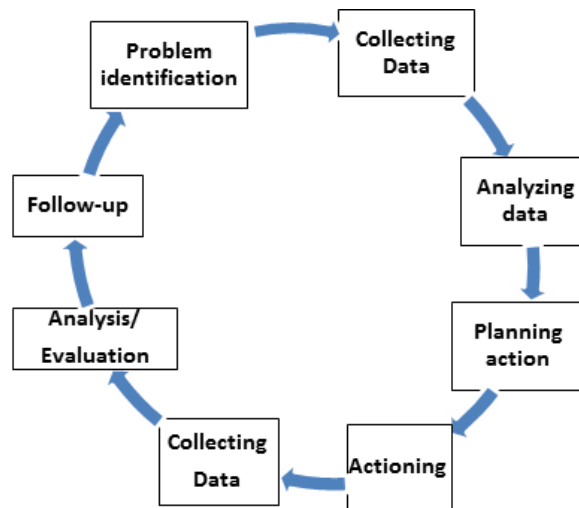
Figure 3. The action research cycle. Adapted from *Exploring Second Language*

Classroom Research (p. 229), by Nunan and Bailey, 2009, Boston: Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Copyright 2009 by Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Researchers' role

　　In this study, the researchers participated as teacher-observers. We were in charge of

designing, leading and observing both groups of participants for further reflections. These

reflections took place in the face-to-face and the virtual environments created to provide

participants with activities and resources to scaffold their writing process. Following the

principles of action research, as researchers, we implemented the process-genre approach,

created the instruments to be implemented, analyzed and synthesized the data. Besides, as

teachers, we worked as facilitators during the learners' training and provided continuous

feedback to support the process of our learners' writing development. In order to foster self-

direction teachers were facilitators and guides instead of just transmitters of information; they

also helped students monitor their learning process using the parameters provided in a

descriptive text rubric to self-evaluate their compositions.

Context

Teacher-researchers implemented this mixed method action research at two settings,

Santiago Pérez School a public school in Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca and at Institución

Universitaria CESMAG (Centro de Estudios Superiores María Goretti) in Pasto, Nariño. Most of

the students at I.U.CESMAG come from rural areas where resources are scarce. Due to

aforementioned situation and other socioeconomic factors, learners' education level is low.

Students from Santiago Pérez School come from families classified mainly in the socioeconomic

level 1 that means not all of them have internet access at home. However, all students can access

technological resources as the town of Zipaquirá has a public library where students can use

computers and internet for free. Currently, the school attempts to prepare students to pursue

university studies. At this level, students need to know English because it is a requirement to

advance each semester; unfortunately, the type of instruction, the time provided to impart classes

and institutional resources do not match that purpose. Therefore, we decided to take advantage of

the computers room at the public library, which is near the school and offers services like free

access to computers and Internet. Regarding the facilities at I.U.CESMAG the institution counts

with an English laboratory room with free access to internet. Students can also access to the free

WI-FI institutional network from their own devices.

Participants

The participants of this study were ten volunteer tenth graders from the public school

Santiago Pérez in Zipaquirá, Cundinamarca, and eleven first semester students from I. U.

CESMAG in Pasto, Nariño who were chosen at random. Participants from both institutions are

teenagers whose ages range between 15 and 19 years old, and they are learning English as a requirement, having three weekly hours of exposure to the English language. The results of the needs-analysis surveys implemented in this study revealed teenagers feel great attraction to technology. Participants manifested their interest in using technology to learn and this is a strength in our contexts as we can engage learners in the use of new technological resources to learn English as a foreign language.

Data collection instruments

In order to gather data to analyze the impact of the use of process-genre approach to descriptive paragraph writing in a blended learning environment, we first created and administered a needs analysis survey in the pre-stage of the study. This initial survey provided us with data related to students' perception about their learning of English considering the learning environments, pedagogical activities, and their writing abilities (See Appendix A). Results from the needs analysis shed light on the design of our pedagogical implementation. During the implementation stage, we collected data by means of three instruments: students' artifacts, teachers' field notes and students' journals.

Learners' artifacts

In action research, documents represent a source of data. Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that "the use of documents often entails a specialized analytic approach called content analysis (…). [Content analysis] is viewed as a method for describing and interpreting the artifacts of a society or social group" (p.108). In this study, we collected the participants' written compositions. They were important instruments to gather information as those compositions informed us about the participants' initial writing skills and their evolution as the intervention proceeded. The first and final compositions were about a place that participants had spent their

last holidays. During the intervention, participants wrote two drafts and a final version of a descriptive text about an interesting place they selected. The teacher-researchers designed a rubric for writing descriptive paragraphs (See Appendix B) to assess the students' compositions as well as for implementing self-assessment procedures. Students knew the requirements they had to accomplish through their writing activities; they could visualize it in the Evaluation section of the VLR "Describing Worlds". In addition, a set of signs and symbols for editing the texts, adapted from Zeman and Kelly (1997), helped participants understand the feedback provided by teachers (See Appendix C).

Field Notes

Hopkins (2008) states that "keeping field notes is a way of reporting observations, reflections and reactions to classroom problems" (p. 116). For the present study, both teacher-researchers registered their classroom observations in a form created for such purpose (See Appendix D). The focus of the observations was to register motivational and socio-linguistic aspects that participants experienced while developing each of the activities proposed. As Marshall and Rossman (2006) note "observation can range from a highly structured, detailed notation of behavior structured by checklists to a more holistic description of events and behavior" (p.98). This study followed a semi-structured format to register what happened in the face-to-face and online interactions. These logs led the teacher-researchers' reflections about how the process-genre approach influenced the participants' writing performance as well as the motivational expressions and self-directed learning actions, such as awareness of their responsibility, curiosity and willingness to try new things, motivation, desired change, and learning enjoyment. (Garrison, 1997; Lyman, 1997 & Taylor, 1995 as cited in Abdullah, 2001, p.2).

Learners' Diary

According to Bailey and Ocher (1983) (as cited in Nunan and Bailey, 2009), journals or diaries encourage introspection on the diarist's teaching or learning and "report on affective factors, language learning strategies, and his own perceptions" (p.292). In this study, we collected data from the students' journal to identify learners' perceptions about their learning experiences and appraisal of their improvement in writing following the process-genre approach in the blended environment designed for this purpose. Learners were required to write an entry in a journal (See Appendix E) after each face-to-face and online session; we provided participants with a format for their journals, which included five questions. With these questions, we attempted to foster learners' reflection about their own learning process and the learning environment that surrounded them.

Survey

Questionnaires are widely used research instruments in educational research because they reach large numbers of subjects, ensure anonymity, and can be written for specific purposes (Yukiko, 2001). In this study, we applied two surveys. In the pre-stage, learners completed a needs analysis survey (See Appendix A) and in the post-stage, after the implementation, learners completed a final survey (See Appendix F). The post-stage survey asked students about their own learning process perceptions regarding three important constructs: process-genre approach, blended learning environment, and self-directed learning. This survey collected mixed data. Quantitative data were gathered from 13 close questions, in which students had to grade from one to five different aspects related to their writing process, willingness to learn and self-directing learning. Qualitative data were gathered from 11open-ended questions, in which

participants were able to express their insights about working on a blended learning environment and about the implementation of the process-genre approach.

Data collection procedures

In the pre-stage, through a survey in Spanish (See Appendix A) we collected data to identify learners' perception about their learning of English, their writing abilities, their previous learning environment and the pedagogical activities used previous to this intervention. The results of the survey showed they had practiced their writing skills in previous courses but their compositions revealed writing problems. According to the students' needs, we designed the action plan for the pedagogical intervention. In order to determine in what ways the process-genre approach affected the students' descriptive paragraph writing, in the pre-stage learners wrote a text describing an interesting place they had visited on their last vacations.

In the while-stage, the learners produced a text following a process-genre approach proposed for both, the face-to-face and the virtual sessions on the blog "Describing Worlds". This process-genre approach included a cycle of modeling, negotiation, and independent construction by planning, gathering information, drafting, revising, and editing to get the final version. At this stage, students also developed the writing tasks through five face-to-face sessions and four virtual sessions. The teacher-researchers uploaded the activities created for this purpose to the blog. There learners interacted with the materials and other classmates in the process of writing of a descriptive paragraph. Students were assisted in the face-to-face classes as they needed to feel the teacher's presence and support by giving them clear instructions and feedback, while working in the selection of topics and the resources needed for their writing.

After each face-to-face and virtual session, students completed the journal format designed for them to register their reflections about the class environment and their perceptions of writing improvement. Teachers also kept observational notes of each session.

In the post-stage students wrote a descriptive paragraph about a place where they had spent their last vacation as it was the same topic they had written about in the pre-stage. They also completed a survey about the process-genre approach, the blended learning environment and the self-directed learning, to evaluate the whole learning process.

Ethical considerations

Ethical Issues in mixed methods design requires researchers to obtain permission, protect anonymity, avoid disruption of sites, and communicate the purpose(s) of the study accurately. In addition it is important to avoid deceptive practices, respect the study population, respond to potential power concerns and confidentiality (Caruth, 2013.p. 115). Therefore, the researchers of this study sent a consent letter (See Appendix G) to the Principal of the school and the Academic Coordinator from the university asking for permission to implement the research work with the group of participants from the tenth grade and the first semester students. Participants took part in the project freely; they signed approval consent letters (See Appendix H). Additionally, the presentation of results ensured the participants' anonymity and confidentiality, as researchers did not use their real names.

Design and Validation of the Instruments and Procedures

To ensure the validity and reliability of the present study, the researchers used triangulation in the process of data collection and analysis. Nunan and Bailey (2009) claim that triangulation "provides a way for researchers working with non-quantified data to check their interpretations of those data" (p.211). The triangulation involves the use of mixed sources of

data; thus, this study implemented several instruments for data collection: learners' artifacts, field notes, learners' diary and surveys. Therefore, the results of the study present statistical and text analysis emerged from two or more instruments.

Validity was evident when designing the instruments as we followed the aspects suggested by King, Morris and Fitz-Gibbon (1987 as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000.p.128) for the appropriate use of instruments. Firstly, we considered readability levels as the questions for the journal were in Spanish and English to ensure learners' comprehension. Secondly, the surveys avoided leading questions so that they focused on the constructs of the study; they were not too long or too short; in addition, participants were given enough time to answer the survey. Finally, we piloted the surveys and this process allowed us to establish that some questions were difficult to understand. Consequently, we re-wrote or omitted some of them.

Researchers are advised to provide an overt discussion and assessment of how the findings have been integrated from both quantitative and qualitative designs and the quality of the integration (Caruth, 2013. p.116). Validity also refers to avoiding subjectivity when analyzing the data. Researchers provided serious judgment sustained with the participants' outcomes without including or deleting information gathered through the instruments. Regarding validity for assessing the participants' artifacts, the researchers interchanged compositions to provide a second score. The raters evaluated the students' compositions considering the rubric (See Appendix B); additionally the teacher-researchers conducted a correlation analysis. Pearson's r for students' first compositions at Santiago Pérez school was 0.83 and for students' second composition was 0.68 showing strong positive relationship. Moreover, at I.U. CESMAG

the Pearson's r for the first composition was 0.70 and for the final composition was 0.72. This also indicates a strong positive relationship.

In terms of reliability in qualitative research; it "can be regarded as a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992 in Cohen and et al, 2000. p.119). The information recorded in this study corresponds to what actually happened and what students really did during the implementation of the different stages. Furthermore, the application of this study in any other group with similar characteristics, and following the same criteria exposed in the pedagogical intervention and instruments design might yield similar results.

Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

This chapter describes step by step how the intervention and implementation of the action

plan was carried out with students from Santiago Pérez School (Institution A, hereafter) who are

in tenth grade and first English level students from Institución Universitaria CESMAG

(Institution B, hereafter) who are in A1 English level, according to the CEFR. This

implementation proposed to enhance learners' descriptive writing skills by supporting their

learning with the process-genre approach. This approach provided participants with model texts

that guided them through the learning process and with opportunities to draft and improve their

own descriptive texts with feedback provided by the teacher in every stage. Additionally,

researchers were interested in analyzing the impact of the use of process-genre approach in a

blended learning environment to develop writing skills in composing descriptive paragraphs in

both groups from the two institutions.

Instructional Design

The process-genre approach is a fusion of genre, product and process approaches

proposed by Badger and White (2000), in which the teacher scaffolds knowledge through step by

step activities. It was necessary to design a cycle of nine lessons in a blended learning

environment to guide participants through a process of writing development (See Figure 4).

These lessons followed the model created for this study, which integrates the characteristics of

the process-genre approach in a blended learning environment. As mentioned before, for this

particular study, teacher-researchers adopted design 4 (*Figure 2*~~Figure 2~~) proposed by Almpanis,

et al. (2010, p.265). Taking into account the educational contexts where this study took place,

Santiago Perez School and I.U.CESMAG had suitable conditions as this selection was justified

and aligned with the learning outcomes and objectives of the current research. Consequently, to

blend the courses we created the blog "describingworlds.wordpress.com" in which we included

all related documentation, interactive writing tasks, as well as, self-assessment forms and rubrics

for scoring criteria.

1.FACE-TO-FACE **Descriptive Paragraph** Situation Set goals Present the task Provide Genre samples	3. FACE-TO-FACE **Outline your text** Modeling/ Pre-writing(planning) Provide text samples. Text analysis: structure, language and purpose. Mode field tenor. Outline the text.	5. FACE-TO-FACE **Improving my first draft** While writing (revising) Teacher's feedback Revise first draft Mode field tenor (audience).	7. FACE-TO-FACE **Reviewing second draft** While writing (revising) Teacher's feedback Revise second draft Mode field tenor (audience).	9. FACE-TO-FACE **Review** Post- writing (assessment) Teacher/students evaluate the final version. On-line self-assessment.
2. ONLINE **Describing places** Modeling/ Descriptive- review activity Text analysis: structure, language Choose a topic/place to write about it.	4.ONLINE **Drafting my descriptive text** While writing (drafting) Write the first draft Peer response sessions Teacher online feedback Individual work using learning tools.	6.ONLINE **Writing my second draft** While writing (second draft) Edit the first draft /write the second draft. Peer response sessions Teacher's online feedback Individual work using learning tools.	8.ONLINE **My final writing** Post- writing (Final text) Edit second draft and writing final version. Individual work using learning tools.	

Figure 4. Model of process-genre approach in a blended learning environment. Adapted

from "A Case Study on the Effects of an L2 Writing Instructional Model For Blended Learning

in Higher Education," by So, L., & Lee, C. H., 2013, *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of*

Educational Technology, *12* (4), p.8. Copyright 2014 by The Turkish Online Journal of

Educational Technology.

Before starting Activity 1, learners had to write a descriptive paragraph that teacher-

researchers used as a diagnostic text to establish the initial students' writing performance and to

compare it to the final descriptive text that students wrote at the end of the intervention. The first

cycle was called 'writing project' in the blog "Describing Worlds" and it started with a face-to-

face activity (See Appendix I) to explain the parameters used during the whole project; the

activity included concepts and samples of descriptive paragraphs.

During the first class, we explained how to surf the blog. Learners were responsible to do

the online activities by themselves and write a journal entry after the completion of each activity.

In the journal, participants reflected on their own performance. At Institutions A (Santiago Perez

school) and B (I.U.CESMAG), where students are not often used to learn on their own, it was

essential to explain all the advantages that self-directed learning has to offer and implement

strategies to foster self-directed learning in blended courses through scaffolding learning.

Bolhuis (1996, p.8) suggests that "[a] gradual shift in teaching towards more student-

responsibility (…) makes learning visible by demonstrating (modeling) the learning process".

The teacher models learning strategies and goes along with students until they learn how to use

them on their own. In the current study learners analyzed paragraph models and worked with the

samples provided on the blog; they also posted their drafts to the forum where teachers always

commented about the quality of their job by starting with sentences or expressions that

highlighted the successes of their writing. The exercise of evaluating oneself can also have a

positive influence on learner's learning. Consequently, participants were given the opportunity

to reflect on their own process by writing a journal and self-evaluated their text based on the

rubric designed for the study. Another strategy used by the teacher-researchers was to involve

learners in decision-making by allowing them to choose their favorite place from the

surroundings to write a descriptive paragraph. Besides being a pedagogical strategy, English

(2011) states that "genre becomes a clear, articulated tool for discussing the relationship between

texts, knowledge and identity." (English, 2011. p.2)

Activity 2 consisted of an online task in which learners were encouraged to recognize the importance of using adjectives for descriptive purposes. In addition, learners had an opportunity to increase their vocabulary and use it in the description of a place they chose from their surroundings. This was their first online experience designed to reinforce not only descriptive vocabulary but also a sense of self-confidence by giving learners the opportunity to work on their own.

Activity 3 was a face-to-face session in which learners watched a presentation about how to outline a descriptive paragraph using sensory details and they went through two exercises: *writing descriptive sentences* and *selecting sensory words.* The implementation of these exercises aimed at guiding participants with the organization of their sentences into a planning map (see Appendix M) to outline the descriptive text according to the generic structure of this type of texts: the parts, qualities, and characteristics of the place.

In Activity 4, knowledge about language was the focus. Therefore, in this online stage we provided students with input related to the language for writing descriptions, emphasizing a detailed analysis of topic sentences as part of a descriptive paragraph. The purpose of this activity was to activate learners' previous knowledge in order to organize their ideas and write a first draft.

Activity 5 took place in a face-to-face lesson where teachers provided feedback on students' papers and enhanced learners to write their second draft. The lesson focused on polishing supported sentences, reorganizing ideas in the text and guiding learners to use adjectives properly. Teacher-researchers expected that learners could use the previous vocabulary and transitional words for improving cohesion and coherence into their texts.

Activity 6 consisted of an online lesson that emphasized concluding sentences. Learners analyzed and gave peer-feedback on one of their classmate's conclusion. Learners also printed a template that would be fulfilled in class according to the teacher and peers-feedback provided on the forum.

Activity 7 was a face-to-face activity in which learners read some tips for improving their writing and did exercises for enhancing mechanics. At this stage, the blog included a sample text to analyze and highlight the features of the genre. The activity also let learners practice mechanics such as punctuation marks, capital letters, small letters as well as transition and linking words.

Activity 8 was an online lesson. This time learners self-assessed their own writing process by using a rubric (see Appendix B). After doing a revision of their papers, learners sent their final papers via e-mail in a word document. In addition, they were expected to post on the forum a presentation of their final writing using Prezi©, a free online presentation software, or Padlet© a free virtual wall. The students received feedback on their final work in the following class.

The last activity, activity 9, intended to determine the impact of the process-genre approach through blended learning environment in our learners' writing process. Students wrote a descriptive paragraph about the place where they had spent their last vacations. In this session, learners also answered the final survey about their perceptions of the impact that the pedagogical implementation had on their own writing process and the procedures they adopted to accomplish each activity.

Action Plan and Lesson Plan Description

This section presents the processes implemented to answer the research question *"What is the impact of the use of a process-genre approach in A1 ESL students' descriptive paragraph writing skills in a blended learning environment?*. It includes the action plan (See Appendix J) and a timeline (See Appendix K) designed for the intervention of this study. The section includes three parts: pre-stage, while-stage and post-intervention stage.

Pre-intervention Stage

The researchers applied a survey (See Appendix A) about preferences for a learning environment and pedagogical activities and implemented a diagnostic task where students wrote a text. This text was compared to a final text that students produced after the implementation. The aim was to provide evidence of any change in learners' artifacts. In this stage, the participants and the heads of both institutions signed a consent letter. The analysis of the diagnostic texts written by students provided confirmation of their poor level of English. According to the results from the survey, we decided to introduce technology into our lessons as a pedagogical tool to develop the activities that supported students' learning. Consequently, we designed the blog "Describing Worlds" to help learners follow a step by step process to improve their writing skills. The implementation of the blog helped to blend our course and to extend the learning process beyond the classroom setting. In addition, the blog created an environment for learners to write to each other and fulfilled a contextualized communicative purpose for writing. The blog also worked as a learning platform meant to promote self-directed learning. We shared Web 2.0 tools with the participants allowing them to work independently and reflect on their own learning process.

While-Stage

This stage covered nine lesson plans of 110 minutes each imparted over seven weeks. In the first face-to-face lesson (See Appendix L), the researchers introduced the blog "Describing Worlds" and explained how to use it during the online sessions. We also explained the convention and rubrics to increase students' self-awareness of their writing process. It is important to mention that the implementation at Institution B involved work that was given a grade in contrast to Institution A, where the teacher left participation to the students' free will with no grade.

All the activities that researchers designed on the blog developed writing skills by means of a process-genre approach and followed the established action plan (See Appendix J). Teachers provided continual feedback and in order to promote collaborative work, teachers asked students to reply to at least one of their classmates by providing feedback on the forum. Through the activities on the blog, students had access to models of descriptive paragraphs and their main parts. First, they saw samples of descriptive paragraphs in brochures. After that, they mapped and outlined their descriptive paragraphs about the place they had chosen from their surroundings, by using a modeled structure explained in materials designed for this study. Students posted their first draft and edited it taking into account the feedback from teachers. Lessons six to eight, attempted to polish the descriptive paragraphs by focusing on coherence and cohesion and the proper use of mechanics. The final lesson assessed three aspects: the impact that the process-genre approach had or did not have on learning, the way that the learners experienced the blended learning environment, and to what extent participants self-monitored their learning and became more self-directed learners.

Post-intervention Stage

Once the intervention was finished, researchers collected the students' artifacts and organized the information in order to start the analysis of data, draw conclusions and reflect on the pedagogical implications.

Chapter Five: Results and Data Analysis

Data analysis carried out in this study allowed researchers to examine, reflect and show evidence of how process-genre approach influenced the learners' writing skills. This study gathered qualitative and quantitative data and followed a mixed method analysis based on the convergent parallel design, which mixed the results of the two methods during the interpretation phase. This interpretation "keeps the strands independent during analysis and then mixes the results during the overall interpretation" (Creswell & Plano, 2011, p.70).

Data Management and Procedures of Data Analysis

This research managed two strands of data: the quantitative and qualitative data. For the study, the responses to the closed-questions in the final survey and the scores of the diagnostic and final descriptive texts represented the quantitative data. We systematized the participants' descriptive compositions scores and their answers to the survey to do the statistical analysis using MS Excel™. The data gathered from the field notes and learners' journals correspond to the qualitative strand. The use of both strands of data was helpful in order to answer the research question: *"What is the impact of the use of a process-genre approach in A1 EFL students' descriptive paragraph writing skills in a blended learning environment?"*

According to Costello (2003) "facts that emerge from quantitative research never speak for themselves: they have to be supported by reasons, evidence, and argument" (p.60). Therefore, to understand what quantitative data said about our pedagogical intervention, we decided to display it on frequency graphs (See Figures 6 to 11). Frequency graphs allowed us to note changes between the participants' first and final writing texts. Using the graphs, we were also able to compare the scores that participants gave to the three areas we were inquiring about: *the process-genre approach*, *blended learning environment* and *self-directed learning*.

Qualitative data analysis determined whether common or uncommon themes emerged. Consequently, the Grounded theory (Cresswell, 2007; Birks and Mills, 2010) strategy of coding, guided the analysis of data collected from the field notes and reflective journal entries. We read the data to identify emerging patterns that later were confirmed through the process of data triangulation.

Corbin and Strauss (1998 as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 160) established three stages of grounded coding: open coding, axial coding, and selected coding. These stages helped to identify the themes, patterns or categories and the possible relationship between them. Macintyre (2000 as cited in Costello, 2003. p.91) explains that themes are "'the consistent ideas which emerged; incidence refers to how often something occurred, or the number of questionnaire replies which said the same thing; patterns indicates the timing of the occurrences-whether they were single or in a cluster; and trends are the frequency of the patterns". In the open coding analysis the researchers identified 10 initial indicators based on the information gathered from the survey, the learners' journals and the teacher-researchers' field notes; the frequency of patterns found were identified using a color code, this means coloring patterns that help to create the indicators according to the topic they referred to.

Indicators

1. Improving writing skills

2. Increasing vocabulary

3. Helping learning process

4. Being aware of the process-genre approach

5. Organizing a paragraph

6. Modeling

7. Developing self-directing skills

8. Experiencing blended learning environments

9. Discovering problem solving strategies

10. Identifying strategies

At the next step, the axial coding, teacher-researchers looked through those initial

indicators to establish relationships among them and delineated the categories, which emerged

from the data analysis by reaffirming and reorganizing the initial indicators. Through the

selective coding, the teacher-researchers integrated the emerged categories into two final

categories. Table 1 shows the reorganization of the categories and subcategories.

Table 1

Core categories.

Research question	Category	Indicator (subcategory)
What is the impact of the use of a process genre approach in A1 EFL students' descriptive paragraph writing skills in a blended learning environment?	1.Scaffolding descriptive paragraph writing	1.1 Improving writing skills through modeling 1.2 Increasing vocabulary 1.3 Organizing a paragraph through process-genre approach
	2. Reflecting on my writing process	2.1 Developing self-directed skills 2.2 Discovering problem solving strategies 2.3 Experiencing blended learning environments

Finally, the teacher-researchers triangulated and interpreted both data by comparing and

contrasting quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings for validation purposes and

supported the findings with data excerpts. The process of merging and analyzing both sets of

data followed the convergent design procedures proposed by Creswell & Plano (2011) as is

shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Convergent design procedures for this study (Creswell & Plano, 2011)

Step		Description	Procedure
1	Design the quantitative and qualitative strand and, collect the quantitative and qualitative data	• State the research question. • Determine the quantitative and qualitative approach. • Obtain permissions. • Identify the quantitative and qualitative sample. • Collect closed-ended and open-ended data	• Statement of the research question. • Defining quantitative data: Participants' writing scores from a diagnostic and a final written descriptive text. • Participants signed the consent forms. • Implementation of the pedagogical intervention and data collection through scoring participants' descriptive texts; applying a mixed questionnaire, journals and field notes.
2	Analyze the quantitative and quantitative data	• Analyze the quantitative data using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and/or effect sizes. • Analyze the qualitative data using procedures of theme development and those specific to the qualitative approach.	• Statistical analysis of the results from the two descriptive texts. • Statistical analysis of the survey's closed-ended questions. • Grounded coding: A. Open coding to the survey's open-ended questions, journals and field notes looking for indicators. B. Axial coding: look through indicators to delineate the emerged categories. C. Selected coding: integrate the categories and analyze their relation with the research question.
3	Use strategies to merge the two sets of results	• Identify content areas represented in data sets and compare, contrast, and/or synthesize the results in a discussion or	• Comparing and contrasting qualitative findings with quantitative statistical results. • Providing excerpts from the qualitative results that complement

		table. • Identify differences within one set of results based on dimensions within the other set and examine the differences within a display organized by the dimensions. • Conduct further analyses to relate the transformed data to the other data (e.g., conduct statistical analyses that include the thematic counts).	and support the quantitative data.
4	Interpret the emerged results	• Summarize and interpret the separate results • Discuss to what extent and in what ways results from the two types of data converge, diverge, relate to each other, and/or produce a more complete understanding.	• Triangulating quantitative and qualitative results to answer the research question: What is the impact of the use of a process genre approach in A1 EFL students' descriptive paragraph writing skills in a blended learning environment?

Findings

From the data analysis of this study two main categories emerged "Scaffolding descriptive paragraph writings" and "Reflecting on my writing process" (See Figure 5). The first category refers to evidence of the benefits of using a process-genre approach to scaffold learners' paragraph writing. The second category focused on the evidence of the positive impact of using a blended learning environment to encourage self-directed learning.
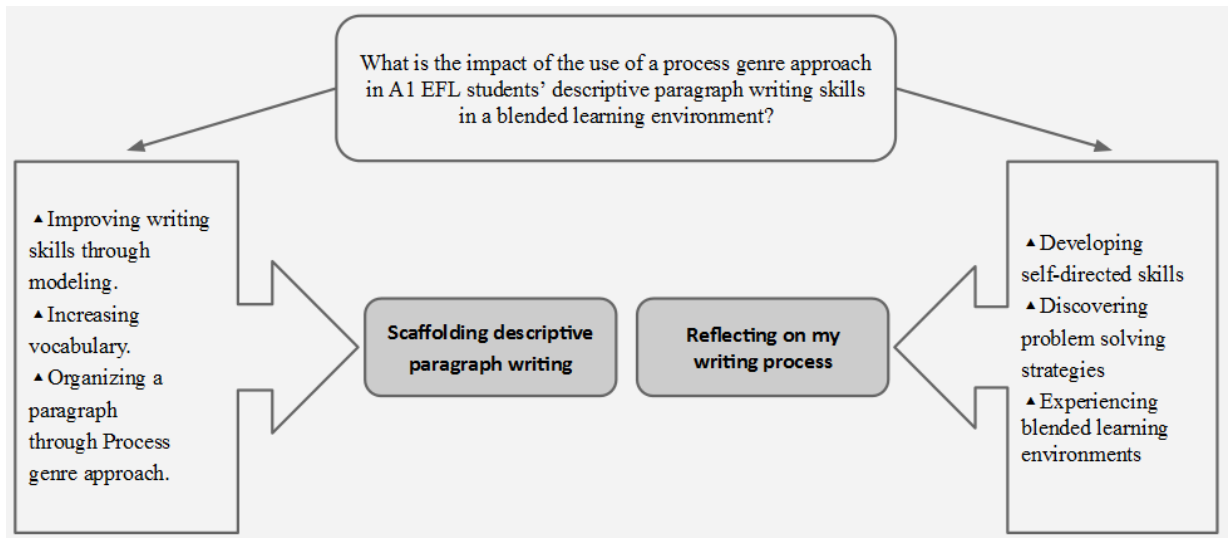
Figure 5. Diagram of categories and subcategories

Category one: Scaffolding descriptive paragraph writing

This category emerged from the analysis of participants' insights about the use of the

process-genre approach to write descriptive paragraphs. According to Hyland (2003, p.27),

''scaffold'' or learners' support happens when learners move towards their potential level of

performance. Sharma and Hannafin (2007 cited in Devolder, van Braak & Tondeur, 2012)

describe scaffolds as ". . . the provision of technology-mediated support to learners as they

engage in a specific learning task" (p. 558); this definition integrates the use of tools, strategies,

or guidelines that support students in gaining higher orders of understanding (Devolder, van

Braak & Tondeur, 2012). In the pedagogical intervention, teachers supported the participants

during the whole process by providing them with a sequence of activities on the blog

"Describing Worlds". Activities in the blog scaffolded learners' descriptive paragraph writing. In

addition, learners received feedback in the different stages of the writing process, because as

Badger and White (2000) claim, writing is not essentially taught but learnt and the teacher's role is to facilitate and assist students to express their own meanings.

Results showed learners' awareness of the aforementioned scaffolding processes and the benefits of such pedagogical implementation for their writing development. Three subcategories emerged from the analysis. The first subcategory, 'improving writing skills through modeling', refers to the benefits of using models to scaffold learners' writing. The second subcategory, 'increasing vocabulary', demonstrates the positive impact of the process in students' descriptive vocabulary. The third subcategory, 'organizing a paragraph through process-genre approach', showed how helpful the process was for raising learners' awareness of the rhetorical structure of a descriptive text.

Improving writing skills through modeling

This pattern was frequent used in both institutions. Modeling proved to be an advantageous scaffolding strategy that supported students writing, as evidenced in the following excerpts from the learners' answers to the open questions in the final survey and from their journals:

Q1: ¿Cómo influyó en tu proceso de escritura el uso y análisis de textos modelos (párrafos, topic sentences, supporting sentences, conclusions)?

"los textos modelos influyeron mucho en mi aprendizaje porque los tome como una guia para realizar las actividades de este blog" Student Z. Survey, question 1. (Institution B)

"influyo mucho ya que estos nos ayudan a poner en practica los conocimientos posteriores que teniamos y ademas nos dan una orientación y un modelo para seguir en nuestros escritos" Student Y. Survey, question 1. (Institution B)

Q2: ¿Te sientes en capacidad de escribir un párrafo descriptivo después de haber tenido esta experiencia? ¿Por qué? *

"I am able [to write a descriptive paragraph] because the guidelines are required in a paragraph, such as creating drafts to have my paragraph" Student C. Survey, question 2 (Institution A)

The data from the excerpts above reveal that participants recognized the influence of modeling strategy to write their own descriptive paragraphs. This evidence also suggests that providing students with suitable models to analyze and allowing them to write their text following examples, resulted on a significant improvement in aspects such the clarity and quality of their paragraphs, and the commitment to participate in the different activities of the blog. The use of models, writing frameworks, and step by step instructions represents a procedural scaffolding to help students use tools and resources effectively (Jumaat, Nurul, Farhana & Zaidatun, Tasir, 2014) and guide their writing process. Data registered in teachers' field notes also supported this assumption:

"All students have improved their descriptive paragraphs; they wrote more comprehensible text and used different descriptive words. Most of the students were working well on the task and use the models provided at the blog". Field notes-Entries 8- November 12/2014. (Institution A)

"Students are improving their writings. They are concerned about expressing their ideas properly". Field notes-Entries 5- October 21/2014. (Institution B)

"Their writings are clearer and easier to understand" Field notes-Entries 8- November 4/2014. (Institution B)

The statistical analysis from the survey corroborated this finding. Participants from both institutions evaluated positively the influence of the use of examples or models from the process-genre approach. In a scale from 1 to 5, with five being the highest possible score, participants at Institution A scored the strategy with 4.6 while at Institution B they scored it with 4.7. (See Figures 6 and 7).
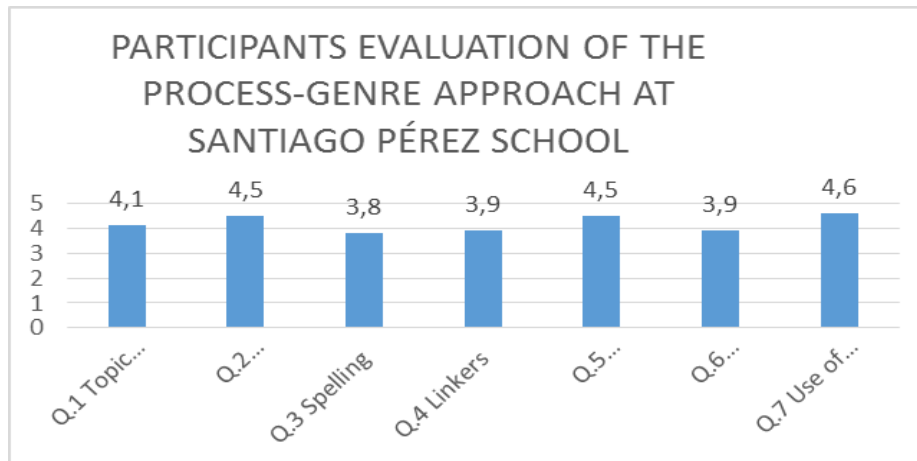

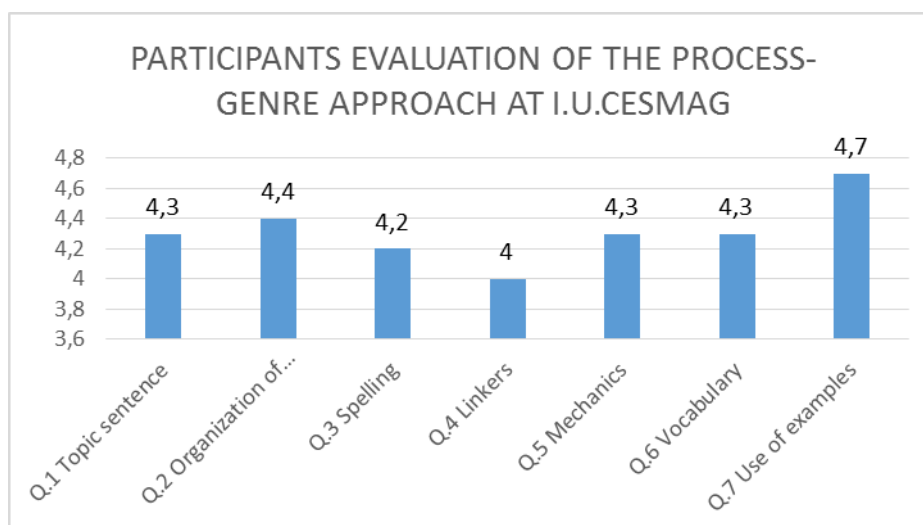*Figure 6.* Participants' evaluation of process-genre approach at Institution A.

Figure 7. Participants' evaluation of process-genre approach at Institution B.

Increasing vocabulary

Regarding the 'increasing vocabulary' subcategory, Moses (2013, p.9) asserts that informational texts provide opportunities to exploit background knowledge and develop vocabulary; and the results indicated that the implementation of the process-genre approach through a blended learning environment scaffolded the participants' vocabulary development by providing them with concrete sample texts and images that support students' comprehension. Likewise Yatvin (2007 cited in Moses, 2013) claims that "Pictures help all students with vocabulary and concepts" (p.8). Taking advantage of the use of images students had the opportunity of selecting a place they knew and were interested in showing to others; then, they took a photo to include as a complement to their descriptive text. The following data excerpts confirmed participants' positive perceptions about their vocabulary development and the use of images; as well as, the teacher-researchers noticing of improvement.

"now I have more vocabulary, adjectives and verbs to express useful ideas". Student D. Journal- Entry 4 (Institution A)

*"Cada actividad salen mas textos y con nuevas imagenes y esas imágenes nos sirven mucho porque nos guiamos"*Student R. Journal- Entry 3. (Institution B)

"Their descriptions included good amount of describing words (adjectives) which make more interesting their descriptions". Field notes- Entry 1-October 1/2014. (Institution A)

"Their writings are clearer and easier to understand. Their vocabulary has increased a lot". Field notes- Entry 8. November 4/2014. (Institution B)

The following excerpts taken from the initial and the final descriptive paragraphs at Institution A show vocabulary improvement, regarding the use of descriptive words and linkers.

The initial description presents short sentences with a lack of adjectives that makes the text not too attractive to the reader while the adjectives and linkers in the second composition present a more vivid image of the place and allow a smoother reading.

The vacation's

In the vacations we were my grand parents in Utica-Condinamorco, we were in the car with my grandmother, my Brother, my two cousins, my aunt and boyfriend, we went to visit to my paternal grand mother's fototoes, when arriving my grand mother's Sisters they gave us Breakfast, then we went to the river when we return we take abath and we eat lunch, to the following days we go down to the central Fork to eat icecream, in the afternoon, we went to pool and it was a family trip it was not expensive and we last three days.

Student B's initial descriptive paragraph, September 2014.

HOTEL FOREST ATHÁN

Athán Forest Hotel is a beautiful and wonderful place which is located one kilometer from Girardot. It has a nice atmosphere and you can feel the heat and sometimes the soft breeze. In the huts of the Hotel we can observe two bedrooms each have a TV and air conditioning has three beds and one room with a bed and a spare bathroom was finally the medium and welcoming. The hotel has several water parks, which one is full of joy for children and different colors, on the other found the pool water park and a small slide and the largest water park can see a big slide and pool. Also on site we can see different places for sports such as micro, tennis and volleyball, which are very well structured and maintained. Finally at the Hotel we see gardens where we find mango trees and bushes full of different flowers which are very beautiful. In the Forest Hotel Athán we can enjoy a memorable and much joy vacation.

★ Me gusta

EDITAR

Student B's final descriptive paragraph, November 19, 2014

The quantitative analysis of data collected from Institution A (See Figure 8), showed that the second writing aspect that participants improved was vocabulary, with an average final score of 3.8 ; followed by the definition of the main idea (topic sentence) scored with 3.7. The analysis of data collected from Institution B (See Figure 9) revealed similar results as the development on vocabulary score was 4.3, being the third highest score after the organization of ideas and topic sentence. However, according to the statistics analysis from the survey (See Figures 6 and 7 above) participants from Institution A evaluated vocabulary and spelling with the lowest scores' average (3.9 and 3.8).

Organizing a paragraph through process-genre approach

Data revealed that participants could write a well-organized descriptive paragraph through the implementation of the process-genre approach by using different scaffolding tools such as graphic organizers, pictures, and charts. These tools guided and shaped the students' thinking, and organized their ideas enabling them to structure more coherent and cohesive (comprehensible) paragraphs. Price and Harkins (2011, p.14) underlined the usefulness of a graphic organizer as a scaffold to "provide support and guidance to enhance students' understanding of the function and conventions of writing". The intention of this study was to develop learners' linguistic competence; therefore, the evaluation of participants' descriptive texts considered the three principal parts of a descriptive paragraph: the topic sentence, body or supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence (Walters, 2000, Nordquist, 2014). The evaluation also looked at the coherence (logical organization) and cohesion (a unified whole) of the text (Hinkel, 2003). The coherence and the cohesion aspects appear in the rubric of this study under the label of 'Organization' (See Appendix B). The results showed that the process-genre approach helped learners develop this writing component. The excerpts below revealed that participants could identify the elements of a descriptive paragraph and applied that knowledge in their own writing. Teacher-researchers' field notes also registered such improvement and the statistical analysis of the participants' composition scores supported this finding.

"Today I learnt about how did I fix my draft and spelling. I feel good for example I improve my draft in the part of spelling and punctuation and I know between topic sentence, supporting sentence and conclusion". Student N. Journal- Entry 5, October 29/2014. (Institution A)

"learn to have a concrete, orderly and coherent conclusion". Student C Journal Entry 6. (Institution A)

"I consider that my writing improves then I kept in mind the elements of the paragraph". Student A Journal-Entry 4, October 22/2014. (Institution A)

Q1: ¿Cómo influyó en tu proceso de escritura el uso y análisis de textos modelos (párrafos, topic sentences, supporting sentences, conclusions)?

*"Influyó de una manera positiva, para hacer una buena estructura de mi párrafo descriptivo, en su gramatica, organización, vocabulario, etc".*Student Ca. Survey, question 1. (Institution B)

"Students wrote a little more structured text. The sentences are better structured; the components explained in the activity are more evident in their text. Some students did not write a whole paragraph but they wrote a list of short and well-structured sentences". Field notes- Entry 2- October 14/2014. (Institution A)

"They are writing more organized paragraphs". Field notes- Entry 5-October 21/2014. (Institution B)

The excerpts below taken from the initial (diagnostic) and the final descriptive paragraphs at Institution B show learner's improvement in the organization of the second paragraph. Among the organization problems that the first composition had, we found that it did not have a clear sequence; the student listed some places he/she visited in Bogotá and right in the following sentence made an introduction to describe those places. *"I in Bogotá visited much place"* (Extracted from student R's initial descriptive paragraph, September 2014); but she/he does not

describe Bogotá. In the second descriptive paragraph, the inclusion of a topic sentence is more

evident. In addition, there are clear supportive sentences and a conclusion that enriched and

gave body to the text.
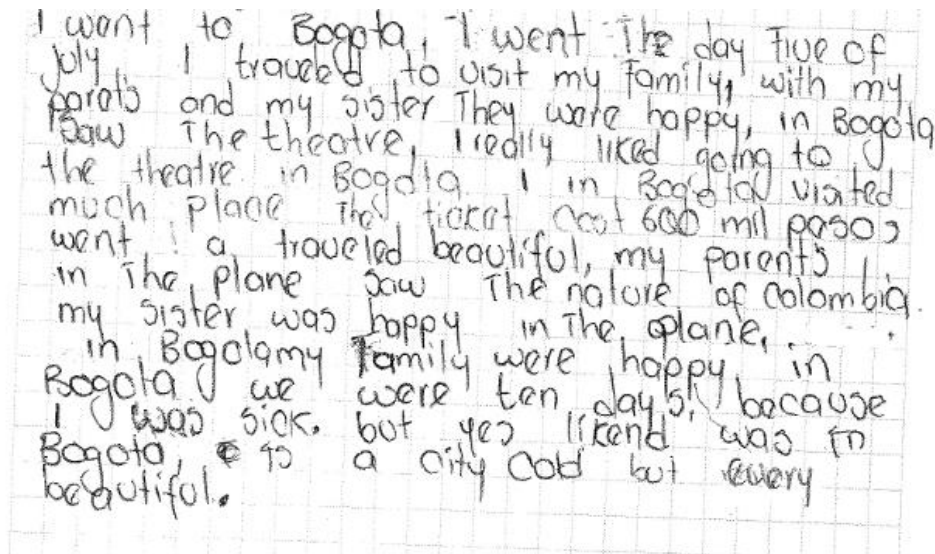
Student R's initial descriptive paragraph, September 2014.

On my last vacations I went To Bogota
The place I like the most was Cerro of Monserrate is beautiful and big.
This is a place pilgrimage religious, many people visit this place
pilgrims visit with faith the SEÑOR CAIDO, It's a higher place in town
here is look at the city of Bogota, tourist really like this place because it
is colonial and ancient here in this place requires a lot of culture.
Around the tourist can enjoy a healthy atmosphere for walk the nature
of this place is beautiful. t
Conclusion is place that the people can visit and enjoy this site and
many things conser there.

★ Me gusta

REPLY   EDITAR

Student R's final descriptive paragraph, November 13, 2014.

Similarly, the following excerpts from the initial (diagnostic) and the final descriptive

paragraphs at Institution A show learner's improvement in the organization of the second

paragraph. The first composition neither had a clear topic sentence nor a concluding sentence;

and there were no linkers. In the second descriptive paragraph, the topic sentence is more

evident, there are clearly sequenced supportive sentences and a conclusion.

The walk Family

The walk was in the Espival, were way the day mother, every family was in one's automobile, all family to rent, house to arrive.

In this walk we were: cousins, guys and my grandparents had beautiful scenery and a climate perfect, we went to swimming pool.
The cost of the trip was 800.000 $ for the rent of the house, lasted 4 days, 5 nights.
So term this family outing for mothers day.

Student D's initial descriptive paragraph, September 2014.

My favorite holiday

My vacations in the Espinal ,this place is great for breaking the daily routine and spend more time with family, is located in the department of Tolima.

This holiday was for Father's Day and my family decided to rent a house in the cord 25 people we were cousins, uncles and grandparents. We set out to explore this city and we found that it is the second largest city of the province is the rice capital of the Midwest. He is known for making traditional instruments, cuisine is famous for its tamales and suckling pig are the typical dishes of the region. Finally the warm weather is perfect to go to a pool or water park.

In conclusion it is an ideal for different things and meet diverse customs and cultures but most important is family togetherness city.

Student D's final descriptive paragraph, November 19, 2014.

The descriptive statistical analysis supported the assumption that students from both institutions improved in the five aspects assessed with the rubric designed for their descriptive compositions. The scores' results showed that the organization of the text (coherence and cohesion) is the component with greater improvement after the intervention using the process genre approach; the average result for Institution A was 4.2 and for Institution B was 3.8. Furthermore, the students' perception of their improvement is revealed in the final survey where they self- evaluated the influence of the process-genre approach from the project on their organization of ideas. Results from this survey showed a score average of 4.5 at Institution A and 4.4 at I Institution B. (See Figures 8 and 9).
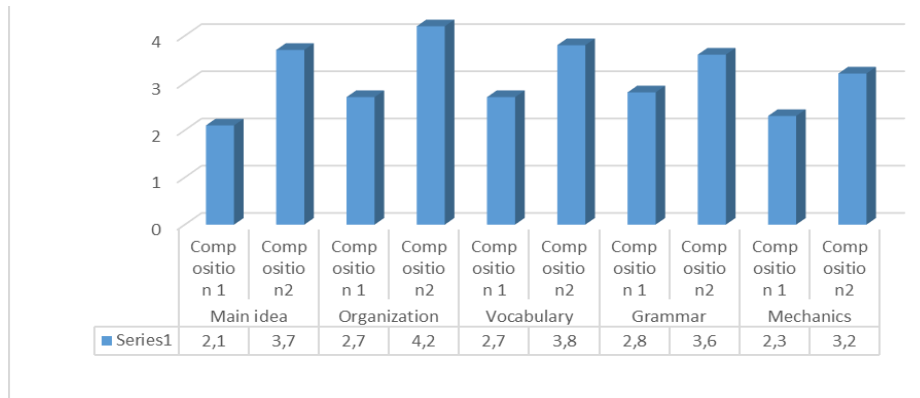
	Comp ositio n 1	Comp ositio n2	Comp ositio n 1	Comp ositio n2	Comp ositio n 1	Comp ositio n2	Comp ositio n 1	Comp ositio n2	Comp ositio n 1	Comp ositio n2
	Main idea		Organization		Vocabulary		Grammar		Mechanics	
■ Series1	2,1	3,7	2,7	4,2	2,7	3,8	2,8	3,6	2,3	3,2

Figure 8. Initial and final compositions scores at Institution A

	Compo sition 1	Compo sition2	Compo sition 1	Compo sition2	Compo sition 1	Compo sition2	Compo sition 1	Compo sition2	Compo sition 1	Compo sition2
	Main idea		Organization		Vocabulary		Grammar		Mechanics	
■ Series1	3,2	3,9	3,3	3,8	2,8	3,6	2,8	3,4	2,8	3,1
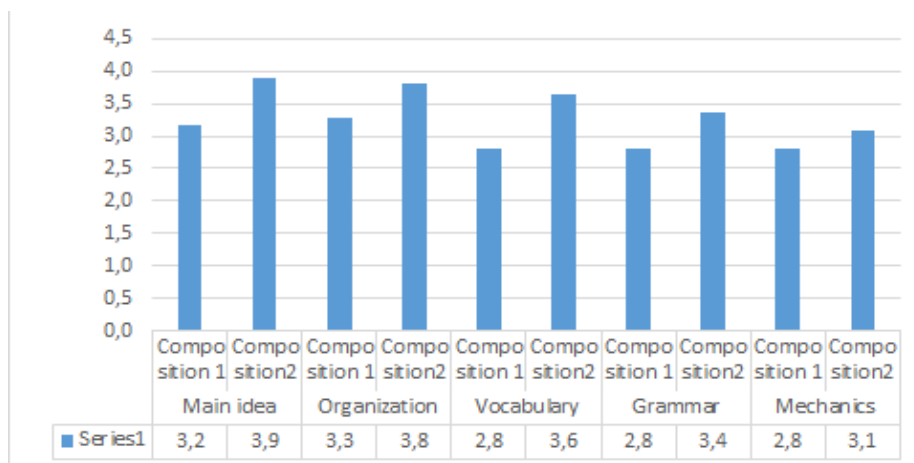
Figure 9. Initial and final compositions scores at Institution B

Category two: Reflecting on my writing process

Reflecting is an essential activity that embraces lifelong learning processes as it provides the opportunity to make a more conscious choice of what and how learning is going to take place. In order to plan and monitor the learning process, it is important to take into account aspects of cognition and metacognition. According to Cormick and Garrison (2007, p.23), "metacognition involves reflecting on one's thoughts and understanding the process of thinking. Learners need both an awareness and understanding of inquiry processes before they can control

them and successfully direct and regulate their learning activities". This suggests there is a need to encourage learners to look for strategies that help them to identify strengths and weaknesses through reflection; it also involves helping learners to improve performance and help them become more independent.

Teacher-researchers noted, through the statistical analysis of the survey, that at Institution A participants self-evaluated their performance with 4.4 for the item 'teacher and classmates interaction' followed by the item 'knowledge transfer' with a score of 4.3, which refers to the relevance of extrapolated knowledge that might be useful in different contexts. 'Motivation' had a score of 4.1, which is a high score that suggests learners' intrinsic motivation as the teacher-researcher asked students to participate in this project as a non-graded activity (See Figure 10). At Institution B the highest score was in three aspects: 'responsibility and self-learning', 'teacher and classmates interaction' and 'knowledge transfer' with a score of 4.5. This reveals learners high commitment to accomplish the tasks. However, the lowest score was 'motivation', which suggests that participants were moved by an extrinsic motivation, in this case the grade for the subject (See Figure 11).
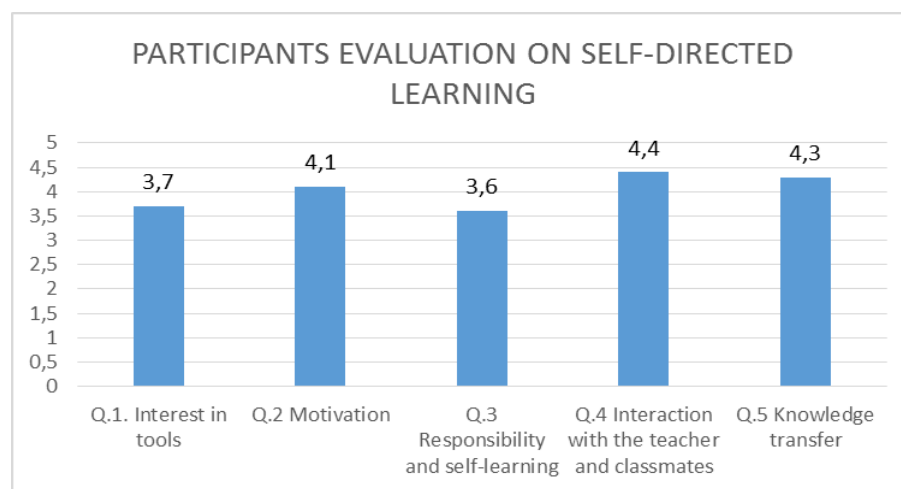

Figure 10. Participants' evaluation on self-directed learning at Institution A
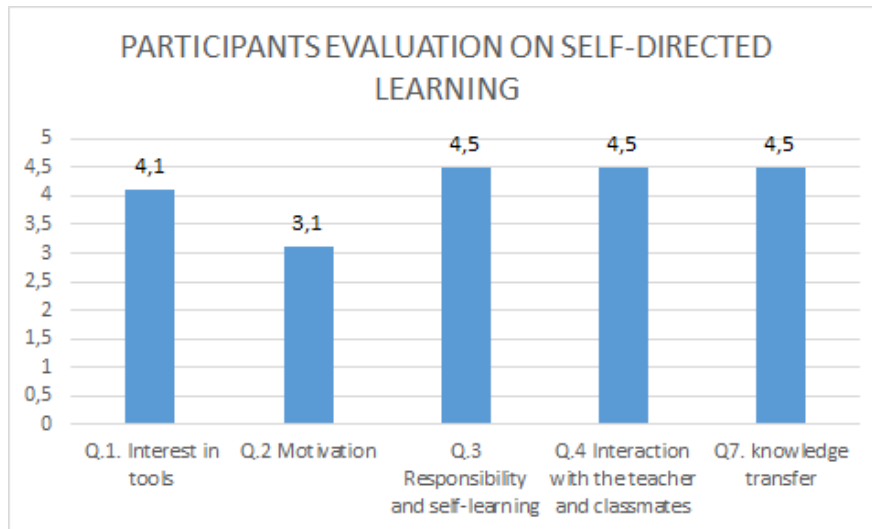
Figure 11. Participants' evaluation on self-directed learning at Institution B

This category emerged from the analysis of participants' insights of their own learning experience in a blended learning environment. It includes three sub-categories: developing self-directed skills, discovering problem-solving strategies and experiencing blended learning environments.

Discovering self-directed skills

According to Garrison, D. (1977, p. 9) self-directed learning is "associated with initiating learning goals, maintaining intention, and striving for quality outcomes." Self-direction is essential for lifelong learning. After the implementation, participants showed motivation towards the activities provided on the blog and manifested interest while reflecting on their own learning process through the development of blended learning activities.

The following excerpts taken from the survey show how monitoring and reflection are part of participant's insights about the subcategory 'developing self-directed skills':

"fue interesante porque nos da mas confianza para organizar el parrafo descriptive".

Student A's journal. Entry 5. (Institution A)

"I improve the sentence but I should improve the logic of the sentence. " Entry 7 Student

N`s journal. (Institution A)

"it gets better and gives more security to write. Entry 5" Student D`s journal. Survey,

question 17 (Institution A)

Experiencing blended learning environments

This subcategory gathers excerpts about students and the teacher-researchers' insights on

blended learning environments. Motivation and interest in web 2.0 tools during the practice, are

important factors that students manifested and what made them engage in learning. Marsh

(2012, p. 4) state "The effective implementation of blended learning is essentially all about

making the most of the learning opportunities and tools available to achieve the "optimal"

learning environment." The excerpts below are taken from the final survey, learners' journals

and researchers' field notes. It is evident that motivation is present during the learning process in

the blended course. Participants manifested confidence and interest in exploring new tools and

actively participated in the different activities proposed on the blog.

"Si, por que es una herramienta practica donde se puede buscar más alla de un blog y

aprender mediante ejercicios, imagenes, presentaciones, videos, etc." Student Ca. Survey,

question 17. (Institution A)

"El blog esta diseñado de una forma practica, y fue de un buen uso." Student B. Survey,

question 11 (Institution A)

"Most of the students are motivated and ask about the Web 2.0 tools, they want to learn

how to use them. For instance the google drive and the voki." Field notes- Entry 4-October

10/2014. (Institution B)

Discovering problem solving strategies

Regarding the subcategory 'discovering of problem solving strategies', it is interesting to observe how participants looked for strategies and emerged with a creative solution to any drawback related to the tasks or technology. According to Mayer and Wittrock (2006 in Mayer and Wittrock 2009), problem solving is "cognitive processing directed at achieving a goal when no solution method is obvious to the problem solver" (p. 287). Solving problems involves the ability to comprehend the goal of the task and analyze the possible solution that may represent the key answer. Participants' journals evidence this process:

"some words were difficult and I went to google translator." Student Ca.'s journal. Entry2. (Institution A)

"change computer or watching our companion which poderme guide and do our business" Student S. Survey, question 15. (Institution A)

"si… al buscar palabras desconocidas alimento mi vocabulario.", "Si tengo alguna duda o dificultad la presencia de la profesora me ayuda a resolver las actividades". M. Z.'s journal. Entry 6. (Institution B)

It is noteworthy that data contained in the field notes also confirmed the learners' use of problem solving strategies:

"They are exploring and looking for more information on the net". Field notes- Entry 3- October 7/2014. (Institution B).

"Some students took notes of vocabulary in their notebooks while watching the presentation of the topic and the teacher explained it." Field notes- Entry 3-October 15/2014 (Institution A).

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

This chapter evaluates the most important findings based on the research question: *What is the impact of the use of a process-genre approach in A1 EFL students' descriptive paragraph writing skills in a blended learning environment.* The chapter also provides an overview of the pedagogical implications, the most significant limitations for this study, and it suggests topics for further research in this field.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of process-genre writing approach through a blended learning environment with A1 English level learners at Santiago Perez School in Zipaquirá, and I.U.CESMAG in Pasto. The analysis of the quantitative results and the category diagram (Figure 5) showed that there was a significant improvement in students' descriptive paragraph writing; data analysis revealed higher scores, both in the five aspects assessed with the descriptive text rubric and in the final compositions. The study revealed that participants who completed the process-genre based activities took advantage of the models provided on the blog to identify the characteristic of a descriptive text.

Moreover, the activities which followed the stages of planning, gathering information, drafting or composing, editing (reflecting and revising), and final version (Tribble, 1996; Harmer, 2004; William, 2005; and Campbell, 1998; as cited in Rahman, 2011) scaffolded mainly the paragraph organization and vocabulary acquisition. Researchers in this study claimed that students at Santiago Pérez School and at I.U. CESMAG needed to improve coherence and cohesion because they are inherent features of writing (Hinkel, 2003). The results revealed that participants from both institutions wrote more organized and enriched vocabulary paragraphs,

which means they were able to organize all elements of a describing paragraph and started to connect their sentences using some linkers and punctuations marks.

Furthermore, teacher-researchers concluded that the use of process-genre approach represented an excellent strategy to scaffold learners' writing, offering students the opportunity to follow some writing steps and analyze the text models as a guide for their own writing. Learners also had the opportunity to make decisions about the topic to write about, the content or information to include in their paragraphs and later the selection of the vocabulary to use. Learners were also encouraged to write for a real communicative purpose, which was to describe their last vacations to their peers.

Regarding reflection, students' insights revealed a significant improvement in their awareness of their own learning process. Participants stated they felt more confident with their performance and were able to create new texts according to the topics studied. They also stated that this knowledge would be useful not only for this particular task but for other purposes in different subjects. This suggests that acquiring skills for lifelong learning is taking place consciously; as Gibbons (2002, p. 2) points out self-directed learning is "any increase in knowledge, skill, accomplishment, or personal development that an individual selects and brings about by his or her own efforts using any method in any circumstances at any time". These findings support the initial purpose of enhancing self-directed learning through reflection. Hiemstra (1994) states, "much of this learning takes place at the learner's initiative, even if available through formal settings" (p.1).

It can be concluded that the pedagogical intervention implemented in this study influenced positively participants' descriptive paragraph writing skills in three senses. First, data revealed significant changes in participants' writing process; second, learners' reflections

provided evidence of participants' initiatives towards their own autonomous learning process; and finally, participants had the opportunity to interact with and reflect on different descriptive texts and web tools in the creation of their own writing productions.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings provide evidence about the positive effects of implementing the process-genre approach in the classroom and in virtual environments to develop writing paragraph organization (coherence and cohesion), vocabulary acquisition and fostering self-reflection on learners. The combination of this writing approach and blended learning environments contributes significantly to scaffold learners writing skills since it provides students with great and suitable structured activities that allow users to write and re-write their own ideas into a text. As a result, learners become active participants in the process while improving their writing by following each writing stage. In addition, using a virtual environment contributes to the contextualization of the writing task since students can interact with their peers and address their compositions to each other; thus, learners fulfill a real communicative purpose for writing.

Process- genre approach in blended learning environments also contributes, through reflection, to support learners in understanding the relevance of following steps and polishing their drafts in order to deliver high quality work. Additionally, the findings of this study can be useful for language teachers not just at secondary schools but also at college levels where learners are required to develop writing skills and where the institutions have suitable technological resources to implement hybrid courses.

The reception of process-genre approach at both school and university levels was positive. Students were open to exploring new tools, using models and receiving teacher's and peer's feedback. Students at Santiago Perez School showed intrinsic motivation as they were

volunteers and worked more independently. Students at I.U.CESMAG worked with extrinsic motivation, as they participated in order to meet a requirement.

Limitations

The most relevant limitation that researchers had to face refers to technological resources and facilities at the moment of implementation, specifically Institution A which is a public school, where the teacher-researcher could not use the school's computer room because it was occupied for computer classes. As a result, the teacher had to ask parents for permission to take students out of school to the public library in order to use the computers. Another limitation emerged while using the Internet, because of the connection, most of the students could not download the activities and the teacher had to explain the tasks on a few computers. The lack of enough screens caused learners' discomfort and disinterest in working with technology. At Institution B, thanks to the facilities that the institution offers, as it is a private institution, students could work independently in the English laboratory room. This difference resulted in a drawback related to time management at institution A and motivation when working on virtual sessions.

Finally, despite the improved performance of students from Institution B, where the teacher scored the activity, the students still showed concern for their grades in order to finish the activities. This attitude suggests the need of extrinsic motivation in this particular course to do the proposed tasks. At institution A, students worked on their own initiative without a score on EFL subject. This students' initiative was helpful in overcoming the technological limitations.

Further Research

The current research demonstrated the positive effects of the use of process-genre approach in blended learning environments in the improvement of writing descriptive

paragraphs. However, it is recommended that further research would be helpful in the areas of development of autonomy in blended courses and teacher-student interaction in terms of feedback.

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Appendix A

Initial students' needs survey

Las siguientes preguntas pretenden indagar sobre su percepción acerca de su proceso de estudio del idioma inglés. La información que usted nos brinda es confidencial y será utilizada únicamente con propósitos de investigación. Usted dispondrá de 15 minutos para responder el cuestionario en su totalidad.

Ambientes de aprendizaje
Por favor marque la opción que mejor describa su proceso de aprendizaje de inglés en años anteriores
1. Las clases de inglés que he recibido se desarrollaron en
☐ Aula de clases ☐ laboratorio ☐ espacios abiertos
☐ Otros, ¿Cuáles? _____
2. En el desarrollo de las clases he trabajado con recursos tecnológicos
☐ Si ☐ No
Si su respuesta es sí,
3. ¿Qué recursos ha utilizado?
☐ Computadores ☐ tabletas ☐ celulares
☐ Grabadoras ☐ otros, ¿Cuáles? _____
4. ¿Qué programas y /o aplicaciones ha utilizado?
☐ Word ☐ PowerPoint ☐ blogs
☐ e-mails ☐ otros, ¿Cuáles? _____
Actividades pedagógicas

Complete las siguientes oraciones seleccionando la opción que mejor describa su proceso de aprendizaje del inglés.
1. La clase de texto(s) que he escrito en clase de inglés en años anteriores es (puede marcar más de una opción)
☐ Notas (mensajes cortos) ☐ Correos electrónicos ☐Cartas
☐ Artículos ☐ Ensayos
☐ Otro. ¿Cuál? _____

2. Lo que más ha influido en mi proceso de escritura en inglés es
☐las explicaciones de los profesores ☐las actividades de clase
☐las actividades extra clase ☐la interacción con mis compañeros

☐ Otra. ¿Cuál? _____
3. Mi habilidad para escribir puede mejorar con
☐ Dictados ☐ Ejercicios ortográficos
☐ Lecturas ☐ Explicaciones de gramática
☐ Ejercicios de redacción ☐ Documentos modelos (ejemplos)
☐ Otros. ¿Cuáles? _____

4. Cuando debo escribir textos en inglés recurro a

☐ textos modelo   ☐ mi propia redacción   ☐ la ayuda de expertos
☐ Instrucciones del docente ☐ Observaciones y/o aportes de los compañeros
☐ Otro. ¿Cuál? _____

Habilidades de escritura

En lo correspondiente a los trabajos escritos en inglés, los problemas que presenta con mayor frecuencia son

☐ Usar correctamente la puntuación y ortografía
☐ Estructuración de oraciones
☐ Usar vocabulario apropiado
☐ Organizar párrafos
☐ Organizar el trabajo en su totalidad
☐ Expresar ideas apropiadamente
☐ Desarrollar ideas
☐ Expresar claramente lo que se quiere decir
☐ Direccionamiento del tema
☐ Adoptar el estilo apropiado
☐ Seguimiento de instrucciones y direcciones
☐ Evaluación y revisión del escrito
☐ Completar tareas de escritura (ejemplo: talleres, exámenes) dentro del tiempo disponible
☐ Otro: (por favor especifique)._____

Initial students' needs survey

These questions inquire on your perception about your English learning process. The information you provide us is confidential and will be used only with research purposes. You have 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire.

Learning environments
Please, select the option that best describe your English learning process in previous years.
1. The English classes I have had were developed in
☐ Classroom   ☐ Language laboratory   ☐ out doors
☐ Other, Which? _____
2. In the development of the classes I have worked with technological resources
☐ Yes   ☐ No
If you answer yes,
3. Which resources have you used?
☐ Computers   ☐ tablets   ☐ cell phones
☐ Tape recorders   ☐ Other, Which? _____
4. Which programs and /or applications have you used?
☐ Word   ☐ PowerPoint   ☐ blogs
☐ e-mails   ☐ Other, Which? _____

Pedagogical Activities

Complete the following sentences choosing the best option that describes your English learning process.
1. The type of text(s) I have written in an English class are (You can choose more than one option)
☐ Notes (short messages)   ☐ E-mails.   ☐ Letters
☐ Articles   ☐ Essays
☐ Other, Which? _____

2. What has influenced my writing process in English is
☐ the teachers' explanation   ☐ the class activities
☐The activities extra-classes   ☐ the interaction with classmates
☐ Other, Which? _____

3. My ability to write can improve with
☐ Dictations   ☐ Spelling exercises
☐ Readings   ☐ Explicaciones de gramática
☐ Writing exercises   ☐ Model text (examples)
☐ Other, Which? _____

4. When I have to write text in English I use

☐ Model texts   ☐ my own writing   ☐ Experts' help
☐ Teachers' instructions   ☐ Classmates' comments /suggestions
☐ Other, Which? _____

Writing abilities
About written tasks in English, I frequently have these problems,
☐ using correct punctuation and spelling
☐ Structuring sentences
☐ Appropriate vocabulary
☐ Organizing paragraphs
☐ Organizing the entire written text
☐ Appropriate expression of ideas
☐ Developing ideas
☐ Expressing clearly what I want to say
☐ Addressing the topic
☐ Adopt the appropriate style
☐ Following instructions
☐ Evaluating and revising of the written text
☐ Completing writing task during the assigned time (example: workshops, exams).
☐ Other: (please, specify)._____

Appendix B

Rubric for descriptive paragraph and self-assessment

Score	Idea principal	Organización: Coherencia y cohesión.	Vocabulario	Gramática	Puntuación
5	Oración temática contundente. Todas las ideas apoyan directamente el tema Principal. El tema es claro y bien enfocado. La idea principal se destaca y es apoyada por la información detallada. Cierre fuerte.	Secuencia lógica. El texto es claro para el lector. El uso variado de conectores mantiene la fluidez de las ideas.	Variedad en el uso de verbos y adjetivos. Vocabulario amplio que ayuda a mejorar las ideas	Formas correctas y claras que hacen fluir las ideas suavemente.	No hay errores de puntuación, por lo tanto el párrafo es excepcionalmente fácil de leer.
4	Buena oración temática. La mayoría de las ideas apoyan directamente la oración temática. La idea principal es clara, pero la información de apoyo es general. Cierre fuerte.	Secuencia lógica y clara para el lector, pero carece de variedad de conectores.	Fortaleza en el uso de verbos y adjetivos. Limitada variedad de vocabulario.	Formas generalmente correctas y claras con errores menores.	Errores ocasionales en el uso de mayúsculas y/ o puntuación, pero el texto sigue siendo fácil de leer.

3	Oración temática adecuada. Algunas ideas Apoyan la oración temática. La idea principal es algo evidente, pero hay necesidad de más información de apoyo. Cierre adecuado.	La secuencia no es clara para el Lector. Uso incorrecto de conectores.	Limitada selección de palabras. Se percibe el intento de usar palabras descriptivas.	Errores ocasionales de forma que hacen el escrito poco comprensible.	Errores frecuentes en el uso de mayúsculas y / o puntuación que capturan la atención del lector e interrumpen la fluidez.
2	Oración temática débil. La idea principal no es clara. Algunas ideas apoyan la oración temática. La frase final de cierre es débil.	No hay conexión en la secuencia. Uso incorrecto de conectores.	Elección inapropiada de vocabulario. Uso limitado de palabras descriptivas	Varios errores de forma que hacen el escrito difícil de leer.	Varios errores en el uso de mayúsculas y / o puntuación, que interrumpen la fluidez de la lectura.
1	No hay oración temática. Hay una colección aparentemente aleatoria de la información.	No se percibe organización.	Seria deficiencia de uso de vocabulario apropiado. No hay uso de palabras descriptivas.	Muchos errores serios de forma. El escrito es incomprensible.	Muchos errores en el uso de mayúsculas y puntuación que hacen el texto confuso y sin sentido.

Rubric for descriptive paragraph and self-assessment

Score	Main Idea	Organization: Coherence and cohesion.	Vocabulary	Grammar	Mechanics
5	Strong topic sentence. All ideas directly support the topic sentence. The topic is clear and well addressed. The main idea is highlighted and supported by detailed information. Strong closing.	Logic sequence. The text is clear for readers. The varied use of connectors keeps the ideas fluent in the text.	Variety use of verbs and adjectives. Large vocabulary that helps to improve ideas.	Correct and clear forms that makes the ideas fluent and soft.	There are no mechanics mistakes. Therefore, the written text is exceptionally easy to read.
4	Good topic sentence. Most of the supporting sentences directly support the topic sentence. The main idea is clear, but the supporting information is general. Strong closing.	Logic and clear sequence for the reader, but it lacks of variety of connectors.	There is strength in the use of verbs and adjectives. Limited use of vocabulary.	There are correct forms with minor mistakes.	Few mistakes in the use of capital letters and/ or mechanics. However the text is still easy to read.

3	Appropriate topic sentence. Some of the ideas support the topic sentence. The main idea is evident, but it needs more supporting information. Appropriate closing.	The sequence is not clear for the reader. Wrong use of connectors.	Limited selection of words. It is perceived the attempt of using descriptive words.	Occasional mistakes of form that make the written text difficult to understand.	Frequent mistakes in the use of capital letters and /or mechanics that call the attention of the reader and interrupt the fluency.
2	Weak topic sentence. The main idea is not clear. Some ideas support the topic sentence. weak closing.	There is no connection in the sequence. Wrong use of connectors.	There is no proper choice of vocabulary. Limited use of descriptive words.	Several mistakes of form that make the written text difficult to read and understand.	Several mistakes in the use of capital letters and / or mechanics that interrupt the fluency of the reading.
1	There is no topic sentence. Random selection of the information.	There is no organization.	Inadequate use of vocabulary. There is no use of descriptive words.	Numerous and serious mistakes of form that make the written text incomprehensible.	Numerous mistakes in the use of capital letters and / or mechanics that make no sense. The text is confusing.

Appendix C

Editing Sense and Symbols

Editing Sense and Symbols

Symbol	Meaning	Example
e	delete	I went to school on Tuestday
∧	left out, insert	I went to school ∧ on Wednesday
∿	reverse order of letters(transpose)	I went to school on Wendesday
. . . .	stet (let it stand)	I went to school on Wednesday
≡	write in capitals	I went to school on wednesday
SL	write in small letters	I Went to school on Wednesday
//	start new paragraph	I went to school on Wednesday. All my classmates were there, except Daniel. He was sick and stayed at home.//The teacher asked us to be quiet.
⊙	insert period	I went to school on Wednesday∧I studied a lot.
⌃	insert comma	I went to school. I studied Maths∧ Science and French
⌄	Insert quotation marks	I said, Listen up!
⌄	Insert apostrophe	The teachers bag is black
SVA	subject verb agreement	She like ice-cream SVA
Pr	word preposition	I went to school in wednesday Pr
?	the meaning is unclear	I went to ?
WT	wrong tense	I go to school yesterday WT
SP	spelling	I went to school on Wenesday SP
V	verb form error	I have buy a car V
WW	wrong word	I studied a lot of signatures when I was at school WW

Appendix D

Teacher-Researcher observation format

An approximation to writing process through the implementation of a process –genre approach in a blended learning environment

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Observer-researcher:	**Date:**
Number of participants	**Time:**
Topic/Task description:	Session: F2F ☐ Virtual☐
Observations	**Observer´s comments**
Learners' performance: Participation/interaction: Implementation of new strategies for writing: Interest in the topic: Initiative and deliberate learning actions: Organization and auto-regulation on tasks:	

Appendix E

Students' journal format

An approximation to writing process through the implementation of a process-genre approach in a blended learning environment

Student's name:	Date:
Session: F2F ☐ Virtual☐	Time:

Topic of the day:

Resources:

Entry:

1. **What points you have learnt from the activities today? Review your notes.**

    ¿Qué has aprendido hoy de las actividades? Revisa tus apuntes.

    _____
    _____

2. **How do you self-evaluate your writing process during these activities? Consider your strengths and weaknesses as a learner.** ¿Cómo auto evalúas tu proceso de escritura durante las actividades de hoy? Considera tus fortalezas y debilidades como aprendiz.

    _____
    _____

3.   **How do you feel with each activity of the session? Give one or two examples of your most useful activities you did. Explain why they were useful for you.**

    ¿Cómo te sentiste con cada una de las actividades de esta sesión? Da uno o dos ejemplos de las actividades más útiles que realizaste durante la sesión. Explica porqué fueron útiles para tí.

    _____
    _____

4. Do you consider your writing is improving? Give an example.

¿Consideras qué tu manera de escribir está mejorando)? Da un ejemplo.

_____
_____

5.   **How does the information and feedback received during the F2F and virtual sessions affect your writing process?**

¿Cómo influye en tu proceso de escritura la información y retroalimentación recibida durante el trabajo presencial y el virtual?

_____
_____

Appendix F

Final Survey

Las siguientes preguntas pretenden indagar sobre los alcances del proyecto "Describing Worlds" y la percepción que usted tuvo acerca de su proceso de estudio del idioma inglés mediante el proyecto en mención. La información que usted nos brinda es confidencial y será utilizada únicamente con propósitos de investigación.

Nombre _____   **Institución**_____

ENFOQUE DE PROCESO-GENERO (PROCESS-GENRE APPROACH)

1. ¿Cómo influyó en tu proceso de escritura el uso y análisis de textos modelos (párrafos, topic sentences, supporting sentences, conclusions)?
2. ¿Cómo influyó en tu proceso de escritura los pasos (planeación, primer borrador, segundo borrador, texto final) para la producción de tu párrafo descriptivo?
3. ¿Te sientes en capacidad de escribir un párrafo descriptivo después de haber tenido esta experiencia? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Cómo contribuyo a tu proceso escritor el recibir retroalimentación en cada una de las actividades desarrolladas?

Califica los siguientes puntos de 1 a 5. Por favor ten en cuenta que 5 es la calificación más alta.

5. El desarrollo del proyecto aportó a la definición y presentación de un tema o idea principal.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

6. El desarrollo del proyecto aportó a la organización de ideas.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

7. El desarrollo del proyecto aportó a la escritura correcta de palabras (Spelling).
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

8. El desarrollo del proyecto aportó al uso de conectores.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

9. El desarrollo del proyecto aportó a mejorar mi uso de puntuación.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

10. El desarrollo del proyecto aportó a la adquisición de vocabulario.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

AMBIENTE DE APRENDIZAJE MIXTO (BLENDED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT)

11. ¿De qué manera aportó a tu proceso de escritura el uso del blog "Describing worlds" y las herramientas sugeridas?
12. ¿Usaste otras herramientas además de las presentadas en el blog? ¿Cuáles?
13. ¿Te sientes más cómodo trabajando las sesiones virtuales o las presenciales? ¿Por qué?
14. ¿Qué dificultades tuviste durante el desarrollo de las distintas actividades del proyecto?
15. ¿Cómo solucionaste esas dificultades?
16. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedicaste para el desarrollo de las actividades propuestas?
17. ¿Te sientes motivado a continuar aprendiendo a través de medios virtuales? ¿Por qué?

APRENDIZAJE AUTODIRIGIDO (SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING)

Califica los siguientes puntos de 1 a 5. Por favor ten en cuenta que 5 es la calificación más alta.

18. Mi interés por investigar de manera autónoma sobre diferentes herramientas que ayuden en mi proceso de escritura.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

19. Mi motivación y voluntad de participar durante todo el proceso hasta el final.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

20. Mi responsabilidad y manejo de mi propio aprendizaje.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

21. La colaboración e interacción con mi profesora y compañeros apoyaron mi proceso de escritura.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

22. Utilicé los ejemplos que mi profesora me facilitó para realizar mis tareas.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

23. Considero que la temática del proyecto de escritura me servirá en situaciones reales para referirme al lugar descrito en mi texto.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

24. Considero que el conocimiento adquirido en el proyecto de escritura y el uso de herramientas virtuales puede ser transferido a otros contextos.
- ○1   ○2   ○3   ○4   ○5

Appendix G

Institutions' consent letter

Zipaquirá, Agosto 5 de 2014

Asunto: Carta de Consentimiento
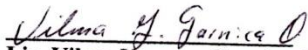Consent Form

Estimada Licenciada

Odilia Malagón Escobar
Rectora IEM Santiago Pérez

Por medio de la presente me dirijo a usted muy respetuosamente para solicitar su autorización para desarrollar el proyecto de investigación sobre estrategias de enseñanza de la escritura en un ambiente de aprendizaje mixto (blended learning) con los estudiantes de grado décimo. Este proyecto de investigación requiere la recolección de información que se utilizará únicamente con fines educativos en el proyecto de grado de la maestría en didácticas del inglés para el aprendizaje autodirigido que estoy cursando actualmente en la universidad de la Sabana, Chía y Anaheim University, California.

La información se recolectará por medio de encuestas y producciones escritas de los y las estudiantes participantes.

Agradezco su colaboración.

Atentamente,

Vilma Y. Garnica O
Lic. Vilma Yomary Garnica Olaya
Candidata a Maestría en Didácticas del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Autodirigido
Universidad de la Sabana - Anaheim University

Autorizado.

San Juan de Pasto, Agosto 9 de 2014

Asunto: Carta de Consentimiento
        Consent Form

Padre:
EMILIO ACOSTA
Coordinador centro de Humanidades
I.U.CESMAG
Presente

Cordial saludo de paz y bien,

Por medio de la presente me dirijo a usted muy respetuosamente para solicitar su autorización para desarrollar el proyecto de investigación sobre estrategias de enseñanza de la escritura en inglés en ambientes de aprendizaje mixto (blended learning) con los estudiantes de inglés nivel 1 los días sábados.

Este proyecto de investigación requiere la recolección de información que se utilizará únicamente con fines educativos en el proyecto de grado de la maestría en Didácticas del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido que estoy cursando actualmente en la Universidad de la Sabana, Chía y Anaheim University, California.
La información se recolectará por medio de encuestas y producciones escritas de los y las estudiantes participantes.

Agradezco por su colaboración.

Atentemente,

_____
Lic. María Patricia Torres B.
Candidata a Maestría en Didácticas del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido
Universidad de la Sabana, Chía - Anaheim University, California

Appendix H

Students' consent form

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Zipaquirá, 01 de Octubre de 2014

Señores:
Estudiantes Grado 1001
IEM Santiago Pérez
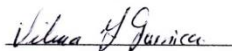Zipaquirá

Apreciados estudiantes:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "**An Approximation to Writing Process through the Implementation of a Process-Genre Approach in a Blended Learning Environment**". Este estudio busca analizar el impacto del uso del enfoque de proceso-género en ambientes mixtos de aprendizaje para desarrollar habilidades de escritura en párrafos descriptivos. Cabe anotar que dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-Dirigido –Programa Virtual- 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 durante el mes de octubre y noviembre. Esto implica la planeación e implementación de actividades presenciales y virtuales en el Centro Virtual "Describing Worlds" y recolección de datos durante 9 sesiones en las cuales ustedes desarrollarán las actividades propuestas en el Centro Virtual hasta producir un folleto que describa un lugar de su preferencia, escribirán un diario reflexivo acerca del desarrollo de las actividades y su proceso de aprendizaje, y autoevaluarán su proceso y trabajo escrito.

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,

Docente investigador

San Juan de Pasto, Agosto 15 de 2014

Asunto: Carta de Consentimiento
          Consent Form

Estimados estudiantes,

Por medio de la presente me dirijo a ustedes muy respetuosamente para solicitarles el permiso de usar la información recolectada a través de los trabajos hechos durante el curso de inglés y la encuesta sobre estrategias para la enseñanza de la escritura en inglés en ambientes de aprendizaje mixto (blended learning). Esta encuesta es un instrumento de recolección de datos que se utilizará para el proyecto de grado de la maestría en Didácticas del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido que estoy cursando actualmente en la Universidad de la Sabana, Chía y Anaheim University, California.
La información ayudará a analizar las necesidades de los estudiantes en la adquisición del inglés como segunda lengua, de tal manera que se pueda apoyar el proceso de aprendizaje con una mayor calidad en la enseñanza a través de la implementación de las estrategias apropiadas.

Agradezco su colaboración.

Atentamente,

Lic. María Patricia Torres B.
Candidata a Maestría en Didácticas del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido
Universidad de la Sabana, Chía - Anaheim University, California

Estoy de acuerdo en que se use la información de la encuesta en mención.

San Juan de Pasto, Agosto 15 de 2014

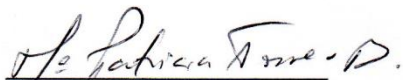**Asunto: Carta de Consentimiento**
Consent Form

Estimados estudiantes,

Por medio de la presente me dirijo a ustedes muy respetuosamente para solicitarles el permiso de us
información recolectada a través de los trabajos hechos durante el curso de inglés y la encuesta sobre estrat
para la enseñanza de la escritura en inglés en ambientes de aprendizaje mixto (blended learning). Esta enc
es un instrumento de recolección de datos que se utilizará para el proyecto de grado de la maestría en Didác
del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido que estoy cursando actualmente en la Universidad de la Sabana,
y Anaheim University, California.
La información ayudará a analizar las necesidades de los estudiantes en la adquisición del inglés como seg
lengua, de tal manera que se pueda apoyar el proceso de aprendizaje con una mayor calidad en la enseña
través de la implementación de las estrategias apropiadas.

Agradezco su colaboración.

Atentamente,

Lic. María Patricia Torres B.
Candidata a Maestría en Didácticas del Inglés para el Aprendizaje Auto-dirigido
Universidad de la Sabana, Chía - Anaheim University, California

Estoy de acuerdo en que se use la información de la encuesta en mención.

Appendix I

Screenshot- Open activity on the blog

Appendix J

Action Plan

Activity/Date	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014	September 2014	October 2014	November 2014	December 2014	January 2015	February March 2015
Step 1: Initiation	▓	▓	▓						
Step 2: Preliminary Investigation	▓	▓	▓						
Step 3: Literature review	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓				
Step 4: Design of action plan				▓	▓				
Step 5: Implementation					▓	▓			
Step 6: Monitoring/data collection					▓	▓			
Step 7: Analysis and interpretation of data							▓	▓	
Step 8: Reflection & written report									▓
Step 9: Sharing findings									▓

Appendix K

Timeline of Data Collection and Implementation

Stage	Month	Week (Dates)	Activity	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Comments
Pre-stage	June July August September	9th-30th 1st-31st 1st-31st 1st-21st	Literature review Tool construction and validation Piloting survey about preferences on learning environment and pedagogical activities Application of the survey about preferences on learning environment and pedagogical activities Diagnostic of a text to see the progress after the implementation of the project	Initial survey Diagnostic text	
While-stage	September	week 1: 22nd-26th	f2f / online session Activity 1 and 2	student´s journal teacher´s journal Students´ artifacts	I.U.CESMAG started the implementation this week
	September / October	week 2: 29th – 3rd	f2f/ online session Activity 3 and 4	student´s journal teacher´s journal students´ artifacts	Santiago Pérez School started the implementation this week
	October	6th -10th No classes- Holiday			
	October	Week 3: 13th - 17th	f2f / online session Activity 5 and 6	students´ Artifacts Students´ journal Teacher´s journal	This is the second week of implementation for Santiago Pérez School
	October	Week 4: 20th – 24th	f2f / online session Activity 7 and 8	students´ Artifact Students´ journal Teacher´s journal	This is the third week of implementation for Santiago Pérez School
	October	Week 5: 27th – 31st	I.U. CESMAG : F2f Santiago Pérez School: F2F / online	students´ Artifact Students´ journal Teacher´s journal	This is the fourth week of implementation for Santiago Pérez School

	November	Week 6 1st – 7th	I.U. CESMAG : online Santiago Perez School: F2F / online	students´ Artifact Students´ journal Teacher´s journal	This is the fifth week of implementation for Santiago Pérez School.
	November	Week 7 10th – 14th	I.U. CESMAG : F2F Santiago Perez School: F2F / online	students´ Artifact Students´ journal Teacher´s journal Final survey	This is the sixth week of implementation for Santiago Pérez School. And the week 7 correspond from 18th -21st.
Post-stage	December 2014-February-March 2015		Analysis and interpretation of data Reflection and decision making Sharing findings		revision

Appendix L

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN 1

DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SELF-DIRECTED LANGUAGE

LEARNING -RESEARCH PROJECT PART

LESSON PLAN 1

Name of co-researcher: AA1&AA2 **University Code Number:** 201310035 201310606	
Institution: IEM Santiago Pérez/ Institución Universitaria CESMAG	
Date of Class: 24 September 2014 / 30 September 2014 **Week No. 1**	**Time of Class:** **Length of** class**:** 100 min **Time Frame:** 2 hours
Class/grade: tenth grade Course 2A- Law program	**Room:** Face to face session
Number of students: 10 / 11	**Level of students:** A1

Lesson Number

1 x	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Class Objective

1. Engage the students to the written project and explain them the parameters to work on it.
2. Explain students how to work on the students' journal following the format proposed for the classes.
3. Provide learners with descriptive paragraphs concepts and samples.
4. Write a descriptive paragraph to establish the initial students' language writing performance.

Language Goal
Learners will write a descriptive paragraph according to the characteristics defined in class.

Learning to Learn Goal
Learners will set a clear purpose/intention to write their descriptive paragraph.

Identify a topic for the lesson
Descriptive paragraph definition and characteristics.

Materials and Resources	Rationale	
Material 1 Name: Students' journal format.	Journal format designed to students write their feeling and ideas about how the activities influence their learning process.	Annex 1
Material 2 Name: VLC "Describing Worlds"	A Blog designed to let students access information and activities attempting to guide their writing; and a space to share their products.	Annex 2
Material 3 Name: Descriptive Text model.	Two pieces of descriptive written text to be analyzed and worked in class.	Annex 3
Material 4 Name: Descriptive Text model.	A photo of a natural place to motivate learners' writing.	Annex 4

Assumed knowledge

Students have been required to write short text before (information gathered from a survey), they know they need to use punctuation and know some adjectives, which should be useful for their writing.

Anticipated problems and planned solutions

Lack of vocabulary to understand the first text. As the text is about a guitar, teacher can bring a photo of an old guitar and show it to students while reading the text.
Bring some dictionaries to the class.

Sequence the lesson to accomplish your goals

Teacher's role (1)	Stage (2)	Aim (3)	Procedure Teacher and students' actions	Interaction	Time (minutes)
Encourager	Contextualization	Engage the students to the written project and to explain them the parameters to work on it. Explain students how to work on the students' journal following the format proposed for the classes.	Teacher presents the students the methodology to work with during the writing classes (face to face and online sessions), explains how to access and work on the blog created for the course, presents the format to follow for the class journal and explains the purpose and procedures to carry on.	Teacher solves the students'' doubts about the project goals and process.	30
Facilitator	BKOF (Building Knowledge Of Field)	Elicit learners' preview knowledge.	Teacher gets students` interest by asking about descriptive paragraphs: definition and characteristics.	Teacher ask questions and students answer based on their previous knowledge and experience.	10
Information provider	MOT (Modeling Of Text)	Provide learners with descriptive paragraphs concepts and a sample.	The teacher explains about the descriptive paragraph including; definition and an example.	Teacher and students analyze the communicative intention and structure of the sample	10
Resource provider	JCOT (Join Construction Of Text)	Consolidate learners' descriptive paragraph knowledge by interacting with a text.	Teacher provides learners with a jig-saw activity to put all the sentences together and complete a descriptive paragraph.	In groups students read and organize the sentences to complete a	20

				descriptive paragraph.	
Facilitator/	ICOT (Individual Construction Of Text)	Write a descriptive paragraph to establish the initial students' language writing performance.	The teacher asks the students to Look at the image and list 5 describing words. They use the five words to write sentences about the image. Example: sandy. It is a sandy cliff. Students write a descriptive paragraph about that image. (Students need to set a communicative purpose/intention before writing the paragraph.)	Students are supported by teacher, although they can ask other classmates.	30

Teacher's Evaluation of his/her lesson plan.

Students should need more time for the ICOT (Individual Construction Of Text), so they should continue their writing outside the class time and submitted it the next F2F session or post it on the VLC "Describing Worlds"

Teacher writes on her journal regarding to what worked well and what needs improvement.

Appendix M

Name_____   Date_____

Writing Project Planning Map

Topic _____

My Purpose (check one)   My Audience

☐ To explain how to do something

☐ To give an opinion

☐ To tell a real story

☐ To tell an imaginary story

☐ To describe a person, place, or thing

☐ To give information about a topic

☐ Other_____

_____

_____

Who will read this?

What do they already know about my topic?

What do I want them to know?

What part of my topic would interest them most?

My First Ideas (draw more boxes and lines as needed)

Topic