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**MAESTRÍA EN ENSEÑANZA DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS COMO LENGUA
EXTRANJERA**

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

**PREVIO A LA OBTENCIÓN DEL TÍTULO DE MAGÍSTER EN ENSEÑANZA
DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA**

**APPLICATION OF TASK-BASED MATERIALS TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS
OF NINTH GRADE STUDENTS**

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La Universidad para todos

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated, first and foremost to God for giving me life, then to my parents, Juan and Cruz, who have been my greatest inspiration. Their hard work, responsibility, and perseverance have taught me never to give up and to always strive to achieve my goals. I also dedicate this project to my beloved family, especially my dear husband, Alex Danilo, whose constant support and motivation have been essential throughout this journey. Finally, I dedicate this work to my cherished children Angie Dayana, Alexis Matías, and Adriana Valentina who give me the strength and determination to continue growing both personally and professionally. This achievement is not only mine, but also belongs to my parents and my family, who have been with me every step of the way.

Ana Lucia Calvopiña Otañez

To God for allowing me to be still alive and provide me with the necessary wisdom to follow my dreams, to my beloved parents Juan and Cruz, whose unconditional love, sacrifices, and constant encouragement have been the foundation of all my achievements. Thank you for teaching me the value of perseverance and for always believing in me. I also dedicate this work to my dear husband Cristian Paúl, for his patience, understanding, and unwavering support throughout this way. Your presence has been one of my strengths during every challenge. Finally, to my cherished son, Dylan Martin, who is my greatest inspiration and the light of my life. This accomplishment is for you, as a reminder that with dedication and passion, anything is possible.

With all my love and gratitude.

Diana Gabriela Calvopiña Otañez

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Sincerely.

Diana Gabriela Calvopiña Otañez

Ana Lucía Calvopiña Otañez

RESUMEN

Esta investigación exploró la eficacia de las actividades basadas en tareas para mejorar las habilidades de escritura de estudiantes de inglés de nivel A1 en una escuela secundaria privada ubicada en las tierras altas de Ecuador. Basado en el enfoque comunicativo y respaldado por estudios previos, el estudio se centró en diseñar tareas de escritura significativas, adaptadas a las necesidades lingüísticas y contextuales de los estudiantes. A través de un diseño mixto, se recolectaron datos antes y después de la implementación mediante una prueba diagnóstica y final, así como una entrevista a la docente. La muestra incluyó a 33 estudiantes y una profesora. Los resultados revelaron una mejora significativa en la coherencia, precisión gramatical y organización textual entre la mayoría de los participantes. Las redacciones descriptivas evidenciaron mayor conciencia espacial y conexión emocional, las cartas personales mostraron mayor atención al destinatario, y los relatos cortos demostraron avances en cohesión narrativa. La perspectiva docente confirmó un aumento en la motivación y el compromiso estudiantil, atribuyendo el progreso al uso de contextos auténticos y orientados por tareas. El estudio concluye que integrar el aprendizaje basado en tareas mejora la expresión escrita, fomenta la intención comunicativa y fortalece la autonomía del estudiante, incluso en entornos con recursos limitados. Estos hallazgos respaldan la aplicabilidad más amplia de la instrucción basada en tareas en contextos y niveles de competencia similares.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas, Habilidades de escritura, Estudiantes de inglés, ninth grade nivel A1, Tareas auténticas

ABSTRACT

This research explored the effectiveness of task-based activities in improving the writing skills of A1-level English learners at a private high school in the Ecuadorian highlands. Grounded in the communicative approach and supported by prior studies, the study focused on designing meaningful writing tasks tailored to students' linguistic and contextual needs. Through a mixed-methods design, data was collected before and after implementation using a pre- and post-test, and a teacher's interview. The sample included 33 students and a teacher. The results revealed significant improvement in coherence, grammatical accuracy, and text organization among the majority of participants. Descriptive writing showed greater spatial awareness and emotional connection, personal letters reflected stronger audience awareness, and short stories demonstrated growth in narrative cohesion. The teacher's perspective confirmed increased student motivation and engagement, attributing progress to the use of authentic, task-driven contexts. The study concludes that integrating task-based learning enhances written expression, fosters communicative intent, and strengthens learner autonomy, even within resource-limited settings. These findings support the broader applicability of task-based instruction across similar learning environments and proficiency levels.

Keywords: Task-Based Language Teaching, Writing Skills, A1 English Learners, Authentic Tasks.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been an observed increase in the demand for English language learning. This is due to the fact that English is an official language in 48 countries and a native language in 25 other countries, with a total of 623.80 million speakers worldwide (WorldData.info, 2025). Beyond its geographical distribution across all five continents, English functions as a *lingua franca*, enabling intercultural communication among individuals of diverse nationalities.

In light of the increasingly globalized world, learning English has become imperative. English has emerged as the international language of culture, technology, communication and entertainment. Consequently, educational institutions are increasingly recognizing the importance of providing students with a comprehensive education that incorporates practical applications of the language through hands-on experience. In the context of second language acquisition, the primary objective is to transform theoretical knowledge into functional competence, thereby fostering authentic learning. Achieve this objective necessitates the integration of classroom instruction to provide the necessary opportunities for the assembly of building blocks of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural understanding into a cohesive whole. Furthermore, active engagement with the language can encourage learners to learn linguistic patterns and structures, facilitating a smoother transition from learning about a language to using it in real situations (Kim, 2023).

Ecuador has demonstrated a commitment to the instruction of English by implementing educational policies intended to enhance the quality of English teaching. Nevertheless, as indicated by certain statistics, Ecuador still has a considerable amount of work to undertake in order to elevate its standing in the index of English proficiency on a global scale (Barre & Villafuerte, 2021).

The pedagogy of English has undergone significant evolution, with the advent of various methodologies and approaches over time. In the contemporary era, the communicative approach is regarded as the most efficacious, given that acquiring a language entails not only the comprehension of its grammatical principles, but also the adept utilization of it in diverse communicative scenarios. However, recent literature has noted a shift towards task-based activities, which aim to cultivate communicative competence through the authentic utilization of language itself. The novelty of this approach lies in its ability to facilitate the accomplishment of tasks, as discussed by Zaghlool *et al.* (2023).

In Ecuador, the teaching of English is mandatory, as stated in the Ecuadorian curriculum. Students between the ages of twelve and thirteen are expected to produce informal

texts, such as a series of simple sentences on a topic familiar to them without many details. However, while the majority of students demonstrate an understanding of the language, nearly all encounter challenges in effectively communicating their ideas in written form. The predicament appears to stem from a deficiency in two key areas: an adequate repertoire of English vocabulary and a paucity of creativity and motivation in their writing. This phenomenon may be attributed to an instructional paradigm characterized by a teacher-centered approach, wherein students, predominantly Basic Users, encounter challenges in mustering the necessary motivation and engagement to effectively partake in the learning process. It has been observed that educators often do not provide activities that could improve the writing process or that could show the students a clear and real use of the language in this sense.

The complexity of writing as a skill is evidenced by its multifaceted nature, which demands students to demonstrate their ability to formulate coherent and precise personal thoughts, opinions, sentiments, or experiences. This process entails the arrangement of words, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs in the second or foreign language, while adhering to fundamental grammatical structures to ensure the proper flow of ideas and enhance the comprehensibility of the written piece for its audience.

In light of the aforementioned points, this research proposal explores the challenges encountered by A1 level teenage students when writing sentences, phrases, and short paragraphs in English. Anda (2020) contended that learners encounter significant challenges in attaining comprehensive productive skills, particularly in the domain of writing.

Gurung (2023) posited that the act of teaching writing is a multifaceted process, primarily due to the students' inadequate writing skills. This assertion is predicated on the premise that students possess an inadequate foundation of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, as well as a paucity of motivation to engage in creatively.

Additionally, educators do not prioritize the development of students' writing skills with the frequency that is required. Consequently, learners exhibit a paucity of interest in writing, perceiving the writing process to be more arduous than it need to be. Despite the numerous researches that have proposed various approaches and methods, including task-based, for the development of English proficiency, most of them have been mainly devoted to oral proficiency, so there is still a research gap in how the Task-Based approach could benefit students' writing skills, especially in the first levels. The present research aims to address these challenges by implementing task-based activities, which assist learners in producing sentences or paragraphs on familiar subjects. It is imperative for educators to recognize the necessity of cultivating writing skills, as it provides young learners with opportunities to articulate their ideas, thoughts, and emotions.

The implementation of task-based activities to assist teenager students of a private high school located in the highlands of Ecuador in the composition of sentences, short paragraphs, and phrases in English aligns with the research interests of the University. This methodological proposal involves the implementation of diverse activities and instructions to facilitate the execution of interactive tasks, which culminate in the production of a written product that is both authentic and free from grammatical inaccuracies. It is noteworthy that among the four language skills, writing is the most complex and demanding. This is due to the fact that writing requires an effective use of vocabulary, careful organization of ideas, linguistic competence, and a high level of motivation to write. Consequently, writing assumes a pivotal role in the acquisition of language skills. Shaby (2020) asserts that effective learning occurs when students are fully engaged in a language task, rather than merely acquiring knowledge about the language. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that this project encompasses the concurrent development of other complementary skills, such as oral comprehension (listening) and oral expression (speaking), as well as written comprehension (reading).

In light of the preceding discourse, the present research proposal is guided by the following objectives:

General Objective

To measure the effectiveness of task-based activities in improving the writing skills of A1 students from a private high school in the Ecuadorian highlands.

Specific Objectives

- To analyze the relevant facts presented in previous research in order to support the effectiveness of task-based activities in overcoming writing difficulties.
- To use data collection techniques to obtain accurate information before and after the implementation of task-based learning activities to promote better written texts.
- To design and implement tasks for A1 learners that are tailored to their specific needs and requirements, thereby facilitating the production of unique written texts in the English language.
- To motivate students to write in English by developing authentic tasks with meaningful contexts that are relevant to them.
- To evaluate student writing products using a rubric and collect student opinions that can provide appropriate feedback to enrich the writing experience.

CHAPTER I THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Research Background

1.1.1 International

Pingmuang and Koraneekij (2022) conducted a study with the objective of examining user experience and needs in acquiring English writing skills. To this end, they administered an online survey to a sample of 665 EFL lower secondary students in Thailand and five school teachers. The researchers employed a range of instruments to gather data, including the MALL application, learning processes, English writing tasks, English writing tests, scoring writing rubrics, and student satisfaction questionnaires. A salient finding of the study was the students' inclination to learn writing skills that are pertinent to their experiences through the analysis of writing errors, patterns, and styles, peer assessment, and constructive feedback from teachers. Consequently, they designed and developed a mobile-assisted language learning application to facilitate writing instruction. While the study's primary focus is on leveraging technology to enhance writing instruction, it also offers insights and potentially paves the way for the integration of task-based writing activities that can be further facilitated by new technologies.

In the other hand, Yundayani and Ardiasih (2021) conducted a research study with the objective of analyzing students' needs with regard to English writing materials for academic purposes. The researchers employed a variety of methods, including tests, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and observations, to validate the students' need for task-based authentic materials that prioritize interactive communication for learning purposes. While the study's primary focus was on higher education students from Indonesia, its findings offer recommendations for the selection of materials that align with students' needs. This is a critical consideration in the design of task-based activities. The findings of the study indicated that task-based activities enhance students' motivation and autonomy, as it emphasizes not only the utilization of language but also the learning process itself.

Another pertinent research from Indonesia is that of the authors Husainn et al. (2021). The authors' objective included two primary factors: first, ascertaining whether the implementation of the task-based learning method can enhance writing skills, and second, determining which writing aspects exhibit a substantial improvement with this methodology. The researchers conducted a pre-test and a post-test on sample of 32 students, and the results indicated a marked improvement in the students' writing skills, particularly in the domain of narrative texts.

Moreover, research on this subject has also been devoted to specific aspects of the language, such as grammar, which is the core of language itself. According to Pham and Do (2021), task-based instruction exerts a significant influence on students' grammatical performance in both speaking and writing skills. The objective of this study was to compare the efficacy of task-based instruction and presentation, practice, production in enhancing students' productive skills. To this end, a pre-test, a post-test, and a series of interviews were administered to two groups of students, with one group receiving task-based instruction and the other receiving presentation, practice, production. The findings of this study indicated that task-based instruction had a strong impact on students' grammatical performance and is recommended to language teachers as it creates opportunities for students to practice the language in class as their motivation level increases.

Another relevant study from Iran is by Zohrevandi et al. (2024), which compared the effects of two instructional methods—debating and dictogloss—alongside two scaffolding approaches: teacher-led and peer-assisted. The research targeted intermediate EFL learners, aiming to assess the impact on their writing accuracy and fluency. The authors employed a quasi-experimental design, selecting a sample of 80 students through convenience sampling. The results indicated that task-based collaborative output activities, combined with effective scaffolding techniques, led to significant improvements in learners' writing skills in English as a foreign language.

1.1.2 National

In the national educational context, some researchers have also demonstrated the positive impact of task-based activities on students' learning process. For instance, Solis (2023) conducted a study with the objective of enhancing grammatical skills by implementing task-based methodology on tenth year EGB students. The researcher presented a qualitative and descriptive study with a sample of 18 students and came to the important conclusion that the relationship between the improvement of writing skills and task-based methodology is tremendous because students have a significant understanding of the language and develop real-life activities based on specific scenarios, which makes the learning process more engaging and motivating.

Moreover, other studies have been dedicated to the enhancement of other language skills through the implementation task-based learning methodologies. For instance, Gavilanez (2021) conducted a study to analyze the influence of the task-based learning approach in the development of oral communicative competence. To this end, this researcher employed a qualitative, quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research approach, conducting in-depth interviews with 40 first-year high school students from Monseñor Leonidas Proaño-CPL

Cotopaxi High School. The author proposed a booklet comprising eight tasks designed to foster the development of communicative competence.

In addition, Amaya (2021) sought to implement a task-based language teaching approach with the objective of developing productive skills at a rural school. To validate her results, the researcher employed a variety of methods, including a literature review, a student questionnaire survey, and teacher interviews. The study's findings indicated that this approach fostered the development of self-confidence, motivation, and creativity among students, empowering them to become active participants and creators in their learning process. While this study and the above do not concern themselves with writing as a solitary skill, they are crucial here because learning a language is a system in which everything is intertwined.

Following this idea, Nagua et al. (2024) conducted a study with the objective to analyze the impact of a task-based learning model on developing reading competence among A2 level students in virtual classes. The study was conducted at the Language Center of the Instituto Superior Universitario Sucre in the city of Quito. The participants of the study comprised 36 A2 level students who were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The objective of this division was to validate the results of the study. The findings indicated that the task-based learning method achieved significantly higher scores in students who were instructed through it. While the present study focuses on reading, its findings remain pertinent, as they substantiate this pedagogical methodology in the teaching-learning process, wherein reading plays a pivotal role in writing, frequently serving as a model or pattern.

1.2 Basic Concepts

1.2.1 Independent Variable

1.2.1.1 Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT). Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) posits that knowledge is constructed by learners through their own experiences, interactions, and reflections. This theory constitutes a comprehensive perspective on learning, teaching and social research. It underscores the significance of prior social learning and interaction in shaping comprehension.

In educational settings, this theory has been employed by some authors, including Zajda (2021), to foster an effective learning environment for all students. The fundamental premise of CLT is that meaningful knowledge and critical thinking are actively constructed, in a cognitive, cultural, emotional, and social sense, and that individual learning is an active process involving engagement and participation in the classroom.

Furthermore, Saleem et al. (2021) posit that language, communication and speech are a social construction, thereby placing the responsibility on the teacher to employ a learner-

centered approach to the exchange of ideas, the solving of problems, or the creation of something new.

In addition, Malik (2024) asserts that the CLT methodology has the potential to enhance language acquisition and proficiency in the teaching-learning process of English, particularly in the context of English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language.

1.2.1.2 Task-Based Learning (TBL). This pedagogical approach emphasizes the utilization of language by students to achieve specific objectives. It is a constituent element of communicative language teaching (CLT).

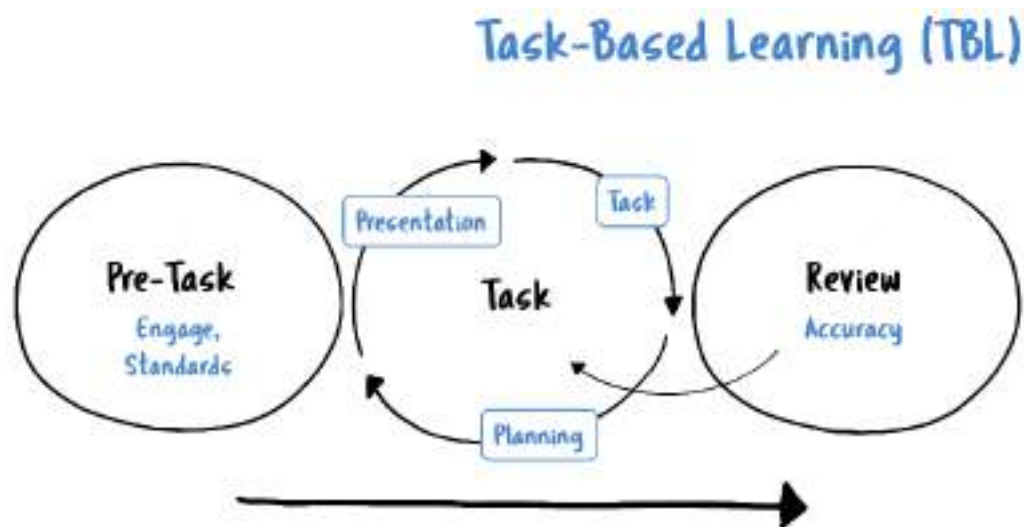
This pedagogical approach is predicated on constructivist theory of learning, which posits that individuals construct their own knowledge through daily real-life experiences and social interaction, thereby engendering meaningful and relevant learning. This pedagogical approach underscores the notion that learners function as dynamic agents in the learning process, as opposed to merely receiving information passively. The primary objective of this approach is to facilitate students' comprehension of language as a medium for practical application in real-life contexts.

The TBL approach has been found to be a significant improvement over traditional language teaching methods, as it places students at the core of the learning process. This methodology is predicated on the four Cs of 22st-century skills (Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, and Critical Thinking).

The primary objective of TBL is to engage students in the creation of something tangible and meaningful within the context of the classroom. These tasks encompass real-world activities that are goal-oriented and culminate in a final product. The TBL process is meticulously structured into three phases: pre-task, during-task, and post-task, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Phases of the Task-Based Learning method



Fuente: Weller (2019)

The pre-task phase initiates the subject matter and furnishes students with the requisite information and terminology for the task. Subsequently, in the during-task stage, students collaborate in pairs or groups to complete the task, while teachers provide ongoing supervision, offer guidance, and provide encouragement. The post-task stage is characterized by the presentation of reports, followed by the allocation of language tasks aimed at fostering further exploration and refinement of grammar, vocabulary, and expressions (Thirakunkovit & Boonyaparakob, 2022).

Thirakunkovit and Boonyaparakob (2022) posit that TBL engenders an authentic environment in which students can hone their communication skills and apply language in authentic contexts. The merits of TBL include its student-centered approach, its contextualization of learning, its diversification of language exposure, its accommodation of students' needs, its enhancement of communication, motivation, and enjoyment (Thirakunkovit & Boonyaparakob, 2022). However, TBL can also present certain challenges in some scenarios. For instance, teachers may invest a significant amount of time in task preparation, students may devote considerable time to task both within and outside the classroom, and they may experience feelings of being overwhelmed, depending on the task's complexity and phase.

It can be posited that Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) must align with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, as communication constitutes the crux of the task (Salem & Vadakalur, 2020). In this regard, educators must acknowledge their pivotal role as facilitators and mentors within the instructional process. They are charged with the

responsibility of meticulously designing and implementing activities that are strategically crafted to foster and develop these competences in an effective manner.

1.2.1.3 Task-Based Activities (TBA). The independent variable is defined as task-based activities, which are instructional exercises or learning experiences in which students engage in completing specific tasks or assignments that are directly related to achieving specific learning objectives. These activities are meticulously designed to be practical and goal-oriented, with the objective of encouraging students to use language authentically in order to accomplish real-world tasks. This approach diverges from the conventional focus on language forms or structures, emphasizing a more holistic and practical learning experience.

These activities facilitate students' learning by engaging them in tasks that apply to the task of writing about real-life situations. For instance, a short story may encompass planning, writing, and revising, thereby fostering a reflective approach to the writing process.

These activities also provide opportunities for learners to practice and develop reading and writing skills in meaningful contexts that closely resemble real-life situations. It is imperative to recognize that these activities are designed for novice learners; therefore, all task-based exercises should be concise and straightforward. The primary objective is to engage students in writing skills. It is also crucial that these activities are engaging and relevant to their interests, drawing upon familiar topics and real-life experiences. This approach not only captures their attention but also motivates them to enhance their understanding and mastery of these writing skills. The objective is to assist and motivate students in comprehending language as a medium for application in authentic contexts.

Zaghlool et al. (2023) have investigated the use of task-based activities to improve students' skills, including writing. For instance, a study involving 65 students in Irbid, Jordan, demonstrated that these activities led to notable enhancements in various aspects of writing proficiency, including punctuation, word count, capitalization, transition words, and coherence.

Furthermore, Thirakunkovit and Boonyaparakob (2022) confirmed that TBA could satisfactorily improve writing skills in various writing tasks. These authors acknowledge the term "task-based collaborative writing approach" for the implementation of task-based approach in academic writing course. The concept is learner-centered, with the teacher playing the role of a facilitator. Its feasibility and applicability to improving writing competence have been validated.

It is crucial to acknowledge that writing represents a challenging and pivotal domain of language proficiency that both students and teachers grapple with, particularly within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Students are engaged in the development

and refinement of all facets of writing, while teachers are devising engaging and meaningful writing lessons, particularly given the perception that writing is often the least favored subject among students. Consequently, there is a continuous pursuit of research to investigate the efficacy of TBA in enhancing writing skills.

1.2.2 Dependent Variable

1.2.2.1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a document that establishes language proficiency levels for European languages. It delineates the competences required for proficient language usage. The CEFR was published in 2001 by the Council of Europe. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages delineates six levels of proficiency for European languages: A1, A2 (Elementary), B1, B2 (Intermediate), and C1, C2 (Advanced).

This reference framework is particularly useful for planning lessons and designing classroom activities and assessments according to the competences to be achieved, as defined in school programs (Council of Europe, 2001). The creation of this framework was guided by two overarching objectives, which are fundamental to the implementation of any pedagogical approach in the classroom:

1. To encourage language practitioners of all kinds, including language learners themselves, to reflect on questions such as:
 - What are we actually doing when we speak or write to each other?
 - What enables us to act in this way?
 - How much of this do we have to learn when we try to use a new language?
 - How do we establish objectives and monitor our advancement from a state of complete unfamiliarity to one of proficient mastery?
 - How does the process of acquiring and mastering a language occur?
 - What strategies can be employed to facilitate more effective language learning for both oneself and others?
2. To facilitate the exchange of information among practitioners regarding the objectives they aim to achieve in language education and the strategies they employ to accomplish these goals.

1.2.2.2 Proficiency Levels for European Languages. Proficiency levels are indicative of the competencies that students must acquire and develop at each of the six levels previously referenced. It is also imperative to acknowledge the existence of sub-levels, such as A1+ and A2+, which denotes a student's progression from one level to the next.

In addition, Harsch (2017) asserts that proficiency plays a crucial role in the fields of teaching, learning, and assessment, particularly in the context of a second or foreign language. This is due to the fact that proficiency encompasses two aspects: the ability to perform tasks with the language (knowing how) and the awareness of the language (knowing what). The fundamental aspects of proficiency are communicative skills, communicative strategies, and linguistic competence (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, and socio-pragmatics). These ideas are collectively encapsulated within the CEFR. Nevertheless, there is a call from some authors for further research to complement and improve our understanding of the concept of proficiency and its optimal modeling.

Additionally, the CEFR facilitates the comparison of proficiency levels across different languages and countries. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the CEFR levels have been mapped as shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Mapping of qualifications

General qualifications	CEFR Proficiency level
Entry 1, 2, 3	Level A1
Foundation GCSE (grades C-G)	Level A2
Higher GCSE (grades A*-D)	Level B1
AS/A/AEA	Level B2
BA Hons	Level C1
Master & Doctorate	Level C2

Fuente: Costa and Albergaria-Almeida (2015)

1.2.2.3 A1 Elementary Level Student. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), A1 learners can:

- Understand and use very common everyday expressions and simple phrases for immediate needs.
- Introduce themselves and other people and ask and answer questions about personal details, such as where they live, things they have and people they know.
- Communicate in a simple way when the other person speaks slowly and clearly.

These competences furnish educators with a lucid framework for curriculum design, lesson planning, and assessment, while ensuring consistency and clarity in teaching objectives. Conversely, these skills empower students to establish their own learning

objectives and gauge their proficiency level. To provide a more precise understanding, the following approximations of the age range for each CEFR level are provided:

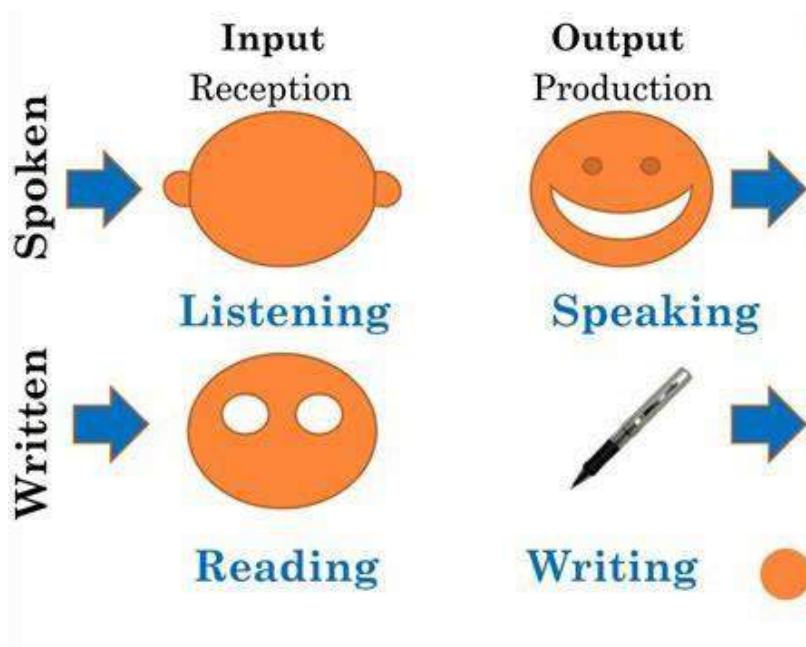
- A1 (beginner): Similar to a 6-year-old native speaker
- A2 (elementary): Similar to an 8-year-old native speaker
- B1 (intermediate): Similar to a 12-year-old native speaker
- B2 (upper-intermediate): Similar to a 16-year-old native speaker
- C1 (advanced): Similar to a young adult native speaker (18-25 years old)
- C2 (proficient): Similar to an educated native speaker (25+ years old)

1.2.2.4 English Language Skills. The English language comprises a series of skills, including listening (oral comprehension), speaking (oral expression), reading (written comprehension), and writing (written expression).

A comparison of the acquisition of a native language with that of a foreign language reveals a sequential pattern of learning, wherein listening is typically mastered first, followed by speaking, then reading, and finally writing. These language skills exhibit two distinct yet interconnected facets, as illustrated in Figure 2: the direction of communication (inward or outward) and the method of communication (spoken or written).

Figure 2

The Four Language Skills



Fuente: TheEnglishClub.com (1997-2025)

1.2.2.5 Writing Skill (Written Expression). The dependent variable will delineate the limitations that learners at level A1 may encounter, with the understanding that writing proficiency is delineated by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. At level A1, learners are considered beginners and typically possess limited skills or are unable to produce adequate written work. According to the National Curriculum for the Teaching of English, students at this level are expected to “produce very simple informational texts that may have little or no detail, little variety in sentence structure, and may have some usage errors” (Ministry of Education, 2012, p. 11). It is also imperative that writers have a clear understanding of the topic they are addressing, as writing involves the articulation of thoughts, feelings, and prior knowledge.

Writing is defined as the ability to express ideas, thoughts, and concepts in written form. The present study focuses on the acquisition of writing skills as the primary skill for composing sentences, texts, essays, and stories. Writing skills constitute an integral component of the communication process, thereby enabling individuals to articulate their thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

The writing process encompasses multiple stages, from the initial planning stage, which involves the formulation of a coherent written message, to the final version that is presented to the audience. The initial stage is known as “drafting”, wherein learners engage in brainstorming activities concerning a given topic. The subsequent stage is the review and refinement of the initial draft, culminating in the creation of the final version. In this particular instance, it is imperative to motivate learners to generate ideas on a pre-selected topic. Subsequently, learners must organize these ideas in a logical and coherent manner, aligning them with their intended message.

The acquisition of written expression is often characterized as the final skill to be mastered, thereby explaining its perceived challenge for beginners. It is imperative to acknowledge that writing conventions vary significantly across different linguistic groups. Students from diverse linguistic backgrounds have often expressed discontent with writing in English, particularly in academic contexts, perceiving it as “boring” and formulaic. The objective, however, is to demonstrate to students how to write in a coherent manner, employing proper grammatical structure and acceptable spelling. A highly effective pedagogical approach involves motivational strategies. However, motivating A1 level students to engage with writing can pose a significant challenge, as they often exhibit a strong aversion to writing because:

- It serves as a more durable record of linguistic proficiency in comparison to spoken language. Consequently, it can be perceived as a potential challenge or threat to them.
- Students have expressed a perceived deficiency in their linguistic knowledge.

- Students assert that writing must adhere to grammatical standards.
- They believe that achieving formal correctness must be done at the first attempt.

Consequently, educators often encounter challenges in teaching writing, particularly during the assessment phase. This is due to the unique nature of writing, which, unlike other subjects, does not have a clearly defined “correct” response. Therefore, in order to achieve a good result, it is advisable to focus on the process of writing, going through its different stages: planning, writing, checking and revising. The task-based method has been shown to facilitate the teaching-learning process by focusing on students’ needs, promoting autonomy, and enhancing motivation.

However, when selecting a methodological approach for teaching writing, the following questions may emerge:

- a. How and when do you believe grammar explanations are necessary?
- b. Do you think there is no communication when grammar is not well used in writing a foreign language?
- c. How can the teaching-learning process be activated?

Given the necessity for students to master grammar rules, it is crucial to provide them with ample opportunities to engage with authentic English through various tasks. For instance, students could be tasked with writing texts related to real-life situations, such as notes, telegrams, postcards, letters, advertisements, summaries of research works. Alternatively, they could engage in linguistics games, such as crosswords, word association, or guessing words. Additionally, students could be encouraged to create posters, brainstorm ideas, or fill in cards or charts.

Notwithstanding the proficiency level of the students, numerous strategies can be employed by educators:

- To conduct needs assessment.
- To lower students’ affective filter.
- To contemplate the potential of the writing task to serve as a foundational element for subsequent tasks.
- To look for opportunities to examine authentic, written language.
- To prioritize functionality over aesthetic considerations when designing instructional materials.
- To provide corrective feedback.
- To consider formative assessment and reflective strategies.
- To assess student work periodically.

- To engage student in group writing activities.
- To select a familiar topic.
- To facilitate a discussion in which students share what they know about the topic.
- To gather the students' ideas until a sufficient level of participation has been achieved.
- To examine the individual contributions.
- To organize these preliminary thoughts to the best of one's ability.
- To provide ample support in the form of examples, formulas, and sentence frames alongside the piece.
- To create the "final draft" together with the students.

Engaging students in the writing process in this manner enables educators to cultivate practices that will equip students with the skills necessary to write autonomously. Indeed, for writing activities, the task-based approach can be integrated within the broader framework of task-based language teaching. This pedagogical approach enables learners to engage in active writing tasks that are commensurate with their capabilities and grounded in their real-life experience. It affords them the opportunity to observe their own progress, reevaluate the initial draft, and implement requisite revisions throughout the writing process.

**CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Conceptualization and Operationalization of Variables

Table 2

Independent Variable

Variable	Definition	Dimensions	Indicators	Instrument	Scale
Task-Based Activities	Instructional exercises or learning experiences in which students engage in completing specific tasks or assignments that are directly related to achieving specific learning objectives.	Contextual relevance	Use of real-life topics	Semi-structured interview	Categorical analysis
			Task completion rate		
		Engagement	Students' interest		
		Methodology	Techniques used for writing instruction Evaluation of task relevance and effectiveness		

Table 3

Dependent Variable

Variable	Definition	Dimensions	Indicators	Instrument	Scale
Writing Skills of A1 Students	Ability to express ideas, thoughts, and concepts in written form.	Content	Clarity	Pre- and Post-Test	5-point scale (5=excellent; 1=poor)
			Relevance		
		Language	Vocabulary		
			Grammar		
		Organization	Text structure		
Mechanics	Spelling Punctuation				

2.2 Research Approach

This study embraces a mixed method approach, combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research to paint a fuller picture of the problem (McKim, 2017). By doing so, it goes beyond numbers and statistics, digging into the real experiences and perspectives of those involved.

To understand how task-based activities impact the writing development of A1 students, the research uses:

- Quantitative tools to track and assess writing performance with measurable indicators, and
- Qualitative methods, like interviews and open-ended responses, to capture the insights and reflections of teachers.

Bringing these two strands together allows for triangulation, meaning findings are cross-checked from multiple angles. This not only strengthens the conclusions but also adds depth, illuminating both the outcomes and the reasons behind them.

2.3 Scope of the Research

This study takes a descriptive and applied research approach. It begins by exploring the current state of students' writing skills, then goes a step further to evaluate a targeted pedagogical intervention designed to enhance those skills in meaningful ways. As Burkholder et al. (2020) explain, descriptive research helps researchers capture and present real-world conditions just as they are, without altering variables. On the other hand, applied research focuses on testing practical solutions, like teaching strategies, that can directly improve learning outcomes. Together, these two approaches make it possible to not only understand what's happening, but also explore what can be done to make things better.

2.4 Type of Research

In this study, a hands-on approach is taken by using field research and a longitudinal design. That means that data is collected right where learning happens, inside real classrooms, over several weeks. Instead of just measuring outcomes at one point in time, it can be observed how students' writing develops, offering a clearer picture of how task-based activities shape their learning journey.

Burkholder et al. (2020) highlight the power of observing students in their everyday environment. They argue that research done "in a natural setting" not only strengthens the real-world relevance of our findings but also reveals how educational interventions unfold over

time. Their work reminds us that practical, classroom-based solutions are best understood in the spaces where they're actually used, where teaching and learning are lived experiences.

2.5 Research Methods

The theoretical methods included deductive, inductive, analytical, and synthetic approaches. These were applied during the initial stages of the study to conduct a comprehensive review of scholarly sources, define key concepts, and establish the pedagogical rationale for using task-based learning in the context of writing instruction. This theoretical foundation ensured that the intervention was aligned with best practices and supported by evidence-based strategies.

In parallel, empirical methods were employed to gather data directly from the educational context. The study began with an initial diagnostic phase, during which a pre-test was administered to assess students' baseline writing abilities. This instrument provided quantitative data on learners' performance in areas such as vocabulary use, sentence structure, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with English teachers offered qualitative insights into classroom dynamics, instructional challenges, and the feasibility of implementing task-based activities.

Based on the diagnostic findings, the modeling phase involved the design and implementation of targeted writing tasks. These tasks were carefully constructed to address specific areas of need and scaffold students' writing development through authentic, communicative activities. Throughout the intervention, classroom observations were conducted to monitor student engagement, task completion, and interaction patterns, contributing further qualitative data to the study.

Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to evaluate progress in students' writing performance. The results were compared with the pre-test data to identify changes in competence and measure the effectiveness of the task-based approach. This comparative analysis provided both individual and group-level evidence of improvement, validating the pedagogical strategy and informing future instructional decisions.

By combining theoretical rigor with empirical inquiry, the study offered a comprehensive understanding of how task-based learning can enhance writing skills in a real-world educational setting.

2.6 Instruments

To address the research objectives, a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments was employed to ensure a well-rounded analysis of the intervention's impact:

- Pre- and Post-Test: writing assessments were administered at the beginning and end of the study to measure learners' writing development over time. These tests were evaluated using an analytic writing rubric, ensuring consistent, criterion-based scoring across performance dimensions.
- Semi-Structured Teacher Interview: The teacher provided qualitative feedback on classroom dynamics, student responsiveness, and the perceived effectiveness of the intervention. This interview enriched the data by offering practitioner insights and contextual reflections.

2.7 Population and Sample

This study involved A1-level students enrolled at a private high school located in the Ecuadorian Highlands. The target population consisted of young learners who demonstrated basic proficiency in English, as well as exposure to task-based instruction during regular classroom activities.

A sample of 33 students was selected through purposive sampling, based on consistent attendance records, willingness to participate, and alignment with the required language level. In addition, one classroom teacher was included for a qualitative interview, offering practitioner insights to complement student-centered data.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants were both appropriate and relevant to the study's objectives. As Burkholder et al. (2020) explain, purposive selection supports the identification of information-rich cases, allowing the researcher to focus on individuals who are most likely to illuminate the phenomenon under investigation. This approach helped establish a balanced participant group that could meaningfully contribute to the exploration of task-based writing development in a real-world school context.

2.8 Procedure

This research was conducted in a private Catholic high school located at 8-85 Velasco Ibarra Avenue and Jaime Roldós Aguilera Street in Latacunga, Cotopaxi Province, in the Ecuadorian Highlands. The institution, registered under AMIE code 05H0094, operates exclusively in the morning and offers initial, primary, and complete secondary education to children and adolescents from middle-income families.

The school provides a comfortable and spacious environment for both teachers and students, featuring multiple facilities and a warm atmosphere. Among its resources is an English language lab equipped with programs designed to support listening and speaking skills. However, due to scheduling constraints, a high number of classrooms, and internal

security concerns, students rarely access the lab. Technological resources available include projectors, audio systems in every classroom, internet access for teachers, and digital books. Despite these tools, students are not permitted to use computers, tablets, or smartphones during lessons, which limits their ability to develop productive skills such as writing.

English is taught as a foreign language, with six hours of instruction per week distributed across three days. Each day includes two consecutive 45-minute sessions, allowing time for both input and output activities. However, all other subjects are taught in Spanish, which restricts students' exposure to English beyond the classroom. Only 30% of the English teachers hold a B2 certification, and none possess a master's degree in the field. Nevertheless, most teachers demonstrate strong dedication and promote contextual learning through hands-on activities and cross-curricular integration.

The textbook currently in use, *I-World English for the Twenty-First Century A1*, incorporates a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, as defined by Marsh (2002), which introduces topics related to science, history, and values such as religion. Despite this, students face challenges in applying English communicatively, particularly in writing.

The primary beneficiaries of this study were 33 students, 15 girls and 18 boys, aged 13, all of Ecuadorian nationality. These learners had acquired basic vocabulary and grammatical structures, enabling them to write simple sentences or short paragraphs on familiar topics. Most of them exhibited visual and kinesthetic learning styles, preferring to engage with the target language through technological tools and physical interaction. They responded positively to teachers who incorporated nonverbal communication strategies such as facial expressions, gestures, and movement.

According to Ellis (1989), learners with these characteristics benefit most from active involvement in the learning process. This was evident in their classroom behavior: they retained information better through experiential learning, enjoyed problem-solving through action, and were highly participative. However, they struggled to maintain attention during auditory or visual presentations and were easily distracted.

Academically, 43% of the students had previously attended public institutions where English instruction was limited to one hour per week. As a result, many lacked foundational knowledge and required multiple exposures to comprehend texts. While some could understand written or spoken English after repeated attempts, most were unable to express their ideas in writing using the target language.

Although the school provided digital resources for teachers to present videos, tutorials, and visual materials, students were not allowed to use these tools themselves. This restriction hindered their ability to practice and improve their productive skills, particularly writing.

Students enrolled in English because it is a mandatory subject, as stipulated by the Ministry of Education. Most came from families capable of affording private English courses, yet showed little interest in pursuing them. Only a few students expressed motivation to learn English for future travel or communication with English speakers. While some learners demonstrated a positive attitude toward writing tasks, more than half viewed English as irrelevant to their lives and completed assignments solely to obtain grades.

To address the challenges identified in this context, the study followed a structured, multi-phase intervention grounded in task-based learning principles. The procedure was designed to enhance students' writing skills through meaningful engagement and scaffolded instruction:

1. **Theoretical Stage:** The research began with a comprehensive review of literature on task-based learning and writing pedagogy. This phase established the conceptual framework and informed the design of the intervention, drawing on key works by Ellis, Willis, and Nunan.
2. **Initial Diagnostic Stage:** A pre-test was administered to assess students' baseline writing abilities. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with English teachers provided contextual insights into instructional practices and the feasibility of implementing task-based strategies. These findings guided the development of targeted writing tasks.
3. **Modeling Stage:** Based on diagnostic results, a series of task-based writing activities were designed and implemented. These tasks addressed specific areas of need, such as vocabulary expansion, sentence structure, and coherence, and were embedded within authentic classroom contexts. Students engaged in collaborative and individual tasks that promoted active learning and knowledge construction.
4. **Final Diagnostic and Validation Stage:** After the intervention, a post-test was conducted to evaluate progress in students' writing performance. Comparative analysis of pre- and post-test results provided evidence of individual improvement and the overall effectiveness of the task-based approach.

This procedure allowed for continuous reflection and adjustment, ensuring that the intervention remained responsive to learners' needs and aligned with the study's pedagogical goals.

2.9 Diagnostic Results

2.9.1 Students' Pre-Test

The objective of the pre-test was to assess students' baseline writing skills in three genres before implementing task-based learning: descriptive writing, personal letter, and short story.

Table 4

Quantitative Overview

Category	Mean Score (out of 20)	Standard Deviation	Score Range
Descriptive Writing	8.48	±3.60	4 – 20
Personal Letter	8.61	±4.23	4 – 20
Short Story	7.52	±3.21	4 – 20
Overall Average	8.20	—	—

Note. These scores show a moderate level of performance, with noticeable variation across students, especially in personal letters.

Figure 3

Average Score per Writing Task (out of 20)

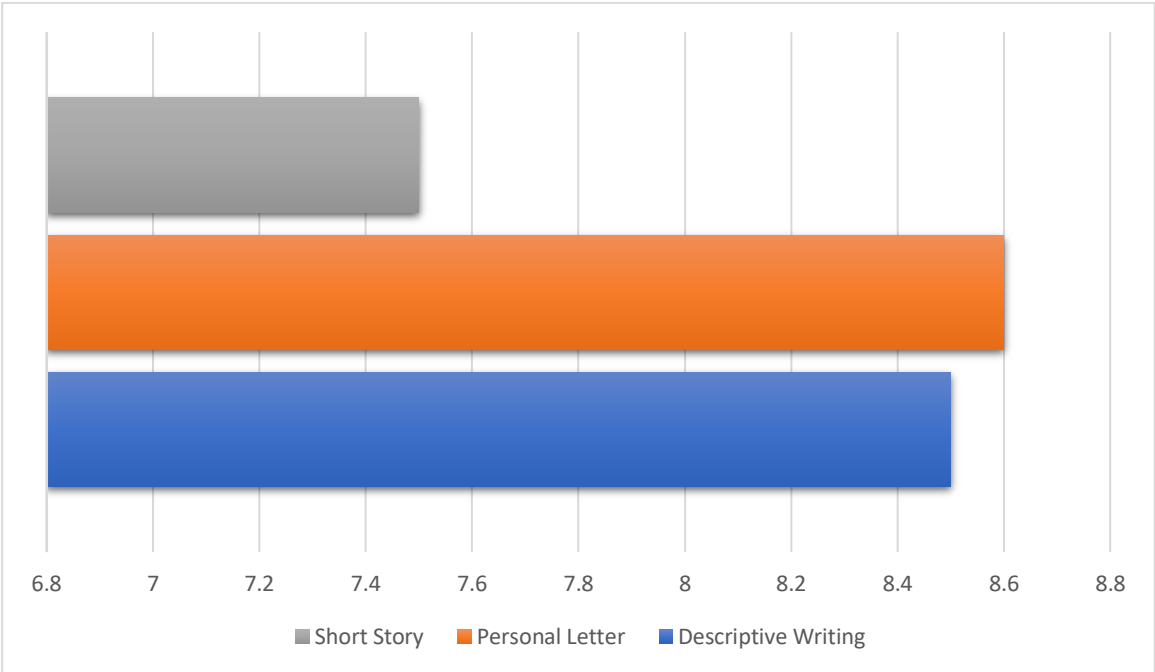


Table 5*Students Performance Bands*

Performance Band	Score Range	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Top Performers	16–20	4	12.12%
Average Performers	8–15	21	63.64%
Struggling Students	4–7	8	24.24%

Analysis and Interpretation

Out of the 33 participants, only one student achieved the maximum score across all tasks, showing outstanding control of content, structure, and language. For the majority of students, however, writing samples reflected recurring difficulties with grammar, vocabulary, and organization. Common errors included incomplete sentences, poor punctuation, and disjointed transitions. These issues reveal wider gaps in writing fluency and suggest that instruction should focus on helping students develop both accuracy and expression. The analysis of each writing task showed that:

- Descriptive Writing

Most students scored between 8 and 12 in this category, suggesting a foundational understanding of how to describe familiar places. However, many responses lacked depth and sensory detail, which limited their effectiveness in creating vivid imagery. This may reflect insufficient practice with descriptive techniques or limited vocabulary. Students who scored higher were able to convey spatial awareness and emotional connection to the place described, demonstrating stronger narrative control.

- Personal Letter

Scores in this task ranged widely, from 4 to 20, highlighting significant variation in students' grasp of tone, format, and audience awareness. While many students struggled to structure a coherent letter or maintain an appropriate conversational tone, a few stood out for their clarity and expressiveness.

- Short Story

The short story task proved to be the most demanding. Several students had difficulty maintaining a clear narrative arc, and frequent issues with organization and grammar interrupted the flow of ideas. Low scores in this category suggest challenges in planning, creativity, and cohesion. In contrast, top-performing students used basic elements of

storytelling, dialogue, plot development, and character, to engage the reader and present a more complete narrative experience.

2.9.2 Teacher's Interview

To better understand the instructional practices and perceptions surrounding task-based learning in A1-level writing instruction, a semi-structured interview was conducted with an experienced English language teacher. The teacher shared insights on methodologies used, student challenges, effective writing activities, evaluation strategies, and recommendations for broader implementation. The following table summarizes the key findings from the interview.

Table 6

Summary of teacher interview results on Task-Based Learning and Writing Instruction

Category	Findings
Teaching Experience	20 years in basic secondary education
Methodologies Used	Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for real-life writing tasks Task-Based Learning (TBL) using contextualized tasks Guided Writing with scaffolding
Challenges Identified	Limited vocabulary and grammar among A1 students Negative transfer from Spanish Low writing habits and confidence
Effective Writing Activities	Text completion and reformulation Personal descriptions Creative tasks (e.g., story writing) Collaborative writing
Evaluation Approach	Formative and developmental Criteria: sentence structure, vocabulary, organization, effort Tools: A1-level rubrics Feedback: positive and specific
Sample Task	Write a Postcard from Vacation Pre-task: model text and vocabulary Task: writing postcards Post-task: peer feedback and revision
Observed Benefits	Increased motivation Improved relevance and retention

	Enhanced writing fluency through meaningful tasks
Implementation Challenges	Limited language skills Time constraints Group work difficulties
Solutions Applied	Use of scaffolds (models, visuals) Explicit instruction in teamwork
Recommendations for TBL	Integration of technology Interdisciplinary task planning Teacher training Collaborative lesson design

Source: Semi-structured interview with English language teacher (2025).

Analysis and Interpretation

To interpret the insights gathered from the semi-structured interview, a thematic analysis was conducted. This method, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. The interview transcript was reviewed and coded to extract recurring ideas, which were then grouped into overarching themes relevant to the study's objectives.

- Pedagogical Approaches to Writing Instruction

The teacher described a flexible use of methodologies, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Learning (TBL), and Guided Writing. These approaches were selected based on topic relevance and time constraints, with a clear emphasis on real-world communication and scaffolded learning. This theme reflects a learner-centered philosophy, where writing is taught not as isolated grammar drills but as a meaningful, contextualized skill.

Interpretation: The teacher's methodology aligns with current best practices in writing pedagogy, emphasizing authenticity, gradual skill development, and learner autonomy.

- Challenges in A1-Level Writing Development

Three major challenges emerged: limited lexical and grammatical range, negative transfer from Spanish, and a general lack of writing habits—even in the students' native language. These barriers contribute to low confidence and limited output in English.

Interpretation: These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions that build foundational language skills and encourage regular writing practice. The influence of L1

interference suggests that contrastive analysis and error correction strategies may be beneficial.

- Effective Writing Activities

The teacher identified several task types that foster engagement and skill development: text completion, personal descriptions, creative storytelling, and collaborative writing. These activities were praised for their ability to connect language to personal experience and promote spontaneous use of English.

Interpretation: The success of these tasks supports the theoretical foundation of TBL, which posits that meaningful, goal-oriented tasks enhance language acquisition. The emphasis on personalization and creativity also aligns with constructivist principles.

- Assessment Practices

Writing was evaluated through a formative and developmental lens, using simplified rubrics and positive feedback. The teacher prioritized effort, organization, and vocabulary use over strict grammatical accuracy.

Interpretation: This approach fosters a growth mindset and encourages students to take ownership of their learning. It also reflects an understanding of the affective dimension of language learning, where confidence and motivation are critical.

- Implementation Challenges and Solutions

The teacher acknowledged limitations in students' language skills, time constraints within the curriculum, and difficulties with group work. To address these, scaffolding techniques (e.g., model texts, visuals) and explicit instruction in collaboration were employed.

Interpretation: These adaptive strategies demonstrate reflective teaching and a commitment to inclusive practice. They also reinforce the importance of teacher agency in overcoming systemic barriers to innovation.

- Recommendations for Broader TBL Integration

The teacher proposed integrating technology, interdisciplinary planning, teacher training, and collaborative lesson design to support sustained use of TBL.

Interpretation: These suggestions align with institutional change models and point to the need for systemic support to scale pedagogical innovations. They also reflect a forward-thinking perspective on curriculum development.

2.9.3 Diagnostic Conclusions

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of students' writing development, the study triangulated data from two key sources: the results of the pre-test administered to 33 A1-level students and the insights gathered from a semi-structured interview with an experienced English teacher. This methodological triangulation allowed for the validation of findings and the identification of converging themes that support the study's conclusions.

- Language Proficiency and Writing Challenges

The pre-test revealed that the majority of students struggled with core writing competencies, particularly grammar accuracy, vocabulary range, and text organization. These difficulties were consistent across all three writing tasks, descriptive writing, personal letters, and short stories. Only one student demonstrated mastery across all areas.

The teacher interview confirmed these observations, noting that students often rely on literal translation from Spanish, which leads to frequent errors. Additionally, the teacher highlighted that many learners lack writing habits even in their native language, contributing to low confidence and limited output.

Triangulated Insight: Both data sources point to a foundational gap in language proficiency and writing practice, reinforcing the need for scaffolded instruction and regular writing exposure.

- Task-Based Writing as a Motivational Strategy

Students performed best on tasks that were personally meaningful, such as writing personal letters. These responses showed greater emotional tone, audience awareness, and coherence. The teacher emphasized that task-based writing, especially activities like personal descriptions and creative storytelling, helps students connect language to real-life contexts and fosters authentic expression.

Triangulated Insight: The alignment between student performance and teacher perception validates task-based learning as an effective strategy for enhancing motivation and relevance in writing instruction.

- Effectiveness of Modeling and Scaffolding

In the pre-test, students who demonstrated stronger writing skills often reflected structural elements from modeled texts, such as clear paragraphing and appropriate use of

expressions. The teacher reported using guided writing techniques, including sample texts and visual aids, to support student output.

Triangulated Insight: The use of modeling and scaffolding is critical in helping A1 learners develop writing fluency and confidence. This confirms the importance of structured support in early writing instruction.

- Creative and Collaborative Writing Potential

Although short story writing was the most challenging task, some students showed promise by incorporating dialogue, character development, and narrative structure. The teacher identified creative and collaborative tasks as particularly effective, noting that they promote spontaneous language use and peer learning.

Triangulated Insight: While creative writing requires more support, it has strong potential to engage learners and develop expressive skills when paired with collaborative strategies.

- Barriers to Implementation

The teacher cited time constraints, limited student vocabulary, and difficulties with group dynamics as barriers to fully implementing task-based writing. These contextual challenges help explain the uneven performance observed in the pre-test, especially in tasks requiring extended output and narrative cohesion.

Triangulated Insight: Institutional and logistical limitations must be addressed to optimize the impact of task-based learning. This includes allocating time for planning, integrating technology, and teaching collaboration skills.

CHAPTER III PRESENTATION AND VALIDATION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 Proposal Presentation

3.1.1 Objectives

General Objective

- To enhance the writing skills of A1-level students from a private high school in Ecuadorian highlands through task-based activities.

Specific Objectives

1. To help students develop descriptive writing skills using rich, sensory vocabulary.
2. To support the creation of personal texts (letters, emails) with appropriate structure, tone, and purpose.
3. To guide students in crafting creative narratives through the use of structured storytelling elements.
4. To improve grammar accuracy by practicing contextual error correction.
5. To encourage students to reflect on their own writing progress and learning through self-assessment activities.

3.1.2 Justification

This proposal is grounded in the principles of task-based learning, which emphasizes the real-world use of language to achieve communicative goals (Amaya, 2021). Through meaningful tasks, such as writing letters, descriptive paragraphs, short stories, and collaborative error correction, students develop linguistic structures in a way that's both contextual and practical. The initiative also responds to an urgent need, that is, improving the written fluency of A1-level English students, particularly in rural or underserved areas like the Ecuadorian highlands.

3.1.3 Key Features of the Proposal

- Duration: 4 weeks
- Target Group: Secondary school students at A1 English level
- Modality: In-person sessions, with optional digital components
- Types of Tasks: Description, narration, personal writing, collaboration, and peer correction

- Methodology: Task-Based Methodology and writing production cycles (planning, writing, reviewing, and feedback)

3.1.4 Core Ideas / Guiding Principles

- Writing improves through meaningful practice.
- Peer-to-peer feedback empowers students and encourages ownership of learning.
- Error correction should be thoughtful, reflective, and rooted in context.
- Collaboration sparks creativity and fosters shared expression.

3.1.5 Structure and Flow of the Components

Table 7

Proposal Organization

Week	Components	Dynamics
Week 1	Description and personal letter	Individual and paired work; peer review (cross-checking)
Week 2	Narrative and guided writing	Use of narrative structures; group feedback
Week 3	Storytelling with images and collaborative writing	Small group work; optional oral presentation
Week 4	Error correction and final reflection	Individual tasks and full-group discussion

3.1.6 Requirements and Key Criteria

- Use of visual and printed materials (such as images and writing guides) to support instruction.
- The teacher must have prior training in contextualized error correction.
- An evaluation rubric that aligns with the language learning objectives.
- A space dedicated to sharing student work and providing meaningful feedback.

3.1.7 Proposed Task-Based Activities

Week 1: Descriptive Writing and Personal Letters

Objectives:

- Familiarize students with sensory vocabulary and descriptive language.
- Develop informal writing skills in personal letters.

Activities:

1. Descriptive Writing (2 Days)

Day 1: Introduction to sensory details.

- Explain sensory vocabulary (appearance, smell, touch, emotions).
- Students choose a dish, place, or person and fill out a sensory chart.

Day 2: Writing and Peer Review.

- Draft descriptive paragraphs based on their charts.
- Exchange descriptions with partners and guess the subject.

Variation: Record audio descriptions instead of writing.

2. Personal Letters (2 Days)

Day 3: Introduction to letter writing.

- Teach letter elements (greeting, body, closing).
- Students write a letter describing a recent experience.

Day 4: Peer Exchange and Feedback.

- Exchange letters with classmates and provide corrections.

Variation: Write postcards or emails instead.

Duration: 30-40 minutes each session.

Week 2: Short Story and Guided Writing Prompts

Objectives:

- Enhance storytelling through structure and creativity.
- Provide guidelines for structured writing.

Activities:

1. Short Story (3 Days)

Day 1: Introduce story arcs (beginning, middle, end) and brainstorm prompts.

- Hand out a list of useful verbs, linking words, and sentence starters.

Day 2: Writing time.

- Students draft their short stories using provided structures.

Day 3: Sharing and Feedback.

- Share stories aloud in pairs or small groups for feedback.

2. Guided Writing Prompts (1 Day)

- Present a simple prompt (e.g., “Describe your daily routine”).
- Students complete sentence starters and write full sentences.
- Conduct a peer review session for grammar refinement.

Duration: 40-50 minutes for short stories, 30-40 minutes for guided prompts.

Week 3: Picture-Based Storytelling and Collaborative Writing

Objectives:

- Foster creativity through visual storytelling.
- Encourage teamwork and narrative development.

Activities:

1. Picture-Based Storytelling (2 Days)

Day 1: Introduce the sequence of images.

- Students work in pairs or small groups to create a short story using the images, focusing on past tense and linking words.

Day 2: Sharing Stories.

- Students present their stories to the class or share within their groups.

2. Collaborative Writing (2 Days)

Day 3: Group formation and story creation.

- Each group collaborates on a shared story, with students adding one sentence or paragraph at a time.

Day 4: Review and Present.

- Discuss the final product, focusing on logical flow and consistency across the group's contributions.

Duration: 35-45 minutes for picture storytelling, 30 minutes for collaborative writing.

Week 4: Error Correction Exercises and Reflection

Objectives:

- Improve grammar and mechanics through correction exercises.
- Reflect on writing progress and learning outcomes.

Activity 1:

- Provide a sample text containing intentional errors.
- Students work individually or in pairs to identify and correct the mistakes.
- Discuss corrections as a class and allow students to rewrite sections for clarity.

Duration: 30 minutes.

Activity 2:

- Have students select one piece of writing they feel proud of from the previous activities.
- Students can revise it based on feedback received earlier.
- Each student shares their final piece with the class or in small groups, discussing what they learned or enjoyed most during the intervention.

Duration: 45 minutes.

3.1.8 Implementation and Evaluation

- Application: Delivered through 30 to 50-minute classroom sessions
- Evaluation: Based on a writing production rubric, peer review, and personal reflection
- Monitoring: Comparing initial and final writing samples, supported by teacher feedback

3.1.9 Resources

- Printed worksheets
- Sensory charts and vocabulary lists
- Audiovisual materials (for creative variations)
- Optional digital tools: Padlet, Google Docs

3.1.10 Beneficiaries

This proposal benefited 33 A1-level students at a private school in the Ecuadorian highlands, as well as the English teachers seeking contextualized strategies to enhance writing skills.

3.1.11 Conclusion

This proposal promotes an active, collaborative, and reflective approach to writing for A1-level students. By tailoring authentic tasks to the learners' level and environment—and integrating communicative writing, meaningful correction, and self-assessment—the activities strengthen not just writing skills, but also student autonomy and motivation. Its structure allows for easy adaptation and replication across diverse educational contexts, both within the country and in similar learning environments abroad.

3.2 Proposal Validation

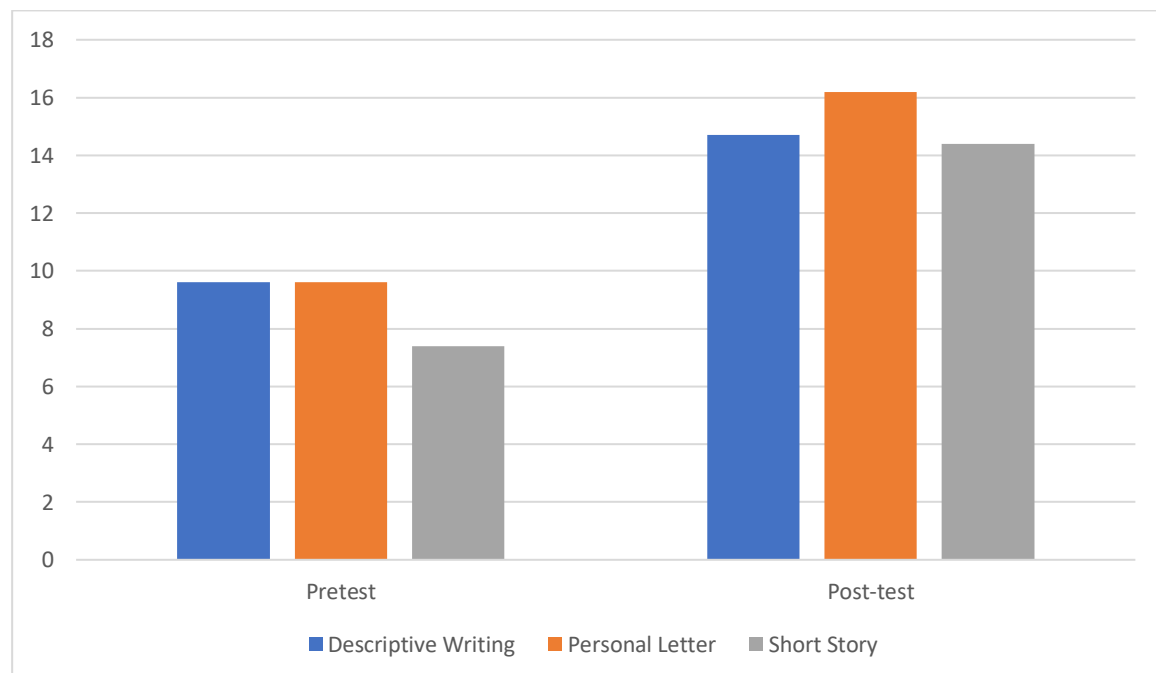
3.2.1 Post-tests' Results

To assess the improvement in students' writing skills following the implementation of task-based activities, a post-test was administered. The resulting data, when compared with pretest scores, provided strong evidence supporting the effectiveness of the proposal. The analysis revealed significant gains across all assessed writing tasks.

Table 8*Average Scores (out of 20)*

Task	Pretest Average	Post-test Average	Improvement	Trend
Descriptive Writing	~9.6	~14.7	+5.1	Sharper clarity, richer vocabulary
Personal Letter	~9.6	~16.2	+6.6	Stronger structure and expression
Short Story	~7.4	~14.4	+7.0	Better creativity and narrative flow

Note. This represents a 53–94% improvement across tasks, especially in Short Story writing—the most cognitively demanding of the three.

Figure 4*Average Scores for Each Writing Task before and after the Intervention*

Note. All tasks demonstrated substantial gains, averaging a 53% to 94% increase in scores.

Analysis and Interpretation

The results, when compared to their initial performance, showed a clear and meaningful improvement. One of the most remarkable gains appeared in the short story category. Students thrived when given space for creative expression, showing deeper thinking and richer narrative development. In the personal letter task, many demonstrated better understanding of tone, format, and real-world communication, suggesting that practical, relevant tasks helped bridge classroom learning with everyday writing. Meanwhile, their descriptive writing revealed expanded vocabulary and more vivid, sensory detail.

The growth wasn't limited to top performers. Students who had previously struggled made impressive progress, jumping several points across all tasks. This confirms that task-based activities provide the kind of support and engagement that lower-performing students need to flourish. On the other hand, top learners continued to perform at high levels, showing that the approach benefits everyone, regardless of where they started.

It's also clear that students transferred skills from one type of writing to another. The gains reflect authentic learning, not just memorization. Across the board, the improvement was substantial and consistent.

The results validate the proposal. Task-based learning isn't just effective, it's transformative. It supports creativity, strengthens communication, and helps build genre-specific fluency. The evidence shows that this approach truly enhances writing development in a way that's both measurable and meaningful.

3.2.2 Validation

To statistically validate the effectiveness of the task-based learning activities, a non-parametric test, specifically the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, was applied to compare students' pretest and post-test scores across writing tasks. This test is ideal because it does not assume normal distribution of the scores and is used to compare paired samples, which fits the before-and-after format of the data.

Hypotheses:

Null (H_0): There is no difference in median scores between pretest and post-test.

Alternative (H_1): There is a statistically significant difference in median scores.

Table 9*Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results*

Writing Task	N (Valid Pairs)	Wilcoxon W	p-value	Significant Improvement
Descriptive Writing	32	0	< 0.0001	Yes
Personal Letter	31	Low	< 0.0001	Yes
Short Story	30	Low	< 0.0001	Yes

Note. All p-values fall below the common threshold of 0.05, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis and confirm that the improvements were statistically significant

Analysis and Interpretation

After reviewing the test results, it is clear that the alternative hypothesis holds up, these differences in writing scores aren't just random fluctuations. The Wilcoxon test shows real, measurable gains after task-based learning activities. And more than just stats, the improvements speak volumes about the effectiveness of this teaching approach. It's not only statistically solid, it is pedagogically powerful. The learning gains are meaningful, suggesting that this method genuinely helps students develop their writing skills.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to measure the effectiveness of task-based activities in improving the writing skills of A1-level students in a private high school in the Ecuadorian highlands. Through a combination of theoretical grounding, empirical data collection, and classroom intervention, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The implementation of task-based writing activities proved to be a successful strategy for enhancing students' written production. Notable improvements were observed in coherence, text organization, and linguistic expressiveness, confirming the achievement of the general objective.
2. The study was supported by a solid theoretical foundation, which emphasized the role of task-based learning in promoting autonomy, critical thinking, and functional language use. This aligns with the first specific objective, as the literature reviewed validated the pedagogical relevance of TBL in overcoming writing difficulties.
3. Comparative analysis of pre- and post-test writing samples revealed significant gains in grammar accuracy, vocabulary usage, and overall text structure. These findings address the second specific objective, demonstrating that data collection techniques effectively captured student progress.
4. Tasks were designed and implemented based on diagnostic findings and learner profiles. This personalization led to increased engagement and the production of more authentic and meaningful texts, fulfilling the third specific objective.
5. Students responded positively to writing tasks embedded in relevant and relatable contexts. Their motivation to express themselves with purpose was reflected in improved tone, storytelling, and reader awareness. This outcome supports the fourth specific objective, highlighting the value of authenticity in task design.
6. The use of rubrics and student feedback provided valuable insights for refining instructional strategies. The formative assessment process was well-received and contributed to a more enriching writing experience, addressing the fifth specific objective.
7. Beyond linguistic competence, the intervention fostered more favorable attitudes toward learning English. Students demonstrated greater willingness to participate and take ownership of their writing, suggesting that task-based instruction can influence affective domains of learning.

8. Despite institutional constraints, the integration of contextualized pedagogy, ongoing assessment, and reflective teaching practices led to measurable improvements. This confirms that meaningful progress in writing is achievable even in environments with limited resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gradually incorporate task-based activities into the regular English curriculum, especially at A1 levels, to encourage contextualized and meaningful written expression from the early stages of language learning.
- Provide targeted training for teachers in the design and implementation of authentic tasks that reflect students' interests, needs, and proficiency levels. This ensures a more effective and communicative approach in classroom practice.
- Develop adaptable repositories of contextualized, reusable writing tasks that can be tailored to various school environments, promoting the practical expansion of the project and enabling replication in similar educational settings.
- Extend research efforts to other CEFR levels (such as A2 and B1) to assess whether the benefits observed at the A1 level can be scaled, and to understand how instructional challenges evolve alongside learners' growing linguistic competence.
- Design longer-term interventions with follow-up evaluations, allowing researchers to determine whether writing improvements are sustained over time and successfully transfer to other genres or productive skills.
- Investigate the role of educational technology as a writing aid, including collaborative platforms, intelligent grammar tools, and digital writing spaces that could enhance feedback mechanisms and support student autonomy.
- Revisit and refine the evaluation tools, ensuring that rubrics address not only linguistic elements but also creativity, communicative intent, and engagement.
- Encourage future research into other written genres, such as argumentative essays, reviews, or chronicles, to explore how task-based methods influence the development of more complex critical and discursive skills.
- Consider comparative studies across urban and rural institutions, examining how sociocultural environments and resource availability impact the implementation and effectiveness of task-based instruction.

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APPENDIX

A. Pre-Test

Objective: To assess the initial writing skills of A2 students before implementing task-based activities.

Tasks:

1. Descriptive Writing:

- Prompt: Write a short paragraph describing your favorite place.

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2. Personal Letter:

- Prompt: Write a letter to a friend inviting them to your birthday party.

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3. Short Story:

- Prompt: Write a short story about an interesting day you had.

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B. Post-Test

Objective: To assess the improvement in writing skills after completing the task-based activities.

Format: Similar to the pre-test to allow for direct comparison.

Tasks:

1. Descriptive Writing (same prompt):

- Prompt: Write a short paragraph describing an imaginary vacation.

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2. Personal Letter (same prompt but slightly varied):

- Prompt: Write a letter to a friend telling them about your recent trip.

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3. Short Story (new prompt):

- Prompt: Write a short story about a surprise party.

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C. Scoring Rubric (for Both Tests):

- Content: Relevance and development of ideas (1-5 points)
- Language: Vocabulary and grammar accuracy (1-5 points)
- Organization: Structure and flow of the writing (1-5 points)
- Mechanics: Spelling and punctuation (1-5 points)

Total Score: out of 20 points.

D. Entrevista a la docente

Objetivo: Reunir información sobre las metodologías empleadas para desarrollar las habilidades de escritura en idioma inglés en estudiantes de nivel A2, así como su percepción sobre la realización de actividades basadas en tareas.

Parte 1: Información general del docente

- 1. Nombre:
- 2. Años de experiencia docente:
- 3. Nivel educativo y materias que enseña:

Parte 2: Metodologías actuales para el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en idioma inglés en estudiantes de nivel A2

4. ¿Qué metodologías utiliza actualmente para desarrollar las habilidades de escritura en idioma inglés en estudiantes de nivel A2?

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5. ¿Cuáles considera son los principales retos que enfrentan sus estudiantes al escribir?

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6. ¿Qué tipos de actividades considera más efectivas para mejorar las habilidades de escritura de sus estudiantes?

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7. ¿Cómo evalúa la escritura de sus estudiantes?

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Parte 3: Actividades basadas en tareas

8. ¿Está familiarizado con el enfoque basado en tareas? Si es así, ¿cómo lo describiría?

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9. ¿Ha implementado alguna vez actividades basadas en tareas en sus clases de escritura? ¿Puede describir alguna actividad específica que haya utilizado?

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10. ¿Qué beneficios ha observado al utilizar estas actividades en comparación con otros métodos?

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11. ¿Qué desafíos ha encontrado al implementar este enfoque en su enseñanza?

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12. Desde su perspectiva, ¿cómo podría evolucionar el uso del enfoque basado en tareas en su contexto educativo?

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Parte 4: Conclusiones y recomendaciones

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13. ¿Qué recomendaciones daría a otros docentes que deseen incorporar un enfoque basado en tareas en la enseñanza de la escritura?

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14. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría agregar acerca de su experiencia con el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en idioma inglés en estudiantes de nivel A2?

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Le agradecemos por su tiempo y disposición para compartir su experiencia y conocimientos.